

ASAIL NEWSLETTER

GATHERING OF POETS, SINGERS, STORYTELLERS, WRITERS, SOUTHWEST INDIAN PEOPLE, "VOICES SINGING", FESTIVAL/CONFERENCE, NAVAJO COMMUNITY COLLEGE, TSAILE, NAVAJO NATION, (ARIZONA), July 5, 6, 7; Sponsored by SOUTH WEST POETS CONFERENCE Hosted by NAVAJO COMMUNITY COLLEGE at Tsaile Lake

There will be a gathering of Southwest Indian poets, storytellers, singers, writers at NAVAJO COMMUNITY COLLEGE AT TSAILE LAKE on July 5 through 7. The theme will be the Continuum of Indian Life in various modest the inter-relationship of People, Place, words. The program will include Andrew Natonabah (Navajo medicineman & Instructor in Navajo Culture & Psychology at NCC) , Jones Van Winkle, Navajo translator & storyteller, Simon J. Ortiz (Acoma poet, storyteller), Soge Track (Taos storyteller, poet), Emerson Blackhorse Mitchell (Navajo novelist) , Roberto Sandoval (Indian poet) , Paul Ortega (Indian rock composer), Harold Littlebird (Santo Domingo poet, artist, singer), Tony Lee (Navajo poet), LaVerna John (Navajo singer), and others. The program will take place in the hogan shaped Navajo Community College Learning Center, among the pinyon groves that surround the college, and somewhere in the Chuska mountains and Canyon de Chelly area. There will also be a panel discussion of the theme. Discussants will include Carl N. Gorman, Simon J. Ortiz, Soge Track and a Native American university professor. Accommodations are restricted, so please contact the director as soon as possible if you wish lodging. Camping places are available in Canyon de Chelly National Park and at Wheatfields Lake north of Gallup. Transportation may be arranged from Gallup, N.M. or Farmington, N.M. if prior arrangements are made. The conference/festival will be video and audio taped; and we hope that this may be made available to those who wish to use it. There will be a publication of the conference/ festival. For additional information contact:

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MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION SEMINARS--New York City, 1974

If you wish to participate in either of the proposed seminars, please contact the seminar director as soon as possible. He must have a list of names to MLA very soon. if you wish to attend the meeting of ASAIL, please notify the secretary.

Seminar in Native American Literatures: Dr Larry Evers (U of Ariz), 933 South 9th, Montrose, Colo 81401

Seminar in Contemporary Native American Literature (Momaday, Welch, Simon Ortiz, Leslie Silko . . .): R. Ackley, Navajo Comm College.

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A REVIEW OF INDIAN BIBLIOGRAPHIES

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As anyone involved in teaching or studying American Indian literatures must know, there is no single, compact bibliography to guide work in the field. And because, for so many of us, the field is an alien one, this lack of a good guide is even more of a handicap than it would be in more familiar areas. Coming up with authoritative and authentic texts is hard enough; but when one tries to develop accurate background information for those texts the job may seem bewilderingly complex, if not altogether impossible. Even that first resource of the scholarly researcher, the card catalog of a good library, is not of much help, for some of the best libraries in the country have only basic holdings in the field. What's more, the means of cataloguing Indian materials seem designed to frustrate the novice; only rarely is the category Indians of North America--Literature used, so one winds up looking for texts in "Folklore," "Myths," and "Religion," as well as in other, less immediately relevant classifications. In view of these and other problems, the present review of Indian bibliographies is both descriptive and prescriptive; in reviewing what has been done, I have found myself empirically defining what ought to be done in the future. Hence my comments on what is lacking in any one work are not merely negative; they indicate what I think should be included in that ideal guide which all of us hope to see written in the next few years.

I want to start with one of the more recent works, Jack W. Marken's The Indians and Eskimos of North America: A Bibliography of Books in Print Through 1972 (Vermillion, S.D.: University of South Dakota Press, 1973). It is a hefty volume, especially when it is compared with some of the brief earlier lists discussed below (such as that of Arlene Hirschfelder's). But it is, perversely enough, almost too large; certainly it is unwieldy. It suffers from, among other things, a paucity of classification. There are five main parts: "Bibliographies" (24 entries); "Handbooks" (19 entries); "Autobiographies" (62 entries); "Myths and Legends" (268 entries); and--dismayingly--"All Other Books" (about 2500 entries). Now it is true that a subject can be divided and subdivided until it looks like a map of Germany before unification. But especially in a field like Indian studies a little bit of even over-zealous partitioning is absolutely necessary. Certainly Marken's book would have profited from a more orderly approach. The last division of his list takes up fully 160 pages of his text, while the first four together total only 25 pages; hence "All Other Books" is nothing more than an omnium-gatherum of miscellaneous (and in part irrelevant) items presented in a single alphabetical listing which begins with "A" on page 28 and finally gets down to "Z" on page 187. Beyond such things as perusal-- or the checking of the exact words of a title, or the verifying of a publisher or a price-- the bulk of Marken's list is so lacking in order as to be almost useless.

We are all a bit eccentric when it comes to matters of organization. But Marken's book would be vastly more helpful, I submit, if it were broken down into culture areas (either the fifteen of Murdock or the eleven of Stith Thompson), and then into tribes. To be sure, even this suggested approach would create its own problems. For one thing, Marken has included not merely books about Indian life (whether by Indians or not), but also all books by Indians regardless of their subject matter (as in the case of Arthur C. Parker's Manual for History Museums--Marken no. 2280). One may quarrel, of course, with whether or not such books as Parker's have any place in a bibliography like Marken's; and objections of this sort are not beside the point, for they underscore what is probably the most serious flaw in Marken's book.

That flaw I am tempted to call its "randomness," for despite that inclusive subtitle ("Books in Print Through 1972"), this volume is in the main simply a list of books in print in 1972 (as Marken himself admits in his "Preface"). Now there is a vast difference between these two little prepositions, and this difference is the same as that existing between the "ideal" bibliography and the one Marken has produced. For what we need at this juncture is just the kind of thing promised in Marken's title--a bibliography, thorough and hopefully annotated, of the great mass of materials by and centrally about Indians and {3} Eskimos since the first dim records of European exploration here. Such a work would

take up several volumes; it would burden many scholars in the making; it would cost a lot and would be a long time in coming. But from the moment of its appearance, it would be the standard tool for future research.

While we wait patiently for this "ideal" bibliography, it will be helpful to consider just what kind of interim guide to the field will be necessary. Such a guide, I believe, should focus clearly on what Indians themselves have said and written about Indian attitudes, experiences, and beliefs. It should give us bibliographies as complete as possible for the ritual texts and tales and poetry of each tribe (listing all of this by tribe, with an elaborate index which allows the scholar to locate all similar materials regardless of tribe). Finally, it should give us careful bibliographical surveys of the current literary activity among Native Americans: it should list the novels and poetry and short-stories (so many of the latter two categories uncollected, fugitive pieces) which we, as students of literature, want to read and study.

Sad to say, Marken gives us none of this. His book is a hasty thing--or at least appears to be--a thing gotten up largely from Books in Print (but with even fewer categories than that faulty guide) with little attempt at originality. Given its avowed tie to the current publishing market, it is almost a mad book, a book which seems to rest on the assumption that no better order can be found in the chaos of Indian and Eskimo studies than that imposed on it by the economics of a not-far-from-exploitative publishing industry.

It is true, on the other hand, that Marken provides us with a "Selected Subject Index" at the very beginning of his text, an index which supposedly refers the reader to all subjects mentioned at least three times in the lists in the Bibliography. But not only does this index fail to list all such subjects (where, for instance, are the legendary "Mound Builders," whom I find discussed in three books on one page of Marken's work alone-- nos. 2574, 2582, 2583)--it also leaves out a number of the most important items for some of the subjects which are indexed (such as Alfonso Ortiz, The Tewa World, no. 2251). What's more, the subjects which are indexed seem like a strange bunching (there are only twenty-eight): Algonquin, Apache, Arapaho, Art, Jim Beckwourth, Blackfeet, Black Hawk, Geronimo, Hopi, Iroquois, Kwakiutl, Indian Languages, Mandan, Navajo, Nez Perce, Osceola (Seminole), Pima, Pocahantas, Pomo, Pueblo, Sacajawea, Seneca, Sioux (Dakota), Sitting Bull, Tecumseh, Tewa, Yuma, and Zuni. What about such subjects as "Indian Agriculture," concerning which there must be at least twenty separate titles in the lists? Or the subject of dispossession (not general, but specific, as in Georgianna Nammack's Fraud, Politics, and the Dispossession of the Indians--no. 2172--a book wholly concerned with the Iroquois and other New York tribes but not listed, by the way, under "Iroquois," an omission dwarfed by the astounding failure to index Lewis Henry Morgan's classic, The League of the Iroquois, no. 2138).

The "Selected Subject Index," then, is not really the help it might have been. Indeed, such a short aid (barely two pages long), even if more accurate and inclusive just in terms of its avowed intent, could not overcome the inherent disadvantages of Marken's chosen organization. If one is going to present over 2500 titles in one alphabetical list then one ought to present a thorough index along with it. Mere alphabet, like the publisher's market, is no substitute for scholarly rigor (and yet, if I may add this without seeming petty, if one is going to follow the alphabet wherever it leads, one ought to know that names like St. John de Crèvecoeur or Samuel de Champlain or P.F.X. de Charlevoix should be entered under the family name proper, not under the particle "de"). Finally, where classification is so gross and cross-references are not dependably given, one ought to take care in sorting out various books: is John Epes Brown's The Sacred Pipe really "Myth and Legend"? Is Witt and Steiner's The Way? And is N. Scott Momaday's The Way to Rainy Mountain "Autobiography"?

In almost no sense is Marken's book that interim guide which we all need, yet because it may seem to be (it already has received favorable review elsewhere, for example) I have spent so much time treating it here. In its favor I can say only a couple of things: first, that it can provide the novice with good beginning booklists in such areas as "Myth and Legend" and "Autobiography"; and second, that it can be helpful in ordering texts and in drawing up reading lists. Beyond these uses, however, it does not go.

Far more helpful, despite its own limitations, is Anna Lee Stensland's Literature By and About the American Indian, a handbook aimed at high school classes (Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1973)--helpful in part

because out of the welter of Marken's 3000 items it selects some few {4} hundred, arranges them in sensible groupings, describes them, and gives, though far too infrequently and briefly, selected comments from Indian sources. There are nine categories (Myth, Legend, Oratory, and Poetry; Fiction, Drama; Biography and Autobiography; History; Anthropology and Archaeology; Modern Life and Problems; Music, Arts and Crafts; and Aids for the Teacher)--as well as useful backmatter (including "Biographies of American Indian Authors" and "Basic Books for a Collection").

Stensland's usual approach in each section is to begin with a brief introduction discussing the significance or particular problems of the subject in hand. Then come the listings themselves, each one containing a short paragraph describing (or, in the case of fiction, summarizing) the item; following some descriptions, finally, are evaluations drawn from Indian authorities (from, for example, the 1970-71 Book List issued at Gallup, N.M., by the Ceremonial Indian Book Service). Here is a guide, then, which has much of the critical apparatus which one might wish to find in Marken. But to have the apparatus is not enough. Stensland is in fact too uncritical in her selection of included materials, her own descriptions, and even her use of the "Indian" evaluations. At times, to be sure (as in the case of Peter Farb's Man's Rise to Civilization, p. 120, or Frank Waters' The Book of the Hopi, p. 126) her inclusion of contradictory or cautionary evaluations is exemplary. But on the whole she could use much more of this sort of thing.

An example is in order. Readers of this Newsletter will recall that Larry Evers, in the previous issue, pointed out that the ambitious anthology of Sanders and Peek (Literature of the American Indian--Glencoe Press, 1973) sometimes fails to give even the bare minimum of cultural background necessary for a proper understanding of items which are included. But Stensland writes that Sanders, and Peek "have provided scholarly comments on every possible aspect of Indian life, history, and religion from pre-Columbian days to the present," and that, "In addition to providing the English teacher with as wide and varied a selection of short works as possible, the collection also offers invaluable information about Indian literature and culture" (p. 32). Stensland's comment may be true if one compares Sanders and Peek with Cronyn (see Evers); but Stensland nonetheless fails to underscore the unevenness of this one new anthology's apparatus.

The problem I have been outlining here probably stems from the evident fact that Stensland herself is simply not "up" on the subject with which she is dealing. Yet I don't mean to be harsh. Certainly the goals of her volume are admirable, the organization is lucid, and the attempt always to be cautious about old half-truths could well be imitated by all of us.

What are the uses of Stensland? Simply put, her book is introductory in the extreme; it is intended to help secondary teachers provide their students with material on Indian life as authentic as possible, rather than to form even a rudimentary "scholarly" guide. Hence those engaged in research will find the books included and excluded rather striking. Such fine studies as The Tewa World simply do not appear, not out of negligence but out of Stensland's very real limitations of audience. And the researcher will find particularly frustrating the inclusion of so many "white" books, especially novels, which (regardless of their "authenticity" or even just their lack of glaring error) have occupied the library and study shelves too long in the place where Indian materials deserve to be. Like Marken, Stensland has not produced the interim guide I have tried to describe above. But in many ways she has come closer. Her book is more honest, more intelligent, more clear. And though none of us can rest content with it, we will use it, I imagine, as a starting place, as a source of preliminary lists and evaluations, as a reference tool which points us to the right beginning even if it doesn't travel too far down the path alongside us. I am happy to recommend it given the limitations I have noticed (and others I've obviously missed).

I turn now to other tools, some recent and some older, which I think can be of help in the study and teaching of American Indian literatures. For the sake of brevity, I simply will list them, and offer brief comments on their usefulness (starred items are of prime importance).

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1) LARGESCALE CATALOGS

- a) Newberry Library (Chicago). Dictionary Catalog of the Edward E. Ayer Collection of Americana and American Indians in the Newberry Library. 16 vols. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1961. First Supplement, 3 vols., 1970.

This catalog is particularly useful because it is both a subject and an author listing. With the Supplement, approx. 100,000 items (approx. 275,000 cards with multiple and cross listings). Periodical items listed only under name of periodical. Note that relevant materials contained in other Newberry collections are not included here, and that the extent of subject cataloging is not consistent throughout.

- b) New York Public Library, Reference Dept. Dictionary Catalog of the History of the Americas, vols. 11-12. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1961.

A good supplement to Ayer because it analyzes periodical items; Subject entries by Region and Tribe (as well as a "General" section).

2) INDEXES: SPECIFIC

- a) Biren Bonnerjea, Index to Bulletins 1-100 of the Bureau of American Ethnology. Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1963. (Also indexes other BAE materials).

Limited as title indicates, is nonetheless a thorough index which describes in some detail the exact nature of each Bulletin article referred to. Unfortunately, it goes only through 1931.

- b) Tritram P. Coffin. Journal of American Folklore: Analytical Index for Volumes 1-70 (1888-1957). Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1958.

Divided into eight sections; the most relevant are those on "Subject and Areas in Folklore" and "Nationalities and Ethnic Groups." Very handy for work with JAF.

3) INDEXES: GENERAL

- ***a) Indian Historian Press and American Indian Historical Society. Index to Literature on the American Indian. San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1971 et seq.

A new annual which will become of central importance to work in the field of American Indian literature. 64 subject classes, including "Literature," "Poetry," "Fiction." Good list as well of "Native American Publications"--i.e., serials and periodicals-- included at the end. Probably of more use for finding "secondary" than "creative" material.

4) BIBLIOGRAPHIES

- a) Arlene Hirschfelder. American Indian Authors: A Representative Bibliography. New York: Association on American Indian Affairs, Inc., 1970.

A brief list (45 pp.) of Indian writers in various fields. Gives tribal affiliations.

- ***b) George P. Murdock. Ethnographic Bibliography of North America. New Haven: HRAFP, 1960. 3rd. edition.

The standard reference work on Indian cultures. Divides N. America into 15 regions, then into 253 tribal groups. Lists books and articles, the most important for each area/tribe at the beginning of each entry, followed by other books and articles. Does not include manuscripts. More helpful for finding "traditional" literature than for locating the works of modern Indian authors (who don't always fit into neat tribal brackets). 17,000 entries.

- c) Judith C. Ullom. Folklore of the North American Indian: An Annotated Bibliography. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress., 1969.

Though aimed primarily at children and those who must keep libraries for them and tell stories to them, this list can be of use for more scholarly purposes. Divided into the eleven culture areas of Stith Thompson; highly selective. Annotations are best feature.

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***d) Charles Haywood. A Bibliography of North American Folklore and Folksong. 2 vols. New York: Dover, 1961. 2nd ed.

The second volume of this work, "The American Indians North of Mexico, Including the Eskimos," is a standard guide to the subject. It is organized regionally and then by tribe. The headings in each section include "Bibliographies," "Serial Publications," "Myths and Mythologies," "Folktale-Legends," "Folk Poetry, etc.," and "Proverbs--Riddles." Out of date in some ways (folklore and anthropological journals have been indexed only through 1948) but very good on myths and legends.

***e) Frederick J. Dockstader. The American Indian in Graduate Study: A Bibliography of Theses and Dissertations. New York: Museum of the American Indian, 1957.

Contains 3684 titles covering the period from 1890 to 1955. Incomplete: many schools did not cooperate (especially some of the larger ones), so this list includes only about three-fourths of the dissertations and theses done in this period. Although it is organized by a simple alphabetical list, a fine index allows quick access to all items concerned with any important subject (see especially the "Literatures, Indian" entry). (Books in Print lists a 1973 reissue containing a supplement through 1970; I have not seen it yet).

f) R. Irwin Goodman. Bibliography of Non-Print Instructional Materials on the American Indian. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young Univ. Press, 1972.

I haven't seen this yet. Perhaps someone who has could write about it in a future issue. I include it here because of its apparent uniqueness and its possible value.

In closing this review, I would urge those of you who have specialized in various areas or tribes to submit your own lists of basic source materials for publication in the Newsletter. Such lists need not be annotated, though annotation certainly would be helpful. Also, if I've left out anything which you have found useful, please let me know, for I will be updating this review for time to time and I want to include as much good material as possible.

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