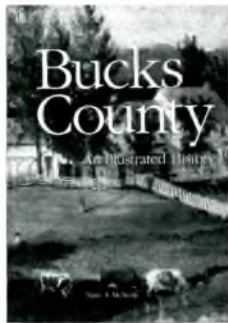


Bucks County: An Illustrated History, by Terry A. McNealy (326 pages, June 2001), is a wonderfully illustrated history of some of Pennsylvania's earliest settlements and the home of its founder William Penn. Thanks to its strategic location between Philadelphia and New York, Bucks County has been an important stage in American history: its original occupation by the Lenape Indians and the infamous land grab of 1737 known as the Walking Purchase, which set the tone for later lopsided Indian real-estate swindles; the Continental Army's deployment in the county in the strategic defense of Philadelphia during the Revolutionary War; the Fries Rebellion of 1798 against the seemingly autocratic policies of President John Adams; the transport revolutions of the Delaware Canal and the Philadelphia & Trenton Railroad; the conflicted sentiments of Bucks County residents toward slavery prior to the Civil War; the influence of the Quakers on the culture of the county; and the Pennsylvania Impressionist artists and literary figures of the early 20th century who made Bucks County their home. All this is documented by historian McNealy, who served as librarian for the Bucks County Historical Society's Spruance Library from 1971 to 1993. \$49.95. Bucks County Historical Society, 84 South Pine Street, Doylestown, PA 18901-4999. ISBN 0-910302-01-4.



The Decipherment of Ancient Maya Writing, edited by Stephen Houston, Oswaldo Chinchilla Mazariegos, and David Stuart (551 pages, June 2001), is not a grammar or dictionary of the language, nor is it a detective

story about how the Mayan glyphs were decoded. (For that, consult Michael D. Coe's *Breaking the Maya Code*, published by Thames and Hudson in 1992.) Rather it is a collection of several centuries worth of hard-to-find writings on the many attempts at decipherment, from the book-burning Diego de Landa's misguided discernment of an alphabet in the 1560s to the "new epigraphy" of the 1980s and later, which combines a systematic search for phonetic values in each glyph with an examination of its contextual and iconographic content. Some of the sources are translated into English for the first time from the original Spanish or German, and all are by scholars who have made significant contributions in the field, among them Daniel Brinton, Cyrus Thomas, Sylvanus Morley, Paul Schellhas, Eric Thompson, Yuri Knorosov, Jean Genet, Tatiana Proskouriakoff, and David Stuart. An important sourcebook for any serious Mesoamerican collection. \$65.00. University of Oklahoma. ISBN 0-8061-3204-3.

The Encyclopedia of the Musical Theatre, by Kurt Gänzl (3 vols., 2d ed., June 2001), updates the 1994 two-volume edition with 500 new and 4,000 revised articles, and many new photos of performers and productions. Much of the new emphasis is on British provincial theatre and the American stage outside New York, thanks to Gänzl's painstaking examination of microfilm runs of *The Era*, *The Clipper*, and *New York Dramatic Mirror*. He has also filled in numerous gaps in birth and death information in the biographies, making this a worthwhile upgrade. The entries on specific shows are lively and qualitative, almost review-like, but never skimpy on facts. \$295.00. Schirmer/Gale. ISBN 0-02-864970-2.

George M. Eberhart is senior editor of *American Libraries*; e-mail: geberhart@ala.org

Place Names: How They Define the World—and More, by Richard R. Randall (201 pages, February 2001), explains how geographic place names are standardized, used, categorized, and changed. Written by a geographer who was executive secretary of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) for 20 years, this book serves as a useful introduction to naming conventions, sources, and disputes. Included are problems with transliteration methods, evolving political correctness in the United States, and post-Cold War changes. (When Ukraine became independent from Russia in 1991, it began to change more than 90 percent of its place names.) Perhaps most important are Randall's insights into how the BGN and the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographic Names have worked to promote standardization. \$35.00. Scarecrow. ISBN 0-8108-3906-7.

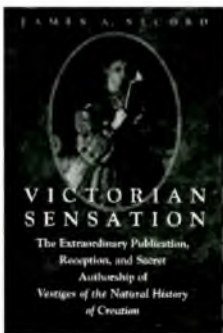
The Tarzan Novels of Edgar Rice Burroughs, by David A. Ullery (298 pages, March 2001), is a reader's guide to Tarzan the Ape-man, otherwise known as Lord Greystoke, and other inhabitants of the fictional jungles dreamed up by Burroughs in novels and stories written between 1914 and his death in 1950. Still bizarrely resonant with some readers after all these years, this book serves as a guide to a world as complex as anything that Tolkien or the *Star Trek* scriptwriters have dreamed up. The first part gives a biographical overview of Tarzan, listing the names various people called him as well as the many girlfriends he had (not just Jane for this jungle boy). Other chapters offer an Ape-English/English-Ape glossary; descriptions of lost cities, civilizations, and ethnic groups Tarzan ran into; descriptions of every major and minor character; and summaries of all the books. \$45.00. McFarland. ISBN 0-7864-0825-1.

You may also wish to consider McFarland's softbound July 2001 reprint of David Fury's *Kings of the Jungle: Tarzan on Screen and Television*, originally published in 1994 with a foreword by Maureen

O'Sullivan. This provides cast lists and detailed background information on all the Tarzan screen adaptations, illustrated with many stills. \$25.00. ISBN 0-7864-1109-0.

If you missed this publisher's other Burroughs reference books, they are both still in print and worthy chronicles of Barsoom, Pellucidar, Caprona, and other series: *The Burroughs Cyclopaedia*, by Clark A. Brady (1996, \$55.00); and *Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Exhaustive Scholar's and Collector's Descriptive Bibliography*, by Robert B. Zeuschner (1996, \$46.50).

Victorian Sensation, by James A. Secord (624 pages, February 2001), constitutes an in-depth examination of the vast effects that



one book—a relatively obscure one to modern readers—had on the beliefs, sensibilities, writings, philosophy, and temperament of Victorian society. Published anonymously in 1844, *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* was an odd blend of historical fiction, popular science, phrenology, free thought, and pre-Darwinian evolutionary speculation that offered its readers a journey from the beginnings of the universe through the progression of species to the ultimate development of human spirituality and reason.

Its author, Scottish writer and naturalist Robert Chambers, managed to preserve his anonymity for 40 years, a feat that magnified the book's intrigue enough to sustain it through 14 editions and 40,000 copies sold. However, *Victorian Sensation* is much more than the biography of a book; Secord only uses *Vestiges* as a well-documented case study to demonstrate how popular and scientific reading itself evolved during the mid-19th century. In his own words, it is a "full-length picture of how a substantial range of contemporary readers made meaning from a single work." This volume is erudite, well-footnoted, insightful, omniscient, and always interesting (especially to librarians and bibliophiles). \$35.00. University of Chicago. ISBN 0-226-74410-8. ■