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From the Reference Desk

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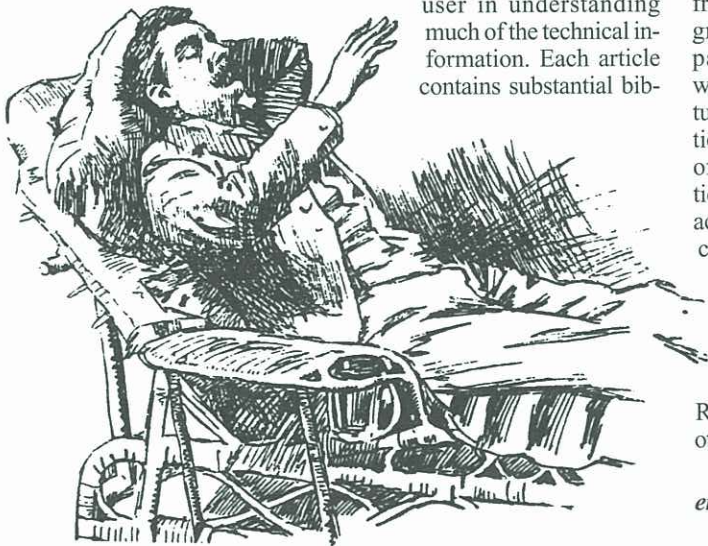
From the Reference Desk

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As Hurricane Georges headed toward the Gulf and Charleston dodged another bullet, I came across a new reference book in our collection that “spoke to me.” Facts on File’s *Encyclopedia of Hurricanes, Typhoons and Cyclones* (1998, 0816033986; \$45) by David Longshore discusses the historic, scientific and cultural aspects of these natural phenomena. The *Encyclopedia* contains clear and precise definitions of things like millibars, the Sapiir-Simpson Scale and Doppler radar while also explaining processes like wind shear, tropical disturbances and barometric pressure. In addition, articles on death tolls and tropical cyclones, the naming of hurricanes and “hurricane parties” shed light on the cultural impacts of these storms. But the real stars of this book are the storms themselves. Author David Longshore thoroughly discusses major storms from the Hakata Bay Typhoon which struck Japan in 1281 killing an estimated 68,000 people, to the minimal Category 1 Hurricane Allison which bumped the Florida Panhandle in June, 1995. Not only are individual storms discussed, but articles covering specific locations susceptible to storms are highlighted. (I learned more than I wanted to know reading the entry on South Carolina.) This book also contains a chronology of major storms, an alphabetical listing of named hurricanes, typhoons, and cyclones and a storm-tracking chart. Maps and black and white photos serve to clarify locations and illustrate the destructive power of these storms. A useful bibliography and an index round out the volume. Public libraries, as well as academic libraries with interest (like ours), will want to add this to their reference collection.

Academic libraries supporting environmental programs, as well as some special libraries will want to seriously consider John Wiley’s *Encyclopedia of Environmental Analysis and Remediation* (1998, 0471117080; \$2150.) This eight-volume set is expensive but is loaded with highly specialized and technical information which will be of most use to scientists, engineers and environmental policy makers. However, graduate students and undergraduates majoring in environmental studies (as well as those upper division students with related or peripheral interest) will also benefit from its use. Some 280 articles arranged alphabetically cover topics relating to air pollution control, environmental law and regulations, sampling and analysis, water reclamation, hazardous waste remediation and pollution in the biosphere. Liberal use of visual aids like charts, tables, diagrams and photos both supplement the text and assist the

user in understanding much of the technical information. Each article contains substantial bib-



liographies attesting to their scholarly nature. However, the index, while useful, is cumbersome. References are to page numbers but there is no indication in the index as to the page numbers within each volume. (Each volume may list the pages on the spine but given the location of most call number labels there is no way to know once the book is processed.) This problem aside, the *Encyclopedia of Environmental Analysis and Remediation* is an impressive work that will find a home in serious environmental science collections. Libraries may also want to consider Academic Press’ *Encyclopedia of Environmental Biology* (1995, 0122267303; \$499) and Wiley’s *Encyclopedia of Energy Technology & the Environment* (1995, 0471544582; \$900).

Students are always being assigned to find information about other countries and there are a number of standard sources like the *Europa Yearbook* and the *World Fact Book* which do an excellent job treating the basic facts and statistics. But, thankfully, more references are also being published which cover the cultural aspects of individual countries. Routledge’s *Encyclopedia of Contemporary French Culture* (1998, 0415131863; \$140) and Garland’s *Modern Germany: An Encyclopedia of History, People and Culture 1871-1990*. (1998, 0815305036; \$175) are good examples. The *Encyclopedia of Contemporary French Culture* is a single volume reference which covers French culture in the “very broadest sense.” Contemporary is defined from 1945 to the present and coverage includes other francophone countries and regions like Belgium and North Africa. Subjects treated cover everything from comic strips to cuisine, social policy to fashion, and erotic writing to the European Union. In addition, the *Encyclopedia* contains short biographies of famous and influential people. The articles are brief, ranging from one or two paragraphs to three or four pages in length. The writing is clear and factual and many of the articles have short bibliographies, although this is not a strength. (Many of the biographical entries contain no bibliography at all.) The articles are arranged alphabetically and there is also an index for added accessibility. Another feature which is very helpful is the “classified contents list” which serves as a thematic index bringing together articles under broad topics like politics, sports and intellectual life.

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The *Encyclopedia of Contemporary French Culture* tackles a tough job and does it well. It provides thorough and reliable coverage of a very broad topic in one easily accessible volume. Interested libraries will be glad to know that this is only one title in Routledge’s *Encyclopedias of Contemporary Culture Series*. The other books in the series cover German, Italian and Spanish cultures.

Although the emphasis is not specifically cultural, Garland’s *Modern Germany: An Encyclopedia of History, People and Culture 1871-*

continued on page 50

From the Reference Desk
from page 48

1990, touches on such issues throughout its two volumes. There are specific articles on topics like aesthetics, counterculture, folklore, and customs as well as articles related to architecture, cinema, art history and leisure. In addition, there are entries for specific artists, composers and writers. But, as alluded to earlier, culture is only one of the aspects treated here. This encyclopedia also covers political developments, economic issues, history, foreign relations and advances in the sciences. And, because of Germany's impact on world affairs over the last century, this encyclopedia is more than an area study. Articles on anti-Semitism, both World Wars, the Berlin Wall and the Holocaust, as well as those which focus on Germany's impact on Western philosophy and culture and its relations with other countries lend international import. The articles are well written and will appeal to student, scholar and laymen alike. Each is followed by a helpful bibliography and are signed. The arrangement is alphabetical and there is an index. As with the *Encyclopedia of Contemporary French Culture*, a thematic "subject guide" is another important feature. It gives the reader a feel for both the breath and depth of the coverage as well as links to related articles. Public and academic libraries will find this two-volume set a worthy addition to their collections.

Fitzroy Dearborn has added a much-needed encyclopedia to their catalog. The *Encyclopedia of AIDS: A Social, Political, Cultural & Scientific Record of the HIV Epidemic* (1998, 1579580076; \$95) is a serious book about a very serious topic. This encyclopedia covers the first fifteen years of the AIDS epidemic beginning in 1981 when it was first identified in the United States and carries through 1996. Coverage is organized on what the editor Raymond A. Smith refers to as the eight domains of the epidemic: Basic Science and Epidemiology; Transmission and Prevention; Pathology and Treatment; Impacted Populations; Government and Activism; Policy and Law; Culture and Society and the Global Epidemic. While the main entries are alphabetical, in the front of the book there is a series of research guides based on these eight domains which include an introductory essay and a list of related articles contained in the encyclopedia. This acts as an expanded version of a thematic index and is very helpful. Regarding the articles, they are thoroughly researched and clearly written and each is followed by a bibliography, often containing both books and journal articles. Realizing that this encyclopedia serves as a background source and that current information is available in the periodical literature, each entry also has a list of keywords for online searching. Each entry also lists related articles in the encyclopedia. Finally to give readers a taste of what to expect, there is an *Encyclopedia of AIDS* Web page at <http://www.thebody.com/encyclo/encyclo.html> which contains selected entries. With so much having been written about AIDS, it is a tremendous help to have a single volume which covers so many aspects of the disease and does it so well. The overall impression is one of scholarly care and commitment. Given the continuing concern about AIDS, this reference should find a welcome home in most public and academic libraries.


Recently a number of new editions of proven titles have also been released and they deserve some discussion. Congressional Quarterly

has just published *Congress and the Nation 1993-1996* (1998, 1568022409; \$225). This is the ninth volume in this series which covers national government actions during succeeding four-year presidential terms. Offering chronological coverage of everything from tax policy to urban aid, agricultural policy to transportation and the environment to defense, this series has become a standard source. Those libraries who already subscribe to the annual *Congressional Quarterly Almanac* may find much of the information redundant and not worth the asking price. (But having the information packaged by presidential term may have added appeal). Those libraries that do not have the annual *Almanacs* should consider purchase.

CQ has also just published *Historic Documents of 1997* (1998, 1568023855; \$135). Stretching back to 1972, these annuals offer access to excerpts of primary sources related to major events occurring during the year. Samples from the 1997 edition include the Supreme Court on Internet Free Speech, the Air Force Report on the Roswell UFO sightings, Earl Spencer's oration at Princess Diana's funeral and the juror's remarks after O.J. Simpson's civil trial. Admittedly, a number of these sources might be found on the Web. The question is how long will they be there? The more time passes, the more valuable this series becomes.

As a "complete reference for generic and brand drugs" *Mosby's GenRx* (1998, 0815137834; \$69.95) is in its eighth edition. In content and coverage, it is comparable to *PDR Generics* (1998, 1563632535; 79.95), only it has been around longer. (*PDR Generics* is currently in its fourth edition.) Besides the complete drug information, *Mosby's GenRx* includes a keyword index, a color drug identification guide and profiles of the suppliers/manufacturers. There is also a directory of AIDS drug assistance programs in the U.S., Guam and the Virgin Islands. There is a lot of information here for the money.

In 1985 ABC-CLIO published volume one of its *Constitutional Law Dictionary* with the second volume following in 1987. They offer clear definitions and explanations of constitutional issues, major cases and legal terms. Rather than revise this reference in new editions, ABC-CLIO chose to issue three supplements to the first volume, *Individual Rights*. Now they have published the first supplement to volume two, *Government Powers* (1998, 0874369258; \$60) which maintains the quality of the original volume and updates it through the 1996 Supreme Court session. Libraries that already have the set will want to add this new supplement

The third edition of William R. Evinger's *Directory of U.S. Military Bases Worldwide* (1998, 1573560499; \$125) has been published by Oryx Press. The last edition was released in 1994 and this most recent version updates the changes reflected in recent base closings and realignments. Close to 1200 bases are included and each entry lists the address, phone and fax number, and the Web URL. In addition, a base profile including branch of service and a base history as well as the commanding officer and other key contacts are listed. There is also an appendix of the 1995 base closures as well as the completion schedule for past and future closings stretching back to the 1988 closures. The indexing is very thorough. Besides an alphabetical list of all bases, there is a state and branch of service index and an index of military units and their base locations. This directory will be extremely useful for all types of libraries. 

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