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FORT HAYS KANSAS STATE COLLEGE

FORSYTH LIBRARY LEAFLET--No. 4

WHO WROTE IT

How to Find Information About Authors

A quick way to find a few important facts about an author's life is to look at the cards for his books in the Card Catalog. The clues you get there will usually tell you where to look for more information. For example:

1. Dates of Author's Birth and Death. These dates follow the name of the author on the catalog cards. If no death date is there, assume that he is still living and look for more information in such books as the various WHO'S WHOS. If the author is dead, you will need to use other biographical dictionaries or encyclopedias. (See page 2.)
2. Nationality of Author. Note where his books were published. The place of publication is given on the catalog card after the title of the book. To look up living Americans, use WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA. If the books were published in England, try a British biographical dictionary, like WHO'S WHO.
3. Occupation of Author. Is he best known as a poet, novelist, dramatist? There are special books which you should try first for professional writers. (See page 3.) Often you can tell about the author's interests or profession from the titles of his books. Are they about education, philosophy, industry? There are special biographical dictionaries for educators, philosophers, industrialists, and for people in other occupations. (See page 3.)

Armed with whatever information the Card Catalog supplies, you are ready to look up the author in the biographical dictionaries and other reference books in the Reference Room. To find their call numbers, consult the card catalog. The books are shelved in call number order in the Reference Room. Here are some of the most useful books:

FOR LIVING WRITERS

Current Biography. 1950 and 1960 annual volumes have indexes listing all the people included in preceding volumes.

Who's Who in America

Who's Who. British

Biography Index. Includes reference to places where you can find more information.

FOR WRITERS NO LONGER LIVING

Who Was Who

Biography Index

Encyclopedias, such as Encyclopedia Americana, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Chambers, Collier's

Dictionary of American Biography (DAB)

Dictionary of National Biography (DNB). British

Use the older issues of Current Biography and the Who's Whos for the past years, since they contain information about writers recently deceased.

FOR PROFESSIONAL WRITERS

American Authors, 1600-1900. Kunitz

Twentieth Century Authors. Kunitz

American Novelists of Today. Warfel

Contemporary American Authors. Millett

British Authors of the 19th Century. Kunitz

FOR WRITERS WITH OTHER OCCUPATIONS

Who's Who in American Education

Who Knows--and What

Dictionary of American Scholars

American Men of Science

Presidents and Deans of American College and Universities

Who's Who in Public Relations

Who's Who of American Women

Who's Who in the Theatre

Who's Who in Railroading

Who's Who in the Midwest

FOR WRITERS OF OTHER COUNTRIES

Remember that Who's Who and the Dictionary of National Biography are British. Some of the biographical dictionaries for other nations are:

Asia Who's Who

International Who's Who

World Biography

Russian Writers

Who's Who in Germany

Who's Who in Latin America

These are only examples of the books available.

For additional material, look in the Card Catalog under such headings as:

Artists, American
Authors
Biography -- Dictionaries
Denmark -- Biography -- Dictionaries
Engineers, American -- Directories
Gt. Britain -- Biography
Theater -- U. S.
Woman -- Biography

For LONGER BIOGRAPHIES of an author, look in the Subject Catalog under his name. Books which were written about him are listed there.

For MAGAZINE ARTICLES about an author, consult the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, or some of the other magazine indexes. See Forsyth Library Leaflet No. 3, MAGAZINE INDEXES.

Information about authors who have written very little, or whose published work is very recent, may be difficult to find. For these authors, try:

BOOK REVIEWS. These sometimes contain information about authors. For information about looking up reviews, see Forsyth Library Leaflet No. 6, HOW TO FIND BOOK REVIEWS.

A SPECIAL FILE OF BOOK JACKETS (covers), available at the Reference Desk, sometimes contain biographical information. Ask about an author if you don't find him in the reference books.

FOR HELP IN FINDING BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION
ASK AT THE GENERAL REFERENCE DESK