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Tammy J. Eschedor Voelker, Editor

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The A–Z of Death and Dying: Social, Medical, and Cultural Aspects. Ed. by Michael Brennan. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2014. 442 p. acid free \$89 (ISBN: 978-1-4408-0343-7). E-book available (978-1-4408-0344-4), call for pricing.

The A–Z of Death and Dying: Social, Medical, and Cultural Aspects fills a gap in thanatology encyclopedias since 2009's *Encyclopedia of Death and the Human Experience* (SAGE) and *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Death and Dying* (Macmillan Reference, 2003).

The A–Z of Death and Dying: Social, Medical, and Cultural Aspects focuses on topics related to social, medical, and cultural aspects of the study of death, as the title implies. Articles are varied and include topics such as cults, domestic violence, embalming, terrorism, Alzheimer's disease, art and literature, medicalization, palliative care, religion, sex and death, superstitions, and zombies. There are 189 encyclopedic articles, which are arranged alphabetically in one volume. The work includes a table of contents and an index. Article lengths range from half pages to three pages but average about one page. Each article includes related article suggestions, as well as selections for further reading. Some photos are included.

Each article in *The A–Z of Death and Dying: Social, Medical, and Cultural Aspects* is well written, making many topics that would otherwise be complex very accessible for the reader. The articles are very informative and unbiased. The breadth of topics covered will appeal to those interested in multidisciplinary fields as well as the particular study of death, and the wide array of topics covered might also lend to serendipitous discovery for the reader.

Since *The A–Z of Death and Dying* is only a one-volume work, space seems limited and some topics that could have more information provided seem to be cut a little short.

The A–Z of Death and Dying: Social, Medical, and Cultural Aspects is intended for high school and low-level undergraduates, and I recommend it without reservation.—Abigail Creitz, Technical Services Librarian, Vincennes University, Vincennes, Indiana

Blacks in Blackface: A Sourcebook on Early Black Musical Shows. 2nd ed. Ed. by Henry T. Sampson. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2014. 2 vols. alkaline \$250 (ISBN: 978-0-8108-8350-5). E-book available (978-8108-8351-2), \$249.99.

Initially published over thirty years ago, this new edition is practically three times the size of the original. Author Sampson has published numerous well-received scholarly texts on African American images and stereotypes in film, cartoons, radio, and television. This work complements his *Ghost Walks: A Chronological History of Blacks in Show Business, 1865–1910* and focuses mainly on the years 1900–1940. Coverage from the original volume has been greatly expanded, including four entirely new chapters. Many more period photographs have been added as well. The focus of the work is on writers, actors, producers, and venues involved in this unique and curious aspect of American entertainment. The

scope of venues covered has also expanded greatly since the original edition and now includes minstrel, circus, medicine, and traveling carnival shows, as well as elegant nightclubs and cabarets. Even booking agents, recording, and publishing houses merit their place here.

The title may be slightly misleading, as not necessarily every performance or performer contained herein falls under the “blackface minstrel” category. Still, there is no denying the widespread popularity of the blackface show during this time in American history—and yes, even many African American performers wore the blackface.

This is a sourcebook, so there is little to no theorizing or critical jargon. The focus is on introducing and informing users of the name, date, location, and description of black musicals in the time period involved. Contemporaneous reviews of the performances from both the African American press and white mainstream press make up a huge portion of this resource. The stated intent is to expose users to the perspectives of those involved in these shows at the time, rather than the modern-day interpretation of them. The author only interjects commentary to introduce each chapter. Otherwise, the original voices of those involved and those who observed them speak for themselves.

The set is not organized alphabetically or chronologically. Rather, there are ten chapters focusing on topics like early black musicals, pioneering producers, minstrel shows, and famous theaters and cabarets. This is a resource with a plethora of detail—there are nearly 250 pages listing comedy shows, their casts of characters, and plot summaries. Period black and white posters advertising the acts appear throughout the volumes as well. Yet the business side of these shows is not ignored, often including performers’ salaries, costs of production, and ticket prices.

Ten appendices are also included, mainly lists of venues and of individuals involved in some of the more obscure traveling shows. There is a helpful index at the back, particularly useful for finding names of people or shows, since the location of relevant entries within the set may not be obvious to the average user.

There are many first-rate resources on the history of American musical theater, but not so many share the focus of this work—the hundreds of shows written, produced, and acted out by African Americans in these early days of show business. While there are some resources that focus on early black stage performances, nearly all of these are from a modern critical perspective, focusing on the implications of the inherent racial stereotypes in this type of entertainment. This resource lets the user see how these performances and performers were received and perceived at the time.

Overall, this is an excellent, detailed, and comprehensive resource on early black musicals. The amount of detail and narrow focus may be more than needed in most public or high school library collections but recommended for academic libraries.—*Mike Tosko, Associate Professor, Research & Learning Services, The University of Akron, Ohio*

Consumer Survival: An Encyclopedia of Consumer Rights, Safety, and Protection. Ed. by Wendy Reibolt and Melanie Horn Mallers. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2013. 2 vols. acid free \$189 (ISBN: 978-1-59884-936-3). E-book available (978-1-59884-937-1), call for pricing.

The authors’ goal in this two-volume encyclopedia is to provide a “cutting edge examination of major issues in consumer affairs blended with topics in human services.” (xix). The title explains the coverage as an attempt to cover government agencies and consumer rights and to provide safety and purchasing tips for consumer protection. The encyclopedia focuses on the United States. The intended audiences are high school, public, college, and university libraries as well as social workers and professionals in consumer affairs.

The two volumes, 986 pages in all, have 224 entries organized alphabetically from “Activism” to the “World Trade Organization.” Volume 1 includes a list of the entries, puts the entries into eight related topics, and, after the preface, includes a twelve-page history of the consumer movement. Before the entries begin, there is a short one-page government chart as well as a very useful list of presidents and their important policies related to consumers. The entries include fifty-five government agencies, fifty-two pieces of legislation, ten movements, twenty-three organizations, sixteen people, and thirty-eight safeguards. The entries range from one to thirteen pages, two hundred to four thousand words, and conclude with see references and a bibliography. Some include sidebars and photographs. According to the editors—both academics with impressive credentials—the entries were chosen over a one-and-a-half-year period through analyzing media, historical sources, newspaper and journal articles, and suggestions from experts in the field. Over ninety people contributed, mainly academics.

Volume 2, after the entries from H–Z, includes five primary sources, including the Sherman Anti-Trust Act and the Identity Theft and Assumption Deterrence Act of 1998. A selected bibliography follows, then brief biographies of the two editors and an even briefer biography of each contributor. The volume concludes with a thorough index, the main entry page numbers in boldface.

This encyclopedia is impressive, with its wide-ranging choice of topics and the inclusion of tips for purchasing, information on avoiding fraud and scams, descriptions of the many departments devoted to consumer issues, and thorough discussions of the numerous pieces of legislation related to consumers and their rights and safety, from automobile purchasing to renters rights, the National Transportation Safety Board, the National Do Not Call Registry, and the National Consumer Law Center and Public Interest Research Groups. Much of this information can be found elsewhere, but these two volumes have it all in one, easy-to-find place. I would recommend this for public, high school, and college libraries and anyone who works with