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Adrian Alexander, Executive Director, Big 12 Plus Libraries Consortium

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Name: Adrian W. Alexander (I always include the middle initial to distinguish me from all the other Adrian Alexanders out there).

Position: Executive Director, Big 12 Plus Libraries Consortium
<<http://www.big12plus.org>>

Along with a program officer, I plan and coordinate a wide variety of cooperative programs for this group of 30 research libraries in 15 states. My office is in the Linda Hall Library (<http://www.lindahall.org>), which is one of the most unique libraries in the country, not to mention one of the loveliest. We basically rent office space and admin support from Linda Hall and they handle our financial affairs as well, although my program officer and I are actually PAID through other member libraries.

Born: July 23, 1950; Waxahachie, Texas.

Current Residence: Overland Park, Kansas

Education: MLS, University of North Texas; BA (History), Texas Tech University.

Job Experience: Hired as first executive director of Big 12 Plus in March 1998; previously spent 13 years in the serials vendor world with Faxon and Swets (very briefly). Worked in academic libraries for five years as a reference librarian and in admin services before moving to the "dark" side as a serials vendor (I'm still confused about why librarians call it the "dark" side; the glare was pretty intense when I was there!).

Proudest accomplishments: Professional — Member of UCLA Senior Fellows Class of 1999.

Personal: Recently appeared in the "world premiere" of a new play by a local playwright/director/actor who also happens to be my acting coach (I was cast without an audition).

First job: My very first paying job ever was at the age of 14 when I worked summers for my godfather, who owned an extermination company. I got to crawl under houses and dig trenches around the foundation so we could spray for termites. This job convinced me early of the importance of a good education. My first "professional" job after college (but pre-library school) was as an investigator for the old U.S. Civil Service Commission; I did background investigations on government employees and government contractors who needed security clearances.

Biggest recent surprise: Getting sunburned in sunny 70+ degree weather at St. Andrews, Scotland while watching the British Open (my 50th birthday present); that's never happened to me in Scotland before!

Favorite pastimes: Theatre (spectator & participant), golf (spectator & participant), good food & wine, reading, traveling, collecting single malt whiskies.

Literary tastes: I do believe that good food and good books go together. I tend to read mostly historical fiction (favorite author: Dorothy Dunnett), southern fiction (Ellen Gilchrist), plays, and European history (mostly British now, formerly Russian).

Seven Years from Now: I'd like to retire early and spend my time acting and traveling, although not at the same time, with at least a weekly round of golf thrown in for good measure.

Had I but world enough and time... Shouldn't that read "money enough and time?" Either way, I would like to visit every continent on the planet before the hole in the ozone layer gets too big.



From the Reference Desk

by Tom Gilson (College of Charleston)
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More than half way toward completion, Gale Group's *Women in World History: A Biographical Encyclopedia* (1999 – 2001, 078763736X, \$995) is emerging as a significant contribution to the reference literature. Projected to be 16 volumes (including the index) with more than 8,000 entries, this set promises to be a landmark in women's biography. International in scope, *Women in World History* offers a serious but accessible treatment of women in all walks of life and helps redress the lack of coverage of women in other biographical works. In short, there is nothing else like it in this important area of biography.

Ranging from 3100 BCE up through modern times, this encyclopedia includes biographies of queens, actresses, athletes, politicians, writers, soldiers, diplomats, artists as well as, women in other diverse fields. The length of each entry varies from short personal profiles to a full-fledged bio including a multi-page narrative, pictures, a list of reference sources and a byline. There is also an interesting use of sidebars for entries to women related in some way to the main subject being discussed. Fortunately, a sometimes confusing system of directional arrows, pointing to the related entries, is augmented by cross-referencing within the overall alphabetically arrangement. Another fascinating and helpful feature is the genealogical chart section in volume 1. Grouped by country, these charts identify ruling families and display the name of the women in bold. A total of 90 such charts are included. In addition, the set is thoroughly cross-referenced by name, name variant and title and there are plans for occupational, geographical and master indexes.

Women in World History: A Biographical Encyclopedia represents 9 years of collective work. The commitment and level of research that has gone into in this set is obvious. Editors **Anne Commire** and **Deborah Klezmer**, along with more than 300 contributors, are providing an exceptional reference work that will find a place in most libraries. Naturally, there will be omissions. The editors admit that they wanted to include more women writers but were limited by the sheer number of worthy possibilities. But knowing Gale Group, you can count on supplements being published as long as there is demand. Completed volumes can be purchased individually. Check out *Books in Print* or Amazon for details.

It would be hard to overestimate the influence of religious practice on human history and a recent **Fitzroy Dearborn** title, the *Encyclopedia of Monasticism* (2000, 1579580904, \$295), gives added proof of that influence. The *Encyclopedia* covers 45 countries and regions with monastic traditions that have existed over the centuries and contributed to the spiritual and social needs of people worldwide.

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community. The importance will only increase as scholars, researchers, and end-users look for easier, faster access to the information they seek when they need it—from different publishers and via different interfaces and services.

ATG: Tell us about yourselves. What do you do for fun?

SI: For fun? This industry is a great place to work, the people are intelligent and focused on building solutions that work for their customers, whether they are library customers or publishers, so I still get a kick out of the conferences, shows and meetings I go to.

However with a young family and an extensive set of neglected hobbies such as "potholing" [spelunking], climbing, and 4-wheel drive off-roading, I really need to get out in the hills a little more. 