

John Lennon Short Guide

John Lennon by Richard Wootton

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Overview

Wootton's biography recounts the life of singer and songwriter John Lennon, best known for his collaboration with Paul McCartney as the combined creative force which made the Beatles the most famous, popular, and successful musical group in history.

Lennon was born on October 9, 1940 in Liverpool, England to Julia and Alfred "Freddie" Lennon during a violent air raid by the German Luftwaffe. The author begins with Lennon's troubled youth as a temperamental and obstinate boy who performed poorly in school, but he devotes most of the book to Lennon's success with The Beatles, and concludes with the star's solo musical career and tragic death outside his apartment in New York City.

Lennon's parents married on impulse against the wishes of Julia's family, and they were not emotionally prepared for parenthood. Consequently, Julia's sister, Mimi Smith, raised John. Wootton discusses his troubled childhood, his failure at school (he failed all eight of his exams at the Quarry Bank Grammar in the Lennon in concert, Hamburg, Germany, 1964 summer of 1957), his playing of dangerous "dare" games, and his shoplifting of candy. Lennon's very strong commitment to his son Sean derived partly from his need to compensate for the lack of devotion he had received from his parents.

The biography focuses most on how the musicians met, formed an embryonic band called the Quarrymen (a name derived from Lennon's old Grammar school), and how the four different personalities blended together to form The Beatles.

Wootton describes in detail the meteoric rise of The Beatles: how they became a popular local group, then a somewhat successful group in Hamburg, Germany, then a smash success in Britain, and finally the most famous rock band of all time. He writes about the success of each particular album, the individual songs from each record, and how they singly and collectively built the legendary reputation of the Beatles. Wootton judiciously compares the albums, showing how they evolved out of and differed from their predecessors. As the albums became increasingly more sophisticated, complex, and accomplished, the group's teamwork began to disintegrate, as evidenced by the lyrical failure of the albums *Abbey Road* and *Let It Be*. The fragments of uncompleted lyrics and songs in *Abbey Road* resulted from feuding between Lennon and McCartney that adversely affected their creative collaboration. The *Abbey Road* album was a commercial success, though it was clearly not their best work.

Wootton spends the last part of the book discussing Lennon's solo career; its limited success was only underscored by his prior incredible artistic and commercial triumphs with The Beatles. The author also writes of the marriage of John and Yoko Ono, the Japanese avant-garde artist who some say hastened the breakup of the group. The reader learns of their life together, complete with various controversies such as the decision to do a nude album cover. Ono sang and wrote songs with John, supplanting McCartney as Lennon's musical partner, with inferior results.



The book concludes with the murder of Lennon at the hands of Mark David Chapman on December 8, 1980.

Wootton claims that Lennon's death inspired a greater mass outpouring of grief than any since President John F. Kennedy's assassination on November 23, 1963. Thousands began a vigil outside the Dakota apartment building where he lived, and radio stations throughout the world played his music.

About the Author

Richard Wootton—former teacher in South London, free-lance writer, and music enthusiast—now resides in London, England. He traveled across the United States during the middle 1970s and the early 1980s looking for and commenting on clubs that play live music. Wootton spent five years learning the nuances of atmosphere, character, and tone that distinguish one musical nightspot from another.

He also visited record stores, radio stations, recording studios, record producers, and musicians. What he found was presented in *Honky Tonkin' —A Travel Guide to American Music* (1977). Wootton has also written books on John Lennon and Elvis Presley, but he has focused more on country music than rock and roll. Wootton no longer writes books because he has devoted his career in recent years to the publicity business.

Andrew Lycett claims that after the publication of *Honky Tonkin'*, "several firms, among them an American hotel chain . . . approached Wootton asking him to put together musical tours and itineraries of the continent". This enterprise ultimately led Wootton to his current career as publicist for country musicians. Richard Wootton Publicity is now a successful London firm that works in conjunction with Joe's Garage in Nashville, Tennessee, handling the publicity for country music recording stars such as Garth Brooks, Emmy Lou Harris, and Gretchen Peters. Wootton has attempted to make country music a big business in England; he has served as Chairman of the British Association of Record Dealers and has written articles for *Billboard* magazine.

Wootton is so modest about his books that his colleagues in the country music publicity business had to learn from other sources that he was an author of some note.



Setting

Liverpool, England—where Lennon grew up, encountered formative musical influences, and met fellow band members Paul McCartney, George Harrison, and Richard Starkey (Ringo Starr)—influenced and inspired his music. One influential place was a nearby Salvation Army Children's Home named Strawberry Fields, which Lennon transformed into a song by that name; this children's home was located near his Aunt Mimi's home in Woolton, a suburb of Liverpool. Another important setting was a Liverpool street called Penny Lane, a name that McCartney used for a song. Liverpool was also an important site for contemporary musicians; it was Europe's busiest transatlantic passenger port, so the sailors returning from New York brought with them the most recent American records. The presence of avant-garde music in Liverpool no doubt influenced the progressive direction the sound of The Beatles' music was to take.

Germany serves as another important setting in the book. Lennon and the other Beatles did not enjoy their gigs in Germany because they were forced to play long hours for very little compensation. However, the band's skills at this time were rather raw, and the countless hours that they spent performing dramatically improved their musicianship. The living and playing conditions were as poor as the pay, and the band members were glad to come back home. They eventually returned for a second time but still did not enjoy life in Germany.

It was during their first time in Hamburg that The Beatles (Lennon, McCartney, Harrison, and Pete Best) met another Liverpool group, Rory Storm and the Hurricanes, whose drummer, Ringo Starr, they befriended. Starr eventually replaced Best as the drummer of The Beatles, giving them the lineup of musicians that would soon catapult them to world-wide fame.

The Beatles switched from playing in one Hamburg club to another because of better wages and living conditions, infuriating the prior club owner, who took revenge by calling the police.

They deported Harrison for being underage and arrested McCartney and Best for setting curtains on fire. Lennon returned to Liverpool by train, carrying as much of the band's equipment as he could take with him.

Brian Epstein's record store possesses historical significance. Epstein was surprised when many fans came to his store to ask for copies of The Beatles's song entitled "My Bonnie," which they had recorded in Germany, where the single had been very popular. He had never heard of The Beatles before, and he decided to attend one of their performances in the Cavern Club in Liverpool. Epstein was immediately captivated by their performance, met them after the show to introduce himself, and then set up an appointment to chat with them at his record store.

He then returned to his store and ordered one hundred copies of the record from Germany; by the time the appointment came about, Epstein had sold all of the copies.



Impressed, Epstein became their manager and met with producer George Martin of EMI records, who signed them to a contract but asked them to find a new drummer to replace Best (Martin considered Best an inferior drummer), whom the other Beatles wanted to fire anyway because of musical differences.

Bangor, Wales and Rishikesh, India were also important settings for Lennon and the other Beatles because of their fascination with the Eastern guru Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who spoke of achieving inner peace through transcendental meditation. This fascination with the Maharishi led many fans of The Beatles to believe the band members had gone mad, to suspect that their overwhelming success had injured them psychologically. Lennon and the others, believing what the guru espoused about the worthlessness of material possessions, donated one-fourth of their incomes to the Maharishi's Regeneration Movement.

In February 1968, The Beatles traveled to the Maharishi's academy in Rishikesh for several weeks of religious studies and transcendental meditation; other notables there included Mike Love of The Beach Boys and actress Mia Farrow. The Beatles became disillusioned with the Maharishi and left abruptly; when the religious man asked them why they were leaving India, Lennon replied, "You're the cosmic one, you ought to know." The Beatles later satirized the Maharishi and their Indian experience in a song entitled "Sexy Sadie."

Lennon enjoyed living in New York City. He found the countryside in England—Tittenhurst Park in Ascot, where he had lived with Yoko Ono before moving to the United States—too quietly tranquil, and he preferred the unimpeded vitality of a huge city like New York. He recorded his music with Ono in New York until he was gunned down outside his Dakota apartment home.



Social Sensitivity

In many aspects of his life, Lennon was not an exemplary model for young admirers. An angry, poorly educated non-conformist, he defied adults, authorities, and social convention. He cheated on, then abandoned his wife and young son, and he experimented with drugs, becoming addicted to heroine. The strength of Wootton's biography is that he treats Lennon's faults without condemning or excusing them. The Beatles became successful almost in spite of themselves, not because of any great virtues or genius or hard work, but because they had vision and courage.

Wootton presents Lennon as a man who deserves to be understood, not idolized.

Lennon's marriage to Yoko Ono was socially sensitive because he fell in love with her while married to Cythnia, his first wife and mother of Julian.

Leaving his wife for another woman somewhat injured Lennon's reputation, but actually people objected more to his new love than to his abandonment of Cynthia. Many people, including McCartney and Harrison, could not understand what Lennon saw in this diminutive and plain Japanese woman several years older than he. Female fans of Lennon were jealous of her as well. And it was not his first extramarital affair. Lennon had previously written a song about an affair that he was having while married to Cynthia, entitled "Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown)."

Drugs played a role in the lives of Lennon and the other Beatles. Lennon admitted publicly in 1967 that he took drugs such as LSD and marijuana. He was watched carefully by the FBI because of his drug use and his antiwar ideology, which made Richard Nixon dislike and distrust him. Nixon on several occasions attempted to have Lennon deported because he considered the star a hindrance to his reelection campaign. "She Said, She Said" from Revolver is about John's frightening LSD experimentation. Two of Lennon's songs in the Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band album caused the songwriter more trouble with respect to drugs. Some considered "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" a song about drugs—the initials spell LSD— although Lennon claimed the song was about a painting by Julian. Also, the song "A Day in the Life" concludes with the line "I'd love to turn you on," which was a statement often made by drug users. On October 18, 1968, police raided John and Yoko's London apartment, confiscated marijuana, and arrested the couple.

Another sensitive issue was Lennon's statement that Christianity would die out before rock 'n' roll and that The Beatles were currently more popular than churches and religion.

The comment attracted little notice in England, but was, according to Wootton, taken out of context and exploited by the American media. Wootton believes that Lennon was simply indicating that he considered the attention of the media and adoration of the hysterical female fans to be overwhelming; not that he felt that the Beatles were greater than God.



Literary Qualities

Wootton's biography of Lennon is straightforward, clearly written, and easy to understand. He organizes the book well by arranging the text in the simple chronological format of birth through death. Some of Wootton's ideas are insightful, such as his critique of the United States government for harassing Lennon while trying to deport him for being against the Vietnam. Wootton's research debunks the theory that Lennon tried to prevent Richard Nixon from being re-elected President of the United States, and that the singer had started a campaign to hinder Nixon's chances because of their differences regarding the Vietnam War. Wootton also supports Lennon's assertions, considered paranoid by other writers, that he was being spied on by Nixon supporters and the FBI. Furthermore, the author employs pop psychology to provide insight into the ramifications of Lennon's troubled youth upon his later life. He combines biographical information with psychological probing to see how events in Lennon's early life shaped later happenings, and how the singer's personality affected his relationships with other people. Wootton also discusses various songs that Lennon wrote, demonstrating how the lyrics reveal a great deal about the man's life and his current state of mind.

It is disappointing that Wootton overlooks Lennon's relationship with his first wife, Cynthia. Wootton does make several references to Cynthia but fails to give her the attention that she deserves. Although she did not share Lennon's artistic interests and creative pursuits, as Yoko Ono did, Cynthia was devoted to him both during the early stages and at the zenith of his career, and she gave birth to Julian, his first child. The author does provide a great deal of information about how Ono shaped Lennon's life and perhaps contributed to the separation of The Beatles.



Themes and Characters

Lennon's difficult family circumstances and unusual upbringing clearly affected his entire life, and this prominent theme is closely studied in the book. Wootton scrutinizes the events surrounding the absence of Lennon's parents: how they both lost interest in their son and shunned him, how the father deserted the family, and how the mother gave him away to her sister Mimi. The author shows how Lennon's quick temper and insecurities may have derived from the trauma of his isolation from his parents. Lennon continued this pattern by deserting his wife Cynthia and son Julian (although he still saw Julian) for Yoko Ono, but deviated from it by his great devotion to Yoko and their son Sean.

Another significant theme is how an intelligent but poorly educated young man suddenly achieved astonishing fame, popularity, and success, eventually passing through superstar ranks to the secular canonization of cultural icon. Wootton discusses the almost frenzied phenomenon of Beatlemania, that incredible amount of attention and fame showered on Lennon and the other Beatles. We see reactions from Lennon and Mimi regarding his unprecedented rise to stardom. Women became hysterically devoted to and obsessed with Lennon, as did his future assassin, Mark David Chapman.

Chapman became obsessed with Lennon, achieving such a frightening and eerie identification that he perhaps believed he was the singer. He even married a Japanese-American woman who reminded him of Ono, and he signed out using the name John Lennon when quitting a job in Honolulu.

A third theme is how Lennon attempted to handle what his success brought, and the consequences of his occasional shortcomings in this area.

Wootton discusses Lennon's remark about The Beatles being more famous than Jesus, his drug use, and his friendships and partnerships with other musicians such as Harry Nilsson, Phil Spector, Elton John, and Billy Preston.

Still another theme is his life after The Beatles, which includes his solo career, his life with avant-garde artist Yoko Ono, and his tragic murder. Lennon's solo career had some disappointments, such as the *Some Time in New York City* album, which included songs from the Plastic Ono band. This album was filled with political and social songs about women's liberation, the war in Northern Ireland, and the imprisonment of left-wing activists. It was a critical and commercial failure that displayed Lennon's naivete and simplistic understanding of these issues. Lennon's two critical and commercial successes in his solo career were his *Imagine* and *Double Fantasy* albums. Yoko became his collaborator, and they spent practically all their time together, except for a brief separation in which Yoko encouraged him to spend a weekend with his secretary.

Lennon, as characterized by Wootton, was a headstrong, reckless, and lazy boy who, though artistically gifted and imaginative, performed badly in school. He was popular with fellow students but not with the teachers whom he annoyed with his class clown antics. He had trouble with romantic relationships due to a bad temper. Because of his



ego, he enjoyed being in charge of any enterprise he was involved in, and he worried about asking Paul McCartney to join his band; he feared that McCartney was a more accomplished player who might eventually dominate the group. The jealous Lennon eventually overcame his mistrust of McCartney for the period of time in which they became the most successful songwriting partnership in rock history. After their manager, Brian Epstein, died of a drug overdose, Lennon and McCartney quarreled over the financial aspects of the group's enterprise, and they wrote separately during the last few years of the band's existence. Lennon and McCartney's musical tastes grew further apart, especially as Lennon became more interested in radical political issues and avant-garde music. Lennon complained about McCartney's childish lyrics in songs such as "Ob-la di, Ob-la-da," while McCartney criticized Lennon's radical songs such as the esoteric and jumbled "Revolution 9." Wootton suggests that Lennon's lyrics are more sophisticated and political than those of McCartney.

It was McCartney who introduced George Harrison to Lennon. Initially annoyed by the younger George, who had learned to play guitar by repeatedly listening to Buddy Holly albums, Lennon agreed to Harrison's joining the group because John liked playing Harrison's expensive guitar, a far superior instrument to Lennon's.

Drummer Ringo Starr, who joined the band after Pete Best's departure, had the least impact upon the group's success. Starr got along well with the others though, perhaps because he had only a minor involvement in any songwriting, and because he did not seem like a threat to usurp control of the band. He briefly quit the band in 1968, just before the *White Album* appeared, because he was tired of the squabbling between Lennon and McCartney. He got along better with Yoko Ono than McCartney and Harrison did, and he flew to New York to comfort her after Lennon was murdered.

Julia Lennon gave her son to her sister Mimi to raise because she was involved in a romantic relationship after her husband left her, and the new man in her life did not like John and wanted him out of Julia's life. Mimi raised John as if he were her own son.

She and her husband George were firm with John, and he was polite to them, even though he was not polite to his teachers or other authority figures.

John had an especially close relationship with Mimi, and she was unquestionably the most important adult role model and influence on his life as he grew up. In spite of her abandonment, John still loved Julia dearly and mourned her death. She was an eccentric, quirky, impulsive, and funny woman who enjoyed making John and his friends laugh. John memorialized her in a song, a beautiful ballad simply titled "Julia." John's irresponsible father only returned years later, when he needed money from his famous and wealthy son.

Cynthia Powell was John's first wife, whom he reluctantly married when she became pregnant with Julian. He felt that his marriage would cause The Beatles to break up, that he would not have time for the band, and that female fans would lose interest if they knew that he was married. Cynthia was devoted to John and very patient with him,



accepting his bad temper, insecurities, and desire to control. When she realized that John could never be happy with her, Cynthia even accepted his relationship with Ono.

Yoko Ono, an avant-garde Japanese artist, shared the same interests and championed the same social causes as her future husband. She wrote, sang, and produced music with Lennon and shared his thirst for publicity. The other Beatles, especially George and Paul, did not like Ono. Paul said that he found it difficult to write songs in her presence because he felt that he was expected to write very witty and unique things while she was there.

Brian Epstein, the owner of West End Record Store who became The Beatles's manager, was energetic, committed to the band, and obtained for them a recording contract with EMI and George Martin. However, he sold The Beatles's marketing rights for very small percentages due to his inexperience. For instance, after The Beatles played their famous Hollywood Bowl concert, in August 1964, the towels they used were torn into pieces and attached to certificates and sold; The Beatles received almost nothing for this marketing extravaganza. Epstein was rather traditional and insisted that The Beatles wear matching suits when they performed.

He became a minor celebrity and enjoyed his new-found fame, but the pressures and temptations that came with it proved too great for him to handle. The Beatles got along very well with one another while Epstein was their manager, but they began quarreling about musical differences and money after he died of a drug overdose.



Topics for Discussion

1. What effect did John's being deserted by his parents have upon his personality later in life?

2. How do you account for The Beatles's phenomenal success? What made them and their music so popular? Was it their talent, their period, changes in society, or a combination of these and other factors?

3. Discuss the relationships between John Lennon and the other Beatles. Do you believe that they got along well with one another? If not, why didn't they? Did it matter whether Lennon or McCartney was leader of the group?

4. What caused The Beatles to break up? Was it the difference in their personalities? Yoko Ono's presence? Different musical tastes? Boredom with success?

5. Did Yoko Ono have a positive or negative effect upon Lennon's life?

Countless women were in love with him at the pinnacle of his popularity.

Why did he choose her?

6. Discuss the successes and failures of Lennon's solo career after The Beatles disbanded.

7. Discuss how fame irrevocably changed Lennon's life. Was it a change for the better or the worse?

8. Discuss how Lennon's music influenced his life.

9. Discuss how Lennon's life influenced his music.



Ideas for Reports and Papers

1. Write a paper on the impact of Lennon and The Beatles upon rock music. How, for instance, have The Beatles influenced subsequent musicians?

2. Write a paper on the influence of Lennon and The Beatles upon Western culture, such as their hair cuts and Lennon's statements about world peace.

3. What changes do you perceive in Lennon's musical style, musical forms, and song lyrics during the course of his career?

4. Write a paper on the influence of Indian philosophy upon The Beatles.

How did it shape their music and their lives?

5. Describe the different stages in the group's history from their idealistic beginning to their tumultuous conclusion. How do you account for these different stages? Relate these changes to different events in the lives of Lennon and the other Beatles.

6. Wootton's book mentions that Pete Best was fired from the group and replaced with Ringo Starr because he was an inferior drummer. Other books claim that Best was fired by the group after Lennon and McCartney became jealous of Best's good looks; they knew that women considered the drummer the most attractive member of the Beatles. Write a report in which you investigate both points of view and conclude which interpretation is the more accurate.

7. Wootton discusses the influence of Elvis Presley upon Lennon. Write a report in which you investigate similarities between the careers and lives of the two musicians.



For Further Reference

Carr, Roy, and Richard Lester. *Beatles at the Movies*. Scranton, PA: Harper Collins, 1996. Carr's and Lester's book is the first to focus exclusively on the five motion pictures that the Beatles made: *It's Been a Hard Day's Night*, *Help!*, *Yellow Submarine*, *Magical Mystery Tour*, and *Let It Be*. It includes interviews with the band members, provides information concerning the title songs and other tunes that highlight the films, and describes anecdotes about the Beatles as they appeared in front of the camera during the movie-making process.

Carr, Roy, and Tony Tyler. *The Beatles, An Illustrated Record*. New York: Crown, 1984. A photographic tribute.

Coleman, Ray. *Lennon: The Definitive Biography*. New York: Harperperennial Library, 1992. This book, recently revised, is unquestionably the best biography of Lennon. Coleman received help from both of the singer's wives in preparing this comprehensive book that describes Lennon in a largely positive light.

Coleman draws upon letters and family papers.

Conord, Bruce W., and Leeza Gibbons.

John Lennon. Broomall, PA: Chelsea House, 1993. This biography, which initiates the Popular Culture Legends series, concerns the professional and personal life of the singer, including his rocky childhood in which his father abandoned him and his mother gave him away to her sister. Conord's and Gibbons's biography discusses the musician's sex life, drug habits, breakup with The Beatles, and inability to handle fame. The book begins with Lennon's birth and continues through his solo career after The Beatles disbanded.

Cott, Jonathan, and Christine Doudna.

The Ballad of John and Yoko. New York: Doubleday, 1982. This book by the editors of Rolling Stone Magazine covers the life of Lennon with his second wife, Yoko Ono, including their relationship and music.

Du Noyer, Paul. *We All Shine On: The Stories Behind Every John Lennon Song: 1970-1980*. New York: Harperperennial Library, 1997. This book, which contains many photographs, focuses solely on Lennon's career after the breakup of The Beatles. It is biographical in that Du Noyer relies on Lennon's life stories to discuss the impetus for the songs.

He discusses heroin addiction, love, the singer's seclusion in his apartment, his songs with Elton John, and the newly released song "Free as a Bird."



Fawcett, Anthony. *John Lennon: One Day a Time*. LaVergne, TN: Grove Press, 1980. Fawcett's book is a biography that focuses on Lennon's life in the 1970s, after the breakup of The Beatles.

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Includes rare interviews from the peak of Lennon's career, including his relationships with Cynthia Lennon and Yoko Ono, and his addiction to heroin.

Glassman, Bruce S. *John Lennon & Paul McCartney: Their Magic and Their Music*. Woodbridge, CT: Blackbirch Marketing, 1995. A dual biography that discusses their teamwork and how their music influenced pop culture, especially the whole world of rock music.

Harry, Bill. *Beatles Encyclopedia*. New York: Blandford Press, 1997. Harry, the author of several books regarding The Beatles, employs his impressive personal Beatle archive and collections to write a thorough encyclopedia about The Beatles. Harry is a Beatles authority whose encyclopedia includes 1,500 entries, 500 biographies of people associated with The Beatles, and 300 photographs. Harry's book presents fact, clarifies controversies, and debunks myths about the Fab Four.

Hertsgaard, Mark. *A Day in the Life: The Music and Artistry of the Beatles*.

New York: Delacorte Press, 1995.

Includes extensive research into the music of The Beatles, and depicts their special chemistry in composing and performing music.

Lennon, Cynthia. *A Twist of Lennon*.

Dresden, TN: Avon Books, 1980.

This intimate biography by John Lennon's first wife tells of her life with the great musician; how his insecurities and bad temper, as well as his jealousy and possessiveness early in their relationship, scared her terribly. She also writes about her reaction to losing John to Yoko Ono.

Lennon, John. *In His Own Write*. Scranton, PA: HarperCollins, 1988. First published in March 1964, this is a collection of Lennon's eccentric writings, which Wootton says he had been working on since childhood. They are childish stories complete with plays on words for humor, sometimes nonsensical like the works of Lewis Carroll. Stories include "The Wrestling Dog," "The Moldy, Moldy Man," and "No Flies on Frank." The book also contains his drawings, showing his art training from previous years. The humor is cynical, sarcastic, and witty, and it manifests the creativity that is present in his songs. The book also contains Lennon's drawings.



——. *Skywriting by Word of Mouth: And Other Writings, Including the Ballad of John and Yoko*. New York: Harperperennial Library, 1996. This fanciful book clearly illustrates his creativity as a writer and also contains line drawings by Lennon. Lennon penned the book when Yoko was pregnant with their son Sean; although the singer intended to publish the book, he was assassinated and the manuscript was stolen from his home in 1982. After it was recovered, it was first published in 1986. The book includes, among other works, "Two Virgins," which concerns the public reaction to John and Yoko as a pair, and Lennon's autobiography. The musician writes about his relationship with Ono, the breakup of The Beatles, and the United States government's persecution of him, as well as his desire to live a private life.

Norman, Philip. *Shout! The Beatles in Their Generation*. New York: Fine Communications, 1997. Norman's excellent biography is thorough and detailed.

O'Donnell, Jim. *The Day John Met Paul: An Hour-By-Hour Account of How the Beatles Began*. Bergenfield, NJ: Penguin, 1996. O'Donnell's book concerns the crucial day in 1957 when Lennon met Paul McCartney. The book makes use of extensive interviews with Lennon's and McCartney's friends in Liverpool to discuss the day in extensive detail.

Santrey, Laurence. *John Lennon: Young Rock Star*. Mahwah, NJ: Trull Communication, 1989. This biography is geared for children from the ages of 9-12, and covers the early years of Lennon's life and musical career, primarily his teenage years.

Seaman, Frederic. *The Private Life of John Lennon: A Photographic Journal*.

New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1997. John Lennon's personal assistant, driver, and friend from 1979 until the death of the musician, presents this personal memoir about the late singer, including his preoccupations with sex, food, shopping, privacy, the occult, and predictions of his death. Seaman includes in his book rare photographs never before published.

Shotton, Peter, and Nicholas Schaffner. *John Lennon in My Life: In My Life*. Chelsea Manor, MI: Stein & Day Publishers, 1983. Pete Shotton, a close friend of Lennon during their teenage years, discusses their experiences together before the singer became a famous musician with The Beatles. Shotton's book provides the reader with extensive and intimate knowledge of crucial years in the life of the singer.

Stannard, Neville, and John Tobler.

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Thomson, Elizabeth, and David Gutman, editors. *The Lennon Companion: Twenty-five Years of Comment*. Old Tappan, NJ: Schirmer Books, 1990.



Contains two dozen photographs and a collection of sixty-plus articles about John Lennon, including Gloria Steinem's "Will He Last?"

Turner, Steve. *A Hard Day's Write: The Stories Behind Every Beatles Song*.

New York: Harperperennial Library, 1994. This book is the first study of all the songs by The Beatles, and it analyzes the lyrics to discuss what was going on in the lives of the band members at the times the songs were written and what were the formative impulses behind the writing of the individual songs. The book tells a great deal about the individual band member's lives, their special bonding as a group, and what was going on in pop culture and history at the time they wrote the songs.

Wiener, Jon. *Come Together: John Lennon in His Time*. London: Faber Paperbacks, 1995. Focuses on Lennon's 1960s musical and political views.

Wiener's treatment of the musician is balanced, not hero worship but not unnecessarily negative either.

The book discusses Lennon's music and his confrontation with Richard Nixon.

Woffinden, Bob. *The Beatles Apart: A Study of the Split and the Years Since*.

Port Chester, NY: Cherry Lane Books, 1984. Analyzes the group's internal friction during its last years together and the years since, including the relationships between the four former band members during their solo careers. Woffinden discusses what caused the break up of the musical and social relationships of the Fab Four.



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