

Encyclopedia of Africa. Ed. by Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Pr., 2010. 2 vols. acid free \$295 (ISBN 978-0-19-533770-9).

The *Encyclopedia of Africa*, coedited by Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., at Princeton and Harvard respectively, focuses on issues and topics related specifically to Africa and Africans, in contrast with the aforementioned editors' five-volume epic *Africana* (Oxford, 2005). While *Africana* included topics across the African diasporas, including the African American and Afro-Caribbean experiences, the editors "realized that we could create out of the larger work [*Africana*] a new encyclopedia focused solely on Africa, one that would allow those who were looking for information and insight about the continent to find it in a single source" (ix). In this mission Appiah and Gates have succeeded; while similar resources exist, this encyclopedic set is broad in coverage and scope, as well as editorial authority.

Containing thirteen hundred entries, the *Encyclopedia of Africa* includes some entries with updated and revised information. One example is the entry for "Zimbabwe," which includes an updated paragraph describing the governmental power-sharing agreement reached in February of 2009; another is "Liberia," which has been updated to reflect the 2006 election of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. The "At-A-Glance" feature, which presents data and fast facts for each country, now provides figures based on 2008 estimates, as opposed to *Africana's* 2002 estimates. However, it seems that many topics, particularly those which have not witnessed a significant domestic or international event since the publication of *Africana*, remain unrevised.

The entries themselves are broad and often interdisciplinary in scope, and topics such as "Biogeography of Africa," "Migrancy and African Literature," and "Women Artists, African: An Interpretation" are included. Articles are often prefaced with a brief definition of the topic, which is helpful to readers unfamiliar with the study of Africa, while cross-referenced entries and bibliographic information provided at the end of each article serve to direct readers to additional information. Topics aim towards inclusiveness rather than exhaustive informative content, especially in entries where information could be supplemented with other texts. One such example is the six-page entry on "Architecture and Art in Africa," which begins with a brief overview of the subject across the continent and concludes with a concise description of regional differences related to art and architecture. This article provides an adequate introduction to the topic, especially for a beginning scholar. However, those seeking further information would do well to supplement their reading with a lengthier discussion of the subject, such as John Middleton's entry on "Art" in *Encyclopedia of Africa: South of the Sahara* (Scribner, 1997).

Ancillary materials are also well-represented. The first volume begins with a "List of Maps, Charts, and Tables," although readers will need to use the substantive index at the end of volume 2 to locate the listed maps. Page numbers are

not indicated next to each map or chart title, nor are maps and charts located intuitively near entries of the same name. Also included in the ancillary materials is a chronology of selected events, beginning from 4–2.5 million years BCE and ending with United States President Barack Obama's visit to Africa in 2009. A topical outline of selected entries can be found at the end of volume 2, which, while helpful, would have been more so if located in the beginning of volume 1. Topical entries are followed by a thematically-arranged bibliography, which, while sometimes dated, represents an overview of African scholarship, and would be a good place to direct readers seeking more information.

Despite some limitations, this encyclopedia's scope, editorial authority, and coverage will likely make it a classic in its field. Recommended for all libraries, especially those who may not have purchased *Africana* due to its cost.—Kristin J. Henrich, *Reference and Instruction Librarian, University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho*

Encyclopedia of African American Actresses in Film and Television. By Bob McCann. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2010. 453p. \$75 (ISBN 978-0-7864-3790-0).

Brief biographical sketches of 360 African American actresses are arranged in dictionary fashion, beginning with Aaliyah and concluding with the prolific Lillian Yarbo. The author's definition of "actress" extends beyond award-winning and well-known thespians to include B-film stars, women who appeared in only one key film of historic or artistic value, and singers who took an acting part in a film.

Up-and-coming young actresses are included selectively based on the author's estimation of their career potential. "American" includes both black actresses not born in America but who have pursued acting careers in film and television in the United States and expatriate African American actresses whose professional careers have been conducted outside of the United States.

By in large, the *Encyclopedia of African American Actresses in Film and Television* sets out to recognize the achievements of women pioneers in the profession who opened doors and created opportunities for the next generation of actresses or who took roles that helped to redefine the image of black women in film and television as well as to reclaim black actresses ignored, underrated, or forgotten. Not surprisingly, great attention is paid to setting out the careers of those actresses whose work falls between the "Silents" and the 1940s. There are exclusions. Singers who appeared in a singing but not acting role are not included. Adult film actresses are excluded, even if at some time they held a part in a legitimate production.

Actual biographical detail varies greatly from entry to entry with some actresses (for example Krysten Leigh Jones) receiving almost no biographical treatment. Plot summaries of the film or television program in which the actress appeared, as well as details of her particular role in the production, are presented in greater detail than is perhaps necessary. A

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lengthy filmography that includes feature films, TV roles, and shorts concludes each biographical entry.

On reference shelves, Henry Sampson's two-volume *Swingin' on the Ether Waves: A Chronological History of African Americans in Radio and Television Programming, 1925–1955* (Scarecrow, 2005), Larry Richard's *African American Films Through 1959* (McFarland, 1998), Phyllis Klotman's *Frame by Frame II: A Filmography of the African American Image, 1978–1994* (Indiana University Press, 1997), volume 9 (covering theater arts and entertainment) of the *Facts on File Encyclopedia of Black Women in America* edited by Darlene Clark Hines (Facts on File, 1997), the second edition of Edward Mapp's *Directory of Blacks in the Performing Arts* (Scarecrow Press, 1990), and Donald Bogle's *Blacks in American Films and Television: An Encyclopedia* (Garland, 1988) cover some of the same terrain as McCann and include aspects of African American film history, such as directors and producers outside the scope of McCann's encyclopedia. McCann's work is unique in the singularity of its subject matter, African American actresses, its chronological coverage, Silents to the present, and its inclusion of television (but not radio).

Encyclopedia of African American Actresses in Film and Television is a posthumous publication. This makes it difficult to ascertain responsibility for proof reading lapses such as "Moten continued to sing professionally until the 1952. [Sic]" (243) or leaving January 16, 1979 (374) as the 1930s and 1940s actress Lillian Yarbo's birth date when surely it must have been 1879.

McCann's work concludes with a short bibliography (375–76) and an index (377–453) to names and titles. Inclusion of topics, such as "Blaxploitation," would have been useful to have had as well, especially since that topic alone would have served as a ready reference to the numerous actresses included in the encyclopedia on the basis of their work in such films. Black and white photographs illustrate the encyclopedia.

Encyclopedia of African American Actresses in Film and Television is recommended for inclusion in academic and public library reference collections. The work supports interest in film studies and in African American and women's history.—Sally Moffitt, *Reference Librarian and Bibliographer, Anthropology, History, Philosophy, Political Science; African American, Asian, Judaic, Latin American and Women's Gender and Sexuality studies; Cohen Enrichment Collection, Langsam Library, University of Cincinnati, Ohio*

Encyclopedia of African American Education. Ed. by Kofi Lomotey. Los Angeles: Sage, 2010. 2 vols. acid free \$325 (ISBN 978-1-4129-4050-4).

There are many books written on the subject of African American education, however, this set is the first to look at topics with both a historical and a contemporary angle. A total of 212 experts have written entries on 247 various topics.

The entries cover traditional topics such as academic

achievement and segregation as well as contemporary topics such as "acting white" and mainstreaming. For the more traditional topics, special care is given to include historical information. As with most specialized encyclopedias the entries are arranged alphabetically, and further readings are listed at the end of most of the entries to direct the researcher. The set also contains a table of contents and index.

A unique feature of this set is the reader's guide, which classifies entries into sixteen categories. This helps the reader navigate to other entries on topics that may be of interest to them. The sixteen categories included are alternative educational models, associations and organizations, biographies, collegiate education, curriculum, economics, gender, graduate and professional education, historically black colleges and universities, legal cases, precollegiate education, psychology and human development, publications, public policy, religious institutions and schooling, and segregation and desegregation. This section makes it very easy for the researcher to find entries on similar topics, for example the section on legal cases lists more than fifty cases dealing with African American education. The reader's guide will make it easy on the researcher to use the set efficiently when looking for items with a particular focus.

Another unique feature is the inclusion of two appendixes dealing with the *Journal of Negro Education*. The first appendix is a complete bibliographical listing of articles published in the journal from 1932 to 2008. The second appendix contains reprints of eleven articles from the *Journal of Negro Education* dealing with segregation, desegregation, and equality in education.

While there are other books on African American education, there are few comprehensive encyclopedias, the most notable is Faustine C. Jones-Wilson's *Encyclopedia of African-American Education* (Greenwood, 1996). While it is a good encyclopedia, it has limited coverage and is more than ten years old. This set by Sage surpasses other volumes in terms of the depth and breadth of the coverage. This book would be a great addition to any academic library.—Vanessa Earp, *Subject Librarian for Education, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio*

Encyclopedia of African American History. Ed. by Leslie M. Alexander and Walter C. Rucker. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2010. 3 vols. alkaline \$295 (ISBN 978-1-85109-769-2). E-book available (ISBN 978-1-85109-774-6), call for pricing.

Despite their myriad accomplishments and contributions to this nation's past, until comparatively recently, African Americans have been largely absent from the pages of reference book publisher's offerings. The pendulum has swung markedly in the other direction of late and librarians now have the luxury of drawing from a fairly deep well. African American history seems especially popular, as evinced by this recent title. An entry in ABC-CLIO's American Ethnic Experience series, this three-volume set explores the story of blacks