

1. *Island of Saints*

My reason for reading *Island of Saints, A Story of One Principle That Frees the Human Spirit*, by Andy Andrews (Nelson Books, 2005) was that I had an interest in the German submarine war in the Gulf of Mexico during the Second World War. This is a fictional account, but quite true to the historical facts as I have come to know them through my own readings.

Why would this topic be of interest? I lived for one summer at Fort Crockett on Galveston Island and visited the coastal defensive installations there. Also, as told in the story of our family's coming to the USA as legally defined refugees¹, there was a farmer family that saved my father from certain death after a bombing raid in the place where he was a slave laborer in Germany. That family lost their oldest son in a German submarine that was sunk by depth charges, very close to the City of New Orleans.

So I relived a small piece of that history by reading Andrews' story.

But I agree with the subtitle, Andrews tells a tale that weaves that history into a tapestry of forgiveness and acceptance, a very good prescription for living a happier life. To harbor anger and resentment towards yourself or others keeps you from being free.

¹ <http://thoughtsandplaces.org/2010SecondintheThird/CollegeStationarrivalarticle/CollegeStationarticle.htm>

This same family could forgive their son dying in the war, but they could not forgive their daughter being raped and murdered by US servicemen during the occupation after the war. That is understandable. They could also not forgive us for going over to this horrible land that not only had put these rapist-murdering hooligans in uniform and handed them guns, but refused to investigate and thus never punished the perpetrators. The basic response was “this sort of thing unfortunately happens in the aftermath of war, we have higher priority issues to deal with, we are sorry.” True to their word, the family that rescued my father refused all contact after we came to the USA. I felt bad for their suffering long ago, and now look back and also feel bad for the anger and despair that must have eaten away at them the rest of their lives. My mother wrote to them every year for many years. Never a reply.