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TestDriving CD-ROMs -- The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM

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From the Reference Desk from page 64

Authored by scholars and professionals in the field, *Guns in American Society* offers a serious and even-handed approach to this complex issue. The writing is factual, to the point and objective. There are also a number of useful features including up-to-date bibliographies, liberal use of "see also" references and a directory of organizations interested in gun issues. This two-volume set will have broad appeal, not only because of the enduring relevance of the topic, but because of the quality of the treatment provided.

Literacy in America: An Encyclopedia of History, Theory and Practice is also impressive. Grounded in the latest research and practice, *Literacy in America* employs a definition of literacy that is multifaceted, and includes reading, writing, listening and speaking literacy, as well as the "new literacies" of popular culture, media and technology. Some 260 entries, written by close to 250 contributors, make up this two-volume work. Intended for a broad audience of scholars, students, professionals and interested lay readers, this set aims at providing "definitions, processes, influences, issues types and theories of literacy" as one of its goals. In addition, editor **Barbara J. Guzzetti** and her contributors focus on methods of assessment and instruction, as well as offering articles on specific literacy resources and organizations. There is also coverage of professional publications and reports. However, the subtitle is somewhat misleading. The word "history" could have been left out. The history of the literacy

movement receives little emphasis. There is one article on the history of reading instruction that offers historical context, but a sense of the history of the literacy movement does not come through in examining these volumes. This may be due to the fact that the literacy movement is a comparatively recent phenomenon. Nonetheless, *Literacy in America* is far stronger in its coverage of "theory" and "practice," and that is the real contribution of this work. It gathers together the current theory and practice of literacy education from the educator's perspective and, in fact, could function as a professional handbook. As you would expect from a high caliber scholarly work, each article has a list of relevant references while black and white photos and some charts and diagrams illustrate the text. In short, academic libraries supporting education courses, in particular, will find this a natural choice.

However, the cost of these two **ABC-CLIO** sets will give some pause. Both *Guns in American Society* and *Literacy in America* might have been published in single volumes, with the price reduced. Of course, that does not detract from their usefulness for libraries with needs in these two critical areas.

Another high interest and timely title is **Sage Publications** *Encyclopedia of Terrorism* (2003, 0761924086, \$99.95) by **Harvey W. Kushner**. **Mr. Kushner** is the Chairman of the Criminal Justice Department at **Long Island University** and a frequent guest on **CNN** whose expertise is widely respected. His book reflects his thorough knowledge of the various types of terror-

ism and the groups and individuals, who make up the worldwide terror network. His encyclopedia names all of the usual suspects like **Hezbollah**, **Al-Qaeda**, and the **Irish Republican Army**, as well as lesser-known or moribund organizations like the **Morazanist Patriotic Front** in Honduras, **Kahane Chai** in Israel, and the Italian **Ordine Nuovo**. However, **Kushner** does not limit his coverage to political terrorism. He also includes essays on animal, environmental, antiabortion and white supremacist terrorism. Counter terrorism is given its due with articles on government agencies like the Office of Homeland Security in the United States and military units like the elite German counter terrorist unit, **Grenzschutzgruppe**, and Israel's **Sayeret Matkal**. There is also coverage of specific terrorist acts like the Munich Olympic Massacre, the Iranian Hostage Crisis, the Achille Lauro hijacking, the bombing of Air India flight 182, and of course, the September 11th attack. Other entries offer brief biographies of known terrorists, discussions of concepts like jihad and phenomena like suicide terrorism, and terrorist methods like kidnapping and hostage taking. Special features like a chronology of terrorism related events, a directory of relevant Websites and a guide/index of related topics are particularly helpful, and enhance the value of this work.

Authoritative and thorough, the *Encyclopedia of Terrorism* is a book that libraries and their patrons will welcome. It offers factual, well-written coverage of a topic both fascinating and disturbing, but ultimately, important. This single volume encyclopedia is appropriate for both reference and circulating collections and should find a home in libraries of all types.

TestDriving CD-ROMs

The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM

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The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM

Cambridge University Press, ISBN: 0-521-62910-1.

Price: \$195. System Requirements: Windows: Windows 95, 98, or NT; 166 MHz Pentium, 32 MB RAM, 84 MB free hard drive space, 800x600 monitor resolution x 65,536 colors (16 bits; 6x speed CD-ROM drive.)

Reviewed by **Norman Desmarais** (Providence College)
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The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM contains the records of 27,233 trans-Atlantic slave ship voyages made between 1595 and 1866. These records account for about 70 percent of the Atlantic slave trade. The voyages made prior to 1660 can have pretty sketchy data, as record keeping was pretty rudimentary. Around 1660, record keeping became more detailed, so the voyages between 1660 and 1867, when the last recorded slave crossing occurred, have the most complete data. Four of the most respected authors on the history of economics of the slave trade compiled the data at the **W.E.B. DuBois Institute** at

Harvard University. They collected archival data from scholars working in Portuguese, Danish, French, Spanish, Dutch, and English, so this CD represents the first truly international database combining the individual work of all these researchers.

The main menu of *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade* lets users perform queries, learn about the methodology, access the code books, and learn more about the ships. The Query option allows users to conduct keyword searches and to locate information by time period and geographic region. Time period offers choices for the full period or for any 5, 25, or 100 year segment. The region option lets researchers locate data based on where a voyage began, where the slaves embarked or disembarked, and the general region of departure or disembarkation.

One can also combine up to three filters with Boolean AND or OR operators. One selects the filter from drop down menus and submenus that provide access to any of the 226 fields in the record. One then selects an operator (<, =, or >) and keys the search term or selects from a list of filters (if available - not all data options have such lists). If an element has a corresponding list, typing a word completes the parameter as soon as one types enough letters for the application to identify a unique pa-

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parameter. One can view the code book for assistance in defining an appropriate filter.

Queries are case sensitive and require initial articles, if present, e.g., Ship name = La Concepcion. Also, entering partial words will perform automatic truncated searches. Keying "Arrar" in a query for captains, for example, will retrieve all names beginning with those letters. Researchers will easily be able to identify variants, such as Arrarte, J. B. and Arrarte, Juan Bautista. The formulated query displays in the Query window with results aside of it. Matching records display as a table at the bottom of the screen. Researchers can adjust the height of the display area and change column width and order. Double clicking any cell in a record shows the detailed display for the selected voyage.

After performing a query, clicking the "Analysis" button displays information on the number of slaves embarked and disembarked, modified tonnage, slave voyage mortality, length of middle passage (days), share of males, and share of children. It provides totals, a voyage sample, the mean and standard deviation.

A "Summary" button shows the total number, percent of total, and percentage less unspecified of slaves embarked and disembarked for each region. One can also graph the data for

embarkations or disembarkations and zoom or pan the graph. One can also view a map of the data, zoom or pan it, and show or hide ports.

Learn About Methodology offers information about the database, sources, and data variables. The Code book is a lookup table containing all the names and descriptions of the fields within the database. It is useful in creating query filters and for understanding the data structure when used with SPSS. (The accompanying manual provides a printed version of all this information.) The CD includes a copy of the database formatted for SPSS and permits downloading data in SPSS format for use in other programs.

Learn More About The Ships offers a more detailed look at three typical vessels: the "Aurore," "Vigilante" and "Brooks." It includes a brief description of each ship and its history as well as sketches and cutaway views. The "Aurore" and the "Brooks" departed from major slave ship ports in France and England (La Rochelle and Liverpool respectively) at the height of the slave trade in the late 18th century. The smaller "Vigilante," sailed later, when the slave trade was becoming illegal. As ships had decreased in size by this time, this vessel is also typical.

In a sample search, we identified a total of 9,945 voyages originating in Britain. Gathering information on so many records takes several minutes; but retrieving information about the

937 voyages originating from Rhode Island is almost instantaneous. We found that of the Polly's total 95 slave voyages, 31 originated in Rhode Island. While we located eleven voyages by the Amistad (4 by Amistad and 7 by Amistad Habaneira), these voyages all took place before 1834. We found nothing about the 1839 voyage that culminated in the famous 1841 Supreme Court case.

While many of the 226 fields in each record may contain no data, there is a wealth of information that can be mined. In fact, the accompanying documentation contains a two-page bibliography of papers written by the CD's four editors based on the data contained on it. The ease of data manipulation and analysis can provide opportunities to research topics previously inconceivable. For example, one could determine whether a particular type of vessel or a particular captain suffered more casualties. When searching for the outcome of a voyage, a researcher can determine which voyages resulted in mutiny on board or identify the fate of voyages from the perspective of either the slaves, the captors, or the ship owners. There is a wealth of information here covering the people on board and their experiences, the owners and captains, the ships' characteristics, and the geographic trajectory of each voyage. This is a very useful database for anybody researching Black studies or the slave trade. It offers great value for the price.

Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

by Debbie Vaughn (Reference Librarian, College of Charleston) <vaughnd@cofc.edu>

Column Editor's Note: In 1999, the American Library Association set forth a plan: *ALAction 2005*. In brief, this project proposes four major action goals that focus on five key areas: diversity, equity of access, intellectual freedom, 21st century literacy, and education and continuous learning. By

2005, the *ALAction* plan anticipates that, among other things, "*ALA will be a leader in continuing education for librarians and library personnel*" (for more information, see <http://www.ala.org/work/alaction2005.html>).

ALA's efforts to offer workshops, conferences, and other educational venues for librarians are applause-worthy. Unfortunately, the increasing trend of institutional budget cutting makes it difficult for most to attend even moderately-priced training seminars (and the like), whether they are or aren't *ALA*-sponsored. In money-weary epochs, it is even more timely to read, learn, and soak up as much information as possible from each other through email lists, professional discourse, and, of course, the written word.

The titles reviewed hereafter are only a minute representation of recent library literature. These four books — all geared towards those in the library profession — seek out the meat of contemporary issues and serve up something to chew on to heavily supplement (or, frighteningly, substitute for) continuing education workshops, conferences, and colloquia. As *ALAction* implies, perpetual learning is of utmost importance to our ever-evolving profession; keeping up with our reading is the least we do. Happy reading, everyone! — DV

Barnett, Andy. *Libraries, Community, and Technology*.
Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2002. 0786413794.
166 pages. \$35.00.

Reviewed by Debbie Vaughn (College of Charleston)
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Andy Barnett gathered 15 of his essays and neatly packaged them into *Libraries, Community, and Technology*. Public libraries as we know them are fading fast, Barnett argues, but libraries, librarians, and the services they provide are more important than ever. This theme is threaded throughout the chapters, such as "What is a Public Library and Does It Still Have a Social Mission?" "Why I Am a Librarian," "Why the Library Should Not Be Re-engineered, Re-imagined, or Otherwise Messed With," "Digitizing on a Budget for Public Libraries," "Why the Internet Is Not a Replacement for the Public Library," and "New Competencies for Library Trustees."

Note the frequency of the phrase *public libraries*; since Barnett has worked in this arena for twenty-something years, it is logical that his anecdotal musings focus on this sector. However, librarians from all walks of life will benefit from his observations. As he aptly points out in his introduction, librarians often change careers three times in the same job and often in the same day: from cataloging to Internet service to reference. Because we are so multi-faceted, we can relate to others in the library field, whether they are in a small public branch or a large university. Moreover, the more we understand about the on-goings of other types of libraries, the easier it is to work with one another and to comprehend and appreciate patrons' needs as they move among school media centers, public libraries, academic institutions, and special collections.

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