

mixed media

A Roundup of Electronic Products

by Frank Alan Bruno

This column features multicultural materials useful for elementary, high school, and college/university audiences. The multicultural titles chosen represent quality electronic products that can help educators, librarians, and researchers better understand diverse ethnic and racial groups.

CD Products

CultureGrams Kids Editions 2003. Lindon, Utah: CultureGrams [333 South 520 West, Suite 360, Lindon, UT 84042-1911; phone: (800) 528-6279; FAX: (801) 847-0127; e-mail: sales@culturegrams.com; web site: culturegrams.com, 2003. Single user: \$69.99, includes choice of accompanying spiral-bound or loose-leaf notebook. K-12 & University Server CD & Online Pricing based on full-time equivalent user (FTE): 1-100: \$309; 101-500: \$378; 501-1000: \$470; 1001-2500: \$560; 2501-5000: \$687; 5001-7000: \$844; 7001-10,000+: \$1225. For multiple schools or consortia call for pricing. Grade 5-8.

This straightforward resource includes short reports for 65 major countries. Each country is arranged into three major sections: welcome, facts, and history. The welcome section includes a country map, brief facts about the country, basic vocabulary words, national symbols, games, and demographic information about family life as a kid. The facts section includes brief details about government, land and climate, population, language, celebrations, food, education, getting around, money, castles and forts, and religion. The history section contains a time line and four to five broad historical periods. This series, originally produced for the high school, college, and general adult level, has been a long-time standard for cultural awareness. Recommended for all elementary schools.

Stories in Season: An Interactive Storybook Written and Illustrated by First Nations Authors and Artists. Regina: Tyndal Stone Media [3026 13th Avenue, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada S4T 1N9; phone: (306) 584-7331; FAX: (306) 347-2300; e-mail: sales@tyndal.com; web site: www.tyndal.com, 2002. Minimum System Requirements: Macintosh® CD-ROM System 7.x and QuickTime™ 3, 8MB RAM, 2x CD-ROM or faster, 500 kilobytes of free hard drive space, 68040-40 MHz or better CPU (Power PC Preferred); Windows™ CD-ROM, Windows 3.1 or greater, 100MHz Pentium or faster, 8MB RAM, 2x CD-ROM or faster, 500 kilobytes of free hard drive space, SoundBlaster-compatible sound card, Pentium or equivalent CPU. \$49 Canadian (check U.S. exchange rate). PreK-Grade 2.

Young children can choose four stories—*Just A Walk,*

Peter's Moccasins, Byron Through the Seasons, Alfred's Summer—to read in six different languages: English, French, Dakota Sioux, Cree, Dene, and Salteaux. The software helps children learn about indigenous cultures and languages in Canada. Readers select a language for audio instruction, then choose one of the four stories. They will be able to hear the story as they read and learn multilingual skills. They can click on objects or highlighted words throughout the story, and information is provided about different objects or concepts or questions asked. Readers are asked to make decisions such as what they would do in a given situation. The focus is on the individual cultures, and teachers are encouraged to attend to values, attitudes, and ideas.

An informative teacher's guide is included in both French and English. The guide offers helpful suggestions on how these stories complement elementary language arts programs, along with a few brief suggestions for incorporation into science, social studies, physical education, and mathematics curricula.

Stories in Season is a fun and colorful teaching aid. Children quickly learn not only about the cultures but also useful language skills. All elementary schools in the United States and Canada should consider purchasing it.

Web-Based Products

African-American Newspapers: The 19th Century. Malvern, Pa.: Accessible Archives Inc. [697 Sugartown Road, Malvern, PA 19355; phone: (610) 296-7441; FAX: (610) 725-1745; e-mail: rnagy@accessible.com; web site: www.accessible.com]. Five parts. K-12 pricing includes access to full eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Newspapers Collection. Elementary: 1-4 schools, \$75 per school; 5 or more schools, \$50 per school. Middle School: 1-4 schools, \$125 per school; 5 or more schools, \$100 per school. High School: 1-4 schools, \$250 per school; 5 or more schools, \$200 per school. Private School, K-12: \$375 per school. University pricing includes permanent access: \$3,500 per part with an additional \$150 per year annual maintenance fees with \$50 increments up to maximum \$300 per year. Subscription access to the African-American Newspaper Collection is based on full-time equivalent user (FTE). University Subscription Access: 1-999, \$1,500 per year; 1,000-4,999, \$1,500 or \$.48 per user; 5000-14,999, \$3420 or \$.43 per user; 15,000-34,999,

\$7,720 or \$.38 per user; 35,000-74,999, \$15,320 or \$.33 per user. Public Libraries Subscription Access: 1-50,000, \$1,000 per year; 50,001-100,000, \$2,000; 100,001-500,000, \$4,000; 500,001-1,000,000, \$6,000; 1,000,001 +, \$8,000.

This extensive collection of African-American newspapers contains 89,000 records on African-American life and history in the 1800s and serves as a chronicle of the African-American experience. The database is an invaluable source on politics, the economy, and other historical issues that impacted blacks during this period. The American-African Newspapers database was extracted from seven sources: *Freedom's Journal*, *Provincial Freeman*, *The Christian Recorder*, *The Coloured American*, *The North Star*, *The National Era*, and *The Frederick Douglass Papers*.

The user can choose to search each publication separately or in total by checking them off. There is a no-frills search engine that will do simple searches. It can do a few Boolean functions such as and, near, and not, or. It can do simple truncation by using an *. A search on John Brown netted 202 hits, which is to be expected. A search on Angelina Grimke netted only 2, which was a bit of a disappointment. When I added her married name *Weld* I found one additional reference. Whenever the term appeared in a record it was bolded in red, which was helpful.

The database is enhanced on a monthly basis and is adding records in chronological order at a rate of 10 million to 12 million words per year. As the database expands, it will include a rich amount of material about individuals like the Grimke sisters and possibly obscure figures like Martin W. Gibbs. The ultimate goal of the family-run company is to include all African-American publications of the nineteenth century.

This database is a good buy for the K-12 market and small universities and colleges. It is a bit pricey for larger institutions and public library systems using the FTE model. It is more affordable as a permanent acquisition for universities, but the \$17,500 price tag will be affordable only for the wealthiest universities.

American Memory: U.S. History and Culture. Washington, D.C.: The Library of Congress [101 Independence Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20540; phone: (202) 707-5000; e-mail: ndlpcoll@loc.gov; web site: memory.loc.gov]. System Requirements: Internet Explorer 5.0 and above; Netscape Communicator 5.0 and above. Sound recordings in American Memory are offered in these formats: RealAudio, MPEG 2, Layer 3 (.mp3) and .wav (WaveForm). MrSid Viewer needed to zoom in and out for maps. Video playback may use QuickTime 3.0 or above, Window Media Player, or Real Player. Free. All ages.

This web site is a primary source gateway with access to seven million digital items from 100 unique historical collections. The collections are broken down into 13 broad subjects: agriculture, arts and architecture, business and economics, education, geography, history, language and literature, performing arts, philosophy and religion, political science and law, recreation and sports, social sciences, and technology and applied sciences. The collection can also be

accessed through a basic search utility.

The basic search utility can search items in each individual collection or across all 100 collections simultaneously. A search can be delimited by format: documents, manuscripts, printed text, sheet music, maps, motion pictures, photos & prints, and sound recordings. The search utility allows users to choose *word variants* (plurals) or exact words. It also limits by *match any of these words*, *match all of these words*, and *match this exact phrase*.

There is a rich amount of information on the African-American, Hispano/Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, American Indian, and Mormon experiences, among many others.

The Learning Page has an extensive guide for teachers to incorporate tips, tricks, lesson plans, activities, and discussion guides. These help to involve the student in using primary sources to learn about our cultural heritage. There is even a professional development area that includes a newsletter and a listing of grant opportunities for educator training. This free primary source document site is the most extensive on the Internet.

Black Drama 1850 to Present. Alexandria, Va.: Alexander Street Press [Sales and Marketing office, 3212 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-4521; phone: (800) 889-5937, ext. 2, (301) 585-4450; FAX: (240) 465-0561; e-mail: lawrence@alexanderstreet.com; web site: www.alexanderstreet.com]. Pricing options either to subscribe or purchase. Annual subscription option: \$1,000 to \$3,995, scaled to library budget, with further discounts through consortia. One-time purchase of perpetual rights: List price \$50,000, with consortium discounts saving 20%-40% or more, depending on the group. (This database is included in "The Street"—a suite of 10 Alexander Street titles priced low for libraries with budgets under \$1,000,000. Call for prices.) Colleges and universities.

Black Drama contains 207 plays by 64 playwrights, together with detailed information on related productions, theaters, production companies, and more. Many of the works are hard to find or out of print. A release due out in Fall 2002 increases the collection to 420 plays.

The database has three sections. Part 1 covers key writings of the Harlem Renaissance, works performed for the Federal Theatre Project, and plays by critically acclaimed dramatists of the 1940s. *Part 2: North America, 1960s-1990s* covers the Black Arts Movement. *Part 3: 20th Century African and Caribbean Drama* covers a wide collection of plays from Ghana, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, the West Indies, the United Kingdom, and other parts of the world.

The plays can be accessed in a variety of ways. Users can view subsections of the Table of Contents by Authors, Plays, Productions, Years, Characters, and Theaters. The main Table of Contents is arranged in chronological order with the author, title, and publication information followed by in-depth links for author information, bibliographic details, and character information. Under author information, users can find out where the author was born, age when he or she wrote the play, sexual orientation, and even religion. The author section has 65 authors represented. The character

information lists each character and such details as name, occupation, nationality, and sexual orientation. There are 1802 different characters described. The production section lists 76 different performances. There are 54 different theaters mentioned and 49 theatrical companies.

The database has six major subject headings: historical events; organizations, edifices, and institutions; personal events; persons; subject terms broad; and subject terms narrow. It has a simple search that allows users to search by play keyword, title, author, age when writing, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, year written, and genre. The multi-field search feature allows one to search for all of the above and literary period, settings, performers, composers, theater name, production company, and play number.

When complete, *Black Drama* will contain the full text of 1,200 plays by more than 100 playwrights from North America, English-speaking Africa, the Caribbean, and other African Diaspora countries written from the mid-1800s to the present. Nearly a quarter of the collection will consist of previously unpublished plays by writers such as Langston Hughes, Ed Bullins, Willis Richardson, Femi Euba, Amiri Baraka, Randolph Edmonds, and Zora Neale Hurston, to name a few. *Black Drama* promises to be one of the only resources that covers this little-explored area of black fine arts. It is recommended for colleges and universities.

Early Encounters in North America: Peoples, Cultures, and the Environment. Alexandria, Va.: Alexander Street Press [Sales and Marketing office, 3212 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-4521; phone: (800) 889-5937 ext. 2 / (301) 585-4450; FAX: (240) 465-0561; e-mail: lawrence@alexanderstreet.com; web site: www.alexanderstreet.com]. Pricing options to either subscribe or purchase. Annual subscription option: \$1,000 to \$3,995, scaled to library budget, with further discounts through consortia. One-time purchase of perpetual rights: List price \$50,000, with consortium discounts saving 20%-40% or more, depending on the group. (This database is included in "The Street"—a suite of 10 Alexander Street titles priced low for libraries with budgets under \$1,000,000. Call for prices.) High school

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and up.

The premise behind the database is to explore primary documents, articles, and speeches dealing with encounters between North American Indians and Africans, Europeans, and Asians from 1534 to 1850. *Early Encounters* documents the relationships among the peoples and their environment throughout North America. The collection focuses on personal accounts and provides unique perspectives from all of the participants, including traders, slaves, missionaries, explorers, soldiers, indigenous peoples, and officials, both men and women. The where when, who, and why of each encounter is given.

The database is organized into 12 different access points: *author, year, source, places, environment, encounter, fauna, flora, people, images, personal event, and cultural event*. Authors are listed in alphabetical order by last name. *Source* is given by the earliest date of publication. *Place* is listed alphabetically by country and then state or province and city/place with sources arranged by where written and where sent and discussed. Geophysical features such as bays, beaches, coasts, and natural phenomena such as blizzards and earthquakes comprise the *Environment* section. The *Encounter* section lists 138 different encounters between groups in chronological order. *Fauna* is broken down into birds, fish and marine life, mammals, insects, and reptiles. *Flora* is broken down into an alphabetical listing from A to Z of flowers and plants. *People* has four broad groups—Africans, American Indians, Europeans, and Asians. The American Indians has specific tribes listed, whereas the others do not list ethnicity. The *Images* section is a bit sparse, with only 25 visuals. Even

though there is a button for *Personal Event*, its contents have been combined with *Cultural Event*.

The Find utility allows one to search by sources, authors, encounters, and images. The *find author* section is pretty thorough; it lets users search by author, author's gender, year of birth, year of death, place of birth, place of death, nationality, cultural affiliation, race, religion, occupation, societal role, and age at death. Users can retrieve some interesting ethnographic material. The *find encounters* is pretty robust too, allowing for encounter name, start year, start month, start date, cultural groups, estimated number of people, participants, location, fatalities during encounter, expedition, subject headings, and description.

The *Search* utility is very powerful and can perform simple searches, searches in letters only, and advanced searches. It can do full-text searching. I was a little disappointed when I searched the term *Dutch* and *New Holland* and found no results. The utility has a quirky way of allowing users to see all the listed articles just in case it might have missed something. It has another point of access via the Table of Contents.

Materials chosen for inclusion were derived from standard bibliographies about North America, including David B. Quinn's *Sources for the Ethnography of Northeastern North America to 1611*; Thomas D. Clark's *Travels in the Old South: A Bibliography*; Robert R. Hubach's *Early Western Travels: An Annotated Bibliography 1634-1850*; Daniel F. Littlefield and James W. Parins's *A Bibliography of Native American Writers, 1772-1924*; and Human Relations Area Files, *Bibliography of Native North Americans*. Materials written exclusively about Latin America, the Northwest Passage, or the Arctic are excluded.

In all, this is a fairly powerful database. The only downside is that it is growing and evolving, with only around 1,000 sources and slightly more than 10,250 pages from 92 authors. When complete, the product will include more than 100,000 pages of letters, diaries, memoirs, and accounts of early encounters. Material is added on a quarterly basis. I recommend this database for school and academic libraries interested in Native American issues. 📖

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