Sources: Encyclopedia of the Documentary Film (Review)

Robin L. Imhof, University of the Pacific
styles, instruments, and other characteristics of the blues. It is
very helpful that almost all the entries include a bibliography
and discography pertinent to the entry. An extensive index,
two hundred pages long, is included. Some black-and-white
photographs add further interest to the text.

Entries vary from a brief paragraph to extensive essays.
For example, the entry under “Harmonica” presents a history
of the instrument, a description of the types of harmonicas,
detailed instructions on playing the instrument, categories
of harmonica music, and an introduction to the harmonica’s
most influential players. Other equally complete and detailed
examples are the entries for “Hispanic Influence on the Blues”
and “Historiography.” The entry under “Periodicals” includes
a list of blues journals, newsletters, fanzines, and additional
serial publications.

There are several other recent publications of blues refer-
ence books that also make a rich contribution to the genre.
Irwin Stambler and Lyndon Stambler’s Folk and Blues: The
Encyclopedia (St. Martin’s, 2001) is a one-volume work that
contains interesting introductory essays and an extensive list
of awards in the fields of folk and blues music. The Language
of the Blues from Alcorub to Zuzu by Debra DeSalva (Bill-
board Bks., 2006) and Blues by Dick Weissman (Facts On
File, 2006) are both short works with discography and bib-
liographical references. Gerard Herthaft’s second edition of
Encyclopedia of the Blues (Univ. of Arkansas Pr., 1997) contains
many very fine photographs and appendices, including a list
of blues standards. But none of these works are as extensive
and inclusive as Komara’s new set.

Encyclopedia of the Blues is well worth its price for most
liberal arts colleges and universities. It will be of interest to
music students and to non-music majors doing research in
this area. Some high schools might also want to consider for
purchase.—Betty Porter, Assistant Director for Education Ser-
vice, Xavier University Library, Cincinnati, Ohio

**Encyclopedia of the Developing World.** Ed. by Thomas M.
1-57958-388-1).

Editor Thomas Leonard, a professor of history at the University of North Florida, previously edited The Encyclopedia of
Cuban–United States Relations (McFarland, 2004) and
authored Fidel Castro: A Biography (Greenwood, 2004). Now
he has gathered more than 250 contributors from institutions
around the world to put together this three-volume reference
set concentrating on the post-1945 period. The beginning of
each volume contains an alphabetical list of entries, a the-
matic list of entries (the themes are Countries and Regions,
Organizations, Persons, and Topics) and an introduction.
Neither of the lists gives corresponding page numbers for the
entries so the user must browse through the volumes or use
the extensive index to find the entries.

The introduction states that the encyclopedia “provides a
ready reference work for understanding the issues that affect
approximately three quarters of the globe’s residents” (xxxvi).
The set covers developing countries, which, as stated in the in-
troduction, is widely assumed to be all countries except for the
G-7 (United States, Japan, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy,
and Canada) and Australia and New Zealand. Those countries
are not covered as separate entries in the encyclopedia but are
included in the index as they are referenced in other sections.
The alphabetically arranged articles range in length from
several paragraphs to several pages. All articles are signed and
have bibliographies that vary widely in length and currency.
Most entries have “see also” references.

Most of the country-specific entries only give brief his-
tories. More thorough country treatment can be found in
sources such as Europa World Year Book (Europa Pub., annual),
Worldmark Encyclopedia of National Economies (Gale Group/
Thomson Learning, 2002), or the Country Studies series from
the Library of Congress (http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.
html). There are “see also” references for countries. So, for
example, a reader will be referred from the entry on Yemen
to the sections, “Middle East: History and Economic Devel-
opment” and “Middle East: International Relations” for more
information about Yemen.

A strength of this source is the extensive number of or-
ganizations listed. The organizations range from the well
known, such as the World Bank and UNICEF, to the less
familiar, such as the Vishehrad Group and the Awami League.
Information given in the entries usually includes the history
and mission of the organization, the members, the work done,
and plans for the future if the organization is still active.

Lengthier coverage than what is provided for the indi-
vidual countries is given to regions such as the Southern Cone
(Latin America), Oceania, Central Asia, and North Africa.
There are many individuals profiled, such as Ni John Fru
Ndi (chairman of Cameroon’s Social Democratic Front), Juan
Bosch (Dominican writer and politician), and Franjo Tudjman
(the father of Croatia). The bulk of the topics address wide
themes such as deforestation, HIV and AIDS, Kurds, socialist
economic model, and water resources and distribution.

Libraries may have some outdated resources on the de-
veloping world such as Encyclopedia of the Third World (Facts
On File, 1992) and the Dictionary of Development: Third World
Economy (Garland, 1990). Although the topics in Encyclopedia
of the Developing World can be researched in a number of other
sources, the editor does a nice job of bringing all the
current information together in these volumes. Encyclopedia
of the Developing World would be a worthwhile addition for
any library.—Stacey Marien, Business and Economics Librarian,
American University, Washington, D.C.

**Encyclopedia of the Documentary Film.** Ed. by Ian Aitken.
New York: Routledge, 2006. 3 vols. acid free $465 (ISBN 1-57958-
445-4).

Although the documentary is one of the earliest film
genres, only now has it been treated by a reference source of
this magnitude. Routledge is promoting its set as “the first
comprehensive reference work of documentary film,” and
although completed before the huge commercial successes of
Morgan Spurlock’s Super Size Me and Luc Jacquet’s March
of the Penguins, these omissions only underscore that a work such as this is long overdue.

As documentary filmmaking has emerged from nearly every country in the world, it is essential that coverage be international in scope. More than thirty countries and regions are represented in entries written primarily by university-affiliated scholars from across the globe. More than seven hundred entries ranging in length from five hundred to several thousand words are enhanced by approximately two hundred photographs. Perhaps one minor complaint is that because this is a work dealing with a visual medium, the corresponding illustrations are fewer than might be expected.

In addition to entries on individual films, directors, and producers, other entries include countries and regions, styles and techniques, themes and issues, and general topics and concepts. Entries for individuals are followed by a short biography, selective filmography, and recommended titles for further reading. Each of the three volumes contains an alphabetical and a thematic list of entries, editor's introduction, and comprehensive index.

Winner of the ALA/RUSA Dartmouth medal for one of this year's most outstanding reference works, this much-anticipated resource will be welcome in academic libraries, film-studies collections, and larger public libraries.—Robin Imhof, Reference Librarian, University of the Pacific, Stockton, California


Editor Paul Finkelman, professor at the College of Law at the University of Tulsa, and the four-hundred-plus individuals who contributed to this three-volume work have produced a wonderful reference resource. Consisting of 667 articles of various lengths, Encyclopedia of the New American Nation provides a wealth of information about America, dating from 1754, when Americans felt a sense of their potential for self-governance following the French and Indian Wars, to 1829, when a new generation, symbolized by Andrew Jackson, was taking over from the founding fathers.

The Encyclopedia completes a larger project. It is the last of a series of four encyclopedias from publisher Thomson Gale that present a detailed understanding of American history from the time of European exploration of the New World to the start of the twenty-first century.

These volumes are organized like many of their kind: table of contents, introductory matter, entries, a list of contributors, and an index. Also present are a chronology of the period covered, which spotlights significant events from each year, and a synoptic outline, or list of twenty-two topics that shed light on the organizing principles behind the encyclopedia: “Foreign Relations,” “Arts and Letters,” “Daily Life,” “Gender and Sexuality,” and “War and the Military” are but a few. In addition to expected entries, such as those for the American Revolution, Benjamin Franklin, the Monroe Doctrine, and the Battle of Bunker Hill, there are entries on “Furniture,” “Material Culture,” “Weights and Measures,” and “Holidays and Public Celebrations.” By including them, the editor places his encyclopedia in a category apart from others that merely cover politics, economics, biographies, and other traditional topics of the same time period.

Though the encyclopedia is excellent, there are a few things about which to quibble. A general bibliography would have been useful. This is not to say that the volumes are devoid of bibliographic sources since many are listed following every entry; however, a listing of books and articles or a bibliographic essay on the general time period would have been useful. In compiling any encyclopedia, editorial decisions are made that lead to omitting some topics in favor of others. Why, for example, is there an entry for Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, but not Morristown, New Jersey, where General Washington’s troops were also headquartered? Why is there an entry for the Hudson River, but not the Delaware River? Why are the writings of Edward Deming Andrews, the pioneer scholar of the Shaker religious sect, omitted from the bibliography on the Shakers? In the table of contents in volume one, a heading reading “Volume 1” leads users to believe that everything that follows is in that volume. Such is not the case. Whoever designed the table of contents did not include “Volume 2” and “Volume 3” as headings.

These shortcomings aside, in deciding whether or not to acquire the encyclopedia, collection-development librarians will check their holdings to see what they already have under the headings United States—History—Colonial period, ca. 1600–1775—Encyclopedias; United States—History—Revolution, 1775–1783—Encyclopedias; and United States—History—1783–1865—Encyclopedias. Large university libraries undoubtedly have quite a bit, while smaller libraries probably have fewer titles. Even if materials are present, it would be advisable to acquire these volumes because many of their entries are not included among the books already on the shelf.—E. Richard McKinstry, Andrew W. Mellon Senior Librarian, Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware


The introduction to the Encyclopedia of War and American Society outlines a theoretical approach to its subject. The theory is that each event, person, or trend that reflects a relationship between war and American society can be defined as a “direct effect of war, having an interactive relationship with war, or [as] an unintended result of war” (2). As a result of this framework, the individual entries in the set are cohesive, rather than being simply a collection of pieces. As stated by the editor, the articles range from general to specific, meaning one can find an article discussing the concept of memory as it pertains to all American wars as well as a detailed description of the film Saving Private Ryan. Every official war in which Americans participated, from the Revolutionary War to the war on terrorism, is addressed.