



# **The Time of Their Lives: The Golden Age of Great American Book Publishers, Their Editors and Authors**

*Al Silverman*

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# The Time of Their Lives: The Golden Age of Great American Book Publishers, Their Editors and Authors

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## **The Time of Their Lives: The Golden Age of Great American Book Publishers, Their Editors and Authors** Al Silverman

The golden age of book publishing, Al Silverman informs us with utter certainty, began in 1946 and lasted into the late 1970s and early 1980s. In his intimate history of those years, Silverman sets out to prove this sweeping conceit by relying on the eyes and ears and memories of the men and women who were *there* creating that history. Without inhibition, more than 120 of the most notable heads of houses, editors and publishers of this time shared many never-before told stories about how the most important books in postwar America came into being, and are still being read today.

In *The Time of Their Lives* we learn how ...

-- Robert Gottlieb worked with Joseph Heller to make *Catch-18*, as it was then called, into the world renowned *Catch-22*...

-- Corlies "Cork" Smith took a risk on a shy young man he had never heard of, Thomas Pynchon, after being absorbed by one of his earliest short stories ...

-- Leona Nevler edited under delicate working conditions with a most difficult author, to make *Peyton Place* a novel for all generations.

It was Arthur Thornhill, Sr., in his years as president of Little, Brown's grand publishing house who said about the occupation he loved, "I wanted to be part of something that was *good*," his word for publishing in the golden age. In this fascinating and elegiac history, Al Silverman illuminates a period in publishing that was not only good, but formed a distinguishing landmark of culture in American life -- a golden time that certainly deserves a new life.

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