Sources


The Encyclopedia of Civil War Medicine fills a gap in existing literature by providing a reference work about Civil War medicine for a lay audience. Numerous narrative treatments exist for laypersons, as do reprints of medical manuals for nineteenth century physicians. Schroeder-Lein repackages current scholarship into a readable and accessible reference work.

Schroeder-Lein's prose is lucid, active, and appropriately sympathetic. Her work will hold the attention of a casual browser. She often provides the reasoning or limitations of knowledge behind nineteenth-century medical practices that her readers might view as quaint, such as prescribing quinine for fevers or failing to use antiseptics in a preventive way. She uses anecdotal evidence and, occasionally, tongue-in-cheek humor to add specificity and interest. For example, in the article “Matrons,” she writes: “Matrons often cooked for patients with special dietary needs, making toddies, eggnog, or recipes that some soldier's mother used to make, in order to appeal to delicate appetites” (196).

Articles range in length from a few paragraphs to three pages, with most being about a page long. Some examples of topics covered are “Blacks, as Hospital Workers,” “Chimborazo Hospital,” “Gettysburg, Battle of,” “Hardtack,” “Esther Hill Hawks” (a female physician), “Hospital Ships,” “Jonathan Stonewall Jackson,” “Morphine,” “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder,” and “Smallpox.” Entries about battles have a clear focus on medical significance. Biographical entries about nonmedical personnel usually concern well-known figures and focus on the subjects' medical histories. A number of articles concern general health conditions and nutrition in the war.

Schroeder-Lein does not provide an independent article about health issues related to slavery. Instead, she couches the discussion within a broader essay about the health of blacks generally. This discussion mentions use of blacks in the South for medical experiments to justify slavery, health care provided to slaves, health care available to impoverished free blacks, sanitary conditions for free blacks and slaves, sickle cell anemia, and inequality of health care experienced by black Union soldiers. This discussion is entirely fair. However, she never addresses the psychological trauma of slavery, even though a brief treatment of the topic would have been an important ethical and rhetorical addition for some readers.

Schroeder-Lein successfully avoids taking sides in the Civil War. She says in the introduction that she struggled with a comparative scarcity of Confederate sources on some topics. However, this does not become readily apparent in the articles as she balances attention between northern and southern subjects.

The work is notable for its accessibility. Schroeder-Lein provides a thorough topical index, appropriate “see” and “see also” references, and bibliographies for further reading. A useful chronology enables the reader to see medical events and developments in relation to political and military history. Appropriate black-and-white photographs add interest. The glossy hardback cover features one of these photographs, making the book an attractive piece for browsers.

The Encyclopedia of Civil War Medicine is an appropriate reference tool for Civil War historians as a guide to health and medical issues. However, its readability and accessibility render it a useful work for general readers, too. The work is interesting enough to appear in a browsing collection. It belongs on the shelves of public, general academic, and secondary school libraries.—Steven R. Edson, Library Director, Memphis (Tenn.) Theological Seminary


Interpersonal violence is a global problem that inflicts harm in multiple ways and affects people of all ages. This two-volume reference work is designed to provide clear, accurate, research-supported information for a general audience about the many different forms of interpersonal violence. With more than five hundred entries, Encyclopedia of Interpersonal Violence defines key terms and provides information about legislation, public policy, theoretical perspectives, and programs dedicated to assisting victims and raising awareness of these devastating social problems.

The encyclopedia features a reader's guide divided into twelve general topic areas. Appendixes include a list of resources with brief descriptions and contact information for treatment programs, advocates, and organizations. Also included in the appendixes are Uniform Crime Reporting Program statistics, specifically crime in the United States by state (2002–06), and National Crime Victimization Survey data (2001–05). Note that Uniform Crime Report statistics are available on the FBI website as Crime in the United States (CIUS), published annually by the FBI, and that National Crime Victimization Survey data (1996–2006) are available on the Bureau of Justice Statistics website through the Office of Justice Statistics.

For purposes of comparison with other reference works, I searched for information on the topic of hate crime. Encyclopedia of Interpersonal Violence features nine pages of material with entries that cover anti-gay, gender motivated, racially motivated, and religiously motivated crimes as well as information about the criminal justice response and legislation. Coverage for the topic of hate crimes is more extensive in this work than in Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace, and Conflict (Academic Press, 1999), Violence in America: An Encyclopedia