

addition, *Gold* has a lengthy bibliography of twelve pages, a comprehensive index, and a resource guide that lists sixteen worldwide organizations that are somehow associated with gold.

In encyclopedias on specific subjects, it is always possible to quibble with the choices of entries. Why include a full essay on the Golden Ticket from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and not one on William Jennings Bryan's iconic "Cross of Gold" speech, which he delivered during the presidential campaign of 1896? On the other hand, essays on the British Gold Standard Act of 1925 and the gold standard, which the United States abandoned in 1971, are timely, considering debates in Washington in 2011 about government spending and increasing indebtedness.

*Gold* can be used profitably with other books, articles, websites, and library collections. My own library focuses on American decorative arts and material culture and has items on gold embroidery, gold boxes, gold jewelry, gold leaf, and gold-tooled bindings. Specific in nature and artistic in their detail, our writings dovetail with a number of topics in *Gold* such as casting, illuminated manuscripts, and gold lace.

Students in high school and college, as well as users of public libraries, should find much to mine in *Gold*, considering the scope of the book: "The content of this volume was organized to cover the most salient topics and themes related to the social and cultural significance of gold from prehistory to the present across the globe and to examine these themes from cultural, historical, social, religious, economic, and financial perspectives" (xiii).—E. Richard McKinstry, *Library Director and Andrew W. Mellon Senior Librarian, H. F. du Pont Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware*

---

***Great Lives from History: The Incredibly Wealthy.*** Ed. Howard Bromberg. Pasadena, Calif.: Salem, 2011. 3 vols. Alkaline \$395 (ISBN 978-1-5876-5664-4). Online access included with purchase of print.

*Great Lives from History: The Incredibly Wealthy* is the tenth set of the Great Lives from History Series which began in 2004. The series now includes 34 volumes covering more than 5,300 individuals from throughout world history and is now branching into specific subject areas. This new set on wealthy individuals follows the 2010 set on inventors and inventions. The current set includes 445 essays on 446 people who were among the wealthiest people during the time in which they lived. According to the editor, the criteria for inclusion are, among others, the amount of wealth possessed, the historical significance of the person, the relevance of the person to school curricula, and overall interest in the person. The editor also seeks to provide representation of a wide range of countries, historical periods, and realms in which the wealth was acquired. The set provides essays on individuals from 64 countries, although the United States is overly represented with 227 entries with England and the United Kingdom close behind with 164. The people profiled represent 51 different "sources of

wealth" with inheritance being the most frequent source of wealth followed by investments, real estate, and trade. Interestingly, government is listed as the source of the wealth of 37 individuals, although the true source of the wealth is usually bribery or embezzlement. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries provide the most entries by far, but individuals from all historical periods are included. For example, there are essays on 14 individuals, such as Midas, Croesus, Crassus, and Cleopatra, from the ancient world, 31 from the middle ages, and 11 from the fifteenth century. There are some interesting lapses, however, such as the exclusion of Cosimo de' Medici, although Giovanni de' Medici and Lorenzo de' Medici are included. Also, although a few monarchs are included, for example Louis XIV and Elizabeth II, others such as the Holy Roman Emperor Charles III, are absent.

Each essay follows a consistent format and is 750 to 2,000 words in length. Biographic information is given first and includes the name of the individual, nationality and occupation, a synopsis highlighting the person's historical importance, the birth and death dates, other names by which he or she is known, the sources of wealth, and how the wealth was bequeathed. Each essay includes the early life, first ventures into career, mature wealth (how the individual earned his or her fortune), and the legacy left by the individual and closes with a bibliography and see also references to other individuals of interest. Over half of the essays include photographs of the individual and many essays include sidebars which discuss a specific aspect of the wealth of the individual. For example, in the essay on Andrew Carnegie the sidebar discusses the Carnegie Foundation and for J. P. Morgan, the Morgan Library is discussed. Additional features of the set includes an appendix that gives very brief biographical information on 154 other wealthy individuals not included in the main essays, a chronological list of entries, electronic resources such as websites to richest individuals in various countries, and a comprehensive bibliography of books about wealth in history. Three indexes conclude the work: category index (how the individuals acquired their wealth), geographic index, and subject index. The subject index is very useful to find names of corporations, other individuals, and business ventures.

Although the essays do provide interesting reading and are uniformly well written, the set as a whole is often duplicative of other biographical resources. Information about most of the individuals included in these volumes is readily available elsewhere, even in other volumes of the series itself. The focus of the essays on the wealth of these individuals, especially on how they accrued their fortunes and how they dispersed them, is enlightening, but is, in general, not worth the costs of the set. For libraries, whether school, public, or academic, that support classes that stress biographies, this may be a worthwhile purchase. For most, however, it will provide only marginal value.—Gregory A. Crawford, *Director, Penn State Harrisburg Library, Middletown, Pennsylvania*