

SOURCES

volume predecessor and companion publication, *Encyclopedia of African American History, 1619–1895: From the Colonial Period to the Age of Frederick Douglass* (Oxford Univ. Pr., 2006) concluded. It carries that history forward from the landmark *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court decision to the landmark 2008 presidential election. Within the encyclopedia's five volumes, some 1,250 alphabetically arranged entries trace the evolution of race relations in the United States from legally sanctioned prohibitions on "Commingling" to the election of a man who happens to be black to the nation's highest office.

Homer Plessy and Barack Obama stand at either end of the long twentieth-century struggle of African American men and women to be judged, in Martin Luther King's now famous words, "by the content of their character." The *Encyclopedia of African American History, 1896 to the Present* chronicles that struggle in entries that are biographical (more than six hundred black men and women with a few whites, such as Lyndon Johnson, who had a significant effect on the lives of African Americans), geographical (each state in the union as well as selected cities such as Baltimore and Chicago), topical ("Brownsville Raid," "Juneteenth," "National Conference of Black Lawyers"), or thematic ("Black Nationalism," "Entertainment Industry and African Americans," "Lynching and Mob Violence").

All entries are signed, and each concludes with "see also" references to related articles and, with minor exceptions, a bibliography of relevant books. Black-and-white illustrations accompany some entries. The section "Directory of Contributors" in volume 5 lists each contributor's name, affiliation, and titles of articles authored. "Thematic Outline of Entries" in the same volume offers the reader an additional means for bringing related articles together as, for example, the theme "Migration" brings together "African Diaspora," "American Colonization Society," "Black Migration," "Black Towns," "Expatriates," "Great Migration," "Great Migration, Second," "Immigrants and African Americans," "Immigration to the United States, Black," "Pan-Africanism," "Urbanization," and "West Indians in the United States." The section "Chronology of African American History, 1896 to the Present" and a comprehensive 244-page index to the encyclopedia's contents round out the work.

As is to be expected, certain topics and themes represented in the *Encyclopedia of African American History, 1619–1885* carry over into the *Encyclopedia of African American History, 1896 to the Present*. Some articles, the "Black Church" for instance, are contributed to each publication by the same author, albeit with emphasis, details, and coverage appropriate to the different historical time periods of the two sets. Other articles, such as "Discrimination," are contributed to the two sets by different authors, and each is fully grounded in its own historical period.

With its more than four thousand entries in eight volumes, Oxford University Press' *African American National Biography*, edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, by far exceeds the six hundred biographical sketches included in the *Encyclopedia of African American History, 1896 to the Present*. Among overlapping entries sampled between the two sets this reviewer found that none had been contributed by

the same author and that each entry complimented the other rather than supplanted it. For example, the entry for W. E. B. Du Bois in the *Encyclopedia of African American History, 1896 to the Present* is conveniently subdivided into three sections, each separately authored, that cover Du Bois' life, his historical writings, his literary writings, and an especially useful arrangement for students; whereas the article in the *African American National Biography* is a good deal shorter, placing its emphasis not only on Du Bois' life and career but also placing his life and career into context with his contemporaries. It should be noted here that all three of these Oxford University Press publications (*Encyclopedia of African American History, 1619–1895*; *Encyclopedia of African American History, 1896 to the Present*; *African American National Biography*) are available online in the Oxford African American Studies Center (www.oxfordaasc.com), although as of this writing only the A–H entries are loaded from the print edition of newest encyclopedia.

The past several years have seen the publication of second editions of two major reference works about African Americans and the African American experience: *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience* (Oxford Univ. Pr., 2005) in five volumes, edited by Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates Jr. (also available online in the Oxford African American Studies Center) and the six-volume *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History: The Black Experience in the Americas* (Macmillan Reference USA, 2006), edited by Colin A. Palmer. Both of these works expand their coverage beyond the shores of the United States, encompassing a broader definition of "American" that includes the experience of peoples of African descent in North and South America and the Caribbean.

The *Encyclopedia of African American History, 1896 to the Present* (and its predecessor) is more narrowly focused on the United States. Used in conjunction, these sets provide a complimentary overview of the African American experience in the Western Hemisphere that expands our understanding of what that experience has in common and what is unique and particular.

This encyclopedia is an obligatory purchase for high school, public, and university libraries that do not have access to the Oxford African American Studies Center online edition, especially those that have already purchased its three-volume predecessor.—Sally Moffitt, *Reference Librarian and Bibliographer, History, Philosophy, Political Science, African American Studies, Asian Studies, Judaic Studies, Latin American Studies, and Women's Studies, Cohen Library Enrichment Collection, Langsam Library, University of Cincinnati, Ohio*

Encyclopedia of African Religion. Ed. by Molefi K. Asante and Ama Mazama. Los Angeles: Sage, 2009. 2 vols. alkaline \$325 (ISBN 978-1-4129-3636-1).

The ambitious two-volume *Encyclopedia of African Religion*, edited by Molefi K. Asante and Ama Mazama, both at Temple University, is the "first comprehensive work to assemble ideas, concepts, discourses, and extensive essays

on African religion" (xxi). Indeed, a search for comparative works turns up no similar titles; as the editors suggest, the complex subject of African traditional religion is often subsumed in larger reference sets focusing on world religion or mythology. This encyclopedia is the first reference work that aspires to present a complete picture of African religion in a stand-alone reference set.

Those looking for an historical overview of religion in Africa in the front matter will be disappointed; the introductory material seems more concerned with refuting past scholarship—particularly Mbiti's *African Religions and Philosophy* (Praeger, 1969) and its focus on the plurality of African religion—than with providing the reader with a framework with which to interpret the entries following. It should also be noted that, although not explicitly stated, these volumes deal predominantly with indigenous African religions, excluding both Christianity and Islam. Readers seeking to contextualize their scholarship would do well to supplement this set with John Middleton and Joseph Miller's entries on "Religion and Ritual" and "Religion and The Study of Africa" in *New Encyclopedia of Africa* (Scribner, 2008) or Elizabeth Isichei's *The Religious Traditions of Africa: A History* (Praeger, 2004).

The length of the more than five hundred articles varies considerably and often counter-intuitively; the entry on ceremonies is a mere column and a half, while the entry about seclusion is four pages long. Many concepts may be unfamiliar to readers, and the brief entries may provide too little information for understanding. The writing style of the entries, generally speaking, could have benefitted from a more scholarly tone; this reviewer found statements such as the following to be rather subjective: "For the Asante, like all Akan peoples (or all African peoples for that matter), religion is at the center of their existence" (70). The content of the entries themselves tends to differ dramatically; entries on topics such as Vèvè and Santeria were informative, insightful, and referential, while entries on topics such as time and age groups were brief and superficial in scope.

In its capacity as a reference work intended to point the user to other sources, the utility of this set is moderate. Entries are not particularly adept at serving as crosswalks to other concepts, while the citations in the list of "Further Readings" at the end of each entry are often outdated. However, the ending bibliography and the index are both quite good, and could capably lead readers to additional helpful resources. Auxiliary materials are meager, and include a reader's guide containing entries grouped by theme and an appendix titled "Names of God in Africa." Maps are noticeably absent and would be a welcome addition to the second edition.

I found myself very torn on the issue of recommendation. On the one hand, the *Encyclopedia of African Religion* is overly ambitious, incomplete, and would need to be very well supplemented by ancillary titles for readers to gain any contextual understanding of the vast subject of religion—traditional or otherwise—in Africa. For a volume titled the *Encyclopedia of African Religion* to exclude any discussion whatsoever of Islam or Christianity seems inexcusable. On

the other hand, any effort to raise the discourse surrounding traditional religion in Africa must be commended, and this would serve as a good resource for those researchers seeking information about particular aspects of African traditional religion. We can only hope that, as the editors themselves suggest, "with the demonstration of the complexity, texture, and rhythms of the African religious tradition, future scholars will have a baseline from which to advance further research" (xxx). I, for one, am hopeful that this further research will yield a second edition that includes a more thoughtful, comprehensive, and nuanced portrait of the complex subject that is African religion. Recommended primarily for those institutions with the funding and curriculum to support such a purchase, or for those libraries with existing African Studies collections.—Kristin J. Henrich, *Reference and Instruction Librarian, University of Idaho, Moscow*

Encyclopedia of Crime Scene Investigation. By Michael Newton. New York: Facts On File, 2008. 352p. acid free \$75 (ISBN 978-0-8160-6814-2).

Anyone who's watched a modern television crime show knows that advancements in science and technology have helped crime scene investigators solve cases, including many cold cases that technological innovations have helped unravel.

The *Encyclopedia of Crime Scene Investigation* provides general information about crime scene investigation, including scientific techniques and descriptions of key historic cases. Written for laypersons interested in learning more about the science behind crime scene investigation, it provides an overview of how crime scene investigators solve crimes. A veteran crime scene investigator for the Baltimore Police Department, author Michael Newton has published more than two hundred books related to crime, including other Facts On File titles *The Encyclopedia of Kidnappings* (2002), *The Encyclopedia of Serial Killers* (2006), *The Encyclopedia of Conspiracies and Conspiracy Theories* (2005), and others. The role of advances in computer technology and expanding sophistication in the use of DNA evidence are also explored in Newton's book.

I chose to look at the topics of hair evidence and DNA for reviewing this source. Within Newton's book, hair evidence is described within a three-page entry titled "Fiber and Hair Evidence." The entry includes a list (more two pages long, developed by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission) of synthetic fibers with their common trade names.

For comparison's sake, I looked up hair evidence in Tilstone, Savage, and Clark's *Forensic Science: An Encyclopedia of History, Methods, and Techniques* (ABC-CLIO, 2006). Like Newton's book, *Forensic Science* includes black-and-white photos, cross-references, an index, and bibliography. The entry about hair in Tilstone, Savage, and Clark's book is nearly six pages long, including information about the anatomy of hair, forensic examination, and the elemental and drug analysis of hair. The entry on fibers is more than three pages long,