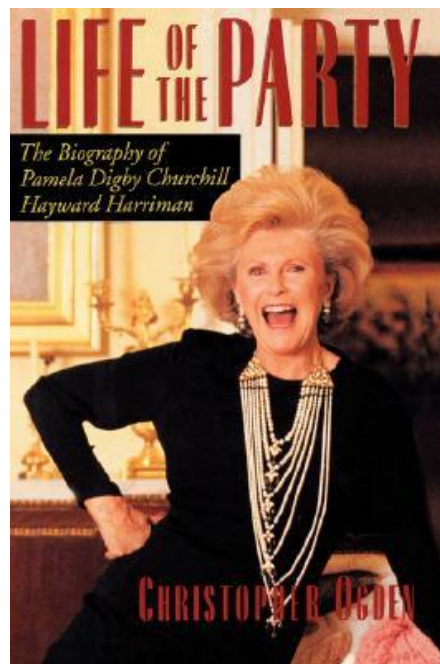




Life of the Party: The Biography of Pamela Digby Churchill Hayward Harriman

Christopher Ogden

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When President Bill Clinton nominated Pamela Harriman to become U.S. ambassador to France in 1993, he was rewarding an extraordinary supporter with a crown jewel from the American political spoils system. Few deserved it more. The glamorous widow of statesman Averell Harriman had sheltered the Democratic party through a dozen years of exile and had used her late husband's fortune and her own drive to raise \$12 million for the party and, ultimately, Clinton's campaign. But long before she became a diplomat, Pamela Harriman had an international reputation - as courtesan of the century. The ambitious eldest child of an English baron, Pamela was eager to flee rural life when her formal education ended at sixteen. Red-haired, voluptuous, and sexy at eighteen, when she claims to have met Adolf Hitler, she married Winston Churchill's only son at the onset of World War II and moved into No. 10 Downing Street. A volatile marriage to Randolph Churchill propelled the seductive young mother into wartime affairs with such powerful men as Harriman, Edward R. Murrow, and top generals on both sides of the Anglo-American alliance. After the war, Pamela divorced, moving to France and into liaisons with wealthy playboys Aly Khan, Gianni Agnelli, and Elie de Rothschild. Her second marriage, to Sound of Music producer Leland Hayward, put her at the crossroads of Broadway and Hollywood in the 1960s. After Hayward's death, a family feud, and a flirtation with Frank Sinatra, she married the seventy-nine-year-old Harriman. The former ambassador, New York governor, and presidential candidate introduced her to a new generation of world leaders as well as Democratic party officials delighted to welcome a beautiful and energetic doyenne. Unauthorized, but based on months of exclusive talks with Pamela Harriman, plus interviews with nearly two hundred friends, relatives, and critics, Life of the Party is the first inside look at the spectacular life and rise of a remarkable woman.

Life of the Party: The Biography of Pamela Digby Churchill Hayward Harriman Details

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Hayward Harriman Christopher Ogden**

From Reader Review Life of the Party: The Biography of Pamela Digby Churchill Hayward Harriman for online ebook

Brenda says

This was a fascinating read - in terms of the historical background, in terms of the connections she had with pretty much anyone of importance, and finally in terms of how she managed to manipulate people and situations to get what she wanted. I was left wanting to know more and have therefore bought two other books about Pamela Harriman.

Pam Venne says

Exceptionally noteworthy read of reinventing oneself given the addition of the Churchill name as a launching pad. Pamela is a woman of grit who took note of her natural resources and levied them to the fullest to achieve one of the highest awards to the Ambassador to France under JFK!

From a naive 17-year old to a world renown woman with connections at the highest levels across the broadest of spectrums. She had a drive for perfection that wouldn't quit and a way of bringing herself into any room with pillows, flowers, and photographs.

Karl says

Biography - what an incredible life! - married to Churchill's son, more marriages and divorces than you can shake a stick at, socialite on both sides of the Atlantic for decades, London, New York, Washington, eventually becoming the American Ambassador to France - good giddy fun

Gatlin says

I had to read this book after glancing at the front-cover photograph! Ms. Harriman was ruthless in her pursuit of rich men to keep her. She comes across as a bawdy, blowsy 19th century Madam; could've been one in another life. And that's not a put-down. Ann-Margret played her in a Lifetime biopic.

Kerry Kenney says

Churchill. Hayward. Harriman.

What I like about Pamela Harriman is that her life was newsworthy, noteworthy, she was self created, charismatic, indomitable and utterly unique.

This biography doesn't come close to capturing her life but it does give a bit of a roadmap to someone that peripherally appears in the biographies and memoirs of so many of the great political personalities of the

20th century.

Joy H. says

RE: _Life of the Party_

I read this book a while ago, before I joined Goodreads. So I can't write a detailed review. However, I did save the following quotation from the book:

"There has to be a certain amount of clutter to enforce your ownership of a room. Flowers or pillows or photographs - these can make a room suddenly spring to life."

[From p. 281 of book, _Life of the Party_ by Christopher Ogden (2006) about Pamela Churchill Leland Harrison, (footnotes say the quote was taken from p.111 of "Architectural Digest", June 1984.)]

Louise says

Reading this, more than decade after its publication when Pamela's primary skills were already passé, it was clear how much things have changed.

Pamela came out of the 19th century British aristocracy where only the first born male was entitled to inherit the family's property and power and to call it what it is/was - human rights within a family. Pamela could not expect familial affection or support. Her family turned her over to nannies and decreed that education, no matter how great her ability or curiosity, would hinder her marriage options.

Pamela made her own match (did not wait for family negotiations) and married what history made the ultimate commodity, a link through a male namesake, to Winston Churchill. She used this "child" and followed the cultural and psychological patterns of aristocratic women by supporting and living through her man with a modern twist--- he did not have to be her husband.

WWII put a chink in the armor of the British class system and affirmed the American ideal of social equality. The super wealthy European men paid in cash and friendship for all she willingly gave. She wanted commitment, which due to European social codes, would not be forthcoming. No wonder Pamela was seduced (in the pure sense of the word) by America. In America she was able to achieve far beyond what her family or country c/would ever provide for her.

She was Darwinistic about men/marriage. If a man's wife was not as fit as her, Pamela had no qualms about the wife, Pamela should have the "position". Her sympathy for her second husband's mother (over that of his children) who had abandoned her family may be testament to an understanding of her emotional situation.

One can salute Pamela's achievements, but her treatment of others is too cold for sympathy. As presented here, her mothering of "The Child" and her stepchildren replicates that toward her in her own nuclear family.

Her treatment of staff and other women is pure 1950's sexism and a workaholic's view of the world. She rose above the rigid role of her family and society had given her. Unfortunately, within her intimate family (birth and blended) she could not break the chain of creating emotional liabilities.

P says

Christopher Ogden makes this fascinating woman and the times in which she lived a very interesting read. Pamela was in the thick of many historical moments. Ogden also wrote about Margaret Thatcher which might be as well worthwhile to read.

Cher Sweeney says

Amazing book about a woman that knew/rubbed elbows with famous people of the twentieth century. Daughter-in-law of Winston Churchill, married to Averil Harriman, Leland Hayward, Randolph Churchill... lover and mistress to Gianni Agnelli (Fiat), Edward R. Murrow, William S. Paley, Elie de Rothschild and many more. Hugely influential and a fund raiser for the Democratic Party, she reportedly hand-picked and championed Bill Clinton to the the Democratic candidate for president. SO many more interesting details about this amazing woman. Hard to put this one down once you get started!

Dixie Swanson says

Talk about reinventing yourself! The late Pamela Harriman did it many times, usually involving a man of note in WWII through the 1990's. From Churchill to Clinton, she was always the Life of the Party, even if she was the wicked stepmother.

Annmbray says

Fascinating life! Highly recommend this one. It is an unbelievable story of how someone who started at the bottom of the social system ended up right on top through several fortuitous marriages. A modern-day geisha to be sure!

Judy says

a gossipy byt rather captivating account of a woman who slept her way to the top!

Karen-Leigh says

Woman of money, power and fascination.

Kara says

Biography of Pamela Digby, who married Winston Churchill's son Randolph then became a high class courtesan in Britain and France during and after World War II, with countless lovers. After which she moved to America and married Leland Hayward, after he died she married a former beau from WWII Avery Harriman.

Betsy Lewis-moreno says

Fascinating look at the events of the 20th century through the life of a woman who knew (in the Biblical sense of the world!) and married some of the men who were right in the midst of it all - prime minister's son, heir to a banking fortune, Hollywood producer, Democratic party political heavyweight... talk about a woman who knew how to use her feminine power to its greatest advantage.
