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[Review of] A Dictionary of American Proverbs

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A Dictionary of American proverbs, ed. by Wolfgang Mieder, Stewart A. Kingsbury, and Kelsie B. Harder. Oxford, 1991, (c1992). 710p bibl afp ISBN 0195053990, \$49.95

Mieder (German and Russian, University of Vermont), Kingsbury (English, Northern Michigan University), and Harder (English, SUNY College at Potsdam) have compiled more than 15,000 proverbs and their variants that were in actual use in the US during the 1940s up to the 1970s. The project grew out of Margaret M. Bryant's work with the American Dialect Society; the dictionary therefore has been based on field collection of *oral* proverbs rather than the literary resources on which most earlier collections have relied, e.g., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* (CH, Jun'83) or Bartlett Whiting, *Modern Proverbs and Proverbial Sayings* (CH, Jan'90). All of these works have a common failing, however: access is by keyword from the proverb, making subject access a haphazard endeavor. Cross-references aid the searcher somewhat, but this type of arrangement does not bring like subjects together. Entries do provide much useful information, including variants, informant's comments, geographic distribution of recorded examples, the history of the proverb's usage, and written sources. This work should be added to all public and academic library collections because of its unique sampling of spoken American proverbs.

--R. A. Aken, *University of Kentucky*

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