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Book Review

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BOOK REVIEW

Trattner, Walter I., editor. *Biographical Dictionary of Social Welfare in America*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1986. xiv + 898 pp. \$75.00.

To the genre of reference books in which one can find brief biographies of leaders of various professions, ethnic or religious groups, or geographical areas, there has now been added this fine volume honoring men and women who have contributed to the development of social welfare in America. The *Biographical Dictionary of Social Welfare in America* (BDSWA) includes articles on 321 persons who were judged to have achieved eminence in their efforts "to improve communities or promote the financial, physical, and emotional well-being of individuals or groups that needed such assistance" in America from colonial times to the recent past. It does not include living persons, people known primarily for their work as elected public officials, philanthropists, or those who were primarily abolitionists, feminists, labor union leaders, or "intellectuals." "The emphasis, then, was on including people who were doers (or thinkers and doers), not solely thinkers, however important their ideas (and writings) may have been, and not mainly givers, however important their financial contributions may have been" (pp. xi, xii).

Among the persons included under these guidelines are one hundred and eighty-nine men and one hundred and thirty-two women. Seventeen were born before 1800, 120 hundred and ninety-four in the 19th century (1801-1900), and ten after 1900. Since one hundred and fifty-five were born after 1870, it seems fair to conclude that at least this many did most of their work in the 20th century. Even though living persons are not included, there is a strong emphasis on events of the present century.

The usefulness of the BDSWA may be suggested by comparing it with the *Dictionary of American Biography*. The DAB, consisting of twenty original volumes and seven supplement volumes, is not the largest general collection of

American biographies, but it is usually considered the most scholarly work of this type. Both DAB and BDSWA exclude living persons; the DAB, unlike the BDSWA, does not publish biographies until at least fifteen years after the subject's death. It follows that the BDSWA subjects may be divided into three groups: (1) those covered in both the BDSWA and the DBA, (2) those not covered in the DAB because their lives extended past the cutoff date (1965) for the most recent supplement volume, and (3) those not included in the DAB even though they did not live beyond 1965.

The first group made up of one hundred and sixty-one persons, includes such well known figures as Benjamin Franklin, Dorothea Dix, Jane Addams, and Eleanor Roosevelt, such relatively unknown persons as Thomas Eddy, Alice C. Fletcher, and Lillie M. Peck, and many in between. Persons who were active in several fields are usually given fuller coverage in the DAB, while the BDSWA concentrates on their work in the area of social welfare. For people who are notable primarily because of their work in their field, articles in the two reference works are usually quite comparable, though they are frequently different enough to make it worthwhile to consult both references.

The sixty-four subjects in the second group, who died during the years 1966–1984, include Saul Alinsky, Roger Baldwin, John Collier, Dorothy Day, Helen Keller, Martin Luther King, Jr., Abraham Muste, Margaret Sanger, Whitney Young, and many others. Biographies of some, but not all, of these persons will undoubtedly be included in later supplement volumes of the DAB, but they are not presently available.

The third group of BDSWA subjects were not included in the DAB for reasons other than chronological ineligibility. These 96 persons include Kate Barnard, Albert Deutsch, Molly Dewson, Josephine Dodge, Charles Eastman, Josephine and Pauline Goldmark, Mary Jarrett, Henry Moskowitz, Mary Ovington, Ellen Starr, Ida Wells-Barnett, and seven dozen others. It is here that the BDSWA clearly goes

beyond the DAB and other reference works in developing its special field.

On the whole, the BDSWA stands up well in comparison with the prestigious and much larger DAB. Its articles, researched and written by one hundred and eighty-eight different people who had to deal with widely differing collections of source material, naturally vary somewhat in quality, but they are all well written. Most are from two to four pages in length, and are based on primary sources where such material was available. Each includes a bibliography, generally identifying the major writings of the subject, other available primary sources, and the most useful books and articles about the subject.

The book includes a brief (three page) chronology of significant events in the history of American social welfare, 1601–1982, a listing of the three hundred and twenty-one subjects by year of birth (from Cotton Mather in 1663 to George A. Wiley in 1931), a listing of the subjects by place of birth (35 states, 24 countries) identification of the authors of the articles, and a reasonably full index.

The BDSWA is a solid scholarly work. It should be available to all students and professionals who might want to obtain information about individuals who made significant contributions to the development of social welfare in America.

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NEW BOOKS RECEIVED

Ronald B. Flowers. *Children and Criminality: The Child as Victim and Perpetrator*, Westport, CT. Greenwood, 223 pp. \$35.00 cloth.

An historical and sociological analysis of child abuse, its explanations and consequences for the individual and society.

Steven Wisotsky. *Breaking the Impasse in the War on Drugs*, Westport, CT. Greenwood, 279 pp. \$35.00 cloth.

A critical assessment of current policy on drugs and its secondary effects upon political and social structure. Some ideas for basic policy change.

Charles H. Shireman. *Rehabilitating Juvenile Justice*. New York, Columbia, 188 pp. \$25.00 cloth.

A history of America's Juvenile Justice System, its philosophy and methodology.

Waldo K. Fishman and George Borello. *Readings in Humanist Sociology*. Bayside, N.Y., General Hall, 232 pp. \$13.95 paper; \$28.95 cloth. A anthology of ten essays with an introduction by Alfred McClung Lee.

Discussion of organizations, life cycle, social policy, research methodology, among others.

Frank Lindenfeld. *Radical Perspectives on Social Problems*. Readings in Critical Sociology, Third edition, Bayside, N.Y., General Hall, 404 pp. \$16.95 paper; \$29.95 cloth.

A selection of classic and contemporary essays in radical sociological thought, including Illich, Kropotkin, Bookchin, Domhoff, Marable, among others. Short introductions by the editor.

Joseph R. Peden and Fred R. Glahe. *The American Family and the State*. San Francisco, Pacific Research Institute, 482 pp. \$14.95 paper; \$34.95 cloth.

A series of political, legal, sociological essays projecting a conservative orientation toward family policy and social welfare.