

The purpose of Editor's Shelf is to highlight the following: new editions of important previously published works; reissues of significant works that had been out of print; U.S. editions of works published elsewhere in English; additional volumes in a publisher's series that *MultiCultural Review* has reviewed; translations; previously published works that have been reissued in a new form, such as audiocassettes, audio CDs, floppy disks, CD-ROM, or DVD; and online reference sources. Paperback reprints are not included unless the reprint contains at least some new material. The initial releases in a publisher's series and works that have undergone major changes in the course of their republication in new edition or new media will receive full-fledged reviews in *MCR*. The Publisher Directory contains addresses and phone numbers of publishers whose works appear in Editor's Shelf.

NEW EDITIONS

Brown, Wesley and Ling, Amy, eds. *Imagining America: A Multicultural Anthology of American Fiction*. New York: Persea, 2003. 416 pp. ISBN 0-89255-277-8, \$16.95 (pb).

The first edition of this collection of short stories about the experience of immigration and migration in America was published in 1991. This second edition (with a new introduction) replaces some of the stories with 11 new ones, for a total of 38. The new authors include several well-known writers, such as Edwidge Danticat and Junot Díaz; among the authors from the original edition are Alice Walker, Gish Jen, and Bernard Malamud. Having stories of "migration" along with those on immigration allows the editors to include Native American authors such as Louise Erdrich and Sherman Alexie.

The stories are gathered in four sections: "Arriving," "Belonging," "Crossings," and "Remembering." These are meant to represent the various stages of an immigrant's experience, from disorientation, to a fragile feeling of understanding and acceptance, to a change in culture and attitude, and to a reconciliation of past memories with present experience. Each of these stories reflects the particular cultural concerns and literary styles of the talented authors collected here. The variety of the lives portrayed in them makes it clear that completely encompassing something as large as America as seen by those new to it (or feeling somewhat outside it) is impossible in any anthology. However, *Imagining America* gives readers numerous fresh glimpses and uncommon angles into the communities and people that make up America.

Davidson, Lawrence. *Islamic Fundamentalism: An Introduction*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2003. 226 pp. Revised and updated edition. ISBN 0-313-32429-8, \$45.00.

This work for students in high school and above (and for

general readers) seeks to explain the origins, variations, and current state of Islamic fundamentalism. After a detailed chronology, which begins in 1744, six chapters describe these topics: the history of Islam up until the nineteenth century; the founding of the Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt in 1928 and its subsequent development; the example of revolutionary Islamic fundamentalism in Iran; the case of a more pro-Western fundamentalism in Saudi Arabia; an analysis of Western perceptions of Islamic fundamentalism; and a discussion of the issues of violence and terrorism. Throughout the book, the author seeks to explain beliefs and developments from both Muslim and Western points of view.

The second half of the book is composed of supplementary material. Seventeen important figures in Islamic fundamentalism are profiled in biographies a page or two long. Information on contemporary figures, such as Osama bin Laden, is updated to 2002. A lengthy section follows of primary documents with brief introductory explanations; selections include passages from the Quran and essays from thinkers and religious leaders including the Ayatollah Khomeini. Some of the commentators, such as those on women and Islam and on reading the Quran creatively, present more liberal and evenhanded interpretations than might be expected from religious fundamentalists. The book ends with a glossary of terms and organizations, an annotated bibliography, and an index. A black-and-white photo essay is also included. *Islamic Fundamentalism* will give readers the background helpful for a better understanding of the origins and complexity of the issues faced throughout the Muslim world today.

Harik, Ramsay M., and Marston, Elsa. *Women in the Middle East: Tradition and Change*. Danbury, Conn.: Franklin Watts/Scholastic, 2003. 192 pp. Revised edition. ISBN 0-531-12222-0, \$20.65.

Originally published in 1996, this updated work for a high school audience now includes two new chapters, one on the state of women in Afghanistan and one on women's health issues. The authors emphasize the diversity of experiences for Middle Eastern women, and they include 20 countries in their survey, from Morocco to Iran. The unifying power of Islam gives most women in this region a set of common experiences and issues to be faced.

Chapters are divided into discussions of women and school, religion, married life, family and home, work, the arts and athletics, public life, and other topics. A chapter on the practice of veiling describes its origins and its somewhat surprising resurgence in the last two decades. The authors point out the ways in which veiling can be a choice for Muslim women, used to make a statement about oneself, while at the same time they acknowledge that movements for stricter veil-

ing often come at a patriarchal society's insistence. Here and elsewhere in the book the authors seek to point out the positive aspects of the situation of women in the Middle East while admitting to the existence of some "troubling questions."

The text is accompanied by some black-and-white photos (which depict women from all of the many countries discussed), and the book contains chapter notes, a glossary, a selected bibliography, and an index. Students reading this book will most likely learn that the lives of women in this region are not as limited as they might have thought, but that there are still many beliefs and practices that are hard to truly understand from a Western perspective.

Lewis, Samella. *African American Art and Artists*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2003. 340 pp. Revised and expanded edition. ISBN 0-520-23929-6, \$65.00 (c); 0-520-23935-0, \$29.95 (pb).

The first and second editions of this comprehensive survey of black artists in the United States were published in 1978 and 1990. This updated edition includes a new introduction by Mary Jane Hewitt, and its chapters take the story of African-American artists from 1619 (with 20 West African indentured servants in the Jamestown colony) to 2002 (with examples of mixed media and computer-generated art).

Each of six chronological chapters includes a brief introduction, but most of the volume is a series of short biographies analyzing the achievements of individual artists, each accompanied by one or two color or black-and-white reproductions or photos of their works. The artworks are numerous and well reproduced, though most are shown in a relatively small size in this large-format book. About half the volume consists of the chapter titled "1960-1990: Political and Cultural Awareness." Among the more than 100 artists profiled in this chapter are painter Faith Ringgold; sculptor Martin Puryear; and sculptor, painter, and installation artist Alison Saar.

The volume ends with a lengthy bibliography and an index of artists' names. Though it does not include much broad analysis of artistic developments, *African American Art and Artists* would be a valuable resource for anyone seeking to learn about the achievements of black artists working in many different periods and media.

Matlins, Stuart M. and Magida, Arthur J., eds. *How to Be a Perfect Stranger*. Woodstock, Vt.: Skylight Paths, 2003. 400 pp. Third ed. ISBN 1-893361-67-5, \$19.95 (pb).

In a culturally and religiously diverse America, people of various faiths often come together to observe life cycle events such as weddings, births, and deaths. This guide offers tips on etiquette for those outside the faith who might be attending a religious service or visiting a bereaved family, for example.

The first edition of this title received the Benjamin Franklin Award for the "Best Reference Book of the Year." The latest edi-

tion combines information on 29 religious denominations into one volume. Within each denomination's listing are a general theological and historical overview, the basic service, holy days and festivals, life cycle events, and home celebrations. Religious outsiders will learn about appropriate attire, when to arrive at the service, whether to participate, whether to contribute to the collection, the reception (if one exists) following the service, and behavior during the service and reception.

Included are a number of Christian denominations, Baha'i, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Jews, Native American/First Nations beliefs, and Sikhs. Islam, Judaism, and Native American/First Nations encompass a wide variety of traditions and practices, and the editors have made an effort to address these complexities. In all, this is an indispensable resource for people encountering sensitive situations.

Shivers, Louise. *Here to Get My Baby Out of Jail*. Winston-Salem, N.C.: John F. Blair, 2003. 136 pp. ISBN 0-89587-282-X, \$10.95 (pb).

Shivers began writing this novel, her first, after enrolling in a creative writing course at a local YMCA when she was 40. It was originally published in 1983 and is now being released in a twentieth anniversary edition.

The novel takes place in a rural town in eastern North Carolina in 1937. It is narrated by Roxy Walston, a 20-year-old mother of a two-year-old girl named Baby. Roxy lives on a tobacco farm with her hardworking but unemotional and unimaginative husband, Aaron. Roxy's father, Will Stanton, is a successful funeral parlor owner, just as Shivers's father was. When, on the novel's first page, the good-looking Jack Ruffin strides into town to find work at Will's funeral home, it is already clear that bad things are likely to result from the appearance of this stranger in a small town. After Jack befriends Aaron and begins working on his tobacco farm, he and Roxy begin an affair, which ends in tragedy.

Although much of the action of the novel is telegraphed well in advance, it does feature the strong voice of a young woman who has never felt passion until the time she becomes overwhelmed by it.

REISSUES OF OUT-OF-PRINT WORKS

Brown, William Wells. *From Fugitive Slave to Free Man: The Autobiographies of William Wells Brown*. Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 2003. 302 pp. Edited and with an introduction by William L. Andrews. ISBN 0-8262-1475-4, \$19.95 (pb).

In his introduction, the editor of this volume of works by Brown (1815-1884) notes that the pioneering African-American author has been greatly overshadowed by his contemporary Frederick Douglass, both in his lifetime and today. He argues that Brown is deserving of a more prominent place in literary history, both as someone who wrote of his more

representative experiences as a slave, and as one who created the first works by an African-American author in several genres—the first travel book (*Three Years in Europe*, 1852), the first novel (*Clotel*, 1853), and the first drama (*The Escape*, 1858).

The present volume is a reissue of a 1993 edition that collected Brown's first volume of autobiography—*Narrative of William W. Brown, A Fugitive Slave, Written by Himself* (1848)—with his 1880 autobiographical work *My Southern Home*. The texts are reprinted from earlier editions, and the introduction does not appear to have changed since 1993, though a list of suggested readings has been updated.

In the relatively short *Narrative*, Brown uses simple, understated prose to tell of his life as a slave and eventual escape. For example, he says that “a circumstance occurred which caused me great unhappiness. My master sold my mother, and all her children, except myself.” The book also includes an appendix of newspaper accounts of horrible incidents involving slaves and extracts from the American Slave Code. By the time Brown wrote his 1880 memoir, his prose had gotten more complex and more concerned with the general condition of blacks in America. A number of passages are rendered in dialect as though in a play. Together, the works in this volume are important documents for anyone studying the development of African-American literature.

Major, Clarence. *Such Was the Season*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 2003. 224 pp. ISBN 0-8071-2865-1, \$15.95 (pb).

This novel, originally published in 1987, is one of a number of works of fiction that have been reissued by LSU Press under its “Voices of the South” banner. The novel is narrated by Annie Eliza, a blunt family matriarch in Atlanta in the early 1980s. The catalyst for much of what occurs is a visit home by her nephew Adam—known as Juneboy—who went North many years before to become a doctor and researcher at Yale. In the book's first line, Annie Eliza tells us that “Last week was a killer-diller!” In the rest of the book, she relates the social, political, and eventually criminal complications that arose over that week to affect various members of her extended family.

One of the main achievements of the novel is the character of Annie Eliza herself. Speaking in a colloquial voice (“I hadn't seed him since he was bout eighteen”), she gives us her story as though we were sitting with her on a porch or in a beauty parlor, and her no-nonsense opinions and observations fill in a complete portrait of her often difficult but ultimately strong family.

McGovern, James R. *Black Eagle: General Daniel “Chappie” James Jr.* Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press, 2003. 216 pp. ISBN 0-8173-1307-9, \$19.95 (pb).

As a line on its cover says, this is the “inspiring life story of

the notable Tuskegee airman who became a four-star general.” The author, a professor of history at the University of West Florida in Pensacola (James's hometown) gives a heroic view of the African-American military pioneer, who died in 1978. (The book was originally published in 1985.) Through extensive interviews with and letters from those who knew him—including such figures as Bob Hope and Richard Nixon—McGovern describes how James rose to the challenges he faced throughout his career, from training as a Tuskegee airman during World War II, to fighting in Korea and Vietnam, to being named as commander of the U.S. base in Libya in 1969 just as Muammar Khadafy took power and forced the Americans to leave.

At times the glowing depiction of James can seem a little one-dimensional. A woman who served as James's secretary when he was a base commander tells the author that he never asked her to make coffee and he always called at Christmas to send good wishes from his entire family to hers. However, James's career did span a dramatic era in the history of the U.S. military and in the development of race relations. McGovern depicts the struggles and the eventual victories James achieved along the way.

NEW VOLUMES IN SERIES

Adventures in America

Masters, Susan Rowan. *Night Journey to Vicksburg*. New York: Silver Moon Press, 2003. 80 pp. Illus. by Duane Smith. ISBN 1-893110-30-3, \$14.95.

Sheely, Robert. *In the Hands of the Enemy*. New York: Silver Moon Press, 2003. 80 pp. Illus. by John Martin. ISBN 1-893110-31-1, \$14.95.

These two novels for students in the middle elementary grades use a footnote in American history as the starting point for the story of a young teenager's adventure. In *Night Journey to Vicksburg*, a 13-year-old slave named Jubi leads his two younger sisters to escape from their plantation in April 1863, at the time of the Battle of Vicksburg. After helping a badly injured Union officer, Jubi takes the officer's information on where the Union forces should land directly to General Grant. The historical fact that this story is based on is that a black man did in fact provide such helpful information to the Union Army, though nothing else is known about him.

In the Hands of the Enemy tells the story of John Billington Jr., a 14-year-old boy who has crossed over on the *Mayflower*. John becomes lost in the woods around Plymouth in the spring of 1621, and he is saved by a 14-year-old Indian boy named Amanuitt and his cousin. John and Amanuitt manage to overcome their mutual fear and hatred (English settlers had kidnapped Amanuitt's brother and other Indians several months before) to develop something of a friendship. The actual historical record does show an English boy of that

name becoming lost and then returned home by nearby Indians, though the characters of the young Indians, and their interactions with John, are invented.

Both books provide young readers with a sense of what it was like to live in these periods. The Plymouth tale does occasionally strain to include historical background into its action (as when the narrator's description of the night as "black as pitch" leads to a mention of how John has seen the pitch used to seal the spaces between the *Mayflower's* timbers). Jubi's tale concentrates more on conveying the fears and dangers of being a young slave. Both books contain full-page illustrations; in *Night Journey* they are stylized pencil drawings, while *In the Hands of the Enemy* has rather static (even in a scene of a knife fight) black-and-white illustrations. The two books also include a historical note and several maps.

African-American Biographies

Schraff, Anne. *Dr. Charles Drew: Blood Bank Innovator*. Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Enslow, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 0-7660-2117-3, \$20.95.

Drew (1904–1950) was a noted pioneer in the use of blood banks; much of this biography for students at the middle school level describes the difficulties faced by a black man of the period trying to make a career in medicine. The prejudice, slights, and segregation Drew faced at a number of points are particularly striking in the face of how much else in his life went well. He was raised by a loving, reasonably well-off family in Washington, D.C., attended a good high school and then Amherst College, and was a very talented and popular athlete throughout his years of schooling. However, he went to McGill University in Montreal to continue his studies without having to face discrimination, and in his career he often couldn't make full use of his medical abilities.

The final chapter details Drew's fatal 1950 auto accident in an effort to counter the persistent rumor that the great blood bank pioneer died because he was denied admission at a white-only hospital or access to a transfusion. In fact, the author states, Drew was taken to the nearest hospital and treated as well as possible, but his injuries were too severe to survive, at least in any small hospital with the medical technology then available. The book includes black-and-white illustrations and photographs, a chronology, chapter notes, lists of further reading and related web sites, and an index.

American Mosaic: African-American Contributions

Asirvatham, Sandy. *The History of Jazz*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 0-7910-7265-7, \$22.95.

Asirvatham, Sandy. *The History of the Blues*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 0-7910-7266-5, \$22.95.

Hasday, Judy L. *The Tuskegee Airmen*. Philadelphia: Chelsea

House, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 0-7910-7267-3, \$22.95.

Lommel, Cookie. *African Americans in Film and Television*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 0-7910-7268-1, \$22.95.

These volumes for students in the middle grades provide straightforward histories of the place of African Americans in various fields. (Other volumes in the series are on the history of African-American civic organizations and of African-American colleges and universities.) *The Tuskegee Airmen* focuses more than the others on a specific historical episode, the famed group of black pilots in World War II. The book does also recount the history of blacks and the U.S. military, and the struggle African Americans went through before being allowed to join.

The histories of jazz and blues concern fields that largely arose from the African-American community, though both books consider the role of whites in each form of music. This is particularly true of the volume on jazz, though the author notes that without the historical experiences of African Americans, there would be no jazz. The volume on blues does a good job of delineating the cultural and musical roots of the blues, including song lyrics and explanations of such questions as why the guitar is the primary blues instrument.

The volume on African Americans in film and television focuses on the limited roles blacks have been allowed to play. Considering the rise of black sitcoms in the 1970s, for example, the author writes, "Television series like *Good Times*, *Sanford and Son*, and *The Jeffersons* professed to celebrate diversity while perpetuating stereotypes from minstrel times." In contrast to the other volumes, this book is more a critique of the limitations on blacks than a celebration of achievement; the author does include information on numerous black actors and actresses, sometimes with lists of films that they appeared in.

Each volume includes a chronology, bibliography, short lists of further reading and web sites, and an index.

Artists in Their Time

Laidlaw, Jill A. *Frida Kahlo*. Danbury, Conn.: Franklin Watts, 2003. 48 pp. ISBN 0-531-12236-0, \$15.40.

This biography of Kahlo (1907–1954) is written at a middle school level, but older students may be interested in it as well, particularly those who have seen the recent film made from her life. Her story is told in two-page chapters that are heavily illustrated in color and black and white. Parts of her life that are covered include her childhood, a terrible bus accident at age 18 with its lifelong injuries, and her marriage (and divorce and remarriage) with the great painter Diego Rivera. Topics that are discussed in order to help place Kahlo "in her time" include revolutionary Mexico and Communism. Many chapters feature a section of a time line, though most items

included are from Kahlo's life and not greater historical and cultural events. The book does not give much consideration to the overall developments in the art world, other than in one chapter on Surrealism, a movement Kahlo was not truly a part of.

A highlight of the book is the 12 full-page color reproductions of Kahlo's heavily symbolic paintings, most of which are self-portraits. The book ends with a glossary, a list of museums and galleries where one might see Kahlo's work, and an index. This series has eight other volumes, including ones on Edward Hopper, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Paul Gauguin.

The Collected Works of Langston Hughes

Hughes, Langston. *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes, Volume 14: Autobiography: I Wonder as I Wander*. Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 2003. 444 pp. Edited with an introduction by Joseph McLaren. ISBN 0-8262-1434-7, \$34.95.

The previous volume in this 17-volume set of works by Hughes (1902–67) was *The Big Sea*, the first volume of his autobiography that was published in 1940 and covers his life up until 1931, when he was 29 years old. *I Wonder as I Wander*, originally published in 1956, takes the story from 1931 to 1937. Most of the volume is an account of Hughes's travels in the Soviet Union, the Far East, the Caribbean, and later Spain, where he reported on the Spanish Civil War. The memoir is of interest for what it tells of Hughes's perspective from later in life toward the Soviet Union and Communism, and of the place of race in the various cultures he traveled through. Some lighter moments are included as well, such his encounters with well-known film stars and others in California. The book includes a chronology by Arnold Rampersad, and extensive notes to explain people, places, and events in the text.

Cover-to-Cover Books

Mishek, Carla and Sorenson, Margo. *The Secret Heroes*. Logan, Iowa: Perfection Learning, 2003. 80 pp. ISBN 0-7891-5992-9, \$5.95 (pb).

This chapter book for students in the middle elementary grades tells the story of a fifth grader named Sam, who is trying to fit in at a new school while grieving the recent death of his grandfather Zaydeh (a Yiddish word for grandfather). Sam prepares a school project on his grandfather, a survivor of a Nazi concentration camp, as part of a day to celebrate one's heritage. A friendly classmate named Sochi eventually agrees to help Sam learn to play baseball better (he is ashamed of his lack of ability) after he uses his drawing talent to help with her project. In a plot twist that may not be obvious to younger readers as far in advance as it is for adults, it turns out that Sochi's grandfather (the subject of her project) is the same

Japanese-American soldier mentioned at the beginning of the book who saved Sam's grandfather from the Nazis.

This well-intentioned book introduces young readers to both the Holocaust and to the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. An after note indicates that a battalion including Japanese Americans did in fact rescue some of the Jewish prisoners being marched from Dachau by the Germans at the end of the war. However, the setup and plotting of this book does seem rather forced—as does, for example, the use of mostly Yiddish terms that are bolded and defined at the book's end (at one point, Sam jokes to himself, "I'm definitely meshuga.") The book's cover may cause some confusion. A photo of a family of Japanese Americans from the 1940s has a barbed wire and a Star of David across its bottom, while the text on the back cover mentions neither the Jewish nor the Japanese-American themes of the story within.

Creative Minds Biographies

Ferris, Jeri Chase. *Demanding Justice: A Story About Mary Ann Shadd Cary*. Minneapolis: Lerner/First Avenue Editions, 2003. 64 pp. Illus. by Kimanne Smith. ISBN 1-57505-177-X, \$21.27 (rlb); 0-87614-928-X, \$5.95 (pb).

Cary (1823–93) was the first black woman to publish a weekly newspaper and the first to enter law school, as well as a strong voice for black self-reliance in the years leading up to the Civil War. This biography for students in the middle grades tells her story, from growing up as a free black in Delaware and Pennsylvania to her years in Canada, where beginning in 1853 she published the newspaper the *Provincial Freeman*.

Though the biography demonstrates Cary's indomitable spirit and willingness to fight for justice, it does point out how difficult she could be, and how she "argued with just about everybody." This means that the book spends some pages sorting out her disputes with abolitionists and other black leaders and publishers in Canada. However, readers will learn of some lesser known parts of this history, such as the state of free blacks in the United States, the black community in Canada, and divisions among those who sought to improve the lives of black people but differed on how to best accomplish that.

The book includes a number of full-page black-and-white illustrations, and ends with a map, a selected bibliography, and an index (though no chronology).

Cultures of the World

Dubois, Jill; Skoura, Xenia; and Gratsaniti, Olga. *Greece*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Marshall Cavendish/Benchmark Books, 2003. 144 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1499-1, \$24.95.

Gan, Delice and Jermyn, Leslie. *Sweden*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Marshall Cavendish/Benchmark Books, 2003. 144 pp. ISBN

0-7614-1502-5, \$24.95.

Gofen, Ethel Caro and Reymann, Blandine Pengili. *France*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Marshall Cavendish/Benchmark Books, 2003. 144 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1498-3, \$24.95.

Kohen, Elizabeth and Elias, Marie Louise. *Spain*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Marshall Cavendish/Benchmark Books, 2003. 144 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1501-7, \$24.95.

Sheehan, Sean. *Austria*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Marshall Cavendish/Benchmark Books, 2003. 144 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1497-5, \$24.95.

Winter, Jane Kohen and Jermyn, Leslie. *Italy*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Marshall Cavendish/Benchmark Books, 2003. 144 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1500-9, \$24.95.

These titles are the fourth group published in an updated second edition of this series for middle school students; the first edition was published in 1990. Each book has chapters on the country's geography, history, government, economy, environment, people, lifestyle, religion, language, arts, leisure, festivals, and food. Included in each book are a few local recipes; the *Austria* volume has what is said to be "an easy recipe for *schwarzplentenschmarren*" (buckwheat pancakes). Many color photos depict notable places and people as well as everyday life. Occasional sidebars cover such topics as, in the book on Italy, a list of traditional Italian sayings with their English equivalents.

The books conclude with topographical, economic, and cultural maps for each country; economic and cultural facts; a timeline; a glossary; suggestions for further reading; a bibliography; and an index. This series combines a great deal of information, history, and facts with attractive photos in a solid package for middle school students learning about other countries.

Discovering Cultures

Gordon, Sharon. *Cuba*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Benchmark/ Marshall Cavendish, 2002. 48 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1517-3, \$16.95.

Gordon, Sharon. *Philippines*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Benchmark/ Marshall Cavendish, 2002. 48 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1518-1, \$16.95.

Murphy, Patricia J. *India*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Benchmark/ Marshall Cavendish, 2002. 48 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1516-5, \$16.95.

Murphy, Patricia J. *Ireland*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Benchmark/ Marshall Cavendish, 2002. 48 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1515-7, \$16.95.

Parker, Lewis K. *Egypt*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Benchmark/ Marshall Cavendish, 2002. 48 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1519-X, \$16.95.

Parker, Lewis K. *Spain*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Benchmark/ Marshall Cavendish, 2002. 48 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1520-3, \$16.95.

The above titles form the second group in this series of country guides for students in grade two and up. (The first group included volumes on Brazil, China, France, Italy, Japan, and Mexico.) Each volume has chapters on the country's geography, people, everyday life, schools, fun activities, and holidays and celebrations. The sections are illustrated with several large color photos, most featuring the people of the country. Also included are pages highlighting particular places or cultural aspects, along with songs, recipes, and traditional games.

The volumes conclude with each country's flag and currency, the numbers from 1 to 10 in its native language, a short glossary, and brief biographies of three of its well-known people. For further research, a short list of books, web sites, and videos is included. The numerous photos, colorful page design, and large easy-to-read text make this series a good choice for students in the lower elementary grades studying life in other countries.

Distinguished Asian Americans

Nakanishi, Don T. and Wu, Ellen D. *Distinguished Asian American Political and Governmental Leaders*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2003. 240 pp. ISBN 1-57356-325-0, \$69.95.

This volume collects 97 profiles of Asian Americans who have played some role in American politics, almost all since 1950. The profiles, arranged alphabetically, include the person's date and place of birth, education, awards and honors, and political and governmental positions held; this is followed by several paragraphs on each figure's early years, education, and career highlights. A number of the biographies include a black-and-white photo.

The figures here range from well-known figures such as Senator Daniel K. Inouye and Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta to others who have been mayors, city councilmen, and circuit court judges. The information for each of these political figures is generally quite complete, and many of their stories of accomplishment are interesting. The entries are indexed by date of birth as well as by positions held or field of endeavor. Also included are a brief introduction, a selected bibliography, and a general index.

Extraordinary People

Sinnott, Susan. *Extraordinary Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders*. Danbury, Conn.: Children's Press/ Scholastic, 2003. 288 pp. Revised edition. ISBN 0-516-22655-X, \$27.30.

This book for students in middle school and up is mostly composed of biographies of well-known Asian Americans (I.M. Pei, Yo-Yo Ma, and Bruce Lee, for example), as well as of a few Americans whose heritage includes other parts of the Pacific (such as the diver Greg Louganis). Among the 81 chap-

ters (most are three or four pages with one black-and-white photo) are eight that tell the story of groups of people, such as Japanese-American internment camp victims of the 1940s and Hmong refugees of the 1970s.

The portraits, arranged by date of birth, present a well-written summary of each figure's background and achievements; the range of occupations and time periods is wide enough to give a good portrayal of the scope of accomplishments of those of Asian and Pacific birth or background in America. The book contains a brief introduction, notes, a list of further reading, and an index.

Enchantment of the World

Blashfield, Jean F. *Germany*. New York: Children's Press/Scholastic, 2003. 144 pp. ISBN 0-516-22376-3, \$24.15.

Greenblatt, Miriam. *Iran*. New York: Children's Press/Scholastic, 2003. 144 pp. ISBN 0-516-22375-5, \$24.15.

Heinrichs, Ann. *Wales*. New York: Children's Press/Scholastic, 2003. 144 pp. ISBN 0-516-22288-5, \$24.15.

Morrison, Marion. *Guyana*. New York: Children's Press/Scholastic, 2003. 144 pp. ISBN 0-516-22377-1, \$24.15.

Orr, Tamra. *Turkey*. New York: Children's Press/Scholastic, 2003. 144 pp. ISBN 0-516-22679-7, \$24.15.

Somervill, Barbara A. *Iceland*. New York: Children's Press/Scholastic, 2003. 144 pp. ISBN 0-516-22694-0, \$24.15.

This is the second group to be published of these updated country guides for students in the middle grades. The first group contained volumes on Austria, Belgium, England, France, Ireland, and Switzerland. Each book has 10 chapters: an introduction followed by chapters on the country's geography, wildlife, history, government, economy, people, religious traditions, culture, and daily life. The chapters include numerous color photos, sidebars, tables, maps, and portraits of noted figures. The variety of information given, and the different ways it is presented, mean that the volumes in this series give a deeper and broader portrait of these countries than some other series aimed at this grade level. Also of note are the volumes in this second series on Wales, Guyana, and Iceland, countries that are not often included in such country series (though the 12 countries included up until now are largely drawn from Europe, with no African entries or Asian entries other than Turkey).

The volumes include a time line; several pages of Fast Facts; lists of commonly used words and well-known persons (the Wales volume runs from Henry VII to Catherine Zeta-Jones); lists of books, videos, and web sites for further research; and an index. Filled with information and written in a serious though accessible tone, the volumes in *Enchantment of the World* (not a very meaningful title) would be good resources for junior high and some high school students researching these countries.

European Colonies in the Americas

Parker, Lewis K. *Dutch Colonies in the Americas*. New York: Rosen, 2003. 24 pp. ISBN 0-8239-6472-8, \$18.75.

Parker, Lewis K. *French Colonies in the Americas*. New York: Rosen, 2003. 24 pp. ISBN 0-8239-6473-6, \$18.75.

Parker, Lewis K. *Portuguese Colonies in the Americas*. New York: Rosen, 2003. 24 pp. ISBN 0-8239-6474-4, \$18.75.

Parker, Lewis K. *Russian Colonies in the Americas*. New York: Rosen, 2003. 24 pp. ISBN 0-8239-6470-1, \$18.75.

Parker, Lewis K. *Spanish Colonies in the Americas*. New York: Rosen, 2003. 24 pp. ISBN 0-8239-6471-X, \$18.75.

Like other books in Rosen's "Reading Power" category, these volumes combine a somewhat higher level subject matter with large-type text, phonetic spellings for any difficult words and names, and a low total word count (about 430 words per book). Students from second to fourth grade could use this series, although those at a true fourth-grade level may find the text and presentation overly simple.

The uncommon general subject here—colonies in the Americas divided by nationality—does lead the reader down some less-traveled avenues of the history of the Americas, such as the Russian colonies in both Alaska and an area of California north of San Francisco. Inevitably, each volume ends with the particular colonies being bought or overtaken by the United States or a different European power. In the case of the Dutch, it is surprising that a permanent Dutch influence occurred from a colony that lasted only from 1624 to 1664.

The books include a number of drawings, photos, and maps, mostly in color, along with short time lines, glossaries, lists for further research, and indexes. For students in the early grades and at a lower reading level, this series does provide a brief but fairly lively and thorough introduction to the earliest periods of American history.

Famous Inventors

Schraff, Anne. *Charles Drew: Pioneer in Medicine*. Berkeley Heights, NJ.: Enslow, 2003. 32 pp. ISBN 0-7660-2008-8, \$17.95.

This biography for students in the lower elementary grades gives a straightforward account of the life of the black doctor best known for his work in developing the procedures used in storing blood in blood banks. The book uses large type and simple sentences to tell of Drew's childhood in Washington, D.C., his struggles against prejudice in becoming a doctor and practicing as a surgeon, and his successes in blood bank work and in the training of young black doctors. Numerous black-and-white and color photos are incorporated into a lively page design that includes colorful borders. The emphasis is on Drew's persistence, good humor, and desire to help others.

Few telling personal details or anecdotes are included (though at one point, the reader is told of the predilection of Drew and his medical school friends for a Montreal restaurant's dish of pig knuckles). His death at age 45 in a car accident is related in one sentence, without the detailed account given in the book on Drew in the African-American Biographies series reviewed above.

The book ends with a time line of Drew's life, a short list of words to know, a list of books and web sites for further research, and an index. Other books in the series include ones on Thomas Edison, Benjamin Franklin, and Henry Ford.

The Great Hispanic Heritage

Foard, Sheila Wood. *Diego Rivera*. Broomall, Pa.: Chelsea House, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 0-7910-7256-8, \$22.95.

Marcovitz, Hal. *César Chávez*. Broomall, Pa.: Chelsea House, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 0-7910-7257-6, \$22.95.

Marcovitz, Hal. *Pancho Villa*. Broomall, Pa.: Chelsea House, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 0-7910-7253-3, \$22.95.

Morrison, John. *Frida Kahlo*. Broomall, Pa.: Chelsea House, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 0-7910-7254-1, \$22.95.

Parker, Barbara Keevil, and Parker, Duane F. *Miguel de Cervantes*. Broomall, Pa.: Chelsea House, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 0-7910-7252-5, \$22.95.

Slavicek, Louise Chipley. *Juan Ponce de León*. Broomall, Pa.: Chelsea House, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 0-7910-7255-X, \$22.95.

This series of six biographies is intended for both middle and high school students. The text is understandable for those at a sixth-grade reading level, and the discussion and information presented is serious and detailed enough for older students as well.

Though only six figures from Hispanic history are included, the series covers a wide range in time and subject. (The range would be wider, however, if the series did not include both Rivera and Kahlo, two twentieth-century painters who were married to each other.) Gaps in our knowledge of the life of Cervantes (1547–1616) cause the author to frequently state that we can't know exactly what Cervantes did or thought at various periods; still, the biography gives much information about life in sixteenth-century Spain and such remarkable episodes as Cervantes' imprisonment for five years in Algiers by Barbary pirates.

The volume on Chávez provides background on California agriculture, migrant workers, and unions along with a serious account of his work as a labor and political activist. Like the other volumes in the series, it includes numerous color and black-and-white photos and ends with a chronology, a bibliography, lists of web sites and sources for further reading, and

an index. These informative biographies may be too dry for some students at the lower end of the targeted age range, but most students will find them to be full accounts of the lives and backgrounds of these figures.

Greenwood Biographies

Marcello, Patricia Cronin. *The Dalai Lama: A Biography*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2003. 192 pp. ISBN 0-313-32207-4, \$27.50.

According to the series foreword, Greenwood Biographies are "tailored for high school students who need challenging yet accessible biographies." Other entries in the series cover Margaret Mead, Pope John Paul II, J. K. Rowling, and Colin Powell.

As the Dalai Lama was installed in his position in 1940 at the age of four and is an influential spiritual and political figure to this day, the biography has a great deal of territory to cover. Sections provide background on daily life in Tibet; the history, significance, and practice of the Dalai Lamas and of Tibetan Buddhism; and the political situation between Tibet and China. In this account of the Dalai Lama's life, what is certainly most remarkable is how he was discovered at the age of two by one of several search parties looking for the reincarnation of his predecessor as Dalai Lama, as well as his upbringing, where he is taken from his small village to live in a large castle as the spiritual leader of his country (while still a boy too young for formal education). Throughout his life, the Dalai Lama has lived by the traditions of his position while also expanding his role through his openness to the outside political world and scientific developments (such as his love of movies from a young age).

The book contains a time line of events in the Dalai Lama's life; notes following each chapter; a glossary mostly of Tibetan terms; a list of some of the Dalai Lama's more than 60 published books; a selected bibliography; and an index. This thorough treatment of a remarkable life contains plenty of information for serious high school students and older readers who wish to better understand the Dalai Lama.

Hispanic Civil Rights

García, Ignacio M. *Hector P. García: In Relentless Pursuit of Justice*. Houston, Tex.: Arte Público, 2002. 256 pp. ISBN 1-55885-387-1, \$26.95.

García (1914–1996) was a Mexican-American physician and World War II veteran instrumental in the 1948 founding of the American G.I. Forum, a group for Mexican-American veterans designed to, as the author of this biography states, "assist veterans in receiving all the benefits to which they were entitled, encourage civic participation among Mexican Americans, and defend American democracy from abroad and within." Throughout the rest of his life, García worked unceasingly for these goals.

This is the first biography of García, and the author (who is no relation to his subject) makes the case for his central role in the history of the struggle of Mexican Americans for a place in society, as well as his significance in the larger civil rights movement. The author also delineates some reasons why García became marginalized in the movement after the 1970s (as the civil rights movement had become more divided during the Vietnam era) and reasons why he is not so well remembered today (such as his lack of significant writings).

This biography does not shy away from the negative, such as García's aggressive personal style and his neglect of his wife and family as compared to his political commitment. Overall, though, the portrait is of a man for whom, as the subtitle states, the pursuit of justice was a consuming lifelong quest. The book includes an extremely thorough 47-page bibliography, half of which is a list of letters to, from, and related to García.

The History of Weapons and Warfare

Nardo, Don. *The Native Americans*. San Diego, Calif.: Lucent, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 1-59018-070-4, \$27.45.

This series for junior high and high school students adds an important level of insight to how societies work and how historical and technological developments occur. (Other volumes in the series cover ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome; the Middle Ages; and the American Civil War.) This thorough discussion of warfare among Native Americans begins with the weapons and tactics used by various tribes "precontact" and then describes the changes that occurred with the introduction of firearms and horses.

A number of intriguing facts and interpretations emerge, often in the sidebars accompanying the main narrative. For instance, Native Americans became quite proficient at repairing and putting together guns but were greatly disadvantaged by their inability to master the manufacture of gunpowder. The author states at one point that Indians soon employed firearms "with considerably more skill and accuracy than most whites, who were for the most part mediocre marksmen." This may be explained by the Indians' greater experience with and reliance on marksmanship as a skill for hunting.

The book includes numerous black-and-white illustrations and photos and several maps, chapter notes, a glossary, a list for further reading, lists of works consulted, and an index. It offers young readers an interesting combination of social, cultural, scientific, and military history.

History Maker Bios

Weidt, Maryann. *Harriet Tubman*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2003. 48 pp. ISBN 0-8225-4676-0, \$23.93.

Weidt, Maryann. *Rosa Parks*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2003. 48 pp. ISBN 0-8225-4673-6, \$23.93.

Welch, Catherine A. *Frederick Douglass*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2003. 48 pp. ISBN 0-8225-4672-8, \$23.93.

Winget, Mary. *Martin Luther King Jr.* Minneapolis: Lerner, 2003. 48 pp. ISBN 0-8225-4674-4, \$23.93.

These four titles are among the 18 volumes in a series for students in the early and middle elementary grades. (Other biographies include ones on Abraham Lincoln, Amelia Earhart, and Matthew Henson.) After an introduction on the subject's historical significance, five chapters detail his or her life in straightforward prose. Each chapter begins with a cartoon-like color drawing from the person's life and is accompanied by a number of mostly black-and-white photos and illustrations, though the book's design includes some colorful and lively borders and backgrounds. The authors try to relate the experiences of these great figures to those of their young readers, as when a sidebar on King's teenage enthusiasm for fine clothes and dancing is titled "Cool Guy."

Each volume concludes with a time line, a fact about how each figure is remembered today (such as a note on a Montgomery, Alabama, museum honoring Rosa Parks and the civil rights movement), lists of further reading and web sites, a bibliography, and an index. The books in this series give younger students an accessible and well-grounded account of the biographical facts and larger importance of the lives portrayed.

Immigrants in America

Hossell, Karen Price. *The Irish Americans*. San Diego, Calif.: Lucent, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 1-56006-752-7, \$27.45.

Zurlo, Tony. *The Japanese Americans*. San Diego, Calif.: Lucent, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 1-59018-001-1, \$27.45.

For students in junior high and above, this series also includes volumes on Americans with origins in China, Cuba, Italy, Russia, and Vietnam. The volume on Irish Americans begins with the horrid conditions in Ireland after the 1846 potato blight that led to much of the immigration. The story continues with a focus on the struggle of Irish Americans to find a place economically and politically in their new country. Some sidebars feature notable Irish Americans, such as the journalist Nelly Bly and the boxer John L. Sullivan; others contain excerpts from primary source materials.

The entry on Japanese Americans also begins in the middle of the nineteenth century, with the opening of Japan to the West. A central chapter describes the experience of internment during World War II. The last chapter details the "mainstream success" now attained by Americans of Japanese background, including portraits of such figures as news anchor Ann Curry and skater Kristi Yamaguchi.

The books include numerous black-and-white photos and

illustrations, chapter notes, an annotated list of books and web sites for further reading, a list of works consulted, and an index.

In Praise of Black Women

Schwarz-Bart, Simone, with Schwarz-Bart, André. *In Praise of Black Women, Volume 3: Modern African Women*. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 2003. 268 pp. Trans. by Rose-Myriam Réjouis, Stephanie K. Turner, and Val Vinokurov. ISBN 0-299-17270-8, \$49.95.

This is the third of four volumes in this series. The first and second were *Ancient African Queens* (2001) and *Heroines of the Slavery Era* (2002); a volume titled *Modern Women of the Diaspora* is scheduled for spring 2004. All four volumes were previously published in French in 1988.

Modern African Women is a large-format, lavishly illustrated volume that celebrates the place of women in African culture and history through portraits of 14 women, from Madam Yoko (1849–1906), a heroine of Sierra Leone, to contemporary figures such as Miriam Makeba and Winnie Mandela. Each chapter includes an inspirational biography accompanied by numerous large color photographs, including photos of other African women and reproductions of artworks. At times it is difficult to gather straightforward facts (such as specific dates) from these biographies, though additional sidebars in smaller type provide historical notes and cultural background. It is hard to say how much material may have been changed or added since the original 1988 publication, though the final paragraph of Winnie Mandela's entry does refer to her later legal problems and divorce from Nelson Mandela.

The volume concludes with a list of works cited and sources for texts included, as well as a list of illustration sources (though no index or any historical material). *Modern African Women* makes its greatest impact through its many photos of African women of different time periods, countries, cultures, and circumstances. These will likely be just as inspirational to readers of the book as the life stories of the 14 women selected.

In Their Own Words

Roop, Peter and Roop, Connie. *Sojourner Truth*. New York: Scholastic, 2002. 128 pp. ISBN 0-439-26323-9, \$4.50 (pb).

The back cover of this biography for students in the middle elementary grades states that it tells the life of the great opponent of slavery by “using personal recollections, as well as letters and newspaper articles written by those who knew her.” Most of the book is written in a conventional narrative, though it does frequently quote briefly from such sources, most notably the 1850 as-told-to autobiography *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*. Among its black-and-white illustrations and photos, the book includes some primary images, including a card Abraham Lincoln inscribed for Truth when she visited the White House in 1864, and an 1806 list of a slave

owner's property that includes Truth (then named Isabella Hardenbergh) and her family.

Sojourner Truth incorporates its sources into a clear and readable story for younger students, with a number of interesting facts, such as that Truth was actually raised in a Dutch-speaking family in her earliest years. The book includes a chronology, a bibliography, lists of further reading, and an index.

In World History

Worth, Richard. *Ponce de León and the Age of Spanish Exploration in World History*. Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Enslow, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 0-7660-1940-3, \$20.95.

Though Ponce de León is named in the title, this history text for middle school students covers more than just the Spanish explorer; several chapters discuss Spanish history and the voyages of Christopher Columbus, as well as the indigenous cultures of the Caribbean during the time of the first contact. This book does make clear Ponce de León's central role. He sailed on Columbus's second voyage to the New World; he conquered what is now Puerto Rico and was the first Spaniard to explore Florida; and he discovered the Gulf Stream, which influenced much later exploration.

The author often states that there are many things we don't know for sure about Ponce de León—his exact year of birth, for example. In general, the portrait here is of a man who was at least somewhat more just and straightforward with the indigenous people he governed (and participated in the enslaving of) and with his own men than some other leading explorers, including Columbus himself.

The title of the book includes the phrase “in World History.” The book does provide a thorough analysis of this time and place from several points of view. It does not include the comparative studies or much larger perspective the title might imply, but students should come away with a good understanding of the period. In particular, they may be surprised by the frequent failures and hardships endured by such legendary figures as well as by the fact that Ponce de León most likely never even looked for a Fountain of Youth.

Included in the book are a number of black-and-white illustrations, three maps, and several “Source Document” boxes of original material such as excerpts from Columbus's journals. It ends with a time line, chapter notes, books and web sites, and an index.

Indigenous Peoples of North America Indigenous Peoples of the World

Lace, William W. *The Hopi*. San Diego, Calif.: Lucent, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 1-59018-086-0, \$27.45.

Sharp, Anne Wallace. *Australia*. San Diego, Calif.: Lucent, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 1-59018-091-7, \$27.45.

Sharp, Anne Wallace. *The Gypsies*. San Diego, Calif.: Lucent, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 1-59018-239-1, \$27.45.

Sharp, Anne Wallace. *The Pacific Islands*. San Diego, Calif.: Lucent, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 1-59018-094-1, \$27.45.

Wilds, Mary C. *Southeast Asia*. San Diego, Calif.: Lucent, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 1-59018-095-X, \$27.45.

These two series for students in junior high and above tell the stories of indigenous peoples in similar fashion. The volumes in both series begin by defining the groups ethnically and geographically and then going on to discuss their cultures and beliefs along with their past history, current status, and future possibilities. The books include black-and-white photos and maps, and sidebars on related topics. Each ends with notes, lists of further reading and works consulted, and an index.

One difference between the series is that the works on North American indigenous peoples can go into great detail. (Eighteen others have been published, with most on such peoples as the Cherokee and the Mohawk as well as some volumes divided by geographic region.) *The Hopi*, for example, gives a full account of their way of life and history, ending with a discussion of the conflicts they have faced with the Navajo people. A volume such as *Southeast Asia*, on the other hand, must cover a lot of ground (in every sense) in its treatment of peoples such as the Hmong and the Dyak. All of the books in these series, though, present a fairly balanced and thorough combination of historical, cultural, and social analysis.

The Jews of...

Shwartz-Be'eri, Ora. *The Jews of Kurdistan: Daily Life, Customs, Arts and Crafts*. Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 2000. 272 pp. ISBN 965-278-238-6, \$45.00 (pb).

Slapak, Orpa. *The Jews of India: A Story of Three Communities*. Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 2003. 216 pp. ISBN 965-278-238-6, \$45.00 (pb).

Over the last two decades, the Israel Museum in Jerusalem has held exhibitions on the life and culture of various Jewish ethnic communities. These volumes are catalogues from two such exhibitions: *The Jews of Kurdistan* is from the first exhibition in 1981 (its catalogue was published in Hebrew at that time but not translated into English until 2000), and *The Jews of India* is from the seventh exhibition in 1995.

Each work collects about a dozen scholarly articles related to the history, culture, and daily life of the group. The large-format volumes are illustrated with numerous color and black-and-white photos, mostly of the objects displayed in the exhibition. The one on the Jews of India includes a number of striking black-and-white photos of family groups from the past century, as well as a large selection of color photographs of *ketubbah*, the elaborately illustrated wedding contracts. Articles also describe the origins of and distinctions among the three Jewish communities in India: the Bene Israel, and the Baghdadi and the Cochin Jews. The volume on the Jews in Kurdistan has more emphasis on everyday life, as shown through beautifully crafted objects such as clothing, rugs, and jewelry. Both include a glossary and a bibliography.

Though their topics are of a specialized nature, these two

books are of interest beyond their connection to the original exhibitions, as they provide a multifaceted portrait of these communities.

Journey to Freedom: The African American Library

Cannarella, Deborah. *Zora Neale Hurston: African-American Writer*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-649-3, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

De Capua, Sarah E. *Abolitionists: A Force for Change*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-644-2, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

Green, Robert. *Nelson Mandela: Activist for Equality*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-648-5, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

Heinrichs, Ann. *The Ku Klux Klan: A Hooded Brotherhood*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-646-9, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

Raatma, Lucia. *The Harlem Renaissance: A Celebration of Creativity*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-645-0, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

Raatma, Lucia. *Langston Hughes: African-American Writer and Poet*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-647-7, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

These are the latest entries to be published in a 42-volume series for middle school students. The large-format books contain text that is serious but easy to follow and a handsome design where most photos are given borders as though they were affixed to the pages of an album.

The majority of the volumes in the series are biographies, and these present conventional, chronological accounts. Of particular interest are the photos included of the people, places, and inspirations in each subject's life; the volume on Hurston, for example, includes illustrations from the Brer Rabbit stories and Kipling's *The Jungle Book* that she loved as a child and that later influenced her fiction. The books on abolitionists and the Harlem Renaissance are largely a series of short biographies with some overall context. The cover of the abolitionists volume is a grouping of six portraits of white abolitionists, though both white and black abolitionists are discussed inside. The Ku Klux Klan book gives a full account of its 1865 origins and its resurgence in 1915, along with its place in the hate groups of today.

Each book ends with a time line, a list of books and web sites, and a glossary that defines the occasional terms placed in bold type throughout the text.

The Latin American Readers

Joseph, Gilbert M., and Henderson, Timothy J. *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press. 808 pp. ISBN 0-8823-3042-3, \$24.95 (pb).

Nouzeilles, Gabriela, and Montaldo, Graciela. *The Argentina Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press. 600 pp. ISBN 0-8823-2914-X, \$23.95 (pb).

These two large volumes join previous series entries on Peru and Brazil, with future ones planned for Cuba, Chile, Costa Rica, and Guatemala. Each volume collects numerous writings original to each country, with most entries translated by the editors from Spanish to English. Some well-known writers are included (Jorge Luis Borges and Julio Cortázar from Argentina and Octavio Paz and Carlos Fuentes from Mexico), but most writers here are lesser known. The order in the subtitle of the words "History, Culture, Politics" is about right; though many different literary genres are represented, the works included are generally placed in chronological order and usually are included for what they tell us about the historical development of each country.

The Argentina Reader includes essays, poems, and short stories, as well as songs, articles, and a few comic strips. The volume on Mexico includes many of these genres, as well as a photo essay on Mexican history. Most articles are placed in historical groupings, though the Mexican volume begins with a selection of attempts to define national identity titled "The Search for Lo Mexicano." The editors for both volumes introduce each selection with a brief introduction that places the work and its origins in context. The volumes end with lists for further reading and an index. For serious students of the history and culture of these two countries, the volumes will provide original material closer to the source than most other works available in English.

Modern Nations of the World

Ake, Anne. *Hungary*. San Diego, Calif.: Lucent, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 1-56006-970-8, \$27.45.

Corona, Laurel. *Israel*. San Diego, Calif.: Lucent, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 1-59018-115-8, \$27.45.

Hutchinson, Linda. *Lebanon*. San Diego, Calif.: Lucent, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 1-59018-116-8, \$27.45.

This series for students in middle school and above now includes more than 40 entries. After an introduction, each volume has a chapter on the country's geography and major cities and regions, several chapters on its history, and single chapters on arts and culture and on daily life. About 40 black-and-white photos, illustrations, and maps accompany the text. Sidebars provide additional facts, such as information on the Hungarian practice of putting family names before personal names, and on Israel's Holocaust memorial Yad Vashem. The books in this series include informative and thorough text, especially on historical developments, though

the relatively small black-and-white photos and the lack of any eye-catching design elements may make it less appealing to students compared with some other country series.

A reference section at the end of each book includes facts about the country, chapter notes, a glossary (except for the Hungary volume), suggested further readings, a list of works consulted, and an index. The volume on Hungary, though published in the same year, has a few other differences from the other two volumes: it does not have the series title or its author on its spine, and its chapters do not follow the same format.

My America

Wyeth, Sharon Dennis. *Message in the Sky: Corey's Underground Railroad Diary. Book Three*. New York: Scholastic, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 0-439-37057-4, \$10.95.

This is the third volume of the fictional journal of Corey Birdsong, a black boy living in the period leading up to the Civil War. In this book, it is 1859. Corey is 10 years old and living with his family in the black community of Amherstburg, Ontario (slavery was abolished in Canada in 1793). In the first volume of the series, Corey's family escaped slavery in Kentucky through the Underground Railroad; in the second book Corey helps a friend of his to escape and join them. This third book features another daring rescue; it results from a heavily foreshadowed mistake by Corey that is accompanied by a remarkable coincidence. Many of the diary entries, though, are about Corey's home life, friends, and his hobby of observing and training birds.

The book contains some writing that seems unlikely from a 10-year-old of this or any other period ("As for myself, life is filled with things to do in every direction"), but it does include a number of realistic details about life for blacks in that era and the simple concerns of a young boy. The story particularly stresses the willingness of blacks in this Canadian community to help one another, and their life seems fairly idyllic. A historical note relates a brief history of slavery in the United States and of the African-Canadian community.

19th Century American Inventors

Cefrey, Holly. *The Inventions of Granville Woods: The Railroad Telegraph System and the "Third Rail."* New York: Rosen, 2003. 24 pp. ISBN 0-8239-6442-6, \$18.75.

The six volumes in this series for lower-elementary level readers include some well-known figures (Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, and Eli Whitney) along with more obscure ones, such as Amanda Jones, who developed the vacuum method of food preservation. Woods, an African-American machinist and inventor who lived from 1856 to 1910, would be placed in the lesser-known group, but he did come up with a number of significant inventions. The most important of these were a telegraph system (1887) that made train travel safer, and the "third rail" (1890) that is still used in trains and subways today. He was the holder of 50 patents

as well.

Part of Rosen's "Reading Power" series, the book has large type and simple sentences to make it suitable for students at a second- or third-grade reading level. A number of black-and-white photos and reproductions of original patent drawings make it easy to follow Woods's accomplishments. The book includes a time line, a brief glossary and list of resources, and an index.

The No-Nonsense Guides

Barker, Jonathan. *The No-Nonsense Guide to Terrorism*. New York: Verso, 2003. 144 pp. ISBN 1-85984-433-2, \$10.00 (pb).

Hughes, Lotte. *The No-Nonsense Guide to Indigenous Peoples*. New York: Verso, 2003. 144 pp. ISBN 1-85984-438-3, \$10.00 (pb).

These two guides are part of a series first published in Britain that is based on material from the magazine *New Internationalist*. The books are intended as pocket guides that will provide a thorough introduction to political and social issues; some of the other entries in the series concern globalization, climate change, and sexual diversity. Though they are created from a liberal and British perspective, these works give a fairly evenhanded presentation of these topics for anyone who would like a more thorough background than can be gained from the daily news.

The author of the guide to terrorism defines it as having three components: "violence threatened or employed; against civilian targets; for political objectives." In this definition, he includes actions by individuals, groups, and governments; an entire chapter is devoted to "State Terrorism." He also writes that while acts may be defined as terroristic, it is difficult to define people as such. Some readers may have different opinions on whether all such actions as he describes are terrorism, or whether some groups and actions should be condemned more severely, but the book's intent is to describe the workings and reality of all situations that fall within the characteristics of terrorism as defined here. For the author of the guide to indigenous peoples, defining an indigenous people is even more problematic, particularly because the peoples the term often refers to may reserve the right to define themselves. The book includes numerous examples of peoples from around the world in chapters such as "Colonialism and conquest," "Facing the problems," and "Development, justice, and future challenges."

Both books include source notes at the end of each chapter, and numerous sidebars (often quotes from other sources or tables of information) in relatively small type. The books conclude with a list of organizations to contact for further information, a short bibliography, and an index.

On My Own Biography

Wadsworth, Ginger. *Benjamin Banneker: Pioneering*

Scientist. Minneapolis: Lerner/First Avenue Editions, 2003. 48 pp. Illus. by Craig Orback. ISBN 0-87614-104-1, \$5.95 (pb).

Walker, Sally M. *Bessie Coleman: Daring to Fly*. Minneapolis: Lerner/First Avenue Editions, 2003. 48 pp. Illus. by Janice Lee Porter. ISBN 0-87614-103-3, \$5.95 (pb).

The two figures in these biographies for early elementary students apparently had somewhat similar origins. In *Benjamin Banneker*, we are told when young Benjamin was picking cotton in Maryland in 1737 that “[i]t was hard work for a six-year-old,” who counted all the rows of tobacco and all the logs in the cabin he lived in to ease the loneliness. *Bessie Coleman* begins in Texas in 1902, where “[p]icking cotton was tough work for a 10-year-old,” but young Bessie loved doing math to count the cotton her family was paid for.

From there, the volume on Bessie Coleman stresses the daring and persistent qualities of the first African-American woman pilot. The author does mention how Coleman had the habit of sometimes embellishing the facts of her achievements. And not all of her colorful life makes it into the story; her marriage in 1917 is mentioned only in a time line of events, and her death in a flying accident in 1926 is discussed only in the afterword.

In contrast with Coleman’s short life of glamour and some controversy, Banneker is presented as a man who dedicated himself to his family and his farm, and who always remained curious about the way the world works. The book recounts his achievements as a clockmaker and surveyor, and how he became the first black to write an almanac. Like the Coleman volume, the book has numerous color illustrations, an afterword, and a list of dates.

Our Cultural Heritage

Alter, Judy. *Mexican Americans*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child’s World, 2002. 32 pp. ISBN 1-56766-156-4, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

Alter, Judy. *Native Americans*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child’s World, 2002. 32 pp. ISBN 1-56766-152-1, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

De Capua, Sarah E. *Irish Americans*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child’s World, 2002. 32 pp. ISBN 1-56766-155-6, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

Fitterer, C. Ann. *Russian Americans*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child’s World, 2002. 32 pp. ISBN 1-56766-158-0, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

Fitterer, C. Ann. *Vietnamese Americans*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child’s World, 2002. 32 pp. ISBN 1-56766-160-2, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

Fitterer, C. Ann. *Arab Americans*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The

Child’s World, 2002. 32 pp. ISBN 1-56766-150-5, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

Fitterer, C. Ann. *German Americans*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child’s World, 2002. 32 pp. ISBN 1-56766-151-3, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

Franchino, Vicky. *Italian Americans*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child’s World, 2002. 32 pp. ISBN 1-56766-153-X, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

McDaniel, Melissa. *Japanese Americans*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child’s World, 2002. 32 pp. ISBN 1-56766-154-8, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

Raatma, Lucia. *Chinese Americans*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child’s World, 2002. 32 pp. ISBN 1-56766-149-1, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

Raatma, Lucia. *Polish Americans*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child’s World, 2002. 32 pp. ISBN 1-56766-157-2, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

Raatma, Lucia. *Swedish Americans*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child’s World, 2002. 32 pp. ISBN 1-56766-159-9, \$27.07 (list); \$18.95 (school and library).

This 12-volume series for students in the middle elementary grades (it is aimed at a fourth-grade reading level) describes the community and contributions of national groups of immigrants to the United States. Each volume contains four chapters: one on life in the country of origin, followed by chapters on the move to America, becoming established in a new country, and the cultural contributions the group has made.

The large-type text is accompanied by numerous illustrations and drawings, most of which are fairly small and original to the period being discussed. Most chapters also include a one- or two-page sidebar on a particular American from that group or on a cultural topic. The volume on German Americans, for example, has sidebars on Revolutionary War heroine Molly Pitcher, the history of Ellis Island, and the singing von Trapp family (a slight stretch here, as they were Austrian). Many of the page spreads include a “Fascinating Fact”; in the Swedish-American volume, we learn that Charles Lindbergh’s grandfather, Mans Olsson Lindbergh, was a Swedish immigrant who served in the Union Army in the American Civil War.

Without going into great depth, this series does connect life in these countries of origin with the immigrant experience as well as with the place each group has in American culture. Students will probably find it interesting to learn of the sometimes unexpected ethnic backgrounds of well-known people, such as in the chapter in the Arab-American volume that includes football player Doug Flutie, disc jockey Casey Kasem, and recent presidential candidate Ralph Nader.

Each volume contain a time line, a glossary of the words bolded in the text, a short list of books and web sites for further reading, and an index.

People's History

Miller, Brandon Marie. *Good Women of a Well-Blessed Land: Women's Lives in Colonial America*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2003. 96 pp. ISBN 0-8225-0032-9, \$25.26.

Written at a middle-school reading level, this book gives young readers a sense of what life was like for women during several times and places in early American history. The first chapters focus on Native Americans, the Jamestown colony in Virginia, early New England colonists, and the growing colonies of the later 1600s, with an emphasis on indentured servants and slaves. Later chapters depict the many tasks and hardships women of the period faced and examine the secondary status of women legally and socially. A chapter titled "A Changing World" describes the effect of eighteenth-century trends such as greater immigration and the development of town life. A short concluding section delineates women's clothing styles in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The book includes some black-and-white illustrations, a selected bibliography, and a list for further reading that includes several original accounts from women of the period. The author introduces this list by stating that it is best when possible "to let people from the past speak for themselves." *Good Women of a Well-Blessed Land* provides a detailed description of how life was for most women of the time, though perhaps it would have been improved by more individual portraits and original words from the women themselves.

A Proud Heritage: The Hispanic Library

Amparano, Julie. *America's Latinos: Their Rich History, Culture, and Traditions*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-083-5, \$28.50 (list); \$19.95 (school and library).

Bowler, Sarah. *Father Junípero Serra and the California Missions*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-175-0, \$28.50 (list); \$19.95 (school and library).

Cantor, Carrie Nichols. *Francisco Vásquez de Coronado: The Search for Cities of Gold*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-210-2, \$28.50 (list); \$19.95 (school and library).

Cantor, Carrie Nichols. *The Mexican War: How the United States Gained Its Western Lands*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-176-9, \$28.50 (list); \$19.95 (school and library).

Gaines, Ann. *The Alamo: The Fight over Texas*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-173-4, \$28.50 (list); \$19.95 (school and library).

Gaines, Ann. *César E. Chávez: The Fight for Farm Workers' Rights*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-209-9, \$28.50 (list); \$19.95 (school and library).

Gaines, Ann. *Vicente Fox: The Road to the Mexican Presidency*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-173-4, \$28.50 (list); \$19.95 (school and library).

Garcia, James. *Cinco de Mayo: A Mexican Holiday about Unity and Pride*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-174-2, \$28.50 (list); \$19.95 (school and library).

The eight volumes in this series for students in the middle elementary grades cover the Hispanic experience from a wide variety of perspectives. One general volume, *America's Latinos*, gives a broad overview of Spanish exploration and settlement in the New World, followed by a description of the major countries of origin of Hispanics in the United States, a chapter on Hispanic culture, and brief portraits of 13 notable Hispanic Americans today.

Other entries take on much more specific topics. One notable feature about the subjects chosen is that they do not all fit neatly into what one might call "A Proud Heritage" (though a few, such as the labor leader César Chávez, do). The biographical volumes include one on Coronado, whose remarkable explorations are described along with his self-admitted failures in the search for gold and his cruelty to Native Americans. The book on Fox, the Mexican president, tells a necessarily incomplete story, as well as one on a figure not directly part of the Hispanic experience in the United States. The volumes on the Mexican War (which, as the author says, was a war the United States started) and the Alamo describe historical episodes with questionable actions and motivations as well as heroism from all sides involved.

The books tell their stories with clear text at a fifth-grade reading level, a number of color photos and illustrations, and several sidebars on related topics. Each entry includes a time line, a brief glossary of words bolded in the text, a list of books and web sites for further reading, a short list of works consulted by the author, and an index. The books in this series each do a good job of providing students with an understanding of their chosen subjects, though the range of subjects show just how little of the Hispanic heritage can be covered in just eight books.

Real Voices, Real History

Rozema, Vicki, ed. *Voices from the Trail of Tears*. Winston-Salem, N.C.: John F. Blair, 2003. 256 pp. ISBN 0-89587-271-4, \$11.95 (pb).

Waters, Andrew, ed. *I Was Born in Slavery: Personal Accounts of Slavery in Texas*. Winston-Salem, N.C.: John F. Blair, 2003. 184 pp. ISBN 0-89587-274-9, \$10.95 (pb).

Several previous volumes in this series are similar to the

book on slavery in Texas; they include accounts of slavery in other Southern states. The 28 reminiscences here have been selected out of hundreds that were collected from former slaves by the Federal Writers' Project in the 1930s. As the editor notes in an introduction, Texas is not often associated with slavery (the institution was not really established there until the 1810s), but by 1860, 30.8 percent of Texas families owned slaves, exactly the same as that in Virginia.

Most of the dialect language and spelling of the original accounts is retained here; this understandably makes the stories harder to read, though certainly more authentic. The editor has also retained, without comment or change, the original introductions to these reminiscences. This can seem odd when the introductions include statements such as: "Lu Lee was born in slavery . . . about 1848–49. She now resides at 1714 Flint Street, Dallas, Texas, with her granddaughter and subsists on the old-age pension."

Voices from the Trail of Tears collects about 30 newspaper accounts, official reports, letters, and journal entries (some complete and some excerpted) to tell the story of the forced removal of Native Americans, particularly the Cherokees, from their original lands to areas west of the Mississippi in the 1820s and 1830s. The story culminates in the 1838 journey along what become known as the Trail of Tears. The editor of this volume begins with a lengthy introduction that gives a background for the history of the removal. Each selection also contains an introduction to put it in context, which is sometimes as long as the original excerpt itself. All together, the book gives a detailed portrait of this tragic episode in history. It is worth noting that the majority of the accounts here are from white observers or participants in the removal, which may be an indication of how written accounts that survive from the period are largely from the perspective of the perpetrators, not the victims.

Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage

Aranda, Jr., José and Torres-Saillant, Silvio, eds. *Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage, Volume IV*. Houston, Tex.: Arte Público, 2002. 360 pp. ISBN 1-55885-361-8, \$27.95.

This is the fourth in a biannual series that collects essays from scholars participating in conferences of the Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage project, which, like Arte Público Press, is based at the University of Houston. As Torres-Saillant notes in the introduction, after eight years of this conference, speakers "for the most part seem free of the compulsion to bear witness." They now take it as an established fact, not something to be defensively proven, that a substantial body of work with deep historical roots exists from writers of Hispanic descent in the United States.

The 17 essays are divided into subjects such as "Textuality and Social Context" and "Writing Modernity." Five of the essays are in Spanish, and many others quote extensively from Spanish texts. Most of the articles here treat specific topics in literary studies, such as Christopher Schedler's

"Inscribing Mexican-American Modernism in Américo Paredes's *George Washington Gómez*." Several take a larger perspective, such as Thomas J. Kinney's "Remapping the Archive: Recovered Literature and the Deterritorialization of the Canon." Collectively, the articles show the broad range of U.S.-Hispanic literary studies, and the volume is an important resource for scholars doing work in this field.

Rookie Biographies

Rookie Read-About Holidays

Krishnaswami, Uma. *Holi*. Danbury, Conn.: Children's Press/Scholastic, 2003. 32 pp. ISBN 0-516-22863-3, \$13.30.

Polette, Nancy. *Mae Jemison*. Danbury, Conn.: Children's Press/Scholastic, 2003. 32 pp. ISBN 0-516-22856-0, \$13.30.

Wade, Mary Dodson. *Cinco de Mayo*. Danbury, Conn.: Children's Press/Scholastic, 2003. 32 pp. ISBN 0-516-22664-9, \$13.30.

In these two series for students in the lower elementary grades, each page spread has several sentences of simple, large-type text accompanied by one or two color photos. To make reading them easier, some names and words are followed by phonetic spellings—as, for example, "Mariachi (mahr-re-AH-che) bands play music." At the end of each book, two pages titled "Words You Know" includes eight words accompanied by photos that readers have seen in the book. All the books contain a very short index.

Mae Jemison is an inspirational biography of the first African-American woman to travel in space. It stresses Jemison's dedication to help others and the years of training it took to achieve her goal. Most of the photos are of Jemison and her training, though a few have a rather tenuous link to the text, such as a page on her return from the Peace Corps that is illustrated by an unknown group of people departing an airliner.

The two holidays in *Cinco de Mayo* and *Holi* have historical origins that may seem odd and obscure to students at this level. *Cinco de Mayo* is described as celebrating a Mexican battle with France in 1862 that was partly caused by Mexico's refusal to pay other countries what it owed them, and it eventually won because a rainstorm led to French troops becoming stuck in the mud. *Holi* is an Indian holiday celebrated on a full moon in March; it was inspired by the Hindu story of a wicked princess named Holika. She tried to kill a good nephew by placing him into a bonfire but was killed when the gods removed her magical resistance to fire. However, young students will appreciate the contemporary celebrations of these holidays, such as the parades and carnivals of *Cinco de Mayo*. Of particular appeal is the practice at *Holi* of tossing colored powder called *gulal* and colored water on people you encounter, even if you don't know them. The photos of adults and children covered in purple, orange, and blue will make first and second graders want to celebrate this holiday.

A Traveler's Literary Companion

Bush, Peter, and Dillman, Lisa, eds. *Spain*. Berkeley, Calif.: Whereabouts Press, 2003. 256 pp. ISBN 1-883513-12-X, \$13.95 (pb).

Silver, Katherine, ed.. *Chile*. Berkeley, Calif.: Whereabouts Press, 2003. 256 pp. ISBN 1-883513-13-8, \$13.95 (pb).

One distinguishing feature of this series of literary guides (eight others are also available) is that each volume is entirely composed of literary works—mainly short stories, along with some excerpts from novels and memoirs. The books include no travel information such as literary walking tours. A second feature that sets the series apart is that all of the selections are relatively contemporary works, from the 1970s up through the last few years—the volume on Spain has no selections from *Don Quixote*, for example.

The 30 selections in *Spain* are divided by cities and regions (with four entries under “Barcelona” and three under “Galicia,” for example). A short author biography on the first page of each story tells the origin of the specific work and its place in the author’s career. Many of the entries tell of everyday life, and memories of a different time and place are frequent story elements.

The 21 stories in *Chile* are similarly divided by region. They include two passages from the memoirs of the poet Pablo Neruda and an excerpt from a novel by Ariel Dorfman. Most other writers in the volume, and in the volume on Spain as well, will probably be known only to those already quite familiar with the country’s contemporary literature. The stories from Chile at times have a political or angry tone, most likely in reaction to the still strong memories of the Pinochet dictatorship and the repression of literary expression that accompanied it.

The stories in both volumes have a number of different translators, but just about all of them are rendered in clear prose that gives a sense of life in these countries. For students of and visitors to Spain or Chile, these books may provide a more personal and down-to-earth entry into national concerns and daily life than other country guides can give.

A True Book

Gray, Shirley Wimbish. *The Philippines*. Danbury, Conn.: Children’s Press/Scholastic, 2003. 48 pp. ISBN 0-516-24212-1, \$16.45.

Gray, Shirley Wimbish. *Vietnam*. Danbury, Conn.: Children’s Press/Scholastic, 2003. 48 pp. ISBN 0-516-24211-3, \$16.45.

Gray, Susan. *Germany*. Danbury, Conn.: Children’s Press/Scholastic, 2003. 48 pp. ISBN 0-516-22673-8, \$16.45.

Heinrichs, Ann. *Afghanistan*. Danbury, Conn.: Children’s Press/Scholastic, 2003. 48 pp. ISBN 0-516-22775-0, \$16.45.

Heinrichs, Ann. *Jamaica*. Danbury, Conn.: Children’s Press/Scholastic, 2003. 48 pp. ISBN 0-516-22676-2, \$16.45.

Heinrichs, Ann. *The Netherlands*. Danbury, Conn.: Children’s Press/Scholastic, 2003. 48 pp. ISBN 0-516-22675-4, \$16.45.

These country guides are aimed at younger students than most other such series. With very large type and simple sentences and vocabulary, they would be appropriate for those in grades two to four. The chapters in each book follow the general pattern of geography, people, history, economy, and daily life. Numerous photos, mostly in color, and lively design elements accompany the text. Many chapters have particularly colorful sidebars on such topics as volcanoes (in *The Philippines*) and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Each book ends with a list of books, organizations, and web sites for further research; a short glossary of words bolded in the text; and an index. It would have been helpful to include a page of country facts such as on currency and population figures; some of this information can be found in various chapters, however.

The A True Book series (the series title is never explained) provides a solid introduction for younger students to these countries. The six volumes reviewed here appear to be the only country guides in the series currently available, and they do make for an unusual assortment.

Understanding: Introductions to the States and Regions of the Contemporary World

Ganguly, Sumit and DeVotta, Neil, eds. *Understanding Contemporary India*. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2003. 334 pp. ISBN 1-55587-982-9, \$55.00 (cl); 1-55587-958-6, \$23.50 (pb).

Hillman, Richard S. and D’Agostino, Thomas, J., eds. *Understanding the Contemporary Caribbean*. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2003. 408 pp. ISBN 1-55587-983-7, \$55.00 (cl); 1-55587-959-4, \$23.50 (pb).

With articles written by a group of scholars from several different nations (most often the United States, along with Britain and the countries being studied) and from numerous disciplines (history, politics, geography, sociology, literature, and more), the volumes in this series cover their subject in a very serious, thorough, and interdisciplinary way. To give an idea of the thoroughness involved, the volume on the Caribbean, in a section on “Ethnicity, Race, Class, and Nationality,” includes a table on the “Distribution of the African Regional Origins of Slaves Arriving in Major British Colonies, 1658–1713.”

Though academic, the prose from the various contributing scholars is usually clear and mostly free of jargon. The rather small type is accompanied by some maps and black-and-white photos, and individual chapters end with notes and a bibliography. The volume on India includes a glossary, and

the Caribbean volume includes a list of facts by country. Both books end with an index. For serious high school students doing extensive research, or for college students looking for one source to broaden their understanding of a country or region, these books provide a useful compendium of scholarship. The interdisciplinary coverage of the many countries and cultures of the Caribbean make that volume an especially worthwhile resource.

We Are America

Binns, Tristan Boyer. *Chinese Americans*. Chicago: Heinemann Library, 2003. 32 pp. ISBN 1-4034-0734-7, \$24.22 (list); \$16.95 (school and library).

Binns, Tristan Boyer. *German Americans*. Chicago: Heinemann Library, 2003. 32 pp. ISBN 1-4034-0736-1, \$24.22 (list); \$16.95 (school and library).

Binns, Tristan Boyer. *Mexican Americans*. Chicago: Heinemann Library, 2003. 32 pp. ISBN 1-4034-0738-X, \$24.22 (list); \$16.95 (school and library).

Yoder, Carolyn P. *Asian Indian Americans*. Chicago: Heinemann Library, 2003. 32 pp. ISBN 1-4034-0733-9, \$24.22 (list); \$16.95 (school and library).

Yoder, Carolyn P. *Filipino Americans*. Chicago: Heinemann Library, 2003. 32 pp. ISBN 1-4034-0735-5, \$24.22 (list); \$16.95 (school and library).

Yoder, Carolyn P. *Italian Americans*. Chicago: Heinemann Library, 2003. 32 pp. ISBN 1-4034-0737-1, \$24.22 (list); \$16.95 (school and library).

A distinguishing element of these volumes for students in the lower to middle elementary grades is how each begins and ends with the story of a single immigrant. The first chapter of *Asian Indian Americans*, for example, tells of Manoj Shenoy, who came to the United States from Bombay in 1983 at the age of 10. The last chapter continues his story and tells how he became a computer programmer near Boston and was married in 2001. In other volumes, the single immigrant is sometimes from a different time period when immigration from that country was the greatest, such as Louis Longo, who came from southern Italy in 1905.

The chapters between these individual stories describe the historical and cultural developments of the immigrant communities in straightforward text, accompanied by black-and-white and color photos in colorful page designs. Throughout these chapters, occasional quotes from other immigrants are placed on the page in a design that makes them appear as if ripped from a notebook.

An interesting feature at the end of each book is an immigration chart that graphically shows by the number of symbols how many people immigrated from that country in

several significant decades, as well as over time. For example, the Italian chart has symbols indicating that about 650,000 Italians came to the United States from 1891 to 1900, a number that rose to about 2 million in the following decade. Other back-of-the-book features are a short list of more books to read, a glossary, and an index. In comparison to other series of this type, which sometimes focus more on various celebrities and historical figures from the same national background, *We Are America* presents what everyday life has been like for ordinary people who came to achieve their dreams in America.

World Writers

Hart, Joyce. *Native Son: The Story of Richard Wright*. Greensboro, N.C.: Morgan Reynolds, 2003. 128 pp. ISBN 1-931798-06-0, \$21.95.

Rhynes, Martha E. *Gwendolyn Brooks: Poet from Chicago*. Greensboro, N.C.: Morgan Reynolds, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 1-931798-05-2, \$21.95.

This series of biographies is for students in junior high and above. The first sentence of *Native Son* sets the tone for what follows: "When he was four years old, Richard Wright set his grandparents' house on fire." From the beginning (such as at age three, when he killed a kitten by hanging to spite his father), the story of this great African-American writer is filled with rebelliousness, racial slights (and worse), difficult relationships, and political conflicts. One thing to note: Although the book does not gloss over many details of Wright's life (from the kitten story above to later marital infidelity), it does appear from the list of sources that most of the material is taken from his autobiographical works *Black Boy* and *American Hunger*. In these sources, some incidents may have been dramatically shaped by Wright, and Hart doesn't seem to bring much of a critical view to investigate what really may have happened.

The Brooks biography begins this way: "In 1967, when Gwendolyn Brooks was fifty years old, she had an experience that dramatically changed her life." (It is refreshing to see a biography where the life-altering event that leads off the book occurs well after the usual age of 10 or 12.) In this case, the experience was attending a writer's conference where the radical political sentiment of the other speakers and the audience caused Brooks to decide to change her poetry from writing *about* black people to writing *for* black people—that is, a more socially conscious and poetically free-form style. The book then describes her childhood in Chicago, frequently mentioning her feeling of not belonging (partly caused, in Brooks's view, by light-skinned blacks looking down on darker-skinned blacks like her). It continues with the steady rise of her career as a poet, including her 1950 Pulitzer Prize.

Each book contains about a dozen black-and-white photos, and each concludes with notes of sources, a list of published works, a bibliography and a short list of web sites, and an index. Other writers in the 19 volumes of this series include Stephen Crane, Langston Hughes, and H.G. Wells. 