

## SOURCES

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maritime\\_history](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maritime_history)) was, as of July 13, 2007, a lengthy survey focused on military affairs and studded with so many links as to be distracting.

*The Oxford Encyclopedia of Maritime History* delivers a comprehensive look at maritime history in a highly accessible manner. It belongs in academic libraries and in mid-size or larger public libraries, and should be well used.—*Evan Davis, Librarian, Allen County Public Library, Indiana*

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***Religion and the Law in America: An Encyclopedia of Personal Belief and Public Policy.*** By Scott A. Merriman. Denver: ABC-CLIO, 2007. 2 vols. alkaline \$195 (ISBN 978-1-85109-863-7).

Religion and its role in the public arena has been one of the most controversial and emotionally charged issues throughout our nation's history. The term "Separation of Church and State," the political and legal doctrine that establishes that religious and government institutions should be kept separate and independent of each other, was first coined by the Supreme Court in 1847. Since then, two centuries of political discourse have failed to resolve the controversy over the framers' original intention in the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. The controversy has become ever more contentious and polarizing, as political groups have increasingly turned to the courts to impose their ideological agenda on states and municipalities when legislators have refused to force religion into public life, or, conversely, to enact prohibitive legislation denying religious expression.

Scott A. Merriman, history instructor at the University of Kentucky and adjunct professor at the University of Maryland University College, has comprehensively addressed the relationship between religion and government since the country's founding in this timely, two-volume encyclopedia. Organized alphabetically, *Religion and Law in America* offers more than 250 articles featuring in-depth analysis of relevant legal cases, biographies of important personalities, and thematic essays covering a broad range of controversial topics that have dominated public debate in recent years, including intelligent design, evolution, and creationism; school prayer and religious expression in public schools; the Pledge of Allegiance; atheism; public displays of religious symbols; political activism; *Roe v. Wade*; the refusal of medical care on religious grounds; and many others. At the same time, the encyclopedia provides a comprehensive historical overview and analysis of religion in public life, including important events, significant political movements, and key personalities. Entries conclude with cross-references and bibliographies, and are frequently accompanied by high-quality photographs and illustrations. Merriman writes in an engaging and straightforward style, and he is refreshingly evenhanded in his analysis.

There is an interesting variety of publications that will serve as excellent companion volumes to the encyclopedia. Leslie Griffin's *Law and Religion, Cases and Materials* (Foundation Pr., 2007) is the newest addition to the University Casebook series and provides a comprehensive overview of law and religion using an academic, interdisciplinary approach.

The book's thorough and frequently overlapping treatments of state, federal, and Supreme Court cases nicely complements *Religion and Law in America's* thematic essays and biographical entries. Stephen M. Feldman's *Law and Religion: A Critical Anthology* (New York Univ. Pr., 2000) provides a fair and balanced anthology of essays concerning religion in public life from twenty-three academic lawyers specializing in religious issues. The work serves as an important reference for readers interested in understanding the constitutionality of laws governing religious expression and public policy. Finally, James Hitchcock's exceptionally comprehensive, two-volume treatment of the Supreme Court's religion cases, *The Supreme Court and Religion in American Life* (Princeton Univ. Pr., 2004), is an impressive historical survey that is free of polemic and includes many obscure cases that have not received much attention. The set serves as a significant resource for understanding the role of religion in public life.

*Religion and Law in America* is unrivaled in its format, and as such, will fill an important void in American reference historiography. Attractively bound using sturdy, high-quality materials, Merriman's work will make an interesting and valuable addition to collections supporting American history and political science programs. It is therefore highly recommended for all undergraduate libraries and large public libraries serving the interested general reader and researcher.—*Vincent P. Tinerella, Coordinator of Electronic Reference Services, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb*

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***Religion in America.*** By Timothy L. Hall. American Experience. New York: Facts On File, 2007. 496p. alkaline \$80 (ISBN 978-0-8160-6198-3).

Spanning the period from before Columbus's arrival to the early twenty-first century, this entry in Facts On File's American Experience series examines the continuing evolution of religion throughout America's history. Although the author does not state a specific purpose for the title, it is clear *Religion in America* is intended as an overview of religion's role and place in American history.

While this book will best serve as a work of reference, it differs from many reference titles in that it is written in a narrative format. Beginning with the year 1400, fourteen chapters cover the six-hundred-year period of American history. Each chapter begins with an essay followed by a timeline covering the period discussed in that chapter. Author Timothy Hall, who has published previously in the area of American religious history, deserves credit for keeping his writing clear and concise. Without dumbing down his language, he has created a work that is readable for high schoolers, college students, and adults interested in the topic.

The work is strengthened by the inclusion of numerous firsthand accounts, giving a people's history feel to the book. These eyewitness accounts are chosen to represent the whole spectrum of religions, offering as many viewpoints as possible. The timelines are quite thorough, and should prove of value mainly to the students using this work.