

Mini-Reviews

German Children's and Youth Literature in Exile 1933-1950: Biographies and Bibliographies. Zlata Fuss Phillips. K.G. Saur, 2001. 318 pp. Eruos 110 cloth. ISBN 3-598-11569-5.

Zlata Fuss Phillips's thoroughly researched bibliography is certain to become an invaluable resource for researchers in the field of exile studies. As Phillips points out in her introduction, not only has little attention been paid to date to exiled children's authors, but illustrators — whose work is integral to children's literature — are routinely omitted from standard bio-bibliographies of exile literature. The breadth and variety of work for a child audience by artists, who account for a quarter of the entries, is one of the revelations of this volume — from the extensive artwork for children's non-fiction and filmstrips of Rafaello Busoni, to Amalia Serkin's handmade dolls in photographic illustrations for fairytales, and Lotte Koch-Reiniger's silhouettes. Authors whose presence enriched writing for children across Europe, Canada, the USA, and South America include some familiar names: Bertolt Brecht, Felix Salten, Erika Mann, and a surprisingly large number of contemporaries who fled to eastern Europe or the former USSR. In a welcome touch, many of these artists and writers are visible in a set of photographs that forms the endpapers of the book; their necessarily brief and factual biographies hint at many a tragedy or stroke of luck. All publications by exiles between the years 1933-1950 are listed, including translations and republications of pre-exile work, together with the locations of primary texts and archive material. There are occasional inconsistencies (e.g. p. 174: Richard Plant or Plaut?) and, inevitably in a work of this scope, at least one omission (American illustrator Lili Cassel Wronker). Such minor points should not, however, detract from an excellent and timely piece of scholarship.

Gillian Lathey is Deputy Director of the National Centre for Research in Children's Literature at the University of Surrey Roehampton, England. Her publications include The Impossible Legacy: Identity and Purpose in Autobiographical Children's Literature Set in the Third Reich and the Second World War (Peter Lang).

Nations of the Plains. Bobbie Kalman. Illus. Barbara Bedell, Margaret Amy Reiach, and Bonna Rouse. Crabtree, 2001. 32 pp. \$9.95 paper. ISBN 0-7787-0368-1.

Just one in a series of four short books published in 2001 in the Native Nations of North America series, this engaging book is sure to capture the interest and attention of young readers, in particular those between eight and twelve. Each section of the book is one to two pages in length with concise subject headings such as "Plains

Communication” and “Owning the Land.” Bold and dramatic colour illustrations depict a diversity of scenes in native Plains life, both pre- and post-Contact. There is a short but useful index and a glossary of terms at the end of the book. The author is quite careful, in the introductory sections, to specify in her generalizations about Plains native life that there were dozens of different groups involved, each with its own unique language, customs, and traditions. The author also does not shy away from brief but effective discussion of the causes of disruption of native societies on the Plains, including reservations, residential schools, and the effects of European diseases. All things considered, I would recommend this book for young readers.

Life in a Longhouse Village. Bobbie Kalman. Illus. Barbara Bedell, Margaret Amy Reiach, and Bonna Rouse. Crabtree, 2001. 32 pp. \$9.95 paper. ISBN 0-7787-0370-3.

Focused on the Northeastern Woodlands of the lower Great Lakes region, this book discusses the village life of Iroquoian-speaking peoples between about 1000 and 1600 C.E. (although only the latter date is specified). The many details of daily village life, house construction, crafts, family, and social organization are discussed in short and well-illustrated sections. The author clearly maps out the tribal areas of the different groups — Huron, Petun, and Neutral in Ontario, and Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk, principally in New York State. Nevertheless, there is a concern that the uninitiated reader may accept that every activity applies to every native group named without differences. I found the positive attitude of this book, as of others in the series, refreshing. Although it is well known that Huron villages had to be moved about every ten years because of local depletion of soils and other resources, it still remains true that the Longhouse peoples cared about their environment, as the author asserts. A useful glossary and index are located at the end of the book. As with other books in this series, ages of eight to twelve appear suitable.

Native Homes. Bobbie Kalman. Illus. Barbara Bedell, Bonna Rouse, and Margaret Amy Reiach. Crabtree, 2001. 32 pp. \$9.95 paper. ISBN 0-7787-0371-1.

I liked this book for its cross-cultural comparison of Native homes across North America. The colour map on pages 4 and 5 gives an extremely clear idea of the type and distribution of about one dozen very different types of house construction: this is probably the first time I have ever seen this kind of information depicted. Since this is an introductory book for young readers, and since it attempts to make sense out of a confusing array of cultural preferences in housing, it was probably a wise decision not to discuss the evolution of housing types in any one region or the actual time depth of particular types of housing. In the Northwest, for instance, the shape, size, and function of bark houses (longhouses) changed dramatically over about 900 years. While the author states the longhouse villages were enclosed by palisades, this is true only for about half of the time that longhouses were in use. Colour illustrations for each section are used very effectively and the book succeeds quite well in demonstrating housing diversity in the different regions of North America.

Life in a Plains Camp. Bobbie Kalman. Illus. Barbara Bedell, Margaret Amy Reiach, and Bonna Rouse. Crabtree, 2001. 32 pp. \$9.95 paper. ISBN 0-7787-0369-X.

This short book offers a good overview of generalized Plains Indian life. It fits well with other books in the Native Nations of North America series and is careful, at the outset, to note that it generalizes about some thirty Native Nations living on the Great Plains before Europeans arrived. I would have liked to see a timeline in the introduction to help readers understand change over time: not only were cultures not static, but environments also changed dramatically. The various book sections, including "Camp Society," "Hunting the Buffalo," and "Men's and Women's Clothing," provide excellent detail and are amply colour illustrated. Occasional colour photographs, such as a woman dressed for tending crops, add a present-day tone to avoid the suggestion that these cultures are entirely gone.

Lawrence Jackson is an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Western Ontario and specializes in the prehistory of the Great Lakes region. He has published a number of articles and two books on the late-glacial Palaeo-Indian period. His co-edited volume with Paul Thacker, Caribou and Reindeer Hunters of the Northern Hemisphere, is published by Avebury Press.

Wolf and the Seven Little Kids. Ann Blades. Illus. Ann Blades. Groundwood, 1999. 32 pp. \$15.95 paper ISBN 0-88899-364-1. Ages 2-5.

Ann Blades has produced a version of this Brothers Grimm tale that will rivet a young child's attention but may produce feelings of uneasiness and even fear in the age group to which it is targeted. Aimed at children aged two to five, the tale involves unattended young kids being devoured whole by a marauding wolf, and although the illustrations are sensitive in their lack of graphic detail, we are presented with the mother goat cutting her children out of the wolf's stomach with a pair of scissors. All does, of course, turn out well in the end, and in the midst of the tale children can amuse themselves by finding each kid's hiding place from the wolf in Blades's cunning illustration. At this point in the story, the wolf seems like an imminent threat, and so Blades tells us that "The little kids were terrified and tried to hide" (12). With her clear prose and simple language, Blades gives us a bright and imaginatively rendered tale that will enchant and intrigue children mature enough to handle its sometimes scary subject matter.

Katrina Harack recently received her MA from Simon Fraser University and is planning to pursue a PhD in the fall of 2002. She is currently working as a research assistant at Simon Fraser University.