
SOURCES

differing views. The end of the volume contains an extensive bibliography and index.

There is an older title, *For Appearance' Sake: The Historical Encyclopedia of Good Looks, Beauty and Grooming* (Greenwood, 2001) that focuses on the history of the beauty industry. This title would be a nice addition for any collections that support women's studies, anthropology, or any other classes that teach the cultural context of beauty.—*Stacey Marien, Acquisitions Librarian, American University, Washington, DC*

The Civil War and Reconstruction Eras: Documents Decoded. By John R. Vile. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2017. 295 pages. Acid-free. \$64.80 (ISBN 978-1-4408-5428-6). E-book available (978-1-4408-5429-3), call for pricing.

Making his fourth contribution to the Documents Decoded series, John R. Vile provides critical commentary for more than sixty documents from the era. The organization is chronological, starting in 1859 and extending to 1877. Source documents are typically brief—averaging one to five pages, with a few longer texts such as the 1861 Constitution of the Confederate States. Designed with the needs of “high school students, college students, and general citizens in mind,” (xiv) each text includes an introduction of about a paragraph providing historical context, and a brief conclusion summarizing the significance of the document. A distinguishing feature of this collection is the reader-friendly approach. The print design is clean and uncluttered with copious white space. The annotations are provided alongside the relevant text, which is clearly highlighted. Placing the commentary side by side with the text makes it easy to go back and forth between the document and the added insights. Consistent with the intended general audience, the editorial additions are not dense scholarly treatments. Rather, they define unfamiliar historical language and elaborate on the meanings of specific sections. There is a list of further readings at the end of the volume; however, no recommendations accompany individual documents.

The selection of texts reflects the interests and expertise of the author, a political scientist and self-described “student of American constitutional law” (xiv). There is a decided emphasis on political and legal topics and government documents including laws, congressional speeches, presidential proclamations, and court decisions. There are no images and little to be found on popular culture (excepting the texts of “Dixie” and “Battle Hymn of the Republic”). No attempt is made to capture the everyday experiences of the time, either on the home front or the battlefield. While familiar figures such as Abraham Lincoln appear frequently, the voices of everyday people from the time—women, African Americans, immigrants, and laborers are largely absent. Legal decisions and laws are certainly important to understanding the era, but compared to other accounts from the time period, they can be dry and unemotional. Readers looking for narratives beyond the political are advised to consult works such as the Library of America's series *The Civil War as Told by Those Who*

Lived It (Library of America, 2011–2014) or *Voices of Civil War America: Contemporary Accounts of Daily Life* (Greenwood, 2011). It is fascinating to dip into the array of documents assembled and general readers interested in the political and legal aspects of the era will find much of interest. The addition of further reading lists for each source document would have been an especially valuable addition supporting high school and college students seeking to explore further.—*Eric Novotny, Humanities Librarian, Pennsylvania State University, University Park*

The Death Penalty: A Reference Handbook. By Joseph A. Melusky and Keith A. Pesto. Contemporary World Issues. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO. 2017. 372 pages. Acid-free \$60 (ISBN 978-1-4408-4549-9). E-book available (978-1-4408-4550-5), call for pricing.

The affordable but brief single-volume *The Death Penalty: A Reference Handbook* is edited by Professor Joseph Melusky of St. Francis University and Keith A. Pesto, a veteran US Magistrate Judge and lecturer at St. Francis. Pesto and Melusky have collaborated several times on related ABC-CLIO reference works including *The Death Penalty: Documents Decoded* (2014), *Capital Punishment* (2011), and *Cruel and Unusual Punishment: Rights and Liberties under the Law* (2003). This title is part of ABC-CLIO's Contemporary World Issues Series, which “address vital issues in today's society” and are “written by professional writers, scholars and non-academic experts,” covering current topics such as marijuana, social media, and prisons (v). Just as all the other titles in this series, *The Death Penalty: A Reference Handbook* provides an overview of the subject, a detailed chronology, biographical sketches, primary sources and relevant data, perspectives essays by experts, and a list of resources (v). The focus of this work is the death penalty in the United States, with the aim of the book to “provide a balanced, objective discussion of arguments, and controversies” (xv). The perspective essays provide a wide range of voices, from former Governor Tom Corbett to academics from multiple disciplines, to leaders in nonprofit organizations. The profiles section provides brief one- to two-page entries on key people, organizations, events, and cases. The strongest part of this work is the third of the book dedicated to “Background and History” and “Problems, Controversies, and Solutions.” These two sections, written by Melusky and Pesto, feature clear, readable, and concise writing that is comprehensive with excellent insights. These sections of the book could serve as the foundation for the research of a high-school student or beginning undergraduate. The analysis throughout the book connects the many cases and decisions that have shaped the law surrounding the death penalty in a fashion that is encyclopedic without being overwhelming. Each section has an extensive list of references including relevant cases, in addition to a sixty-page reference section. In some areas, this title is sometimes too focused on framing the legal history of the death penalty, and doesn't analyze related issues extensively. For