November 2005

From the Reference Desk

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Recommended Citation

Gilson, Thomas (2005) "From the Reference Desk," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 17: Iss. 5, Article 19.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.4561>

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From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Head, Reference Services, Addlestone Library, College of Charleston, 66 George Street, Charleston, SC 29401; Phone: 843-953-8014; Fax: 843-953-8019) <gilson@cofc.edu>

Libraries wanting to develop their collections in African American studies have had a few recent titles to ponder. The just released *Greenwood Encyclopedia of African American Literature* (2005, 0313329753, \$495) may be on the short list for many. Edited by **Hans Ostrom** and **J. David Macy, Jr.**, these five compact volumes are packed with close to 1030 articles written by some 200 scholars.

It comes as no surprise that coverage includes numerous articles on influential writers, as well as those on various literary forms, genres, and movements. However, there is also ample space given to the historical and social issues impacting African American literature ranging from Afro-centricity to the Vietnam War, affirmative action to the Middle Passage and from the Nation of Islam to the Underground Railroad. Other essays treat important newspapers like the *Amsterdam News* and literary journals like *Callaloo* while others cover influential regions and locations ranging from New Orleans to Detroit and from Haiti to Paris. While accessible to general readers and high school students, undergraduates will find the articles useful for background and facts, and will appreciate the list of added sources following each article.

The set also contains an alphabetical

cal, as well as topical list of all articles, a helpful introduction and a chronology. These features all add value and give the reader a firmer sense of the contents and coverage of the *Encyclopedia*. Providing access to the page level is a thorough, easy to use general index.

Rich and detailed, the scope of this work is nonetheless broad and inclusive. The *Greenwood Encyclopedia of African American Literature* not only provides information about writers and literary movements but it successfully places them in historic and societal context. While it in no way replaces *Macmillan's Encyclopedia of African American History and Culture* (a 2nd edition will be released later this year), it is a worthy complement. It also serves to update, as well as broaden the scope of the critically praised *Oxford Companion to African American Literature* (1997, 0195065107).

Other recent reference works that will also find a place in African American studies collections include *Oxford's* second edition of *Africana: the Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience* (2005, 0195223276, \$620) edited by renown scholars **Kwame Anthony Appiah** and **Henry Louis Gates Jr.** and *Routledge's Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance* (2005, 157958389X, \$325) edited by **Cary D. Wintz** and **Paul Finkelman**.

Routledge's Encyclopedia of Christian Theology (2005, 1579582508, \$495) offers a serious, scholarly treatment with a decidedly European slant. The reason for that is obvious. It is an English language translation of a 2nd edition of the *Dictionnaire critique de theologie*, first published in 1998. Edited by **Jean-Yves Lacoste**, the over 500 articles contained in this three-volume set attempt to lend shape to the "massive amount

of discourse and doctrines that Christianity has assembled about **God** and its experience of **God.**" **Lacoste** draws on the expertise of 250 scholars, the majority coming from Continental Europe, to accomplish this challenging endeavor.

While there are discussions about liturgy, church administration, spiritual practices and social and moral issues, the main concerns here are theological concepts like the Trinity, Christology, Knowledge of **God**, Justification, Salvation and Revelation. Many of the articles are more than a background recitation of facts and historical development. The contributors are not afraid to point to controversy, speculate and provoke questions and may make some readers steeped in tradition pause. The production features are what you would expect from a work of this caliber. The organization is alphabetical with liberal use of cross references, and while there are no illustrations, the layout of the text is clear and visually engaging. The bibliographies are often extensive but many references are to works in languages other than English, a possible limitation for many students.

Intended for the scholar and upper division or graduate student, this reference will not be easy going for the general lay reader. Treating complex concepts and in the critical tradition of European, especially French theological thought, many of the articles ask more than a casual familiarity with the issues covered. All by the largest public libraries will probably pass on this work; however, theological libraries, as well as academic libraries supporting majors in religious studies should give it serious consideration.

ABC-CLIO has published another nicely focused historical encyclopedia suitable for either circulation or reference collections. *The Constitutional Convention of 1787: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of America's Founding* (2005, 1851096698, \$185) includes more than 400 articles providing a multidimensional look at this central event in American history. Individual essays cover the delegates and other influential people, important committees, relevant documents, proposed plans of government, and philosophical influences. Author **John R. Vile** writes in an accessible, straightforward fashion informed by serious scholarship referencing authoritative sources throughout most of these essays. A series of appendices provide relevant historic documents prior to, during and after the convention, a selected bibliography, and a brief list of authoritative Websites. There is also a topical table of contents, a day by day timetable of the convention and an introductory essay setting the stage for the rest of the articles.

Academic libraries in particular will find this title useful. As noted above, given its special-

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there are some ways in which we may be able to enhance their abilities to manage and improve the quality of that data. Stay tuned.

ATG: Is there anything else that you would like to tell the *ATG* readers about yourself, your family, and/or your company? What is your greatest professional accomplishment?

HH: I am glad to say I have worked in the library field for a number of years. I attended library school "a few years ago" in North Carolina at **UNC-Chapel Hill** where I met my wife in the Master's program. **Pat**, my wife, is perhaps better known in the library field than I am having worked for the **American Library Association** and **NISO** in the course of her career.

We have one daughter, **Mary** who is a Producer for **ABC News**. Just before beginning our interview I watched the first of four stories in a series she produced entitled "Made in China" for **Good Morning America**. I hope my greatest professional accomplishment always lies ahead of me instead of behind me. I find you can drive better looking through the windshield than in the rear view mirror.

ATG: Thank you very much, Howard. See you at the Charleston Conference!

HH: I'll be looking to see you there **Robyn**. **Library Dynamics** will be at the **Charleston Advisor Vendor Showcase** event on the first day and available then and later in the meeting to talk with participants to learn about their needs and obviously to talk with people interested in our products and services. I wish everyone a good meeting in Charleston.

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ized area of concentration, it may get equal or more mileage in circulating collections. Regardless, this two volume set will be a worthy addition to a number of collections. It complements broader, more comprehensive works like **Macmillan's Encyclopedia of the American Constitution** (2000, 0028648803, \$655)

A fun title to browse, especially this time of year, is **McFarland's** 2nd edition of the **Cultural Encyclopedia of Baseball** (2005, 0786420871, \$75). For anyone that wonders (or remembers) what **Willie, Mickey** and the **Duke** mean to American culture in the fifties, this is the title for you. Besides biographical sketches of all the great players, the noteworthy owners and the famous sportscasters, this book also contains profiles of all the major league teams, as well as selected minor league, Negro league and 19th century amateur teams. In addition, there are articles on strategy, awards, pennant races, and the various player positions. And, showing the game's worldwide appeal, there are essays on baseball's impact in countries like Japan, Cuba, Korea and Mexico, as well as mention of the players from those countries that have played in the major leagues. The darker side of the game is not ignored and is explored in articles on Racism, Integration, Gambling and Fixed Games, Alcoholism and Drug Use and Abuse. The book is organized alphabetically with the "see" and "see also" references attempting to link related articles. For example, in looking for articles on baseball "curses" readers find themselves directed to "superstitions." However, all is not perfect. When looking for articles on Hispanic players, one has to stumble upon them listed under Latin Baseball and Latin Major League Players. There is no "see" reference from Hispanic to Latin in the index, or within the text of the book. Also there is no individual article on steroids and only two references to steroids in the index. However, neither reference is to the article on Drug Use and Abuse where there is thorough coverage of the BALCO scandal and steroid use in the major leagues. Obviously, more care needs to be given the cross referencing and indexing of this book in any future editions.

But having noted this, the content of this reference is truly impressive and overwhelms any negatives. Author **Jonathan Fraser Light** has written a book that is full of facts, pithy quotes and wonderful anecdotes that point to how much baseball is ingrained into our culture. He has created a work that will delight and inform fans of all ages. The **Cultural Encyclopedia of Baseball** is an obvious choice for most public libraries, as well as academic libraries (like ours) supporting courses on the social and cultural impacts of American sports. (By the way, it's also the perfect gift for that baseball fanatic in your life.) Libraries owning the first edition should put it in circulation and placing this updated version in the reference collection. This book is an excellent complement to statistical standards like

SportClassic Books' Total Baseball (2004, 189496327X, \$59.95)

Grey House has recently published another handy resource directory. The **Environmental Resource Handbook** (2005, 159237090X, \$155) is now in its 3rd edition. The editors claim they have "updated more than 70% of the listings and verified the currency of the rest." Over 6,700 resources are included along with 102 statistical tables. (Interestingly, this is a decrease from the 8000 resources included in the 1st edition.)

The book is divided into four sections. The first covers the resources themselves, the second offers a number of statistical tables, the third provides a glossary of terms and a list of relevant abbreviations, and the fourth is a section of indexes by entry, geographical location and subject.

The resource section is the largest and contains entries on associations, award and honors, conferences, consultants, and financial resources, as well as government agencies, publications, research centers, educational programs, Websites and relevant databases, and catalogs of environmentally friendly products. The entries for each listed resource

give the address, phone and fax numbers, email and Website addresses along with a brief description.

Unfortunately, problems noted in prior editions still persist. The statistical tables are not indexed, nor is there a table of contents allowing for easier access. They are however, arranged alphabetically by topic from air quality to Hazardous Waste to the UV index. With this number of entries, the subject indexing could be also more precise. For example, there are well over 350 entries listed under one subject; Environmental Engineering.

This being said, there is a wealth of data available in this directory that those interested in environmental issues will find valuable. Libraries that need information like this, particularly in short bursts, i.e., specific names of associations or agencies, individual snail and email addresses, phone numbers and Webpage URLs, should consider purchase. However, those owning the 2003 edition may want to rely on the Web for updating and pass this edition up. Others needing a resource to develop mailing, and other type lists, might opt for the online version. Information on the online product can be found at http://www.greyhouse.com/pdf_dc/erh_dc.pdf.

Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

Column Editor: **Debbie Vaughn** (Reference Librarian,
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Column Editor's Note: *The Charleston Conference* brings together the different spheres of libraries, publishers, and vendors; for the past 25 years, the business and educational/public service ends of the library spectrum have united to discuss pressing issues from their points of view. Similarly, **Jeannette Woodward's Creating the Customer-Driven Library** also brings together the almost-separate worlds of libraries and bookstores, the former with a mission to educate and serve and the latter with a mission to sell. Her book couldn't come in a more timely fashion. During the mid- to late-1990s, several pieces in the library body of literature focused on the similarities and differences between these two venues. In the past five years or so, though, it seems that the at-

tention has turned to exploring libraries, **Amazon.com**, and **Google**. It remains, though, that people do not visit bookstores simply to buy books; comfortable reading chairs and cafes are commonplace in both chain and independent venues. Likewise, library patrons often demand customer-is-always-right treatment, and more and more libraries — without exception, the **College of Charleston Addlestone Library** — are being outfitted with the same comfortable reading chairs and cafes. The debate over whether or not libraries should imitate bookstores has not been resolved. **Woodward's** work reminds us that we need to continue to evaluate bookstores' successes and determine the appropriate cues to take from them. Happy reading, everyone! — **DV**

Woodward, Jeannette. Creating the Customer-Driven Library: Building on the Bookstore Model. Chicago: American Library Association, 2004.
0838908888. 256 pages. \$38.00.

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When I was in library school at the **University of South Carolina**, my favorite professor, **Dr. Charles Curran**, assigned a handful of

readings on the topic of libraries and "mega" bookstores. At the time, I was an employee of

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