

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

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consumers.—*Carol Krismann, retired business librarian, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado*

Disasters and Tragic Events: An Encyclopedia of Catastrophes in American History. Ed. by Mitchell Newton-Matza. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2014. 2 vols. acid free \$189 (ISBN: 978-1-61069-165-9). E-book available (978-1-61069-166-6), call for pricing.

As this double volume set clearly shows, American history is much more than Presidential elections, momentous discoveries, and incredible inventions. It's also about ships sinking, epidemics, riots, and the ravages of Mother Nature. While unpleasant to contemplate, these are part of the life story of the United States; there are also lessons to be learned from the mistakes our forefathers made in reacting to these events.

Editor Newton-Matza (Ph.D., The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC) and his crew of contributors have done a commendable job in outlining some of the more notable grief-stricken occurrences of our national past. There were plenty more they could have chosen from, a fact he plainly points out in his preface in which he states that “as with the creation of any list, decisions had to be made with certain criteria...the attempt here is to examine a wide variety of events and understand why we still remember them” (xiv). Therefore, the researcher may find entries regarding a cross-section of both man-made debacles (“1692 Salem Witch Trials,” “1871 Great Chicago Fire,” “1929 Great Depression Begins”) and natural phenomena (“1811–1812 New Madrid, Missouri Earthquakes,” “1927 Mississippi River Flood”). As these representative articles suggest, the arrangement is chronological. A “List of Entries” appears in both volumes for easy browsing, while an ample index will assist those who know the name of a particular event, such as the *Hindenburg* airship explosion but not the year or place it occurred (in this case, 1937, at Lakehurst, New Jersey). Writing style is suitable for the intended audience of high school/undergraduate college students and the lay public. This set is well illustrated with black-and-white historic photographs, engravings, etc., and sidebar articles highlight tangential issues related to main entries. For example, “Labor Strife and Legal Issues” appears within the body of text for the “1894 Pullman Strike in Chicago, Illinois”. A total of 206 entries appear within these covers; the set concludes with a selection of primary documents relating to selected disasters and a lengthy bibliography of print and electronic resources for further study.

Well researched, well written, and well documented, this set is recommended for purchase by all public and academic libraries. This reviewer hastens to add, however, that a competing recent title is on par with the ABC-CLIO volumes and could either supplant or supplement the same. *Disasters, Accidents, and Crises in American History: A Reference Guide to the Nation's Most Catastrophic Events* (Ballard C. Campbell, ed., Facts on File, 2008) contains surprisingly little overlap; while limited to one volume, the articles are more concise, so

it contains about the same amount of material but on different topics. This title is likewise recommended for purchase.—*Michael F. Bemis, Independent Reference Book Reviewer*

Encyclopedia of American Recessions and Depressions. Ed. by Daniel J. Leab. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2014. 2 vols. acid free. \$189 (ISBN: 967-1-59884-945-5). E-book available (978-1-59884-946-2), call for pricing.

During the 1936 Democratic National Convention, President Franklin Roosevelt famously stated, “There is a mysterious cycle in human events. To some generations, much is given. Of other generations, much is expected.” The *Encyclopedia of American Recessions and Depressions* focuses primarily on the mysterious cycle of economic downturns throughout the history of the United States and on these generations of Americans where much was expected, specifically to help the country emerge from the economic abyss of their time.

The scope of this two-volume set is quite comprehensive. Fourteen of the most significant economic depressions and recessions are covered, spanning from the turbulent years shortly after the conclusion of the American Revolution up to the Great Recession of 2008–2009. Organized chronologically, each recession or depression is comprised of an in-depth essay written by an expert on the time period. In addition, there are numerous short form, traditional reference entries, spanning one to three pages in length, that expound on the significant people, events, issues, and legislation germane to each particular downturn. Peppered with eye-catching images of relevant documents and illustrations, each entry concludes with citations for further reading on the topic, which is always an appreciated feature.

Perhaps the most impressive feature of this encyclopedia is the collection of primary documents included in the appendix. At least one primary document is provided for each economic downturn, with the total number of primary documents contained exceeding one hundred. These kinds of primary sources, often coveted by history students in an academic setting, are highly effective in putting each major economic downturn into a cultural and societal context that makes an already strong reference source truly exceptional. This section of primary documents, combined with a lengthy bibliography of additional sources and alphabetical index of each entry, results in an appendix that is just as valuable as the information contained within each of the main entries.

Considering the far-reaching coverage of recessions and depressions and related topics contained within this set, as well as the exhaustive topical entries, primary documents, and selected bibliography, the *Encyclopedia of American Recessions and Depressions* becomes easy to recommend. This encyclopedia would be a welcome and valuable addition to any academic library.—*Matthew Laudicina, Reference and Instruction Librarian, Sojourner Truth Library, State University of New York at New Paltz.*