

SOURCES

Monitoring Mission (SLMM) pulls no punches in describing the mission's status as of 2007: "By the occasion of the SLMM's fifth operational anniversary in February 2007, its weekly reports read more like war tallies than the lists of cease-fire violations it recorded during its first three years" (133). Some librarians may find such judgmental analysis out of place in a reference work; others may find it refreshing.

In determining whether or not to purchase this source, librarians should keep in mind that the United Nations website (www.un.org) provides free information on its peacekeeping missions, including background notes for each mission, the official peacekeeping mandate, facts and figures, and UN documents. A smaller library with access to a print or online reference source that updates political developments in the nations of the world may find that this source is not worth the cost, given the amount of free information available through the UN. For larger public and academic libraries, however, the in-depth coverage and analysis make this a worthy addition to an international relations reference collection.—*Peter Bliss, Reference Librarian, University of California, Riverside*

College Financing Information for Teens: Tips for a Successful Financial Life: Including Facts about Planning, Saving, and Paying for Post-Secondary Education, with Information about College Savings Plans, Scholarships, Grants, Loans, Military Service, and More. Ed. by Karen Bellenir. Teen Finance Series. Detroit, Mich.: Omnigraphics, 2008. 400p. alkaline \$65 (ISBN 978-0-7808-0988-8).

The full title of this addition to the Teen Finance Series indicates the comprehensive nature of this work. It contains a wealth of information necessary for almost all prospective college students.

As college costs rise and the options for financing a college education proliferate, the topic of postsecondary education becomes bewilderingly complex. To provide guidance, this practical handbook discusses the broad topics of whether or not college is the best option; how to select an institution of higher education; tips on saving, paying, and borrowing for college; finding specialized college options; and suggestions for pursuing more information.

Each major section hones in on specifics: a high school action plan; standardized tests; choosing among a four-year college, a vocational school, or a community college; Section 529 Plans; financial aid packages, student loans, and PLUS loans; and educational benefits of service such as AmeriCorps and Peace Corps or Armed Forces membership.

Similar to the other titles in this series, *College Financing Information for Teens* offers sidebar information in sections labeled "Quick Tips," "It's a Fact!" "What's It Mean?" and "Remember!" All sources are documented and many include addresses, phone numbers, and websites. For more information, the book directs the reader to a "Directory of Financial Aid Resources" and a "Directory of State Higher Education Agencies."

Several other current titles offer information similar to

this volume. *The Everything Paying for College Book* by Nathan Brown and Sheryle A. Proper (Adams Media, 2005), provides a broad look at the various aspects of financing a college education. This includes saving in advance; scholarships, grants, and financial aid; part-time jobs and internships; and credit card pitfalls. This title also contains creative ways for students to supplement their income.

Gen and Kelly Tanabe's *1001 Ways To Pay for College* (SuperCollege, 2d ed., 2005) is a quick-reading and attractive volume that emphasizes a variety of creative ways to finance a college education. Topics such as unusual scholarships, contests, reward programs, and loan forgiveness programs provide very interesting reading and will spark the imagination of enterprising students. The book also contains a lot of good tips for saving money during the college years and making every college tuition penny work for the student's benefit.

FastWeb! College Gold: The Step-by-Step Guide to Paying for College by Mark Kantrowitz (FastWeb, 2006), is also very user-friendly and well organized. It begins with a project plan for the student, then takes a look at federal and state programs, grants, scholarships, and the help that high school guidance counselors and college financial aid administrators can provide. The conclusion helps the reader steer clear of problems in the final decision about college financing. This volume includes a survey of students and parents that helps to identify where the most help is needed in the college financial picture.

In addition to these titles, which provide general supplementary material, there are several titles that focus on specific aspects of the college financing picture. *The 529 College Savings Plan* by Richard A. Feigenbaum and David J. Morton (Sphinx Publishing, 2003) and *The Best Way To Save for College: A Complete Guide To 529 Plans* (Savingforcollege.com Publications, 2003/2004) both discuss the Internal Revenue Code of 1996 (Qualified Tuition Program) which provides families with tax advantaged ways to save for college. Both provide state-by-state assessment of the plans.

Many good books on managing college costs are available. *College Financing Information for Teens: Tips for a Successful Financial Life* has the advantage of being comprehensive, reliable, and easy to navigate. Recommended for any library serving teen readers and their parents.—*Betty Porter, Education Services Librarian, Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio*

Daily Life in the New Testament. By James W. Ermatinger. Daily Life Through History. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2008. 184p. alkaline \$49.95 (ISBN 978-0-313-34175-5).

Daily Life in the New Testament is an appealing book. Its purpose it is to "set the stage for understanding daily life during the New Testament period, mainly in Palestine" (xxiv), and it does a commendable job of fulfilling that purpose. However, although it does provide excellent information, its arrangement makes it easier to read like a history book than to use as a quick reference tool. The book has ten chapters with each chapter covering a certain aspect of Jewish socio-

economic life. It is not comprised of individual articles on certain topics, like an encyclopedia or dictionary, nor is it arranged in chronological order, like an almanac. For example, if one were looking for information on how the Dead Sea Scrolls community played a part in the daily life of first century Jews, one must turn to the index, which then leads to a handful of pages that discuss this issue.

This book does not compare with other reference works. For example, *The Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (Routledge, 1998) provides several articles, with bibliographies, on different topics, arranged in alphabetical order. Patrons are typically pointed to reference books as a starting point for their research in part because many reference works offer bibliographies that lead to further sources. *Daily Life in the New Testament* does have a bibliography, but it is not organized by subject. Instead, it lists resources arranged by the author's last name, which makes it difficult to find additional sources on a specific topic.

Daily Life in the New Testament is recommended for any library's general collection, but not their reference collection. It provides a brief, up-to-date, and scholarly overview of the socio-historical setting of the area where Christianity and Judaism claim their heritage.—Garrett B. Trott, *Reference/Instruction Librarian, Corban College & Graduate School, Salem, Oregon*

Disasters, Accidents, and Crises in American History: A Reference Guide to the Nation's Most Catastrophic Events. By Ballard C. Campbell. Facts On File Library of American History. New York: Facts On File, 2008. 461p. acid free \$95 (ISBN 978-0-8160-6603-2).

Unpleasant though it may be to contemplate, the brutal reality is that death, destruction, and despair are just as much a part of the American Story as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This is made abundantly clear by the 201 main entries, eight essays, and two appendixes of this recent offering. Covering a broad spectrum of both natural incidents (floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, and so on) and results of human folly (wars, depressions and financial panics, riots, and others), this volume serves as an effective antidote to nostalgia. While not explicitly stated as such, the tacit message is that the "good old days" exist only in our imaginations.

Editor Ballard Campbell, a professor of history at Northeastern University in Portland, Maine, states in the introduction, "The goal of this book is to describe the most destructive, influential, and fascinating of these events" (xii). Between Acts of God and the hand of man, Campbell and his contributors had a wealth of material upon which to draw. Ultimately, it was decided that the selection criteria would consist of the "dramatic, memorable and consequential" (xiii). Thus there is coverage of the well known (Johnstown Flood, Great Chicago Fire) and the obscure (1832 New York City cholera epidemic, a disease that few today are familiar with); the long ago (lost colony of Roanoke, Virginia in 1590) to the seemingly yesterday (2005's Hurricane Katrina).

Clearly and concisely written, each entry is signed by its author. Unfortunately, there is no contributors page, so their individual qualifications cannot be ascertained. Campbell himself appears to have been a good choice to helm this project: the author of a number of works on the American past, he is currently president of the New England Historical Association and a distinguished lecturer for the Organization of American Historians.

A number of interesting features bear mentioning. First, the observant reader will note that the subtitle reads "Reference Guide," rather than "Encyclopedia" or "Companion" or some other synonym for works of this nature. Rather than the standard alphabetical arrangement, the contents are listed chronologically, year by year, in the order of their occurrence. Secondly, the table of contents appears in two formats: one follows the timeline layout of the book itself, while the other is topical, so that like events are grouped together under such headings as "Sensational Crimes" and "Ship and Maritime Accidents." Additionally, each entry carries a shaded "Factbox" that highlights the most important details of the event in question, just the thing for ready reference questions. Lastly, the aforementioned essays throw a spotlight on the alphabet soup of federal government "doomsday" agencies, such as FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) and CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). One quibble is that the book is poorly illustrated. What few graphics there are appear only in black and white and are generally so small as to be of little use in helping the reader understand the gravity of the situations presented.

A diligent search of the reference literature reveals no other work of this scope within the last ten years. Having said that, Checkmark Books, an imprint of Facts On File, seems to have cornered the market on calamity titles, each with a very specific focus: *Hurricanes, Typhoons, and Cyclones* (2000); *Shipwrecks* (1996); and *Man-Made Catastrophes* (revised ed., 2002) are a few examples. *Disasters* itself would be a fine addition to the American history collections of both public and academic libraries.—Michael F. Bemis, *Assistant Librarian, Washington County Library, Woodbury, MN*

The Eighties in America. Ed. by Milton Berman. Decades. Pasadena, Calif.: Salem, 2008. 3 vols. alkaline \$364 (ISBN 978-1-58765-419-0).

The purpose of *The Eighties in America* is to explore the "iconic personalities, issues, and moments of the decade" (ix). This three volume collection, edited by Milton Berman, professor emeritus of history at the University of Rochester, is a companion set to *The Sixties in America* (Salem, 1999), *The Fifties in America* (Salem, 2005), and *The Seventies in America* (Salem, 2006). *The Eighties in America* is a comprehensible, thorough, and readable examination of the decade synonymous with Reaganomics, compact discs, Madonna, and MTV.

The Eighties in America contains 663 alphabetically arranged articles ranging in length from one to six pages.