

Reference Books

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Editor

Africa and the Americas: Culture, Politics, and History. Ed. by Richard M. Juang and Noelle Morrisette. Transatlantic Relations Series. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-Clio, 2008. 3 vols. alkaline \$270 (ISBN 978-1-85109-441-7).

ABC-Clio's Transatlantic Relations Series is the result of the work of Professor Terry Rodenberg of Central Missouri State University, who in 1995 invited scholars to establish an educational and scholarly institution devoted to encouraging a transatlantic perspective. Out of that conference came the founding of the Maastricht Center for Transatlantic Studies and the emergence of transatlantic studies as an area of inquiry. The editor's stated purpose for this series is "to present historical, political, and cultural relationships that tie together both sides of the Atlantic Ocean" (xv). "The aim in a phrase is to explore the myriad of connections and interconnections of the Atlantic World" (xiii). *Africa and the Americas: Culture, Politics and History* is the sixth in the series. Other titles are *Britain and the Americas*, *France and the Americas*, *Germany and the Americas*, *Iberia and the Americas*, and *Ireland and the Americas*.

Africa and the Americas has a table of contents, an index, and several special features. The headings include "A Chronology of Africa and the Americas, 700–2007," "A Topic Finder" (hot topics), and four introductory essays: "Demography, Diaspora and International Relations," "Culture and Religion," "Economics and Trade," and "Arts, Literature and Sport." These provide broad overviews of the topics as they relate to Africa and the Americas. The work is illustrated with black-and-white photographs and paintings. Each article is signed and includes a list of references for further reading.

Included in this set are entries designed to illustrate the historical and present connections between Africa and the Americas. However, some such connections are tenuous and may not be evident to the average reader. An example is the section on the sinking of the luxury liner Titanic. It is always thought that there were no blacks on the ship, but there was one black man, a Haitian with a white wife. However, the connection that convinced the editors to include the disaster was that African Americans at the time took a leading role in composing songs and poems about the Titanic. This connection can only be considered an obscure one at best. Even more puzzling is the inclusion of an entry on the African American writer Jean Toomer, author of the famous novel *Cane* (Boni and Liveright, 1923). Toomer is tied to Africa because of his depiction of Southern blacks during the period between slavery and the civil rights era.

Fortunately, the entries that illustrate very apparent connections between Africa and the Americas far outnumber the ones that don't. An example of a solid entry with appar-

ent connections is the one on the African American writer Alex Haley, known for the novel *Roots: Saga of An American Family* (Doubleday, 1974), later made into a groundbreaking television mini-series. Haley traced his family ancestry back to Africa. Another solid entry is the section on African American Islam. This six-page section discusses the connection between African American Islam and the Muslim faith that was brought from Africa to the New World with the transatlantic slave trade.

For a comparison to works that are similar to this set, I consulted Sanders and Moore's *African Presence in the Americas* (Africa World Press, 1995), a one-volume text with chapters devoted to the African presence in Peru, Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, and Panama and dealing with subjects such as Afro-Nicaraguans, Afro-Cubans, and black business in the French West Indies. Lovejoy and Trotman's edited volume *Transatlantic Dimensions of Ethnicity in the African Diaspora* (Continuum, 2003), with coverage of the slave populations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, presents discussions on the condition of the slave populations and their subsequent influence, with chapters such as "Africanizing and Creolizing the Plantation Frontier of Trinidad, 1787–1838," "Ethnic Designations of the Slave Trade and The Reconstruction of the History of Transatlantic Slavery," and "Afro-Brazilian Communities of the Bight of Benin in the Nineteenth Century."

For an encyclopedic treatment of all aspects of the African influence in the Americas, *Africa and the Americas* is the only encyclopedia available. Recommended for large academic and public libraries.—M. Elaine Hughes, *Liaison Librarian for African American and African Studies, University Libraries, Georgia State University, Atlanta*

Chronology of American History. By John C. Fredriksen. Facts On File Library of American History. New York: Facts On File, 2008. 4 vols. alkaline \$350 (ISBN 978-0-8160-6800-5).

Although the United States cannot boast of a history stretching back millennia, as may Egypt or China, the country nevertheless has a long and storied past of its own, as evidenced in the roughly twenty-five hundred pages of this four-volume set. Author John Fredriksen (PhD in American history) states in his introduction that among his goals are balance and inclusiveness, which he seems to feel are lacking in previous works of this type. The time span covered by the work stretches from the prehistoric era to the end of 2007, while the subject matter encompasses not only the standard military, political, and social developments but also architecture, business, exploration, science, slavery, women's issues, and a host of other topics. Emphasis is on contiguous United States, though various entries touch on the entire continent of North America and beyond, including Hawaii, Alaska, far-flung possessions such as American Samoa and Guam—even the moon is mentioned.

The set is presented in four broad divisions: *Volume I, Colonization and Independence, Beginnings to 1788*; *Volume II, Expansion and Civil War, 1789 to 1865*; *Volume III, Industry and Modernity, 1866 to 1920*; and *Volume IV, Challenges at Home*

and *Abroad, 1921 to the Present*. Each volume contains an era-specific introductory overview, an extensive bibliography of relevant literature, and a set of black-and-white maps. All volumes are well illustrated with duo-tone drawings, paintings, and photographs. Lending context as well as human interest are full-page biographical sketch boxes, which include birth and death dates, an illustration of the person in question, and the main facts of her or his claim to fame. Printed on the lower corners of each page is the year pertaining to those particular entries, which allows the user to fan the pages to quickly pinpoint a desired time period. Volume IV contains an index for the entire set.

Entries follow a year-month-day format. Appearing beneath each date is one to several subject headings in small caps, which helps the reader to zero in on specific topics across time. Typically, these amount to a single line of straight description, as, for example, "1776, August 2, POLITICS: The Declaration of Independence is finally signed by all 55 delegates to the Continental Congress" (394). However, it should be noted that significant occurrences do receive a modicum of analysis, as with the trial of John Peter Zenger, a New York publisher who had the temerity to print material critical of the state governor. Writes Fredriksen: "This is a precedent-setting event for freedom of the press, establishing that truth constitutes an absolute defense against libel. Henceforth, individuals are empowered with implicit ability to criticize the government" (212).

Although there are many similar titles vying for a slice of the collection development librarian's budget, many tend to be limited in coverage, either by geography (*Chronology of the American West: From 23,000 B.C.E. Through the Twentieth Century*, ABC-CLIO, 2002) or scope (*American Decades*, 10 volumes by various authors, Gale, 1996–2000) or some other factor. *The Encyclopedia of American Facts and Dates* (10th ed., Harper Collins, 1997) was for many years considered a decent, inexpensive pick for the reference desk, but, sadly, this volume has been left to languish and is now out of date. All told, *Chronology of American History* is a solid buy and is highly recommended for all public and academic libraries.—Michael F. Bemis, Assistant Librarian, Washington County Library, Woodbury, Minnesota

Conflict Between India and Pakistan: An Encyclopedia. By Peter Lyon. *Roots of Modern Conflict*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2008. 389p. alkaline \$85 (ISBN 978-1-57607-712-2).

Covering the relations between India and Pakistan from independence in 1947 to the twenty-first century, this work objectively examines the bitter divisions between the two nations. Many tensions go back to 1947, when by partitioning the provinces of Punjab and Bengal and absorbing more than five hundred princely states, British India was succeeded by two independent countries, a primarily Hindu India and a Muslim Pakistan.

Entries in the encyclopedia range from one paragraph to two pages in length and cover important events, people, movements, treaties, political parties, and other topics. Treas-

ties include the Simla Agreement, Tashkent Conference, and Government of India Act. Biographies include Pakistani leaders such as Mohammed Ali Jinnah and Muhammad Khan Junejo; Indian leaders such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Jawaharlal Nehru; and Bangladeshi leaders such as Hossain Muhammad Ershad. Focusing on their connection to Indo-Pakistani relations, entries on British persons such as Harold Wilson and Mountbatten of Burma, American presidents Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and George Walker Bush, as well as American Secretaries of State such as Henry Kissinger and John Foster Dulles, also are included. An entry for Lashkar-E-Taiba, the insurgent group often mentioned in relation to attacks in Mumbai, is included, as are Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Other assorted entries include "Bengal," "caste," "Indo-Pakistan War of 1947–48," "nuclear weapons," "Sikhism," and "Ten Possible Options for Kashmir." Some entries include a photograph, a cross reference, or a bibliography. An epilogue discusses the current state of India–Pakistan relations, followed by an extensive chronology from 1947 through 2007. An appendix of presidents and prime ministers of each country, a brief glossary, a bibliography, and an index complete the work.

Readers who are not familiar with the history of India and Pakistan may want initially to consult *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives* (Cambridge Univ. Pr., 1989), as it details the history to independence of both countries and also includes more detailed maps of these areas. Some of the topics are covered more extensively in Surjit Mansingh's *Historical Dictionary of India* (Scarecrow, 2006) and Shahid Javed Burki's *Historical Dictionary of Pakistan* (Scarecrow, 1999). Although *Conflict Between India and Pakistan: An Encyclopedia* is not recommended as a starting point for information on the relations between India and Pakistan, it is the only encyclopedic source of its kind and is recommended for large public libraries and academic libraries.—Eva Lautemann, Director of Learning Resources, Georgia Perimeter College, Clarkston, Georgia

Cultural Encyclopedia of the Body. Ed. by Victoria Pitts-Taylor. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2008. 2 vols. alkaline \$175 (ISBN 978-0-313-34145-8).

What do *The Vagina Monologues*, Michael Jackson's face, and the cultural history of bodybuilding have in common? They are among the 110 signed articles in the *Cultural Encyclopedia of the Body*. International in scope and covering antiquity to the present, this two-volume work is organized alphabetically by body part from "Abdomen" to "Waist." The forty body parts include both external (skin, buttocks) and internal (heart, fat) components of the body. The shortest chapter, "Thigh," is a scant two pages in length and contains a single article on "Liposuction of the Thigh." The lengthiest chapter, "Skin," covers forty-four pages and contains nine signed articles. The majority of the forty contributors are doctoral students or professors.

A lengthy introduction is followed by a chronology spanning 24,000 BCE to 2008. Black-and-white photographs and