

HISTORICAL FICTION



James Michener: Michener often wrote about the Pacific Islands and what was going on there during the wars in the early 20th century. *Tales of the South Pacific* is about the soldiers stationed in the islands out there during WWII.

“I wish I could tell you about the South Pacific. The way it actually was. The endless ocean. The infinite specks of coral we called islands. Coconut palms nodding gracefully toward the ocean. Reefs upon which waves broke into spray, and inner lagoons, lovely beyond description. I wish I could tell you about the sweating jungle, the full moon rising behind the volcanoes, and the waiting. The waiting. The timeless, repetitive waiting.”

-Tales of the South Pacific (1946)



Even though this quote is fictional, how does it help us better understand that part of history?

Nathaniel Hawthorne: Hawthorne was a famous early American writer. His books often dealt with the problems in the strict Puritan culture of early New England.

“A throng of bearded men, in sad-colored garments, and gray, steeple-crowned hats, intermixed with women, some wearing hoods and others bareheaded, was assembled in front of a wooden edifice, the door of which was heavily timbered with oak, and studded with iron spikes.

The founders of a new colony, whatever Utopia of human virtue and happiness they might originally project, have invariably recognized it among their earliest practical necessities to allot a portion of the virgin soil as a cemetery, and another portion as the site of a prison.”

- The Scarlet Letter (1850)



What does this quote teach us about the time period it takes place in?
