

## Reference Books

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Editor

***Encyclopedia of American Business History.*** By Charles R. Geisst. Facts On File Library of American History. New York: Facts On File, 2006. 2 vols. acid free \$125 (ISBN 0-8160-4350-7).

The *Encyclopedia of American Business History* consists of approximately 350 well-illustrated entries in two slim volumes. There are articles on various industries and companies, many biographical entries, and articles on business concepts and trends, some of them uniquely American. Laws and institutions that have had an impact on business are also featured. Each entry is followed by a brief bibliography and references to related articles; there is also a general bibliography. The entries are followed in the second volume by a chronology and selected primary documents, which range from the “Hudson’s Bay Company Charter, 1670” to “*United States versus Microsoft*, 2000.” The intent of the encyclopedia, according to the introduction, is to respond to the growth of business history as a discipline and to cover recent business history from the turbulent 1990s.

There is a strong emphasis on biography, perhaps harking back to an earlier encyclopedic series put out by this publisher, though the biographical articles in the current source are more abbreviated. The industry articles are a helpful introduction to each industry, though several industries are neglected—for example, there is no apparel industry article, nor any for the healthcare, food and beverage, or tobacco industries. And the industries themselves are treated differently—the article on the sports industry is more than five pages long, whereas the steel industry entry is less than two pages long.

Alphabetization is the less-used letter-by-letter system, rather than word-by-word, so that the article “banknotes” is followed by “Bank of America,” and the later “Bank of United States” is followed by “bankruptcy.” Somewhat confusing, unless you think telephone directories are models of clarity; at any rate, one needs awareness of the method in order to find articles.

There is nothing else quite like this reference source at this time. An earlier eight-volume series put out by the same publisher, *Encyclopedia of American Business History and Biography* (Facts On File, 1989–1994), focuses on a few industries only (railroads, automobiles, airlines, iron and steel, and banking and finance) and the articles are primarily on important people and companies. Each volume is on a different industry (some industries merited two volumes, covering different time periods), with a substantial introduction to the industry as a whole, and biographical articles give extensive information on their subjects. This earlier work covers American business history (at least in those particular industries) in much more depth than the current encyclopedia and is

certainly not replaced by it. Other encyclopedias of business do not have the direct emphasis on the history of American business. An example is *Encyclopedia of American Business*, edited by W. Davis Folsom (Facts On File, 2004). This source has more than double the number of articles, though virtually no illustrations. It treats business concepts, organizations, and relevant laws and agencies, but with little focus on history. It lacks biographical, company, and industry articles (though the index refers to people, companies, and industries mentioned in the articles). Other sources do treat American business history, but only in a much narrower context, such as the *Encyclopedia of African American Business History*, edited by Juliet Walker (Greenwood, 1999) and Jennette Oppedisano’s *Historical Encyclopedia of American Women Entrepreneurs: 1776 to the Present* (Greenwood, 2000).

Overall, the encyclopedia is a good introduction to American business history, and its bibliographical references lead readers to fuller treatments of each topic. It is quite readable, easily living up to its own reading-level evaluation of “grade 9 and up.” Recommended, particularly for school and public libraries.—*Judith Faust, Business Librarian, California State University—East Bay, Hayward*

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***Encyclopedia of Anthropology.*** Ed. by H. James Birx. London: Sage, 2006. 5 vols. acid free \$450 (ISBN 0-7619-3029-9).

Edited by H. James Birx, a frequent contributor to *Library Journal*, *Encyclopedia of Anthropology* presents in one resource a wide-ranging variety of articles on topics in the field of anthropology. Included in the five-volume set are more than one thousand entries by more than 250 scholars, encompassing the four traditional areas of anthropological inquiry—physical anthropology, cultural anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics—as well as relevant articles in the areas of geology, biology, paleontology, sociology, psychology, philosophy, and theology. Although many excellent resources in anthropology are currently available, such as *Encyclopedia of Human Evolution and Prehistory* (Garland, 2000), *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (Routledge, 1996), and *Encyclopedia of Archaeology* (ABC-CLIO, 1999–2001), these works concentrate on a single area or aspect of the discipline. *Encyclopedia of Anthropology* is the first attempt at a survey of the entire field of anthropology and its related disciplines in one resource, and as such, it does an admirable job.

The volumes themselves are well presented, with an identical “Chronology,” “List of Entries,” and “Reader’s Guide” in the front, and an index covering the entire set in the back of each volume. Entries are arranged alphabetically, and are written in clear, understandable, and relatively jargon-free language, making this a good resource for high school and undergraduate students as well as interested nonspecialists. Most entries contain numerous cross references to related topics in the *Encyclopedia* and include a well-demarcated section of “Further Readings” at the end of each signed article. Additional or supplementary information accompanies some topics and is clearly set off from the main body of the text. The

volumes are generously illustrated in color, and the typeface is clear and easy to read.

As with any resource that attempts comprehensiveness, certain topics are included at the expense of others. There is, for example, no entry for ethnobotany or historical archaeology, although salvage and maritime archaeology are covered. Native American populations are well represented, but the indigenous peoples of Africa and Asia are overlooked to some extent. This may reflect the mostly North American and European origin of the majority of the volume's contributors. A volume such as *Encyclopedia of World Cultures* (G. K. Hall, 1991–1996) would be a better choice for these topics. There is also no discussion of writing; language and its role in human communication is more than adequately discussed, but the translation of that language into written form and its transformative power in societies is, somewhat disappointingly, not.

Small criticisms aside, however, this is an excellent resource for basic anthropological information and research. The comprehensive coverage, lively writing, and easily understandable text should guarantee *Encyclopedia of Anthropology* a place in public library collections and in academic libraries supporting undergraduate education and research.—*Amanda K. Sprochi, Monograph Cataloger, J. Otto Lottes Health Sciences Library, University of Missouri-Columbia*

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***Encyclopedia of Caribbean Literature.*** Ed. by D. H. Figuerado. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2006. 2 vols. acid free \$199.95 (ISBN 0-313-32742-4).

For a region as rich and diverse in cultures, tradition, history, and politics as the Caribbean, reference materials covering Caribbean literature are surprisingly scarce. Perhaps it is that richness and diversity that makes creating a comprehensive encyclopedia of the region's literature difficult—"the Caribbean" can include or exclude as many areas as any particular editor sees fit. In *Encyclopedia of Caribbean Literature*, editor Figuerado includes the areas generally considered the Caribbean as well as French Guiana, Guyana, and Suriname. Figuerado's introduction explains his choice to include other areas by stating that the idea of the changing Caribbean has been shared by many of the authors covered in the text: "For their own growth as individuals, their development as authors, and their psychological and philosophical explorations of the region had been challenged and constrained, energized and frustrated by the ever-changing, never-ending evolutionary nature of the Caribbean" (xxvii).

The seven-hundred-plus alphabetically arranged entries in this two-volume set focus mostly on writers, covering biographical information, major works, themes, and where the writer fits into the category of Caribbean literature. There are also entries on related topics such as political or artistic movements, cultural identities, literary generations, and so on. There is a "List of Entries" (helpful with multiple volumes) but even more helpful is a "Guide to Related Topics," which lists separately those additional entries that are not biographical in nature. Each entry also includes a "Further Reading"

section with suggestions on where to find more in-depth information. Boldface information within an entry indicates a separate entry within the text on that subject.

A comparable volume would be the *Encyclopedia of Latin American and Caribbean Literature, 1900–2003* (Routledge, 2004), but for information on authors who may not be as well known as Jamaica Kincaid, V. S. Naipaul, Jean Rhys, or Derek Walcott, Figuerado's *Encyclopedia of Caribbean Literature* is a much safer bet. Strongly recommended for academic libraries and larger public libraries.—*Tracy Carr, Specialized Reference Manager, Mississippi Library Commission, Jackson*

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***Encyclopedia of Human Computer Interaction.*** Ed. by Claude Ghaoui. Hershey, Pa.: Idea Group, 2006. 738p. acid free \$215 (ISBN 1-59140-562-9).

The international contributors and the broad range of topics covered in this one-volume encyclopedia make it a noteworthy resource in the emerging area of human-computer interaction (HCI). However, the book's poor organization keeps it from attaining its goal to be "a basic reference work for readers who need information on subjects in which they are not experts" (xv).

The alphabetical arrangement of entries according to article title (which, as the editor notes in the preface, is a requirement of the publisher for its reference works) creates problems for readers. For instance, readers interested in design issues will not think to look under "O" to find the relevant article entitled "On Not Designing Tools." This kind of problem could have been alleviated with the inclusion of a reader's guide to organize the articles into broad topic areas. The editor notes in the preface that articles were chosen to cover five major themes (Foundation, Design Process, Theories, Analysis, and HCI in various applications), but the reader is given no indication where each article falls in those categories. Without a reader's guide, the novice researcher is left to either browse through 109 entries to locate a topic of interest or use the index.

Considering the "On Not Designing Tools" example, users who would use the index to find that article would need to look under one of the following terms: authenticity, critical-design practices, cultural probes, expression, materiality, meaning, meaning making, pragmatism, or transparent interface. These index terms may not be intuitive to readers interested in this article about design process and evaluation. The index is more than thirteen pages long, but the choice of indexing terms is lacking for some articles.

Although there are significant issues with the physical layout and organization of the book, it must be noted that the information in the articles themselves is valid and thought provoking, and that most entries are well supported with numerous references. Nevertheless, the *Berkshire Encyclopedia of Human-Computer Interaction* (Berkshire, 2004) would be a more user-friendly reference work to introduce new researchers to HCI and its related topics. The Berkshire two-volume set includes many features not available in Idea Group's encyclopedia, including the aforementioned reader's guide,