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Review of the book Guide to reference in genealogy and biography

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Guide to reference in genealogy and biography, ed. by Mary K. Mannix, Fred Burchsted, and Jo Bell Whitlatch. ALA Editions, 2015. 372p index afp ISBN 9780838912942 pbk, \$75.00

In 2009, the venerable *Guide to Reference Books* (known to librarians colloquially as “Mudge,” “Winchell,” “Sheehy,” or “Balay”) ceased its print run and was succeeded by the electronic *Guide to Reference* (CH, Sep’09, 47-0006). Portions of the printed *Guide* have returned, now in small subject segments. Both sections of this volume—“Genealogy,” at 87 pages, and “Biography” at 231 pages—are arranged geographically (e.g., “International,” “North America,” “Latin America”) and further subdivided by country. Sources, both print and electronic, are listed in alphabetical order by title and supply an entry number and full bibliographic information, including Dewey and LC numbers, with annotations ranging from brief descriptions to more extensive evaluations. An author/title index refers users to entry numbers. While the geographic arrangement works for genealogy resources, it is unsatisfactory for biography, which needs subject access. Biographical sources that cross country boundaries are lumped together in the “International” section, where intrepid browsers will find collective biographies for (among others) Nobel and Pulitzer Prize winners, sports figures, chemists, artists, and women. Although this compilation will be a valuable collection-development tool for librarians and useful for libraries with genealogical collections, its value for those seeking biographical or genealogical information is impaired by its lack of subject access, making it a time-consuming reference source. **Summing Up:** ★★ Recommended. Primarily for professionals/practitioners.—*J. A. Drobnicki, York College, CUNY*