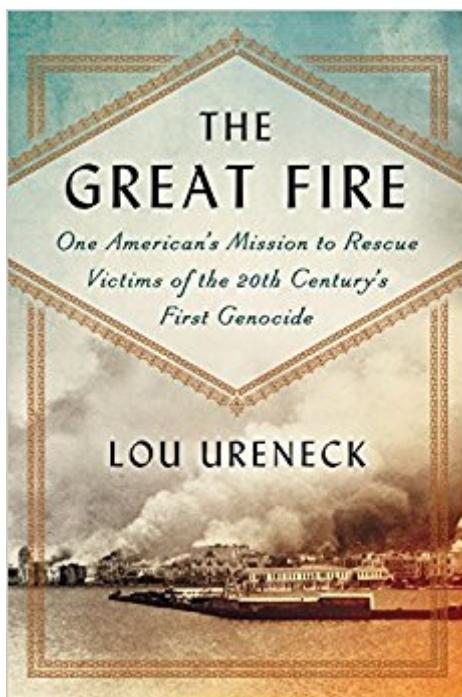


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# The Great Fire: One American's Mission To Rescue Victims Of The 20th Century's First Genocide



## Synopsis

The harrowing story of a Methodist Minister and a principled American naval officer who helped rescue more than 250,000 refugees during the genocide of Armenian and Greek Christiansâ "a tale of bravery, morality, and politics, published to coincide with the genocideâ ™s centennial. The year was 1922: World War I had just come to a close, the Ottoman Empire was in decline, and Asa Jennings, a YMCA worker from upstate New York, had just arrived in the quiet coastal city of Smyrna to teach sports to boys. Several hundred miles to the east in Turkeyâ ™s interior, tensions between Greeks and Turks had boiled over into deadly violence. Mustapha Kemal, now known as Ataturk, and his Muslim army soon advanced into Smyrna, a Christian city, where a half a million terrified Greek and Armenian refugees had fled in a desperate attempt to escape his troops. Turkish soldiers proceeded to burn the city and rape and kill countless Christian refugees. Unwilling to leave with the other American civilians and determined to get Armenians and Greeks out of the doomed city, Jennings worked tirelessly to feed and transport the thousands of people gathered at the cityâ ™s Quay. With the help of the brilliant naval officer and Kentucky gentleman Halsey Powell, and a handful of others, Jennings commandeered a fleet of unoccupied Greek ships and was able to evacuate a quarter million innocent peopleâ "an amazing humanitarian act that has been lost to history, until now. Before the horrible events in Turkey were complete, Jennings had helped rescue a million people. By turns harrowing and inspiring, *The Great Fire* uses eyewitness accounts, documents, and survivor narratives to bring this episodeâ "extraordinary for its brutality as well as its heroismâ "to life.Â

## Book Information

Hardcover: 512 pages

Publisher: Ecco; 1st Edition, 1st Printing edition (May 12, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0062259881

ISBN-13: 978-0062259882

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1.6 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (49 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #266,725 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #97 inÂ Books > Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies > Religious Intolerance & Persecution #119 inÂ Books > History > Middle East > Turkey #266 inÂ Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Disaster

## Customer Reviews

I just finished reading this book and I have a few observations. You really should read this book, especially if you and your family have been Americans for many generations. And this suggestion is coming from a first generation American who grew up in a household where we were taught that "don't be like Americans, because Americans are very uneducated in how the world really is." of course we four would always respond, "but dad we were born in America" and his answer was "yes, but you are not like them because we educate you about the world." I'm an American, born here, who grew up in the 1950s and 60s outside of Philadelphia, with two brothers and a sister. Every September the four of us, while Dad was off at work, would have to team up and pitch in to run the house and to go shopping and to cook the meals while going to public school. This is because mom would disappear into what we called a haze. Mom would just stare off into space and mumble more prayers than we could count. All kinds of names, in a language that we didn't really understand tumbled out. Mom had often embarrassed us, as she would tell strangers that she was educated at a place called the American College and learned many languages. She would talk of her education in all manner of important subjects. To us growing up, how could that be, she was married to a steady, stoic man who owned a hat cleaning and shoe shine parlor. Things were good in America, but mom in an advanced high school? in the old country? No way, America was not a backward place, back there, was.

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