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Summer 2001

## "Organizing Black America: An Encyclopedia of African American Associations" Book Review

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## Recommended Citation

Hughes, M. Elaine, ""Organizing Black America: An Encyclopedia of African American Associations" Book Review" (2001). University Library Faculty Publications. Paper 23.

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adults, and older adults with vision impairments. The *Lighthouse Handbook* has a substantial index.

A quick search of the catalog at the Ruth Lilly Medical Library on the IUPUI campus revealed many fine textbooks in the area of vision impairment and rehabilitation. However, many of these texts either concentrate on a special patient group, such as Treating Vision Problems in the Older Adult (Mosby-Year Book, 1997); are targeted towards a particular caregiver group, for example, Understanding and Managing Vision Deficits: A Guide for Occupational Therapists (SLACK, 1997); deal with only diagnosis, medical treatment, or rehabilitation, such as The Ocular Examination (W. B. Saunders, 1997); or focus on only one facet of vision impairment, like Eye Movement Disorders (Kluwer, 1987). Of all of these available texts, only the Lighthouse Handbook on Vision Impairment and Vision Rehabilitation offers a comprehensive framework on caring for patients within the entire spectrum of vision impairments, from low vision to total loss of sight, and includes contributions from all members of the treatment team. In addition, what makes the Lighthouse Handbook particularly valuable is how easy it is to read and use, with concise text that avoids dependence on lengthy medical terminology and professional jargon. The typeface is large and clear, with liberal use of subheadings, and the volumes are sturdy and attractive.

The Lighthouse Handbook would be an excellent addition to health sciences and hospital libraries, as well as to libraries of organizations and community agencies that work with visually impaired clients and their families. It would also be appropriate for academic libraries that support programs in non-health caregiver areas, such as social work. However, it would also be an excellent addition to a public library. The Lighthouse Handbook is more than just a medical resource—it covers the entire spectrum of issues that visually impaired individuals and their families have to confront on a daily basis. Given the

aging population, it is likely that patrons will need more information than ever on how to deal with visual impairments and how to effectively locate and coordinate a wide variety of caregivers, assistive devices, and programs. Chapters on specific vision disorders, such as diabetic retinopathy, would be excellent to have on hand for ready reference.—Sara Anne Hook, Associate Dean of the Faculties and Professor of Dental Informatics, Indiana University—Purdue University Indianapolis

A Native American Encyclopedia: History, Culture, and Peoples. By Barry M. Pritzker. New York: Oxford Univ. Pr., 2000. 607p. acid free \$49.95 (ISBN 0-19-513897-X). www.oup.com.

This volume was originally published by ABC-CLIO in 1998 as a two-volume set called Native Americans: An Encyclopedia of History, Culture, and Peoples. Largely covering Indians that reside in the United States, the author intended it as "a helpful starting point for further research among more specialized resources"(xv). The encyclopedia is organized into regional chapters, broken down alphabetically by indigenous peoples of the Southwest, California, Northwest Coast, Great Basin, Plateau, Great Plains, Southeast, Northeast Woodlands, Subarctic, and Arctic. Each chapter begins with a cultural-historical overview of the region. This is followed by the tribal entries, which give broad, wellwritten descriptions of location, population, language, history, religion, government, technology, a little about artistic traditions, and contemporary life. The format of the entries reminds one of the Encyclopedia of World Cultures, volume one, North America (G.K. Hall, 1991). Also released in 1998, the four-volume Gale Encyclopedia of Native American Tribes (Gale, 1998) lists more tribes, but has overall less in-depth information than the Native American Encyclopedia, and is more expensive.

Bibliographies do not follow each chapter, but instead are listed at the end of the volume. Also included in

the back matter are a glossary of terms used regularly throughout the volume, lists of Alaskan villages, and a generally good tribal name and subject index. There are thirty-two color photographs of individuals from various tribes-mostly in traditional clothing-which do not really add value to the volume. (The photographs are not dated, nor are individuals identified, a particular pet peeve of this reviewer.) A paperback edition of this Oxford University Press release exits for \$29.95, making this volume more accessible for a wider variety of libraries. Since many of the descriptions of contemporary life for the various native peoples included are now several years old, the volume would have benefited from being updated and turned into a second edition. To illustrate, gaming's increased importance to the economies of many more tribes today is not adequately covered in this source. Recommended for public and academic library collections.—Christina E. Carter, Head, Collection Services, Zimmerman Library and Selector for Native American Studies, General Library, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque

Organizing Black America: An Encyclopedia of African American Associations. Ed. by Nina Mjagkij. New York: Garland, 2000. 768p. acid free \$125 (ISBN 0-8153-2309-3).

Organizing Black America is the most comprehensive volume documenting the history of associations established by African Americans in the United States. It's a one-of-a-kind publication, never before published by a major publisher. There really is no other volume similar to this one for the purpose of comparison. However, if you need current information on some black organizations or associations in the United States, four other reference volumes—The African Americans Information Directory (Gale, 1999), African American Almanac (Gale, 2000), Black Resource Guide (Ben Johnson, 1993), and Encyclopedia of Associations (Gale, 2000)—might suffice. Unlike the volumes mentioned

above, Organizing Black America attempts to be historical as well as current and covers only large organizations and those considered by the editor to be of regional, national, and international significance. What's excluded? Small groups and organizations that are considered of only local significance.

Each entry describes the founding of the organization, its goals, membership, staff, and its accomplishments and failures. Some of the organizations included are no longer in existence. They either served their purpose at the time and went out of existence or they disbanded for any number of reasons. Nevertheless, the distinguished list of 184 scholars who are the contributors to the book emphasize the relative importance of the organizations and the contributions the members made or are currently making to the life of the black community.

Each one of the 576 articles is signed and has a list of "further readings" for a deeper understanding of the organization. And as expected in a volume of this size, an extensive index is included. It indexes not only the names of the associations but also the persons connected to the association and the subject matter. See and See also references abound. Looking for the current addresses of the associations? They are omitted since this element of an organization frequently changes and would detract from the value of the volume.

Why all these organizations or associations? Black people started them (the College Language Association, for example) either because of segregation, when they were not allowed to join the equivalent white organization, or because they wanted to give a voice to the concerns of the black members of the majority white organization, concerns which were not being addressed. Others were begun in the black community to speak to certain pressing issues (e.g., civil rights, discrimination, racism.) or purely for companionship and solidarity. It took several years for the editor and contributors to complete this comprehensive volume, but it was well worth the wait. It's an excellent reference work. I recommend it for all medium-sized to large academic and public libraries.—M. Elaine Hughes, Reference Desk Coordinator, Pullen Library, Georgia State University, Atlanta

Profiles of African American Stage Performers and Theatre People, 1816– 1960. By Bernard L. Peterson. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2001. 440p. acid free \$95 (ISBN 0-313-29534-4). www.greenwood.com.

This comprehensive work is the last in Peterson's series of works focusing on the African American theatre. Other previous titles published by Greenwood include Contemporary Black American Playwrights and Their Plays (1988), Early Black American Playwrights and Dramatic Writers (1990), A Century of Musicals in Black and White (1993), and The African American Theatre Directory, 1886-1960 (1997). The scope of the work covers stage performers, directors, managers, entertainers, musicians, playwrights, librettists, scriptwriters, and others involved in some aspect of the theatrical business. Profiles of African American Stage Performers and Theatre People covers a time period of 140 years, marking the beginning of the movement to the beginning of a new epoch for the African American theatre. The goal of this work, "to rescue the careers of many . . . lesser-known stage personalities" (xvi), is successfully achieved by honoring more than seven hundred theatrical personalities. Some of the more familiar names of the present day, such as Sidney Poitier, Fats Waller, Langston Hughes, Sammy Davis Jr., Duke Ellington, and Maya Angelou, receive recognition, as well as the lesser-known names of earlier times. These biographical sketches vary in length from several sentences to one page.

Bernard L. Peterson Jr., the author, is Professor Emeritus of English and Drama at Elizabeth City State University. Well-known and respected research consultants provide additional information for biographical entries. Several of them have separate biographical entries, such as Errol Hill and Georgia Allen. The work begins with a foreword composed by James Hatch, in which he highlights the much-"neglected" topic concerning the historical nature of the African American theatre. The foreword sets the pace and tone for the remainder of the work.

There are a variety of access points for finding theatrical personalities. The work is arranged in an easy A-Z format, includes numerous see references, and provides an extensive index covering nearly fifty pages. Other ways to access biographical entries include the three appendices listing important theatrical personalities not covered in the main bulk of the work. The third appendix, which divides these personalities into their specific theatrical domains, is very helpful. Many biographical entries include bibliographical abbreviations with reference to their complete citation in the "abbreviations" section at the beginning of the work.

Although it is similar to Peterson's fourth series title, The African American Theatre Directory, 1886-1960 (Greenwood, 1997), in that it covers the same time period, it stands alone with its unique coverage of biographical information about African American theatrical personalities. Libraries owning the fourth title in the series will want to add this fifth, as well as the previous titles, to their collections. It will be useful for students, researchers, and scholars with an interest in the theatre. In addition, it will serve those libraries that want to build their African American collection. Highly recommended for academic reference collections.—Janell R. Carter, Reference Librarian, E. S. Farley Library, Wilkes University, Wilkes-Barre, Penn.

They Also Wrote: Evaluative Essays on Lesser-Known Popular American Songwriters Prior to the Rock Era. By William E. Studwell. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow, 2000. 440p. alkaline \$69.50 paper (ISBN 0-8108-3789-7). www.scarecrowpress.com.