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From the Reference Desk--Reviews of Reference Titles

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From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Associate Editor, *Against the Grain*, and Head of Reference Emeritus, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29401) <gilson@cofc.edu>

Bucking current trends, a new start-up reference publisher is debuting in the marketplace. Based in Santa Barbara, CA, **Mission Bell Media** intends to publish both print and digital media with a focus on the themes of leadership and innovation. In fact, they have just released a series of single-volume reference works, the first of which is entitled *African-American Leadership: A Concise Reference Guide* (2015, 978-0990730033, \$135).

A look at the Reader's Guide of this title shows not only the broad categories that are covered but it also points to the framework within which editor **Tyson D. Kling-Meadows** has chosen to present his study of African-American leadership. In this reference, leadership is presented and defined by how it is exemplified in specific areas of endeavor. As such, articles focus on African-American leadership as demonstrated in fields ranging from academics to business to art, as well as in politics, science, and within faith communities. Given this arrangement, individual entries are free to focus on a range of specific topics including affirmative action: the Freedom Rides; the Harlem Renaissance; the Nation of Islam, gender and leadership; the Black Business Network; historically black colleges and universities; and inventions and patents. There are also essays that cover leadership as seen in specific organizations like the **NAACP**, the **Black Theatre Network**, and the **National Black Chamber of Commerce**. Each article is fact laden providing historical context both past and present while containing specific examples of leadership with numerous references to specific individuals. Value-added features include the above mentioned Reader's Guide, a general index, a chronology, "see also" references, and brief bibliographies after each entry. However, the most impressive value-added feature is the 200-page *Leadership Glossary* edited by **Dr. Jeni McRay**. It contains over 750 terms relevant to leadership including definitions of concepts and theories as well as brief discussions of specific organizations, influential publications, and actual leaders. This volume has also been published separately by **Mission Bell Media** under the title *Leadership Glossary: Essential Terms for the 21st Century* (2015, 978-0-9907300-0-2, \$29.95).

African-American Leadership: a Concise Reference Guide is a well-designed



single-volume reference that will be welcomed by students of leadership studies. Editor **Tyson D. Kling-Meadows** has assembled well written and solidly researched articles on relevant topics, and the publisher has made the significant addition of the *Leadership Glossary* to enhance the usefulness of the volume. The arrangement and layout make the contents accessible and the book easy to use. It is one of those titles that should have appeal to both public and academic libraries and deserves consideration for both reference and circulating collections depending on need. This title as well as others in this series are available electronically via **Credo Reference** at <http://corp.credoreference.com/>.

Grey House Publishing has just released a two-volume set entitled the *Encyclopedia of the Continental Congresses* (2015, 978-1619251755, \$245). Authored by **Mark Grossman**, this specialized reference attempts to provide comprehensive coverage of "the Continental Congresses and the persons, places, and events that had an impact on these formative bodies." In an effort to fulfill this goal, the set contains some 509 entries in a straightforward A-Z arrangement with references to numerous primary sources.

As you might expect, the vast majority of the entries are biographies of members of the First and Second Continental Congresses as well as other relevant players who had an impact on the formation and work of those bodies. Additional entries focus on relevant issues, events, places, battles, laws, and treaties. As such there are discussions of topics ranging from the Coercive Acts to the Declaration of Independence; from Loyalists to the Committees of Correspondence and from Espionage Tactics to the Diplomacy employed by the Continental Congresses. Each article is factual and thoroughly researched with liberal use of quotes from primary sources and including cited analysis from a variety of historians. At first this can be a tad disconcerting given the length of a number of the quotes but the overall effect is to offer a scholarly and comprehensive discussion of each topic covered, not to mention a sense of what contemporaries were thinking and feeling at the time. Each entry reinforces this impression with an impressive work cited list that serious researchers will appreciate. Value-added features include an historic timeline, numerous primary documents, an exhaustive bibliography and a general index. There is also a very useful index of the delegates by state contained in the appendix as well as lists of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation by occupation, the Presidents of the Continental Congresses, and the location and dates of the various sessions.

The *Encyclopedia of the Continental Congresses* is an obvious labor of love. The time and effort needed to gather and distill the

information contained in these two volumes required a deep scholarly commitment. Not only does **Mr. Grossman** cover those who served in these formative Congresses, he also includes those who were selected but did not serve. By quoting numerous primary sources, he offers not only firsthand accounts but is able to provide the perspectives of both Colonial and British observers and participants. And by including the comments of numerous historians, **Mr. Grossman** intersperses immediate scholarly analysis. The *Encyclopedia of the Continental Congresses* is a unique resource that serves both as central repository of detailed biographies and as a rich source of references for the avid researcher. As such, it is a natural addition to academic library collections that support the serious study of this formative time in U.S. history. (Buyers of the print edition get free online access at <http://gold.greyhouse.com>.)

Grey House has also published the 4th edition of **Salem Press' Cyclopedia of Literary Characters** (2015, 978-1619254978, \$399). First published in 1963 as a two-volume complement to the first edition of the *Masterplots* series, the *Cyclopedia of Literary Characters* has grown apace as *Masterplots* has expanded. Initially offering profiles of 16,000 characters presented in 1,300 classic works of literature, it now covers some 3,500 titles published through 2013 with profiles of 29,000 characters. It has also expanded to become a five-volume set.

As with all earlier editions, the new collection is organized alphabetically by the title of the literary work. Each entry provides the title, (foreign title if the original language was not English), author, date, genre (novel, play, short story, etc.), locale, time of action, and the plot type (satire, social realism, historical, fantasy, etc.). This basic information is followed by the character profiles, which are arranged by order of importance. While not all characters are discussed for each work, both major and selected minor characters are covered. The profiles themselves generally range in length from 100 to 150 words, but many will exceed 200 words in length when warranted. Each offers a descriptive assessment with some brief critical analysis for the character being discussed. Given the numerous entries in these five volumes, finding aids are essential, and the *Cyclopedia of Literary Characters* provides highly useful ones. Each volume contains a list of the entire contents of all five volumes, while comprehensive title, character, and author indexes take up a major portion of the last volume of the set.

The *Cyclopedia of Literary Characters* will prove a highly useful resource for both literature students seeking added insights for a research paper and lay readers interested in a better understand of a work and its characters. This is especially true when used in tandem

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with the current *Masterplots*. While the use of these references is no substitute for reading the originals, they can offer an expanded appreciation of the works and characters being discussed. As such, the *Cyclopedia of Literary Characters* should be on the short list for possible purchase by quite a few academic, public, and high school libraries.

Extra Servings

Princeton University Press recently announced the publication of a new reference work:

- Edited by **Mark R. Dennis**, et al., *The Princeton Companion to Applied Mathematics* (2015, ISBN: 9780691150390; eISBN: 9781400874477, \$99.50) is an “authoritative and accessible single-volume reference book on applied mathematics. Featuring numerous entries by leading experts and organized thematically, it introduces readers to applied mathematics and its uses; explains key concepts; describes important equations, laws, and functions; looks at exciting areas of research; covers modeling and simulation; explores areas of application; and more...”

Salem Press is releasing a couple of new literary reference titles:

- *Critical Survey of Shakespeare's Plays* (Nov. 2015, ISBN:978-1-61925-864-8; eISBN: 978-1-61925-865-5, \$125) is “written by leading experts in the field of Shakespearean studies, *Critical Survey of Shakespeare's Plays* closely examines all 39 of **Shakespeare's** plays, as well as **Shakespeare's** life, style, technique, and influences. This title begins with a biography of **Shakespeare** and an introduction to his plays as a whole, followed by close readings of individual plays. Each essay is devoted to a single work and provides an in-depth critical analysis of the play's historical significance, literary/dramatic techniques, and meaning to a contemporary audience. An abstract, explanation of context, and lists of keywords, works cited, and recommended books for further study also enhance each essay.”
- *Cyclopedia of Literary Places* (June 2016, ISBN: 978-1-61925-884-6; e-ISBN: 978-1-61925-885-3, \$395) is in three volumes and contains “articles on over 1,300 literary works and selected titles covered in *Masterplots*. The selected titles are those that best lend themselves to meaningful discussion of place as a literary device. The articles

contain more than 6,000 separate place entries... A brief introductory paragraph explains where the work is set and comments on themes and patterns in the work's use of place. Discussions within the entries focus on how places are used as literary devices within the novels, plays, or poems in which they appear...”

SAGE Reference has a few new titles worth considering:

- The *SAGE Encyclopedia of Quality and the Service Economy* (Aug. 2015, ISBN: 9781452256726 \$395) is a two-volume set edited by **Su Mi Dahlgaard-Park** that focuses on the emerging service economy and “explores such relevant questions as: What are the characteristics, nature, and definitions of quality and services? How do we define quality of products, quality of services, or quality of life? How are services distinguished from goods? How do we measure various aspects of quality and services? How can products and service quality be managed most effectively and efficiently? What is the role of customers in creation of values? These questions and more are explored within the pages of this two-volume, A-to-Z reference work...”
- The *SAGE Deaf Studies Encyclopedia* (Oct. 2015, ISBN: 9781452259567, \$495) is a three-volume set that defines “the current state of Deaf Studies at an international level using critical and intersectional lenses encompassing the field. The emergence of Deaf Studies programs at colleges and universities and the broadened knowledge of social sciences (including but not limited to Deaf History, Deaf Culture, Signed Languages, Deaf Bilingual Education, Deaf Art, and more) have served to expand the activities of research, teaching, analysis, and curriculum development...”

(These reference works are available online from the *SAGE Knowledge* platform <https://knowledge.sagepub.com/>.)

ABC-CLIO recently released two items of interest:

- *Ideas and Movements That Shaped America From the Bill of Rights to “Occupy Wall Street”* (July 2015, ISBN: 978-1-61069-251-9; 294; eISBN: 978-1-61069-252-6, call for pricing) is a three-volume set edited by **Michael S. Green** and **Scott L. Stabler** that “examines the evolution of American society and thought from the nation's beginnings to the 21st century. It covers the seminal ideas and social movements that define who we are as Americans — from the ideas that underpin the Bill

of Rights to slavery, the Civil Rights movement, and the idea of gay rights — even if U.S. citizens often strongly disagree on these topics...”

- *Iconic Mexico: An Encyclopedia from Acapulco to Zócalo* (Aug. 2015, ISBN: 978-1-61069-043-0, \$189; eISBN: 978-1-61069-044-7, call for pricing) is a two-volume set edited by **Eric Zolov** that offers “in-depth treatments by renowned as well as up-and-coming scholars on the most iconic people, places, social movements, and cultural manifestations — including food, dress, film, and music — that have given shape and meaning to modern Mexico and its people. Presenting authoritative information written by scholars in a format that is easily accessible to general audiences, this book serves as a useful and thorough reference tool for all readers...”

Oxford University Press has published some newly revised subject dictionaries:

- *A Dictionary of Psychology*, Fourth Edition by **Andrew M. Colman** (2015, ISBN: 9780199657681; eISBN: 9780191744358, \$19.95) includes “more than 11,000 definitions, this authoritative and up-to-date dictionary covers all branches of psychology. Clear, concise descriptions for each entry offer extensive coverage of key areas including cognition, sensation and perception, emotion and motivation, learning and skills, language, mental disorder, and research methods. The range of entries extends to related disciplines including psychoanalysis, psychiatry, the neurosciences, and statistics. Entries are extensively cross-referenced for ease of use, and cover word origins and derivations as well as definitions. More than 100 illustrations complement the text...”
- *A Dictionary of Education*, Second Edition, by **Susan Wallace** (2015, ISBN: 978-0199679393; eISBN: 9780191758454, \$25.95) is written from a UK perspective and “provides clear and concise definitions for the terms that anyone studying education or working in the field is likely to encounter — from A* to zero tolerance. Coverage includes all sectors of education: pre-school, primary, secondary, further and higher education, special needs, adult and continuing education, and work-based learning...” 🌿