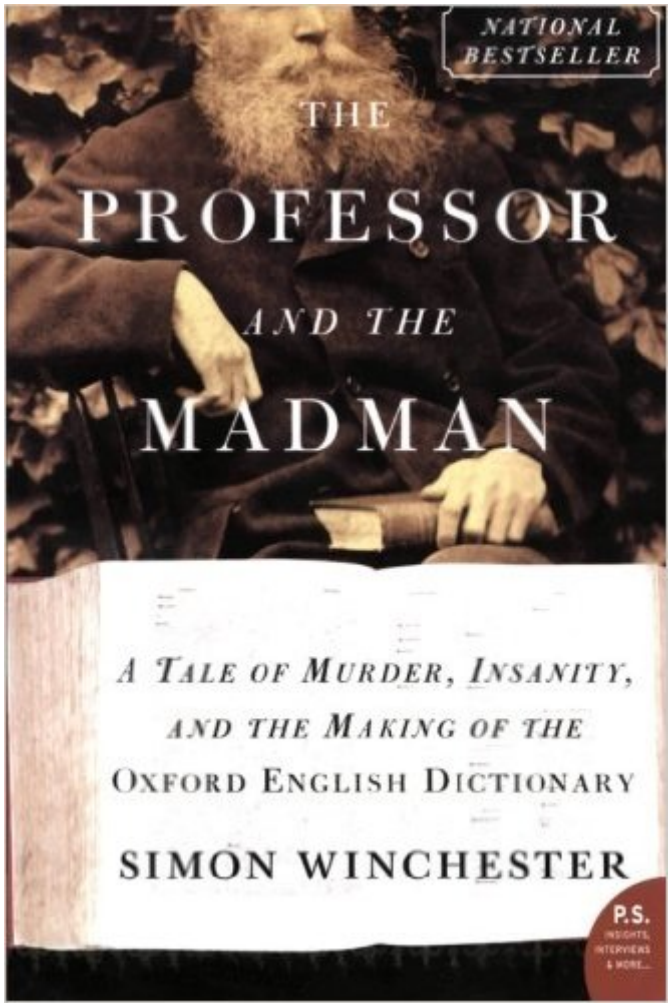
The book was found

The Professor And The Madman: A Tale Of Murder, Insanity, And The Making Of The Oxford English Dictionary



PDF
Adobe
DOWNLOAD EBOOK

Synopsis

The Professor and the Madman, masterfully researched and eloquently written, is an extraordinary tale of madness, genius, and the incredible obsessions of two remarkable men that led to the making of the Oxford English Dictionary -- and literary history. The compilation of the OED began in 1857, it was one of the most ambitious projects ever undertaken. As definitions were collected, the overseeing committee, led by Professor James Murray, discovered that one man, Dr. W. C. Minor, had submitted more than ten thousand. When the committee insisted on honoring him, a shocking truth came to light: Dr. Minor, an American Civil War veteran, was also an inmate at an asylum for the criminally insane.This P.S. edition features an extra 16 pages of insights into the book, including author interviews, recommended reading, and more.

Book Information

Paperback: 242 pages
Publisher: Harper Perennial (2005)
Language: English
ISBN-10: 0060839783
ISBN-13: 978-0060839789
Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.6 x 8 inches
Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)
Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (821 customer reviews)
Best Sellers Rank: #18,102 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #21 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Books & Reading > General #32 inÂ Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Europe > Great Britain #106 inÂ Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature > Authors

Customer Reviews

James Murray, the editor of the Oxford English Dictionary, corresponded with Dr. W.C. Minor for many years; Dr. Minor was one of the most indefatigable contributors to the OED. Minor was committed to an Broadmoor asylum in 1872, having murdered an innocent man. Nowadays we would call him a paranoid schizophrenic; in those days they just called him insane.In the asylum he had plenty of time to locate and submit thousands of usage slips to the OED, and thus began his relationship with Murray. It is an extraordinary relationship, and Winchester wrings every last drop of melodrama from it--to the point of irritating the reader.For example, for many years there was a standard tale about the first meeting of Murray and Minor, in which Murray only finds out when he

actually arrives at Broadmoor that Dr. Minor is not on the staff, but is an inmate. Winchester opens the book with the phrase "Popular myth has it that . . . " and proceeds to tell the tale; it is an engaging story, and he tells it well. However, halfway through the book he points out that it is false, and has been known to be so for several years. He does eventually give the true version of events, but dangling the attractive lie in front of the reader like this while delaying the less exciting truth is a sign of his weakness for sensationalism.Another example (p. 195 in the paperback edition): after describing a particular gruesome episode of his madness, Winchester speculates for a whole page about a possible cause for which there is not even a hint of evidence--that Minor had an affair with the wife of the man he murdered. Winchester freely admits this is a complete fabrication, but includes it as "legitimate speculation"; to me, it feels more like tabloid journalism.

For those who love words and reference books, this is a well-told yarn. Being the story of the relationship between one William Minor, a doctor and convicted lunatic suffering from paranoia, and James Murray, editor of the Oxford English Dictionary, there is much more right with the book than wrong, but it does have some problems, primarily the lack of an index. Any book with so many names should have an index.Secondly, one wishes to see and hear more -- the author refers to several interesting photographs: a formal farewell photo of Minor near the end of his life, returning to America after 37 years in England (all but one spent in Broadmoor Asylum for the Criminally Insane); the last photo of Murray, a fortnight before his death, in the Scriptorium (where the OED was compiled) surrounded by his daughters and staff. It would have been nice to see these pictures. The author refers several times to Minor’s handwriting and many times to his letters. It would have added to the story to see at least a few letters in full, and particularly to have seen a sample of Minor’s writing. In addition, Winchester credits the motivation for the creation of the OED to an address by Richard Trench, in which Trench delineates seven ways that dictionaries of the time were deficient, but then states that "most of them are technical and should not concern us here"! I think people interested in this book *would* most likely be interested in these technical details. If nothing else, they should be put in a (foot)note.

Download to continue reading...

The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity, and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity, and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary Oxford Picture Dictionary for the Content Areas English Dictionary (Oxford Picture Dictionary for the Content Areas 2e) The Oxford Picture Dictionary: English-Spanish Edition (The Oxford Picture Dictionary Program) (English and Spanish Edition) The Oxford Picture

Dictionary English/Japanese: English-Japanese Edition (The Oxford Picture Dictionary Program) The Professor and the Madman Spanish-English English-Spanish Medical Dictionary: Diccionario MÃ©dico EspaÃ ol-InglÃ©s InglÃ©s-EspaÃ ol (Spanish to English/ English to Spanish Medical Dictionary) (Spanish Edition) Murder Most Vile Volume 10: 18 Shocking True Crime Murder Cases (True Crime Murder Books) Hip Hop Rhyming Dictionary: The Extensive Hip Hop & Rap Rhyming Dictionary for Rappers, Mcs,Poets,Slam Artist and lyricists: Hip Hop & Rap Rhyming Dictionary And General Rhyming Dictionary The Oxford Dictionary of Dance (Oxford Quick Reference) Diccionario Oxford Complutense de Ciencias / Oxford Dictionary of Science Complutense (Spanish Edition) Pocket Oxford Chinese Dictionary (Oxford Dictionaries) Russian-English / English-Russian Dictionary and Phrasebook: (Hippocrene Dictionary & Phrasebooks) BEATRIX POTTER Ultimate Collection - 22 Children's Books With Complete Original Illustrations: The Tale of Peter Rabbit, The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck, ... Moppet, The Tale of Tom Kitten and more The Oxford Book of English Ghost Stories (Oxford Books of Prose & Verse) On the Verge of Insanity: Van Gogh and His Illness The Dig Tree: A True Story of Bravery, Insanity, and the Race to Discover Australia's Wild Frontier I Don't Suffer from Insanity Daybrightener The Insanity of God: A True Story of Faith Resurrected The Insanity of Obedience: Walking with Jesus in Tough Places

Dmca