

Reference Books

Tammy J. Eschedor Voelker

Editor

American Revolutionary War Leaders: A Biographical Dictionary.

By Bud Hannings. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2010. 558p. acid free \$125 (ISBN 978-0-7864-4379-6).

Many of the leaders of the American Revolutionary War are well known to every American student—Benedict Arnold, George Washington, Paul Revere, John Hancock, Patrick Henry, et al.—yet a great many obscure leaders played an integral role in the establishment of the United States. Unfortunately, little has been written about many of these personalities, and much of what is available is difficult to find. These include, among others, officers of the army, navy, and marines; farmers; politicians; plantation owners; state militia officers; diplomats; their wives; and the women of the Revolution. Written by Bud Hannings, a recognized expert in American military history and the head of Seniram Publishing, a company specializing in U.S. military history, this encyclopedia will enable students to research and discover many of the instrumental yet less-heralded people of the Revolutionary era. Entries are comprehensive, giving an accurate and complete picture of the subject's life and career, and are well written, interesting, and informative. Each furnishes a wealth of heretofore inaccessible biographical information from birth to death and includes a host of genealogical information for those entries where it is available. The book provides several features that will enhance its usefulness for the researcher, including a comprehensive bibliography, a list of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and the Framers of the Constitution, an index, and a generous number of high-quality black-and-white portraits. Unfortunately, the index is not subdivided by subject, making it difficult to use. Hannings' work is, however, noteworthy in its analysis and in its attention to detail, making this new effort unrivaled in its field in the scope and strength of its research, especially for the more obscure people included here.

Unique in its exceptional depth, readers will be hard-pressed to find another biographical source in this field that contains the amount of information or the number of entries in one volume. Yet there are several interesting and recent additions to American historiography that may serve as valuable companion volumes. Cokie Roberts' *Founding Mothers: The Women Who Raised Our Nation* (William Morrow, 2004), is a delightful biographical examination of the largely overlooked women of the Revolutionary era and their enormous contributions to the war effort. Joseph C. Morton's *Shapers of the Great Debates at the Constitutional Convention of 1787: A Biographical Dictionary* (Greenwood, 2005) is an alphabetically arranged single-volume encyclopedia providing concise

biographies of the fifty-five delegates to the 1787 Constitutional Convention. In a more in-depth examination of the era, John R. Vile's *The Constitutional Convention of 1787: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of America's Founding* (ABC-CLIO, 2005) furnishes more than 350 alphabetical entries (many of which are biographies of the key participants) and furnishes a number of valuable primary sources. Finally, *Colonial America: An Encyclopedia of Social, Political, Cultural, and Economic History*, edited by James Ciment (M.E. Sharpe, 2005), is a carefully crafted and exhaustive work that furnishes a wealth of biographical information out of its more than two thousand pages.

Hannings's book will fill an important gap in the reference literature, and it will serve as a welcome addition to American historiography. Well written, thorough, and without rival in its coverage, this will undoubtedly become the premier biographical reference encyclopedia on the subject. A work with this much depth and quality is easy to recommend for all libraries that support American history researchers, students, and interested readers.—*Vincent P. Tinerella, Public Services Librarian, Arkansas Tech University, Russellville, Arkansas*

Annual Register: World Events. 250th ed. Ed. by D. S. Lewis. Bethesda, Md.: ProQuest, 2009. 720p. acid free \$240 (ISBN 978-1-60030-828-4).

This edition of *The Annual Register: World Events* commemorates the 250th anniversary of its initial publication in 1758, which, as noted in the "Annual Register Archive" section, was marked by the return of Halley's Comet.

The 250th edition opens with two short essays, one on its history and one on its possible future, written by a "future reader" in 2059. These essays are followed by a review of the world in 2008. A strength of the *Annual Register* is that all entries are written in an "executive summary" format by subject specialists. Each entry is attributed to each specialist.

The organization of the *Annual Register* allows users to easily identify relevant entries. The main section is organized first by major geographical region, such as "Western and Southern Europe" and "Middle East and North Africa," and then by individual countries in each region. Each country entry begins with background information, such as population, official languages, and political system. An essay outlining the major events of the year in each country follows. These essays are usually only a couple of pages long and tend to expound on one key development while touching upon other newsworthy happenings. The entry for Egypt, for example, focuses on how the situation of the Palestinians in Gaza significantly affected the Egyptian government. The essay then briefly reviews the impact of the world economic crisis on the local economy, the tension between the poorer populations and government, and the struggle of the government to maintain civil order. The impact of the world economic crisis in 2008 pervades much of this edition. Countries with greater roles in world events, such as the United States, China, and the United Kingdom receive greater breadth of coverage.

The countries section is followed by a glance at the activities of more than forty major international organizations. These organizations are arranged under broader categories, such as “Defense Organizations,” “Economic Organizations,” and “Arab Organizations.” The entry for the European Union, for example, includes background information, such as headquarters and membership, and reviews its major actions for the year, such as ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, response to the global credit crisis, and climate change.

Additional chapters provide summaries for developments in the international economy, sciences, law, religion, arts, and sports. These sections allow more inclusive coverage of the year’s events. Examples of notable events covered in these sections include controversial fatwas in the Islamic world, the opening of the new Acropolis Museum in Athens, and the end of Roger Federer’s 237-week reign as tennis’s top-ranked player.

The final section of this edition provides the texts of key documents for the year, such as Barack Obama’s U.S. presidential victory acceptance speech and the Kosovo Declaration of Independence, obituaries of significant individuals, a chronicle of key events for the year, and the “Annual Register Archive.”

The *Annual Register* clearly achieves its purpose, which is to “analyze and interpret the year’s most important events and developments throughout the world” (dust jacket summary). Each entry is written in a clear, succinct style that allows one to quickly comprehend the importance of each event without being overwhelmed by too much detail. Even in its 250th year, the *Annual Register: World Events* continues to be a necessary reference work for all high school, public, and academic library collections.—Rick Robison, *Reference and Access Services Coordinator, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California*

Encyclopedia of Business in Today’s World. Ed. by Charles Wankel. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2009. 4 vols. acid free \$495 (ISBN 978-1-4129-6427-2).

Edited by Charles Wankel (St. John’s University, New York), this set is intended to offer readers an introduction to key business topics in the global marketplace. It comprises more than a thousand entries covering twenty-two themes. Each signed one-to-three-page article is arranged alphabetically and typically includes “see also” references and a brief bibliography.

Considering the editor’s intention that readers use the set “as a GPS to navigate them into the language and ideas of the main conceptual terrain of business” (vii), one has to wonder if this might be too ambitious an undertaking for a mere four-volume subject encyclopedia. To determine if this product delivers, coverage of two of the broad themes—“Corporate Profiles” and “Countries”—are examined.

A comparison of companies included in “Corporate Profiles” to those in the 2008 list of *Fortune* magazine’s “Fortune 500” reveals that entries for 21 of the top 25 companies, 43

of the top 50, and 56 of the top 100 companies are included. However, with only 14 listings in the 50–100 range, it appears that few, if any, of the remaining 400 are included. Thus many of America’s top companies are not profiled, including Goldman Sachs, Kroger, Lehman Brothers, Fannie Mae, Intel, Kraft, American Express, and Coca-Cola, among others. When one considers the names of companies students are researching and writing papers on, some of these would be at the top of the list.

Comparing the list of the one hundred countries covered in this work to those profiled in the most recent edition of *Europa Yearbook*, one finds that while coverage for larger industrialized countries is fairly good, many smaller, less economically developed countries are left out. For these, readers must search broadly written articles on the business environment in “Africa,” “Central America,” “Eastern Europe,” “Middle East,” and “Western Europe,” or under topical articles such as “Industrialized Countries” and “Less Industrialized Countries.”

In looking at the affiliations of the contributors, users will find few from America’s top business schools. Of the nearly 500 contributors, 295 are affiliated with American universities; a comparison of their affiliations with *Business Week*’s most recent ranking of America’s top thirty MBA programs reveals that only 5 are affiliated with any of these programs—none from the top 12. This is somewhat disappointing, as one would like to see authoritative entries on many of the most important topics written by faculty at Harvard, Northwestern, Michigan, Stanford, Columbia, Duke, MIT, Cornell, and Dartmouth, among others.

The text is presented in a very readable font with an attractive layout and design. Articles span a wide range of topics for students and professionals alike, and while some entries seem brief with an overly modest bibliography, readers will appreciate the helpful 52-page glossary, the 139-page appendix of useful business statistics, and the cumulative index.

While this set will not replace the more in-depth, six-volume *International Encyclopedia of Business and Management*, 2nd edition (Thomson Learning, 2001. \$1,499)—whose first edition was selected as a *Choice* “Outstanding Academic Title” in 1997—it is a more comprehensive and appropriate purchase for academic and public libraries than the two-volume *Encyclopedia of Business and Finance*, 2nd edition (MacMillan Reference USA, 2006. \$385).—R. Neil Scott, *Professor/User Services Librarian, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee*

Encyclopedia of Death and the Human Experience. Ed. by Clifton D. Bryant and Dennis L. Peck. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2009. 2 vols. acid free \$350 (ISBN 978-1-4129-5178-4). Also available online for \$435.

As the song says, “The moment you’re born you start to die.” Since our beginning as a species, humans have been fascinated by death, its inevitability, its process, its place in life, and its aftermath. This work, edited by two eminent