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From the Reference Desk

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From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Head, Reference Services, Addlestone Library, College of Charleston, 66 George Street, Charleston, SC 29401; Phone: 843-953-8014; Fax: 843-953-8019) <gilson@cofc.edu>

ABC-CLIO recently released another work focused on a much studied historical topic. The *Encyclopedia of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: A Political, Social, and Military History* (2006, 1851096469, \$285) is a three-volume set that offers a serious and scholarly treatment of a critical chapter in Western European history. Containing more than 800 signed articles, this encyclopedia attempts to provide multi-faceted but well balanced coverage of a complex era. That it succeeds is a tribute to the editor, **Gregory Fremont-Barnes** and his more than 90 contributors.

Aside from the alphabetically arranged entries, the *Encyclopedia* has numerous value added features, not the least of which is the collection of contextual essays that introduce the set. By reading these short essays, the stage is set for a fuller appreciation of the subjects discussed in the entries. These essays treat broad topics like the conditions leading to the outbreak of these wars, their overall military operations, the economic backdrop and the political thought of the time, as well as the concept of empire building, and developments in science and technology.

Individual articles are fact-filled and well researched. The set is thoughtfully structured with a number of value added features. There is a chronology along with glossaries of military and naval terms, 65 maps, 18 primary source documents and numerous illustrations. (One note regarding the illustrations, paintings attributed to the English painter **George Dawe**, give his dates as 1781-1929, an obvious typo. He died in 1829.) There is a general index that is replicated in each volume which does a good job in dividing larger issues into relevant subcategories and referencing their specific pages. There is also impressive use of "see also" references linking articles through out the set. However, the lack of a thematic index is a slight disappointment.

Scholars and students researching this era will find the *Encyclopedia of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars* a rich source of information

about
this
seminal
time

in European history. This is especially true regarding the military aspects of the era, as well as the impact of its major personalities. Academic libraries, along with larger public libraries where there is interest, will want to add this work to their reference collections.

The *Encyclopedia of International Sports Studies* (2006, 0415277132, \$650) published by **Routledge** does more than focus on sports medicine and science. It also points to the extent in which sports relate to broader social concerns ranging from feminism to socialization to broadcasting rights. In this regard it attempts to forge new ground by "providing a reference work covering all aspects of the science, social science and medicine of sport."

The set contains nearly 1,000 entries with 90 figures and tables serving to illustrate the text. Topic coverage is broad and diverse ranging from the biochemistry of exercise to the role of sports in city marketing, and from the history of doping to rotator cuff rupture. Entries vary in length from 3,000 words for those articles dealing with "disciplinary areas" like Sports Technology and Engineering and "Sports History" to articles as brief as 300 words for narrow topics and introductory overviews. Each entry is followed by a brief bibliography, as well as "see also" references. The general index is comprehensive and thorough. The articles themselves are written for an academic audience but would be accessible to the informed lay reader. While international in scope, the contributors are scholars from the U.S. and Europe (especially Britain) and the entries reflect this.

Encyclopedia of International Sports Studies is an ambitious effort that uniquely brings together the social aspects of sport with the medical and scientific. The content of these three volumes is impressive and an obvious plus. However, there are some additional features that might have been included, especially given the price of the set. For instance, it would have been helpful to have a thematic guide offering the reader an easy to comprehend overview of the topics given their interdisciplinary nature. In addition, longer bibliographies would enhance the value of the set for students and other researchers.

Regardless, *Encyclopedia of International Sports Studies* is a valuable addition to academic library collections supporting sports and physical fitness curriculums.

It helps update and broaden the coverage offered by other sports studies references and should find a place on the shelf next to similar titles like *Encyclopedia of Sports Science* published by **Macmillan** (1997, 0028975065, \$200). Larger public libraries where

there is particular interest in the topic may want to consider it as well. However, given the serious academic nature of the set and its price tag, smaller public libraries will find titles like **Facts on File's** *Encyclopedia of Sports Medicine* (2005, 0816053340, \$65) far more appropriate.

Postwar America: an Encyclopedia of Social, Political, Cultural, and Economic History (2006, 076568067X, \$399) is a new work that could have very broad appeal to a variety of libraries. Published by **M.E. Sharpe** and edited by the prolific **James Climent**, this four-volume set covers the major events and issues that have dominated American life since the end of World War II.

Browsing through a work like this reveals the staggering change the United States has undergone in the last 60 years. From desegregating our public schools to cleaning up Love Canal, to moving from radio as the dominate mass medium to television, and now the Internet, change has dramatically influenced every facet of American life. We have struggled with numerous issues like sexism and women's liberation, environmental pollution, Vietnam and Iraq, various energy crises, poverty, civil rights, economic booms and recessions, and terrorism at home and abroad. These issues are all reflected in the over 550 articles in the *Encyclopedia*. In addition, specific events, laws and cases, institutions and organizations and political parties and movements are covered. Each entry has a brief bibliography and "see also" references. The bibliographies will be acceptable to high school and public libraries but from an academic library stand point, they could be more substantial. A number of entries also have interesting sidebars that enhance their usefulness.

Added features include a topic finder or thematic guide, a glossary, and a collective bibliography. Worthy of special mention is a very useful and informative section entitled "Cultural Landmarks." Broadly categorized under "Literature and Journalism," and "Film, Radio, Television and Theater," these landmarks are presented by decade from the forties and fifties through today with descriptions and explanations of their importance.

There is one caveat, however. The general index is somewhat disappointing. For instance, while there are articles discussing the British influence on American music, as well as the Altamont tragedy, there is no reference in the index to the specific bands involved, even though they are included in the text of the articles. (There is even a picture of the Beatles in volume four.)

Despite this minor reservation, *Postwar America: an Encyclopedia of Social, Political,*

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Cultural, and Economic History is a valuable resource. Because of the importance and diversity of the topics covered, it could easily find a home in high school, undergraduate and public libraries.

Michael Newton's *Ku Klux Klan: History, Organization, Language, Influence and Activities of America's Most Notorious Secret Society* (2007, 0786427876, \$95) is the result of a life long interest on the part of its author. (He has written three other books on the Klan including **Garland's** *Ku Klux Klan: An Encyclopedia* [1991 0824020383, \$79]) This book, his most recent and comprehensive effort, is published by **McFarland**. It is a single volume reference that is a thoroughly researched and highly detailed exposing the Klan and its history from a variety of angles.

The author utilizes an interesting organizational structure. He does not employ a traditional alphabetic, encyclopedia approach. He divides his work into section or chapter titles. In some cases these titles hint at the contents and require the reader to examine the section to get the full sense of what is covered. The contents of section headings like "A Brief History of the Ku Klux Klan" and "Who's Who in the Invisible Empire" are obvious, but ones entitled "Reign of Terror" or "Mapping the Empire" invite the reader to check them out more thoroughly. Fortunately, the time looking at these individual sections is well spent. For instance the section "Reign of Terror" discusses the various methods of intimidation and terror employed by the Klan, as well as specific events and individual victims. "Mapping the Empire" provides state by state, as well as international evidence of Klan activity and influence. In addition, sections like "Klanspeak and the Klan Creed," team with an appendix that reprints selected Klan documents, to offer revealing insights into the language and meaning of the Klan's racist, nativist and hate filled philosophy. Other full sections are given over to covering splinter factions and front groups, as well as affiliated groups and individual supporters thus attesting to the Klan's broader influence. There are also sections that discuss law enforcement's efforts to police the Klan and the media coverage afforded the Klan by various news outlets.

While individual sections do not have bibliographies, there is a fairly extensive general bibliography at the end of the book, as well as an adequate index. In addition, another appendix lists a through chronology of Klan related events and activities from 1864 to 2005.

The *Ku Klux Klan...* provides a tremendous amount of information from diverse perspectives while advancing a distinct and revealing picture that is both fascinating and abhorrent. Given the continuing interest in the Ku Klux Klan, this book will draw appreciative audiences in academic, as well as public libraries and is suitable for both reference and circulating collections.

The *Encyclopedia of Slave Resistance and Rebellion* (2007, 0313332711, \$199.95) is the most recent reference title in the **Greenwood Milestones in African American History** series. It is a worthy addition to the series that treats an outgrowth of slavery deserving of more emphasis and study.

Editor **Junius P. Rodriguez** and his contributors fulfill an important purpose with the articles in this encyclopedia. By placing the focus on slave resistance and rebellion, they refute "the notion that individuals who were turned into chattel property...lost their essential human nature to resist their subjugation." And not only that, as one examines this work, it becomes obvious that the enslaved did so with "all means that were possible." The articles discussing numerous forms of resistance attest to this. Entries cover individual method of resistance ranging from arson to sabotage, and from running away to self mutilation. There are also articles on specific rebellions and uprisings, as well as on their leaders and the other personalities involved.

Arguably, the dominant focus is on the African American experience however, there are also articles on ancient Greco-Roman slave resistance, as well as entries that discuss resistance in the other places ranging from Caribbean, Mexico, and Central and South America to Africa and Asia. In addition, a number of entries discuss the portrayal of slavery and slave resistance in literature, film and television programs. The articles are informed by recent scholarship but easily accessible to the non-academic. Other features that increase usability and add value include an informative introduction, a chronology, a thematic guide, a collected bibliography, and a section of 65 primary source documents.

Greenwood's *Encyclopedia of Slave Resistance and Rebellion* does a significant service by bringing to the fore an aspect of slavery that deserves broader attention. In this regard it will give an added dimension to collections that already have works like **Macmillan's** *Encyclopedia of World Slavery* (1998, 0-02-864607-X, \$195) and **ABC-CLIO's** *His-*

torical Encyclopedia of World Slavery (1997, 0-87436-885-5, \$95) also edited by **Junius P. Rodriguez**. Although intended for a scholarly audience, this work is equally appropriate for larger public libraries.

Below is a guest review by **Adrian Tinsley**, Reference Librarian, **College of Charleston**.

Encyclopedia of American Urban History, 2v. Edited by **David Goldfield** (2007, 0-7619-2884-7, \$275)

We live and work in an urban, multicultural world, which encompasses a wide diversity of culture, ethnicity and history. Urban phenomena has been a prevalent subject studied by historians and researchers for years, and now numerous academic institutions have adopted and incorporated Urban studies into the curriculum. The *Encyclopedia of American Urban History* will be a valuable resource for libraries supporting such programs of study.

Editor, **David Goldfield** along with a host of other diverse and well-known contributors, has created a two-volume set providing thorough definitions highlighting the cultural, social, economic, political and environmental issues and concerns affecting urban communities. This resource is arranged alphabetically with a list of over 500 entries accompanied by 11 thematic subject headings, and includes a 35-page index and a four-page introduction. The overall content offers a multidisciplinary blend of urban places, peoples and events. Articles range in length from three-paragraphs to three pages, covering major figures, significant areas and landmarks in urban history. Each entry is followed by selective future readings and references.

Encyclopedia of American Urban History provides comprehensive exposure coupled with in-depth treatments covering the various facets of urban history. This work provides a scholarly view of the vibrant past and present of American urbanization. These two volumes published by **SAGE** will prove to be a key resource for all academic library collections, as well as public libraries located in urban settings. 🐾

Rumors
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ert Kiley (Head of e-Strategy, Wellcome Library, Wellcome Trust); **Richard Smith** (Member of the board of Public Library of Science, former Editor of the British Medical Journal (BMJ) and Chief Executive of the BMJ Publishing Group).
www.biomedcentral.com/info/about/oacoloquium/

Last minute news from liblicense and DLF-Dispatches — **Germany's Springer Science & Business Media** is for sale and looking to float on the stock market with a valuation

expected to top two billion euros (1.3 billion pounds), *The Mail* on Sunday reported, without citing sources. "The media firm's private equity owners **Cinven** and **Candover** have appointed investment banks **Goldman Sachs**, **ABN AMRO** and **UBS** to prepare the company for a stock market valuation," the newspaper said.
<http://business.scotsman.com/latest.cfm?id=300532007>

Well, gotta run! Have a good visit to **Baltimore** next month!

Yr. Ed. 🐾