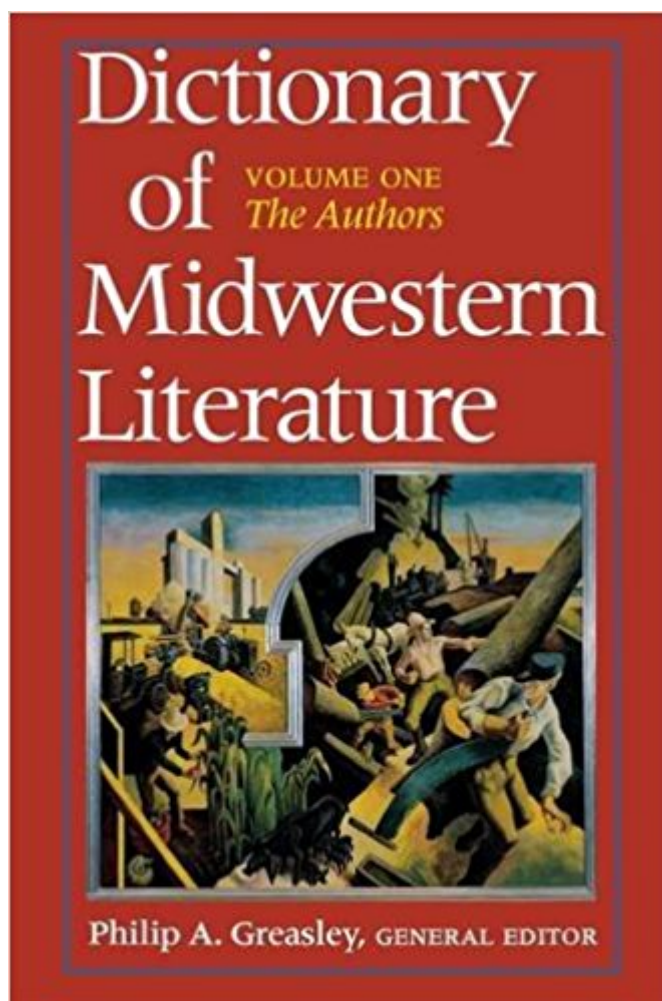


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Dictionary Of Midwestern Literature: Volume One: The Authors



Synopsis

The Dictionary of Midwestern Literature, Volume One, surveys the lives and writings of nearly 400 Midwestern authors and identifies some of the most important criticism of their writings. The Dictionary is based on the belief that the literature of any region simultaneously captures the experience and influences the worldview of its people, reflecting as well as shaping the evolving sense of individual and collective identity, meaning, and values. Volume One presents individual lives and literary orientations and offers a broad survey of the Midwestern experience as expressed by its many diverse peoples over time. Philip A. Greasley's introduction fills in background information and describes the philosophy, focus, methodology, content, and layout of entries, as well as criteria for their inclusion. An extended lead-essay, "The Origins and Development of the Literature of the Midwest," by David D. Anderson, provides a historical, cultural, and literary context in which the lives and writings of individual authors can be considered. This volume is the first of an ambitious three-volume series sponsored by the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature and created by its members. Volume Two will provide similar coverage of non-author entries, such as sites, centers, movements, influences, themes, and genres. Volume Three will be a literary history of the Midwest. One goal of the series is to build understanding of the nature, importance, and influence of Midwestern writers and literature. Another is to provide information on writers from the early years of the Midwestern experience, as well as those now emerging, who are typically absent from existing reference works.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The first of a planned three-volume series sponsored by the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature, this work covers the authors of that region. (Volume 2 will cover nonauthor entities such as themes, sites, and movements, and Volume 3 will provide a literary history of the Midwest.) Given the strength of this first volume, scholars and literature buffs will no doubt eagerly await the rest. Entries highlight 400 authors and critics, chosen for having a "significant continuing connection" to the Midwest region. By making sure to include authors who range in importance (from well known to lesser known) and are at different stages of their careers and their lives, editor Greasley (English, Univ. of Kentucky) presents a comprehensive view of the literary landscape of the region. The well-written and interesting signed entries are quite detailed: they include biographical information, pseudonyms, the individual's significance, a discussion of selected works, and recommended further readings. The contributors' expertise and deep care for the literature of the Midwest show in the writing. This reference book, the first of its kind, fills a gap in reference work on the literature of the United States. All other regions of this country should be jealous and should follow suit if they want to celebrate their literary traditions. Mayna Chylinski, Ernst & Young, Ctr. for Business Knowledge, Boston Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

A project of the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature headquartered at Michigan State University, this first volume of a projected three-volume series provides information on the lives and writings of close to 400 midwestern authors. The introductory material defines a 12-state region (Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska and the Dakotas) and includes a discussion of midwestern literature and thought. The scope is broad and encompasses journalists, poets, critics, writers of fiction, and playwrights representing a diversity of race, ethnicity, and gender as well as intellectual focus. Criteria for inclusion specify a significant connection between author and the Midwest reflected in writings, a body of writings dealing with life and people of the region, and literary products of quality and significance. The usual authors associated with the midwestern experience--Sherwood Anderson, Willa Cather--are included, as are modern writers such as Jane Smiley and children's author Patricia Polacco. The individual author entries (signed by more than 100 contributors identified in an appended list) include basic biographical information, descriptions of the author's literary significance, a list of most-significant publications, and suggestions for further reading. The best-known authors are of course included in

numerous reference works; one can find sufficient and more expansive discussions of Hamlin Garland or Gwendolyn Brooks in many places. However, quite a few lesser-known figures are included here, both emerging authors and forgotten names who have expressed the midwestern experience in their work. An appendix provides information on the recipients of the MidAmerica Award, an annual award by the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature to recognize scholars and critics who have made contributions to study of midwestern literature. A detailed index is an aid using this reference work, but it would have been very useful to include indexes by ethnicity, geography, and genre as well. Volume 2 of this project will provide coverage of nonauthor topics such as sites, movements, influences, themes, and genres. The third volume is to be a literary history of the region. Although it seems that each volume can be used alone, the entire set will provide a unique coverage of the body of literature that communicates the experience, values, and images of the U.S. heartland. Academic and larger libraries in the Midwest will find the most use for these volumes. RBBCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

I am delighted with this book, which I plan to use as reference. It takes a wide approach to midwestern authors: they don't have to be natives of the midwest, just have a connection. Nevertheless, it is going to be very useful as I seek to understand what is the midwest, the land where I myself was born and still reside, after the typical ten-year hiatus living several other places.

A solid introduction to American regional literature. Waiting eagerly for volume 2. Essential to all teachers of English in the Midwest.

I had never seen my entry in this book until 2017; the material was not sent to me for review or correction. I'm appalled at the errors in my entry which could have been corrected by asking me, or by reference to my many published NONFICTION works. First, the entry says that I was born to John and Florence (Baker) Hasselstrom. I was born to my parents, Mildred F. (Baker) and Robert Paul Bovard. When I was four years old, my mother left my father and moved home to South Dakota where, when I was nine, she married John Hasselstrom. Second, the entry says that in 1994, "after a long court battle," I received title to the ranch I had inherited. When my father, John Hasselstrom, died in 1992, he left the ranch to my mother. I bought the ranch from her; no court battle was required.

This is a wonder reference for those who might like to know about writers who may never have even

been to NYC, LA or much beyond the Great Lakes, the Mississippi River or seen either the Atlantic or Pacific Oceans. The entries describe and critique the backgrounds and writing of those greats and not so greats of Midwestern America. The insights would be useful for research by student and professors seeking fresh point of view, contrasts and comparisons of writers of serious literature.

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