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Watching Walter Cronkite: Reflections on Growing Up in the 1950s and 1960s

Austin K. Kutscher

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In *Watching Walter Cronkite*, Austin Ken Kutscher, M.D., reflects on how our lives were shaped by the transformative events of the 1950s and 1960s. As we celebrate our first African-American president, Barack Obama, in a world where American soldiers are still fighting wars halfway across the globe and where the threat of nuclear weapons still exists, generations both young and old need to understand the past events that were so instrumental in shaping our lives today.

Watching Walter Cronkite had its beginning when Dr. Kutscher realized his teenage daughter was part of a generation, born after 1980, oblivious to issues that have been the foundation of their parents' ideals. Using the historical events of the era of the '50s and '60s as a backdrop, Dr. Kutscher has fashioned a moving memoir of his experiences as a public school and college student, as he tried to make his mark in the world after his Mom had died of breast cancer. He shares not only his personal joys and sorrows, but also the parallel adolescent reminiscences of his wife, Mary Ellen. Their personal journeys are representative of everyday Baby Boomers who were never featured on the CBS Evening News. As Dr. Kutscher recounts our country's pains during the '60s — a decade filled with a tragic war and social and racial injustice — he also brings to life the electrifying feelings of the music of love and protest and the scientific achievements of our nation, not to mention the spirit of the New York Mets' "Miracle" World Series victory in 1969.

Watching Walter Cronkite will resonate deeply with older generations of Americans, as they recall the dizzying array of events that unfolded nightly on their TV screens—including the assassinations of the Kennedy brothers and Martin Luther King, Jr., the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam War, the anti-war movement, the counter-culture, the Woodstock Festival, and the crowning achievement of the 1960s—the Apollo XI Moon landing.

By chronicling our lives against this historic period, Dr. Kutscher hopes we can find peace and redemption in the turbulent times through which we are now living—and that we can explore, as did Neil Armstrong, our own "Sea of Tranquility."

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