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BOOKS

MEDIA

REFERENCE

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

READERS' ADVISORY

IN THE BOOKROOM

SELF-E

You are here: Home / Best Of / Best Print Reference | Best Reference 2015

## Best Print Reference | Best Reference 2015

BY BRIAN COUTTS & CYNTHIA ETKIN ON FEBRUARY 26, 2016



**IN 2015**, as Americans worried about terrorist attacks at home and abroad, a disturbing new study showed that while 71 Americans were killed in terrorist attacks on U.S. soil over the past decade, more than 300,000 were killed by gun violence. A report in the *Guardian* showed that African Americans were more than twice as likely to be unarmed when killed during encounters with the police as white citizens. Glen Starks's *African Americans at Risk: Issues in Education, Health, Community and Justice* examines why African Americans are disadvantaged in comparison with the majority population.

We were shocked when the media showed a picture of a toddler, a Syrian refugee, washed up on the surf of the Turkish coast and saddened when terrorist attacks in Paris killed more than 120 people and injured some 200. These events prompted discussions of what to do about an escalating exodus of refugees from war-torn countries. *Asian American Society: An Encyclopedia* from SAGE reminds us that although the United States is a nation of refugees, assimilation is not always easy. On the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, ABC-CLIO published *Modern Genocide*, which describes each atrocity in text and documents.

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## TAKING FLIGHT

The subject of the birds, bees, and butterflies brought us some wonderful new sources. *Parrots of the Wild* from the University of California Press was the culmination of a life spent researching some 350 species of parrots. Complete with 900 beautiful color illustrations, Joseph Wilson and Olivia Carril's *The Bees in Your Backyard* addressed some 4,000 different species, while *Monarchs in a Changing World* from Cornell University Press enhanced our knowledge of the mysterious monarch butterfly.

To honor the centennial of Albert Einstein's general theory of relativity, Princeton University Press produced its exceptional *An Einstein Encyclopedia*, which looks at Einstein as a personality, scientist, political figure, humanitarian, and even poet.

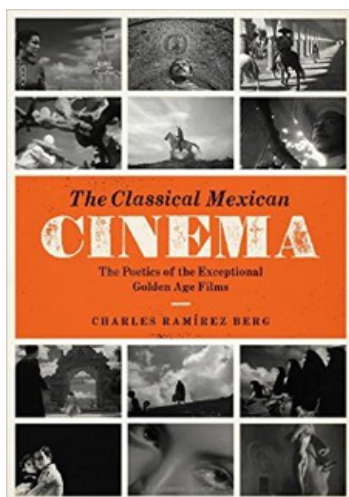
Food was also a hot topic for reference publishers. The launch of Oxford University Press's *Savoring Gotham: A Food Lover's Companion to New York City*, edited by Andrew Smith, was complete with local food, wine, and beer. Critics also heaped praise on *The Oxford Companion to Sugar and Sweets*, edited by Darra Goldstein, and the fourth edition of the *Oxford Companion to Wine* by Jancis Robinson. Finally, *The Sage Encyclopedia of Food Issues*, edited by Ken Albala, helps readers understand food processing and safety.

Finally, as the world is keeping its eye on Russian president Vladimir Putin, it was good to have Ian Barnes's final gift to us, *Restless Empire: A Historical Atlas of Russia*, from Harvard University Press, with an entire chapter devoted to "The Putin Era." Barnes, the author of so many great atlases, died in 2014.

## ARTS

Anderson, Zoë. **The Ballet Lover's Companion**. Yale Univ. 384p. illus. index. ISBN 9780300154283. \$40; ebk. ISBN 9780300154290.

Written by the longtime dance critic of Britain's the *Independent*, this widely praised reference focuses on a core international repertoire of 140 ballets ranging from romantic ballads such as *Coppélia* and imperial classics like *Sleeping Beauty*, down to indie-pop cult favorite *Everywhere We Go*, choreographed by Justin Peck. For each entry, the author describes the circumstances of the ballet's creation and its effect on the theater and recounts anecdotes about performance history and reception. For instance, we learn that the attribution to Tchaikovsky of the libretto for *Swan Lake* is disputed and that the first attempt to stage it in 1877 was a failure. Fittingly, Anderson even offers tips on what to look for during a performance. (*LJ* 6/1/15)



Berg, Charles Ramírez. **The Classical Mexican Cinema: The Poetics of the Exceptional Golden Age Films**. Univ. of Texas. 254p. illus. notes. index. ISBN 9781477308059. pap. \$24.95; ebk. ISBN 9781477308073.

Berg (media studies, Univ. of Texas), who has spent more than two decades researching Mexican cinema, focuses on the Cine de Oro, or Golden Age, of Mexican cinema, which lasted from the mid-1930s to the late 1950s. He sees its precursors in the illustrations of printmaker José Guadalupe Posada and the silent film *El Automóvil Gris* (1919). Mexican cinema reached its peak with the films of Emilio Fernández in the 1940s and Spanish-Mexican filmmaker Luis Buñuel in the same era, before market factors in part brought on by the onslaught of Hollywood films after World War II contributed to its

demise. With a detailed index and extensive notes, this works both as a history and a reference source shedding new light on an understudied subject. (*LJ* 7/15)

Fisher, James. **Historical Dictionary of American Theater: Beginnings**. Rowman & Littlefield. 570p. bibliog. ISBN 9780810878327. \$135; ebk. ISBN 9780810878334.

This is the third in a trilogy of reference works about the American stage. Fisher's (theater, Univ. of North Carolina at Greensboro) earlier volume, *Modernism*, was published in 2008, followed by *Contemporary* in 2011. The focus of the more than 1,000 entries here is the formative era

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both prior to and post-independence, extending to the end of the 19th century. The first plays performed were comedies most likely acted by Spanish soldiers at a mission near Tequesta, FL, in 1567. Prior to the revolution, “theatrical activity...was sporadic at best.” The first permanent theater structure, the Southwark Theatre, opened in Philadelphia in 1766. Complete with a detailed chronology and bibliography, this is a well-researched treasure trove of information. (LJ 7/15)

**French Cinema in Close-up: La Vie D'Un Acteur Pour Moi.** Phaeton. 438p. ed. by Michaël Abecassis with Marcelline Block. illus. index. ISBN 9781908420114. \$35.

There may be other biographical dictionaries of the French cinema, but none with such engagingly written biographies as this one. Editors Abecassis (French, Oxford Univ.) and Block have assembled an international cast to write personal sketches of actors and actresses in the French cinema. American audiences will recognize names such as Gérard Depardieu, Oscar winners Juliette Binoche and Simone Signoret, and singer-actor Maurice Chevalier. Chevalier's sketch chronicles his many early successes, postwar troubles, and triumphant return to the United States after 1954 with *Love in the Afternoon*. The highlights of the dictionary are the hand-drawn caricatures by artists Jenny Batlay, who's based in New York, and Igor Bratusek, at the Sorbonne in Paris, that accompany each sketch. Read collectively, the pieces document trends in French cinema and its close connections with the theater.

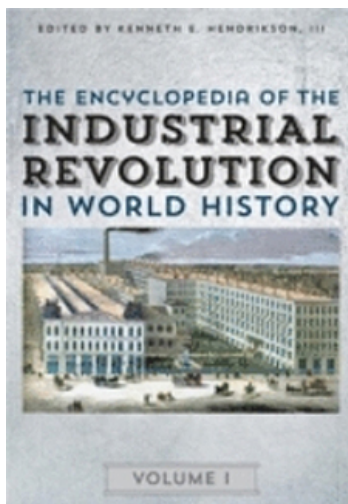
**Gray, John. Carnival, Calypso and Steel Pan: A Bibliographic Guide to Popular Music of the English-speaking Caribbean and its Diaspora.** African Diaspora. 479p. index. ISBN 9780984413454. \$124.95.

In 1993, bibliographer Gray began to document resources relating to the music of the African diaspora. This title, the sixth in the publisher's “Black Music Reference” series, notes that popular music in the English-speaking Caribbean has two principal hubs. The first was covered in his *Jamaican Popular Music*. With a Trinidad base, this second hub explores the intertwining of carnival, calypso, and steel pan in some 3,400 entries arranged regionally from Antigua to the Virgin Islands, including West Indian communities in North America. A separate biographical section profiles some 600 individual performers and ensembles. Gray documents how, from their beginnings as colonial harvest celebrations, carnivals became spectacles that are major economic engines for their regions. Criteria for inclusion include research potential and accessibility to researchers.

## BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

**The Encyclopedia of the Industrial Revolution in World History.** 3 vols. Rowman & Littlefield. 1172p. ed. by Kenneth E. Hendrickson III & others. illus. index. ISBN 9780810888876. \$240; ebk. ISBN 9780810888883.

Editor Hendrickson (history, Sam Houston State Univ.) notes that in 1750 the vast majority of people worked daily for the basics of life: food, clothing, and shelter. By 1900, electricity supplied power, while cities maintained local infrastructures. How this shift occurred and the costs associated with this global phenomenon are the themes around which a diverse group of international scholars—including historians, social scientists, and engineers—have crafted more than 1,000 entries describing technical innovations such as the water frame that led to the first factory in the English Midlands, social theorists such as Robert Owen who introduced “higher principles” at his New Lanark cotton mill in Scotland, and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. One of RUSA's “Notable Business Reference Sources of 2015.” (LJ 9/15/15)



## CLOTHING & DRESS

**Clothing and Fashion: American Fashion from Head to Toe.** 4 vols. ABC-CLIO. 1786p. ed. by José Blanco F. illus. bibliog. index. ISBN 9781610693097. \$415; ebk. ISBN 9781610693103.



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This sweeping overview of fashion and apparel describes American history through the clothes its citizens wear and wore. Earlier volumes cover the colonial and federal eras and the 20th century through World War II. Here, Blanco (apparel design and merchandising, Dominican Univ.) features 800-plus entries written by more than 100 fashion experts and clothing historians. The entries are arranged alphabetically by period and enhanced by helpful glossaries and detailed bibliographies. Engaging entries include the “mantua makers” who made fitted clothing for 18th-century women and children, the first ready-to-wear men’s suits offered at Brooks Brothers in 1849, and the skateboard and surf fashion of recent decades. Well-written and -researched entries are enhanced by black-and-white and color illustrations. Given the popularity of popular culture classes, every library needs a copy.

## FOOD

**The Oxford Companion to Sugar and Sweets.** Oxford Univ. 920p. ed. by Darra Goldstein. illus. index. ISBN 9780199313396. \$65.

The most popular reference book of the year is this “tour de force” on all things sugary and sweet, edited by Goldstein (Slavic literature, Williams Coll.; *Fire and Ice*), founder of the journal *Gastronomica*. She engaged 265 diverse international contributors to write some 600 entries alphabetically arranged from “à la mode” to the Italian trifle “zuppa inglese.” This book speaks to such concepts as how chocolate evolved from a drink to a solid bar, why cats don’t discern sweetness, and how sugar has become a part of our discourse and language in terms such as *eye candy* and *sugar daddy*. Also explored is the darker side of sugar and its connection to slavery and addiction. (LJ 6/15/15)

**The Oxford Companion to Wine.** 4th ed. Oxford Univ. 860p. ed. by Jancis Robinson. illus. maps. ISBN 9780198705383. \$65; ebk. ISBN 9780191016073.

The fourth edition of this work, first published in 1994 to worldwide acclaim, is the latest update since 2006. At 4,104 entries from 187 contributors, it is just slightly longer than the previous edition. Nearly 2,500 entries have been significantly revised, and 300 are completely new. All appendixes have been updated along with maps of growing regions. Consider the entry for Chile, some six pages in length, with a full-page map of growing regions. Readers learn that Chile has undergone possibly the most dramatic technological revolution in the wine world and now boasts some of the finest oenologists, with Cabernet Sauvignon being the most important variety. Trends noted are a shift from “making” to “growing wine,” and a wider variety of grapes than ever before. Italy, France, and Spain remain the leading producers, but China is on the rise. (See review p. 120.)

**The SAGE Encyclopedia of Food Issues.** 3 vols. SAGE. 1664p. ed. by Ken Albala. index. ISBN 9781452243016. \$395; ebk. ISBN 9781506317304.

The more than 400 well-written and well-researched A–Z entries here focus on social and policy aspects of food production, safety, regulation, labeling, marketing, distribution, and consumption. Editor Albala (history, food studies, Univ. of the Pacific; *At the Table*) is a prolific author and editor of more than 20 books on food. The focus is inclusive and global, as are the contributors. Among the more intriguing articles are “airport meals,” which date to the early 1900s in Europe and are designed to provide order to passengers’ concept of time; the “food justice movement,” which asserts that no one should live without enough food; “food TV,” now 24 hours a day; and *veganism*, a term coined by Donald Watson in 1944.

**Savoring Gotham: A Food Lover's Companion to New York City.** Oxford Univ. 760p. ed. by Andrew F. Smith. illus. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780199397020. \$34.95; ebk. ISBN 9780190263645.

This wonderful companion to all things related to food in New York is the brainchild of Smith, who teaches courses on culinary topics at the city’s New School and edited the award-winning *Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America*. In 567 alphabetical entries, the 174 contributors (mostly New Yorkers) describe everything from the cronut (the wildly popular 2013 invention of pastry chef Dominique Ansel), deep-fried Twinkies, famous restaurants such as Delmonico’s, venues such as the Plaza Hotel, street vendors, odd terms like *groggeries* (grocery stores in tenements where beer and liquor were sold), and people such as Tim and Nina Zagat who created the famous Zagat Survey.

## GENERAL REFERENCE