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Antanas Balašaitis et al., *Jungtinių Amerikos Valstijų Lietuviai: Biografijos žinynas*,

I tomas, A-M. Vilnius, 1998: Mokslo ir enciklopedijos leidybos institutas, L. Asanavičiūtės 23, 2050 Vilnius. \$25, plus \$10 postage & handling.

This is the first half of an intended pair of biographical dictionaries, embracing Lithuanians who have lived chiefly if not exclusively in the United States. The project is a joint venture of a Vilnius-based publishing house and the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center of Chicago. Despite some misunderstandings between the partners (cf. letter-to-the-editor, *Draugas* 13 April 1999), both institutions deserve plaudits for managing to produce this handsome, hardcover tome of 716 pages, replete with 1,037 photographs, accompanying 2,004 entries.

Several encyclopedia staff members made lengthy visits to Chicago to gather material, culled from *Lietuvių enciklopedija* and *Encyclopedia Lituanica*, supplemented from other biographical handbooks, newspapers, clippings and responses to questionnaires. This tome attempts to include publicists, engineers, writers, artists, musicians, medical personnel, attorneys, diplomats, clergy, and religious. The illustrations are of good quality. Just to assemble photos for over half the entries required much diligence. Despite their formidable goal, the editors have achieved considerable success in this task.

There are a number of admirable features in the dictionary. One is immediately struck by the mixture of birthplaces. Apart from the majority, who were natives of Lithuania, one encounters those born in St. Petersburg, Ukraine, Australia, Great Britain, and Germany. Over 10 percent of entries, i.e. 298, described second-generation Lithuanians in the United States.

More laudable is the time-span from the 1860s to the 1970s, representing persons of more than a century. The honor for the earliest entry belongs to Juozas Januškevičius who was born 14 June 1862 in Ruponiai, Lithuania, and died 21 April 1960 in Riverside, Pennsylvania. An actual count by decades reveals the following breakdown:

1860s - 3	1900s - 389	1940s - 110
1870s - 25	1910s - 433	1950s - 93
1880s - 101	1920s - 314	1960s - 33
1890s - 229	1930s - 203	1970s - 3

For full identification, the editors have provided pseudonyms, as well as alternate spellings of surnames in Anglicized form. Married women are identified by both family name and husband's surname.

A venture of this kind, nevertheless, inevitably bears certain inescapable hazards. Severe limitation of researchers and funding precluded expert proofreading and checking of independent sources to insure accuracy (e.g., a 1971 death date was assigned to a priest still among the living!) The editorial board admits its shortcomings in a lengthy disclaimer.

For a variety of reasons (the vast scope of the publication, the scarcity of evidence, the majority of the entries prepared in Vilnius) some places in this dictionary lack the total precision and depth of an encyclopedia. Some biographies are scant without dates and places [of birth]. There may also be inaccuracies and omissions. In many instances, the effort to encompass the biographies was determined by the availability of evidence. Thus, the length of an entry does not express the subject's prominence. In only a portion of the cases, were we able to provide the subject with a glimpse of the prepared text of his or her entry. In such instances, corrections were made (p. 8).

This acknowledgment is indeed honest. As many as forty-six entries lack a date of birth. In at least five cases, only an approximate ("apie") year given. In dozens of entries, only a year appears, without month or day. In many more instances, there is no birthplace. Nevertheless, in some instances at least, a simple phone call or two would have yielded the missing information.

In this reviewer's opinion, there is a major fault in this volume - the lack of a clear plan. Were there precise criteria for the selection of entries? Here the board indicates no standard for inclusion, nor can one discern such a measuring stick. Apart from notable accomplishments, does mere membership in a profession alone warrant an entry? Does being a priest, teacher, or nurse by itself automatically provide admission? If this were the case, the volume would have to expand to triple its size to include hundreds more. This dictionary shows no judgment in such selections included here.

A related question arises about categories. Was there a clear plan to include or exclude any such listings? For instance, was there an intention to list outstanding professional athletes? If so, one finds barely a few, such as tennis great Vitas Gerulaitis, and football Giant quarterback, Johnny (Unitas) Jonaitis. Missing are other sports figures of equal stature.

Furthermore, absent are such noteworthy activists as: Fr. Aleksandras Burba, Msgr. Algimantas Bartkus, Fr. Antanas Kaupas, Fr. Fabijonas Kemėšis, and Fr. Antanas Milukas. To name only a few women deserving an entry, one recalls Moterų Sąjunga leader -Uršulė Daukantiėnė, and the Casimirite - Sr. Timothy Audyatis (Audyaitė), author of an invaluable massive master's thesis on the history of the Lithuanian Catholic Federation. Above all, where are the famous aviators, Darius and Girėnas?

There is a hint of a disclaimer on selections in the prefatory explanation (Paaiškinimai, p. 8) as to the time-period for the entries. Earlier emigrants' activities, the reader is told, are described in the *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, published in Boston (1953-1969, 1985), seemingly to account for the absence of people such as Fr. Burba (born, 1854). Yet one finds others of that earlier immigration, such as Antanas Bimba (born, 1894). Most of all, the aforementioned table of entries by decades contradicts the disclaimer. The subjects of over 1,000 entries were people born before the end of the second decade of this century. This fact partially conflicts with the opening sentence of the Explanatory page 8: "Described in this dictionary are Lithuanians who vividly distinguished themselves after World War Two in community and professional activities."

One misses urgently needed cross-references and consistency. For example, one would not locate Irena Banaitė without knowing that her married surname was Ivaškienė (p. 362). In reverse, one would not find Juzė Daugėlienė without knowing her maiden surname of Krištolaitė, recorded under letter "K" in hyphenated form with her married surname (p. 532). Anticipating Volume N-Ž, the editors should have furnished Stasė Daugėlienė with an intended cross-reference to her maiden surname of Vižinytė (p. 230). Such troublesome omissions abound throughout.

One comes away from an inspection of this dictionary with the impression of haste, lack of allotted time and failure sufficiently to consult knowledgeable historians. In addition to the Chicago research, a trip to the Boston area and the ALKA Archives in Putnam, Connecticut, would probably have mitigated some, if not most, of the difficulties. Despite the editorial board's understandable passion to get into print, this reviewer respectfully urges patience. Tedious as it is, a painstaking review of all aspects of this enterprise is necessary.

Meanwhile, the benefit of a forthcoming second volume permits the research team to insert supplementary and corrective data for the first tome, and to tighten its editorial policies. One trusts that this will happen in order to furnish the best possible outcome. This praiseworthy and invaluable undertaking merits the good wishes of us all.

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