

Print & Online

A Winning Formula

Increased e-book presence a plus
for the 2007 List of Outstanding Reference Sources

At each American Library Association Midwinter Meeting, the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) Outstanding Reference Sources Committee meets to select and honor the best new reference materials suitable for small and medium-sized academic and public libraries. Members nominate titles in their subject areas. The committee discusses their merits and votes on whether a specific title should be recognized as outstanding.

2006 committee chair Matthew J. Wayman noted that the numbers of nominated and honored titles had trended downwards over the last 10 years. In 2006, 61 nominees were narrowed to a dozen winners. This year, we began with 41 candidates but only found 14 to be truly outstanding.

Wayman proposed two nonexclusive explanations for the shrinking number of nominees and honorees: Committee members may have become increasingly critical and publishers may be moving their interests from print to electronic sources. The committee's attention to electronic sources had not kept pace as they migrated from CD-ROM to the Web. This year, we made a concerted effort to consider products appearing simultaneously in print and online and those "born electronic." Ultimately, no digital-only sources were nominated because none met the requirement of being predominantly new material.

To Wayman's theories, I propose to add three more. First, many titles were cancelled or delayed this year because publishing firms were sold, merged, or downsized by their parent companies. These decisions may have been motivated by broad economic and media trends and changes, rather than anything specific to reference, libraries, or even books in general. Second, while reference is becoming increasingly electronic, this is not simply a move from print to subscription databases. Free online sources such as Internet Movie Database and the ever-controversial Wikipedia are new core titles. Finally, it is uncertain how the spread of "retail reference" and the bookstore model will affect reference work, collections, and publishing.

—Jeff Schwartz

2007 chair, RUSA Reference Sources Committee

Colonial America: An Encyclopedia of Social, Political, Cultural, and Economic History, EDITED BY JAMES CIMENT. 5 VOLS., 1,968 PAGES. M. E. SHARPE (0-7656-8065-3), \$499.

Designed to complement high school and undergraduate curricula, the book includes a broad range of information related to Colonial America, including but not limited to people, places, ideas, and events. Divided into four major sections—thematic essays, A-to-Z entries, chronologies, and primary documents—coverage is focused on the 13 colonies but extends to the American Southwest, Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean. While coverage

is in-depth, it remains engaging, making this set ideal for anyone interested in history.

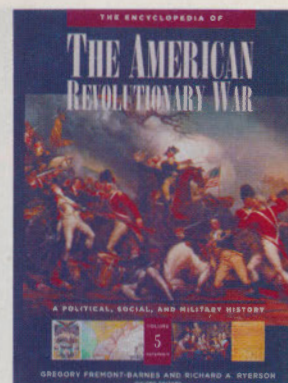
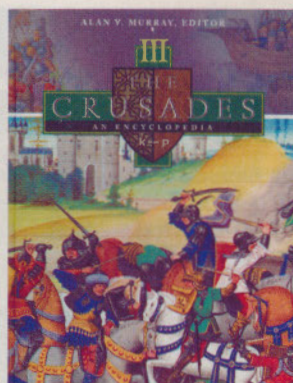
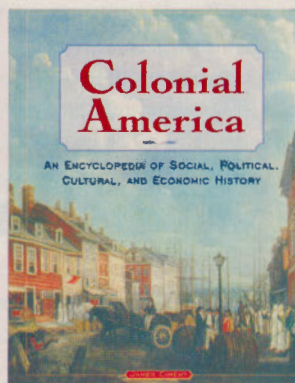
The Crusades: An Encyclopedia, EDITED BY ALAN V. MURRAY. 4 VOLS., 1,314 PAGES. ABC-CLIO (1-5760-7862-0; 1-5760-7863-9 E-BOOK), \$385 PRINT; \$480 AS E-BOOK; \$675 (PRINT AND E-BOOK).

A highly accessible set that covers all aspects of the Crusades—from their origins in the 11th century to their end in the 16th century—the 1,000 A-to-Z entries focus not only on the Eastern Mediterranean and Muslims, but include the struggles in Eastern Europe and the Baltic area as well as those against pagans, Jews, and others perceived to be heretics. A well-respected scholar, Murray has edited the most comprehensive encyclopedia on the Crusades to date.

Encyclopedia of the Developing World, EDITED BY THOMAS M. LEONARD. 3 VOLS., 2,184 PAGES. ROUTLEDGE (1-5795-8388-1), \$625.

This three-volume set has more than 750 entries that detail the challenges and progress made in developing countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America in the modern (post-1945) era. Each country has a main entry as well as cross references and regional entries that broadly define development. Entries range from 500 to 5,000 words and address economics, civil society, and social progress.

The Encyclopedia of the American Revolutionary War: A Political, Social, and Military History, EDITED BY GREGORY FREMONT-BARNES AND RICHARD ALAN RYERSON. 5 VOLS., 1,760 PAGES. ABC-CLIO (1-85109-408-3; 978-1-85109-413-X E-BOOK), \$485 PRINT; \$605 AS E-BOOK; \$850 (PRINT AND E-BOOK).



Essays on the origins and military operations of the American Revolution introduce this stately reference work, which covers events from 1763 to 1789. In addition to 154 primary documents, entries on topics such as art, music, popular culture, religion, trade, women, and slaves and free blacks present material beyond the basics of military and political endeavors. Clear black-and-white maps and other graphics accompany the more than 900 signed entries that are accessible to students in high school and above.

An Encyclopedia of Swearing: The Social History of Oaths, Profanity, Foul Language, and Ethnic Slurs in the English-Speaking World, BY GEOFFREY HUGHES. 573 PAGES. M. E. SHARPE (0-7656-1231-3), \$110.

This work is meticulously researched, with well-documented scholarly, yet engaging, essays on terms, people, events, and issues related to the history of its subject matter. Hughes expands upon the work of revered reference sources and linguists to present social and historical contexts to topics that are potentially offensive, often complicated, and always fascinating. Bibliographies that follow each essay will prove of great value to students and scholars alike. Peppered with black-and-white illustrations, the encyclopedia concludes with a chronology of events and a selected bibliography.

Encyclopedia of U.S. Labor and Working-Class History, EDITED BY ERIC ARNESEN. 3 VOLS., 1,561 PAGES. ROUTLEDGE (0-4159-6826-7), \$565.

Labor history is a vibrant and diverse field that has long ago moved from just a study of trade unions and labor movements to encompass topics related to race and ethnicity, gender, worklife issues, and more. The diversity of the field is reflected in this book, with more than 650 entries covering events, individuals, industries, laws, occupations, organizations, and concepts

ranging from abolitionism to “yellow-dog” contracts. Each signed entry, ranging from 500 to 6,000 words, is accompanied by a bibliography.

Encyclopedia of Western Colonialism Since 1450, EDITED BY THOMAS BENJAMIN. 3 VOLS., 1,315 PAGES. MACMILLAN REFERENCE (0-0286-5843-4), \$395.

A comprehensive look at Western colonialism from the 15th century to the 21st century is provided—from Abdülhamid II to the Zulu Wars. Both scholarly and accessible, the more than 400 entries, written by an international cadre of scholars, provide not only the facts of colonialism but also the current scholarly interpretations. Entries range from 500 to 6,000 words and are accompanied by extensive bibliographies and highlighted with illustrations, maps, chronologies, and sidebars. A glossary of terms and a small collection of primary sources round out the volumes.

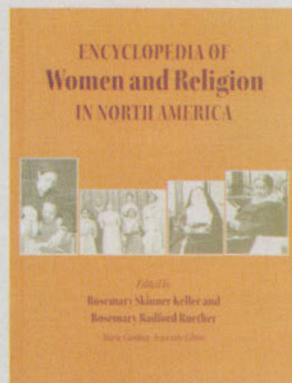
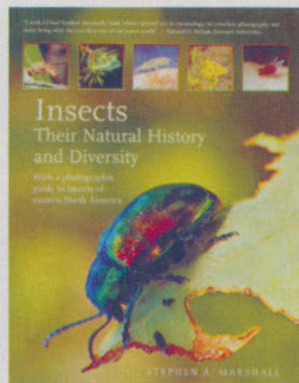
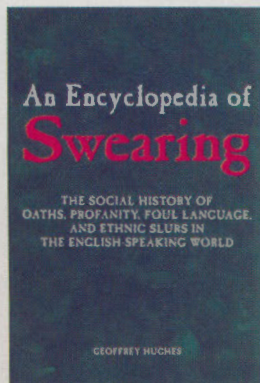
Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America, EDITED BY ROSEMARY SKINNER KELLER AND ROSEMARY RADFORD RUETHER. 3 VOLS., 1,394 PAGES. INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS, (0-2533-4685-1), \$250.

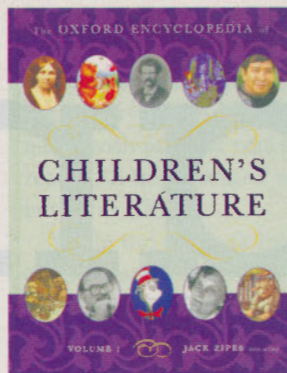
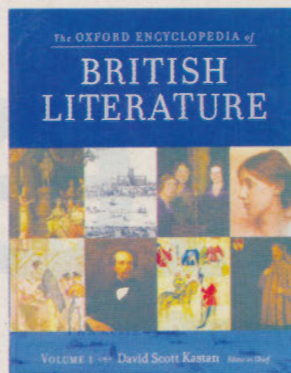
More than 145 long thematic essays written by 150 scholars and organized into broad categories cover all aspects of the status and contributions of American and Canadian women to religion and religious life. Coverage is interreligious, multicultural, interracial, and aimed at a broad general audience. With wide-ranging and readable essays, the work covers such topics as “Social Ethics and Religion,” “Women’s Issues in American Islam,” and “Sexuality and the Black Church.”

The Historical Statistics of the United States: Earliest Times to the Present, Millennial Edition, EDITED BY SUSAN B. CARTER [ET AL.]. 5 VOLS., 4,500 PAGES. CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS (0-5218-1791-9, COMPLETE SET;

0-5111-3297-2, E-BOOK; 0-5111-3311-1, BUNDLE), \$990 PRINT; E-BOOK AND BUNDLE PACKAGE PRICES VARY DEPENDING ON LIBRARY SIZE.

It’s all about the numbers in this statistical source, which includes more than 37,000 data series, over 80 scholars as contributors, and 30 years of new scholarship since the publication of the previous edition





in 1975. The tables are divided into volumes devoted to Population, Work and Welfare, Economic Structure and Performance, Economic Sectors, and Governance and International Relations. The introductory scholarly essay at the beginning of each chapter illuminates the statistics and, subsequently, the history of our nation. For students, scholars, and laypersons interested in history, this is the premier quantitative source for understanding the United States of today and yesterday.

Insects: Their Natural History and Diversity: With a Photographic Guide to Insects of Eastern North America, BY STEPHEN A. MARSHALL. 718 PAGES. FIREFLY BOOKS (1-5529-7900-8), \$95.

With over 4,000 color photographs and 13 chapters covering the major orders and families of insects, a wealth of information is provided for the work's less-than-\$100 price. Additional features include 28 picture keys for quick insect identification. The concluding chapter provides tips for observing, collecting, and photographing insects.

The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature, EDITED BY DAVID SCOTT KASTAN. 5 VOLS., 2,656 PAGES. OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (0-1951-6921-2) \$595.

Well-loved writers, such as Shakespeare, the Brontë sisters, and Yeats, are joined by over 375 other authors from England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales in this set of more than 500 articles of varying lengths. While the majority of essays are biographical, there also are dissertations focusing on major titles, movements, genres, and general topics. Each entry includes a list of major works, a suggested list of further readings, and cross-references to other articles. Also included are an extensive index and a chronological chart.

The Oxford Encyclopedia of Children's Literature, EDITED BY JACK ZIPES. 4 VOLS., 1,932 PAGES. OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (0-1951-4656-5), \$495.

In response to increasing scholarly attention to children's literature, this work provides a definition and interpretation of issues in the field from medieval times to the present. Alphabetically arranged entries offer information about authors, illustrators, characters, themes, genres, and related topics from around the globe. Enhancements include 400 black-and-white illustrations, international bibliographies, lists of award winners and children's literature collections, a topical outline of entries, and a detailed index.

The Qur'an: An Encyclopedia, EDITED BY OLIVER LEAMAN. 800 PAGES. ROUTLEDGE (0-4153-2639-7), \$240.

This approachable single-volume treatment of the Qur'an strikes a balance between more general treatments of Islam and lengthier academic sets. The more than 300 signed entries, ranging in length from one paragraph to several pages, include both cross-references to other topics treated in the volume and bibliographies for deeper exploration. Along with the usual subject and name indexes, an index of Qur'anic passages is included.

Right, Wrong, and Risky: A Dictionary of Today's American English Usage, BY MARK DAVIDSON. 544 PAGES, W. W. NORTON (0-393-06119-1), \$29.95.

With so many English-language usage guides to choose from, what makes this one so special? Just about, like, everything! (See "like as a filler," p. 342.) This selection outshines other guides by providing extraordinarily lucid explanations to common language-usage pitfalls. Infused with Davidson's exceptional expertise and wit throughout, it reaches beyond "right" and "wrong" usage to provide the reader with apt and clever examples and intriguing background information. Davidson even dispels a few antiquated grammar myths. So if you are afraid to end a sentence with a preposition, consult the entry on "prepositions you end sentences with" (p. 428). After clearly explaining why, Davidson advises, "So feel free, when it's appropriate, to laugh your head off. And don't listen to anyone who tells you to laugh off your head." ■