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From the Reference Desk-Reviews of Reference Titles

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From the Reference Desk

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Some reference books assume added importance because of the serious nature of the topics they treat. Undoubtedly, ABC-CLIO's *Encyclopedia of Genocide* (1999, 0874369282, \$150) falls into that category. Produced by the **Institute of the Holocaust and Genocide** in Jerusalem and edited by **Israel W. Charny**, this set is a disturbing reminder of the staggering crimes committed as a result of racial and ethnic hatreds. While there is a considerable amount of attention paid to the Jewish Holocaust here, coverage is by no means restricted to it. Editor Charny and his contributors also report on the carnage that took nearly 2 million Armenian lives during and just after World War I, as well as the more recent Khmer Rouge genocide in Cambodia and the retaliatory killings of Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi and Rwanda. There are also articles on the genocide of the Native populations in Australia and the Americas and those that cover broad historical epochs like those on genocide in antiquity, the Middle Ages and the early modern period. In addition, the encyclopedia includes biographical sketches of both perpetrators of genocide and those who have fought to expose and combat it. There are also entries that define terms and concepts and those that discuss various other aspects like

the psychology of genocide, the attempts at genocide denial, the role of film as propaganda and the art of the Holocaust. Reading through this encyclopedia has a mind numbing effect and many of the facts recounted are difficult to comprehend. For example, the Soviet Union, under Stalin, is accused of murdering almost 62 million people. Some 70 countries are held to have had "mass killings and arbitrary executions" of their indigenous populations numbering 350-400 million through recorded history. And, few can claim innocence. In the fight against Indonesian communism, "recently declassified secret government documents show that in 1965 Britain aided the slaughter of over half a million people." Declassified documents also show that the United States covertly supplied many of the weapons.

Getting back to the mundane, the organization of the book is a bit quirky, but a more than adequate index helps make up for it. Nonetheless, a reading of the "How to use the Encyclopedia" section might be a good idea. While the scholarship is undeniable, there are instances where more thorough authentication would be a great help. For example, the information regarding the genocide in Indonesia related above is given in a sidebar and does not cite the source of the "secret documents,"

and the person reporting the information is not identified in the list of contributors. Despite flaws like this, the *Encyclopedia of Genocide* is a powerful work and represents a milestone in genocide studies. It is a reference set that is a necessary and important purchase for both academic and public libraries.

Another ABC-CLIO title deserves discussion. The *Constitutional Rights Sourcebook* (1999, 1576070611, \$75) is a handy introduction to the Constitution and the rights it protects. Written by **Peter G. Renstrom**, the emphasis is on the "currently existing doctrine" as elucidated by 175 landmark **Supreme Court** cases. Renstrom has organized his book by what he considers to be relevant constitutional amendments including the first, fourth, fifth, sixth, eighth and the fourteenth. He further organized each chapter by significant concepts accompanied by an explanation of the cases that address the concept. For example, in the chapter on the fourth amendment, concepts like third party searches, probable cause, the exclusionary rule, and drug testing are explained with references to cases like *Zurcher v. Stanford Daily*, *Draper v. United States*,
continued on page 68

ATG Interviews Bob Doran from page 62

to create with the other players a standard, a means of identifying what we are all talking about. The work that **Glen Secor** has done with **YRM** and the **DOI** is really important here. We have to have a place to store the metadata about the products and to store the products themselves. Obviously, we need to acquire the content from the publishers, get the rights to it. This is all so new; we are going to have to experiment, be willing to change, be flexible. But overall, these are just products, like we've been distributing for nearly a 100 years. Baker&Taylor has established a brand name in the market place and has, for years, served the Library and the Retail. We plan to continue to provide the same service and earn the same respect that have made **B&T** a trusted partner. We have to think this through carefully, but I've no doubt we will continue to satisfy our customers. And I can tell you we've been in contact with all the major players. We are open to work with any company and will consider any potential relationship. I guarantee that there will be some partnerships announced that will be wild and crazy—look at **AOL** and **Time-Warner**.

ATG: What role, if any, does **George Coe** play in all of this? Is this why he left **Brodart** after over twenty years?

RD: George brings such a wealth of experience and customer knowledge to **B&T**. His role is **President of B&T Institutional** so he will not have an immediate impact on **Informata.com**, but, of course, his insights and thoughts on the marketplace will help us move forward. We are so proud to have someone of George's status join the executive team of **Gary Rautenstrauch**, **Arnie Wight** and **Jim Ulsamer**.

ATG: Tell us about yourself, What do you like to do for fun? What do you like to read? Tell us about your family.

RD: Let's see ... I grew up in New England and graduated from **Bowdoin College**—seems like ages ago—after 4 years of service, Marine Corps, I joined **Prentice-Hall Publishing** and marketed college textbooks before moving on to run **Macmillan Publishings'** College Sales Department. My first move into database and library work came when I joined **R.R. Bowker** where I headed up sales and became the Publisher of *Books In Print*. I did two years at **Barnes&Noble** working on the database which drove **bn.com**. **Craig Richards** and I met up and we both shared a vision which has come to reality in **Informata.com** ... talk about coming full circle!

I did live outside NYC for 25 years, so
continued on page 86

Colleran & Funkhouser Interview from page 64

company's participating publishers, and manages the digital rights management sales effort. Colleran has over 17 years of experience in the communications industry, having spent the majority of his career in the advertising/marketing communications profession. Most recently, he was Vice President/Managing Director of **Larry Miller Productions** (now **ixl, Inc.**), a firm specializing in Web strategy and the development and design of Websites for the Internet and intranets. Prior to **LMP**, Colleran was Director of Account Services at **Quantic Communications**, a marketing and communications firm specializing in new and traditional media.

Bruce Funkhouser manages CCC's business operations department, supporting all licensing and rights management services. He is a member of the International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organisation's (IFRRO) Musical Works Committee and Data Exchange Committee as well as the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences. Prior to joining CCC, Funkhouser served as Vice President, Programming, Licensing and Sales Support at **Muzak Limited Partnership**.

From the Reference Desk
from page 66

Mapp v. Ohio and the *Veronica School District 47J v. Acton*. But even more helpful is the fact that Renstrom explains the impact of each case in a "significance" section that follows the case description. Written in a style that is understandable to the lay reader, this reference is intended to make complicated legal concepts accessible. In this it succeeds. However, the *Constitutional Rights Sourcebook* is not a comprehensive reference to constitutional case law. In discussing the death penalty, the author references *Gregg v. Georgia*, which determined that the death penalty was not cruel and unusual punishment. In that discussion he also mentions *Furman v. Georgia* which had previously struck down all state capital punishment laws. And while in the "significance" section on *Gregg v. Georgia* its relationship to the *Furman* case is clarified, there is no separate entry for the *Furman* case.

While the overall content is solid, there are some surprising omissions. There is no discussion of the second amendment and the controversial interpretation of its guaranteeing the right to bear arms, or of the seventh amendment and the right to trial by jury. However, what author Renstrom covers, he covers well. In addition, he provides a listing of legal words and phrases that not only define, but also explain the importance of over 75 terms. An alphabetical list of cases, as well as an index of case names and subjects, offer helpful access to specifics. The *Constitutional Rights Sourcebook* will be of value to both academic and public libraries. Larger libraries may consider it appropriate for circulation.

McFarland has just published another "labor of love" highlighting an important aspect of American popular culture. The *Encyclopedia of American Radio 1920-1960* (2000, 0786404523; \$135) offers a comprehensive, factual look at the golden age of radio, a time when radio, not television, was the main vehicle of popular entertainment reaching into living rooms throughout the country. Alphabetically arranged, the *Encyclopedia of American Radio 1920-1960* covers everything from specific programs like the *Harlem Amateur Hour*, the *Green Hornet* and

the *Shadow* to individual actors and

actresses, sportscasters, news announcers, disc jockeys and even musical saw soloists. There are also revealing entries on broader topics like radio comedy, radio during wartime, black radio, religious broadcasting and the growth and development of radio stations.

Author **Luther F. Sies'** research is impressive. His book contains over 28,500 entries and is full of obscure facts. But equally important is the overarching sense of radio's cultural impact that one is left with after examining this work. In his introduction Sies notes that in the 1920s, radio was "sweeping the country" with annual radio sales jumping 1400% from 1922-1929. As one reads through the entries, you see names as diverse as comedian **Jack Benny**, radio evangelist **Aimee McPherson**, war correspondent **William Shirer**, and musician/vocalist **Nat King Cole**. You also notice program titles like the controversial **Amos 'n' Andy**, **Orson Welles' Mercury Theater** and the **Grand Ole Opry**. It is a vivid reminder that it was radio that first made these names and programs nationally famous.

Access to all this information is provided by three useful indexes containing listings by radio stations, program and name. There is also a chronology tracing the development of radio as well as a bibliography of additional sources. While the program descriptions in John Dunning's *On the Air: The Encyclopedia of Old-Time Radio* (1998, Oxford UP, 0195076788; \$55) are more complete, there is nothing that can match this book's comprehensive listing of programs, personalities, and individual stations. Most public libraries will want to find a place for this reference on their shelves. Academic libraries with courses in communications and popular culture will also want to give it serious consideration.

Libraries with interest in mythology and comparative religion may also want to take a look at McFarland's *Encyclopedia of Ancient Deities* (2000, 0786403179, \$75). The product of ten years of research by authors **Charles Russell Coulter** and **Patricia Turner**, this book offers an impressive list of over 10,000 deities from a variety of traditions including Greek, Celtic, Hindu, Islamic, Inuit, Chinese and African, as well as a number of others. The entries indicate which cultures the god/goddess is associated with and provide a good description of their relevance and purpose. Each entry also attempts to place the god/goddess in their proper family relationship. So **Antigone** is listed as the "daughter of Oedipus and Jocasta or possibly Euryganeia." She is also "the sister of Eteocles, Ismene and Polynices." The organization of the book is alphabetical. There is a comprehensive index that locates specific entries and includes alternate spellings. However, it would have been helpful to have other indexes, specifically, indexes by culture and type. It is discouraging to look at the comprehensive index under "China" and see approximately 156 page numbers or under "Fertility" and be confronted with 144 page

numbers. Indexes by culture and type with the actual names of the relevant gods/goddesses and specific page numbers would be a welcome addition. There is one other problem. While the information seems authoritative, there are no citations at the entry level to the sources used. The authors provide a bibliography of their sources, but the reader is left to guess where the information in specific entries came from. Still the number of entries listed here make the *Encyclopedia of Ancient Deities* well worth considering. It stands on its own as a resource and is a natural addition to collections already containing references like ABC-CLIO's *Guide to the Gods* (1992, 0874365910, \$150) and their *Goddesses in World Mythology* (1993, 0874367158, \$99).

Researchers in need of information from government agencies at the county, state and federal level will welcome the release of BRB Publications' *Sourcebook to Public Record Information* (1999, 1879792559; \$69.95). Providing descriptions and contact information for more than 20,000 government agencies this one volume replaces four previous publications: the *Sourcebook of County Court Records*, the *Sourcebook of State Court Records*, the *Sourcebook of Federal Court Records*, and the *Sourcebook of County Asset/Lien Records*. As such, the amount of information in-between the covers of this directory is remarkable. However, the *Sourcebook to Public Record Information* is more than a directory. It also acts as a primer on conducting this type of research. The introductory section of "How to" chapters point out both the shortcuts and pitfalls of locating public record information at each level. The second section is arranged by state and provides information about the following list of record sources: state agencies, licensing boards, federal courts, county courts, recording offices and county locator. Individual entries contain addresses, telephone and fax numbers, descriptions of the types of information available, access methods, fees and Web addresses when relevant. Any library having patrons who regularly seek public record information will find this book indispensable.

However, for those of us who have neither the time, nor the inclination to do this type of research, BRB Publications has another answer. The *Sourcebook of Local Court and County Record Retrievers* (2000, 1879792575, \$45) lists both firms and individuals who make their living locating court and agency records. According to the editors, "over 2600 retrievers covering more than 7,000 courts in 3,600 counties are profiled." Each entry is based "solely on regular, physical hands-on abstracting and/or retrieval of public record documents at the county courthouse or public records office." The book is divided into two sections, the County Index and Retriever Profiles. Arranged alphabetically by state and then by county within state, the County Index lists the names of the retrievers

continued on page 70

From the Reference Desk
from page 68

and their telephone numbers along with the various courts and agencies they claim competence in searching. The courts covered include the US District, Bankruptcy, Civil, Criminal and Probate, while the agencies listed are UCC Filing Office, Real Estate Recording, Tax Filing, Voter Registration and the Vital Records Offices. The Retriever Profiles provide information about the firms and individuals offering these devices. Besides addresses, email, and telephone and fax numbers, these profiles include the geographical area covered, types of retrieval and a brief description, including the expected turnaround time. However, there is one "consumer beware" that deserves mention. The information in the *Sourcebook* is based on responses to a survey and the editors take no responsibility for the answers. Realizing that standards are a problem, BRB has established its own a Public Record Retrievers Network that requires a commitment to a **Code of Professional Ethics** (a copy of which is printed in the book). Some 692 of the 2,500 companies listed in the *Sourcebook* have become members of the network and they are identified within the County Index and the Retrievers Profile section.

Some of this information may be attainable by searching the Web. But the real value of the *Sourcebook* is in the aggregation of this information into one easy-to-use reference tool and the attempt to establish standards via the Public Record Retrievers Network. Most public libraries, particularly those libraries where interest in genealogy is high, will find this reference highly useful.

Macmillan Reference USA has published an impressive and important two-volume encyclopedia entitled *Civil Rights in the United States* (2000, 0028647653, \$225). While the emphasis is on African American civil rights, the struggles of women, gays, the elderly and other minorities are given ample coverage. The articles run the gamut from biographical sketches of the prominent, to discussion of landmark legislation, to the roles of influential organizations and publications. There are also entries that define and clarify concepts and issues like nativism, anti-Semitism, critical race theory, test bias and voting rights. In addition, there are articles on civil rights in each of the individual states, as well as those that report specific outrages like the Tuskegee Experiments, and atrocities like the murder of the 14-year-old **Emmett Till**. However, there is one questionable omission. There is little mention of the Abolition Movement and the work of people like William Lloyd Garrison and the Grimke sisters (early abolitionists and feminists) in setting the stage for later civil rights struggles. But, given the wealth of other information provided, this oversight is forgivable.

The articles are organized alphabetically and there is a full list of articles, as well as a list of all the contributors. A general index

helps locate specifics, but there is no thematic index, and given the lack of "see also" references, such an index would have been a helpful tool in locating related articles. Any future edition should consider the addition of such finding aids. The writing is factual and each article is signed and has a bibliography of authoritative sources. Overall this set offers a more scholarly treatment than Sharpe Reference's *Encyclopedia of Civil Rights in America* (1997, 0765680009, \$249) and is far more comprehensive than the out of print ABC-CLIO *Companion to the Civil Rights Movement*.

Civil Rights in the United States is a reference set that should have broad appeal. It is suitable for both public and academic libraries, and given the importance of the topic, larger high school collections may also want to consider it.

Contemporary American Religion (1999, 0028649281, \$225) is another two-volume set recently published by Macmillan Reference, USA. Living up to its title, this encyclopedia concentrates on "popular religious life" in America since the 1960s. The emphasis is on cultural, not doctrinal concerns, with the focus on the "ever-widening religious pluralism" and increasing change in American religion. A look at the more than 500 article titles bears witness to this dynamic diversity. Entries on the Baptist Tradition and Roman Catholicism stand side-by-side with those on the Branch Davidians and the Ramtha School of Enlightenment. The set also contains biographical entries on people ranging from **Louis Farrakan** to the **Dalai Lama** to **L Ron Hubbard**. Controversial issues like the ordination of women, celibacy and assisted suicide, as well as practices as diverse as circumcision, channeling and prayer are also covered. Whether it is mainstream religion, the occult, new age or indigenous, it is covered in these two volumes. There is even an article on Cyber Religion.

Browsing through this set gives one a sense of the expanding complexity of American religious and spiritual life. The articles offer a clear, descriptive treatment of the beliefs, traditions, practices and movements covered. They are scholarly in tone while remaining readable. Each entry has its own bibliography and "see also" references link similar articles. An alphabetical list of articles, a list of contributors and a thorough index are also valuable features. Complementing and updating standbys like Macmillan's *Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience*, (1987, 0684180626, \$350) this reference should find a place on both academic and public library shelves.

Speaking of updating, the third edition of *Who's Who in Economics* (1999, 1858988861, \$350) has been published by the UK's Edward Elgar Publishing. This book is unlike the usual Who's Who type publication. It is really a one-volume biographical dictionary that includes what editor **Mark Blaug** considers the "major economists" from the

years 1700 through 1996. As he did in the 2nd edition (published in 1986), Blaug determined who qualified as "major" by the frequency of citation in "some 200 economics journals indexed in the Social Sciences Citation Index." Each entry has the relevant birth and death dates, the posts held, degrees, offices and honors, publications, fields of interest and principal contributions. While names like **Adam Smith**, **Jeremy Bentham** and **Thomas Malthus** are listed, more than two-thirds of the approximately 1,600 economists covered, are still living. In the case of these living economists, the information was gathered through a mailing to each individual, as well as by a follow-up, direct contact. It is their written responses that make up the bulk of the book. The arrangement is alphabetical, but indexes by principal field of interest, country of residence and country of birth provide additional access.

Who's Who in Economics is a natural for most academic libraries. It provides both historical, as well as contemporary coverage of some of the most influential names in economics. At \$350 the price may be too steep for some, but academic libraries, supporting an active economics curriculum, will want to make the investment.

Reference librarians will welcome the recent publication of volume 31 of Libraries Unlimited's *American Reference Books Annual* (2000, 1563088371, \$110). Long a standard source for reference book reviews, this edition provides critical evaluations of 1,543 books and CD-ROMs written by professional librarians and subject specialists. The reviews vary in length but most range 300-500 words and include books published in 1999, and late 1998. *ARBA 2000* is divided into four large categories, "General Reference Works," "Social Sciences," "Humanities" and "Science and Technology." In turn, these large categories are split into 37 chapters covering specific subject areas. It is also encouraging to see *ARBA* branch out into coverage of electronic resources. This year 62 CD-ROM titles are included. One hopes that as Web versions of reference sources become more prevalent, editor **Bohdan S. Wynar** will consider coverage of them as well. Providing access to the reviews is a thorough table-of-contents and comprehensive author/title and subject indexes. Perhaps not as comprehensive as those in *Booklist's Reference Books Bulletin*, nonetheless, the reviews are well written and critical, comparing other similar sources and making recommendations. All the reviews are signed and there is a list of reviewers and their professional positions in the front of the volume.

Over the years, the *American Reference Books Annual* has developed a well-earned reputation as an essential tool for reference book evaluation and collection development. Many libraries have standing orders to the series and that is worth considering for those that have been more sporadic in their purchasing of these books. Recommended for all libraries serious about their reference collections.