Best Bibliographies in History

RUSA Bibliography and Indexes Committee

With this list, the Bibliography and Indexes Committee continues its project to honor outstanding English-language book-length bibliographies in the field of history. This year’s titles were published in either 1996 or 1997. All members of the library profession are invited to submit titles to the project editor for consideration. The committee will consider titles that deal with all geographic areas and periods of history. The focus is on first editions, but a subsequent publishing will be considered if there is substantial revision of a previous work. For 1999, the committee will review works published in 1997 or 1998. Titles for consideration, with appropriate bibliographic information, may be sent to: Betty Jenkins, Reference Librarian, Cohen Library, City College of New York, North Academic Center, Convent Ave. and 138th St., New York, NY 10031; e-mail: bljcc@cunyvm.cuny.edu. The deadline for submitting titles is December 1, 1998.


As Karen Blair notes in her preface, a bibliography provides “a keyhole to a large and unexplored history.” Certainly both of these bibliographies are excellent starting points for research in women’s history, albeit in two different geographic areas. In the second edition of Changing Women, Changing History, Diana Pedersen expands her coverage to over 4,000 entries on all aspects of women in Canadian history, ranging from education to ethnicity. The volume includes all types of published materials: books, essays in anthologies, and periodical articles, but no unpublished materials. The broad subject organization is supplemented by extensive subject and author indexes.

Both English and French sources are listed; no annotations are provided. Karen Blair’s work on a narrower geographic area, emphasizing Oregon and Washington, contains fewer entries but includes extensive annotations. In this unique bibliography—the only one on Northwest women—the 722 entries are listed alphabetically by author, with a subject index. Blair includes mostly secondary sources published prior to 1995 that chronicle women’s history through 1970. Both of these bibliographies are suitable for high school, public and academic libraries.—Carla Rickerson, University of Washington, Seattle.


Despite its hefty price, this extensive cartobibliography promises to become a standard reference for maps of North America and should find a place on the shelves of libraries with strengths in geography or American or Canadian history. It lists 410 maps chronologically by the dates they were first published. Each entry provides information on the car-
tographer, engraver, or publisher, place and date of publication; exact title; medium and size; title of the atlas or book (if any) that the map appears in; references, and locations. In addition, each entry provides a description at least one paragraph in length and often longer, and a black-and-white reproduction.

(Unfortunately, there are no color illustrations.) Charts at the back include “genealogical” charts of maps and their derivatives, and maps showing various geographic areas; appendices include “Lost maps,” “California as an island,” “First on American maps,” “Places of production,” and other features. The author, a map dealer, promises a second volume covering the period 1671 to 1700.

—David Langenberg, University of Delaware, Newark.


Total war, the techniques of mass politics, and the technology of mass communication combined to cause an explosion in the use of propaganda in this century. The author, who has published extensively on British history, defines propaganda broadly to include censorship, public relations, and advertising. He selected materials which, he says, best exemplify the topic. Chapter one covers propaganda theory; subsequent chapters trace the story chronologically. Each chapter has an introduction describing its contents. Cole cites primary and secondary sources in several formats, print and non-print, as well as bibliographies and research guides. Informative abstracts accompany the entries. Most citations are to works in English. There are author/editor, film title, and subject indexes. This an outstanding bibliography on an important topic.—Daniel W. Bartell, George Washington University, Washington, DC.


This work concentrates on women active in electoral politics, primarily on those involved in the Democratic and Republican Parties. It follows a topical arrangement, with 5,915 citations to books, theses, professional papers from conferences, and journal articles, but not newspapers or government publications. Entries are not annotated. There are very useful indexes by author and subject which facilitate access.—Andrew H. Lee, New York University, New York.


This is an annotated bibliography of 787 entries of works by and about George F. Kennan—diplomat, historian, and Soviet expert. The first section of works by him covers published books and articles, selected newspaper articles and government publications. Book reviews and short commentaries, including introductions and letters to the editor, are also in this section. Works about Kennan focus on recent interpretations. Dissertations are in a separate section, as are short listings of oral histories and archival collections. Subject and name/title indexes are helpful additions. Recommended for both college and research libraries.—Betty Jenkins, City College of the City University of New York.


Edited and written by a team of British business faculty, this massive bibliography pulls together much of the recent scholarly work in business history. Focusing on the book literature, with coverage of key theses and journal articles, the work includes a significant amount of foreign-language material, including items in French, German, Dutch, Swedish, and Japanese. The bibliography contains over 3,000 separate annotated entries and an additional 1,000 cross references. It is organized into eight broad subject chapters, beginning with general sources and then shifting to specific topics, such as primary and extractive industries, and banking and finance. Each chapter is subdivided by type of industry and then by geographic area. The bibliography is indexed by author and by company, which helps to make up for its lack of a separate name index to find entries on individual heads of corporations. This work is a recommended purchase for all academic libraries with strong business programs.—Lou Vyhnanek, Washington State University, Pullman.


This is an analytical, critical, and biographical guide to over 1,000 published autobiographies of women from every corner of the British Commonwealth. An introductory essay establishes some narrative conventions of women’s autobiography and places these themes in literary and historical context. The body of the work is dedicated to works published from the early eight-

This is a bibliographical survey of the lives and works of two brothers who effectively ruled Great Britain during the 1740’s and 1750’s. Both were important to the reigns of George II and George III, with Newcastle replacing his brother in several important public offices when the latter died in 1754. They saw Britain through several wars and an important rebellion. This good quality hardcover begins with a chronological of their lives. The 601 entries are divided into sections that provide citations to newspaper and periodical articles, unpublished papers, memoirs of contemporaries, parliamentary speeches, even pamphlets and satires. Each section begins with a narrative introduction. Although the subject index is poor, it has an adequate name index.—*James Doyle, Macomb Community College, Warren, Michigan.


Kurdistan is not a sovereign nation but an area that crosses several national borders in the Middle East. Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Azerbaijan all have Kurdish populations, estimated to total over 30,000,000 individuals. In light of recent political events, this bibliography was created by a librarian of Kurdish descent originally from Lebanon. Richly annotated, it presents 814 scholarly citations for items about the Kurds and Kurdistan published after World War II. Books, articles, chapters, dissertations and reports are represented, with an emphasis on more recent materials, including some from 1996. Most of the items are in English for ease of access. Each of the ten chapters centers around a broad topic subdivided by specific aspects of the topic. Cross references to other citations conclude each section. There are comprehensive author and title indexes, and a subject index that is cross-referenced. An excellent introduction provides pertinent background information. Academic and research libraries will find this volume most useful.—*Cynthia Krolkowski, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.


This slim volume provides an introduction to English-language scholarship on the social, political, military, and economic aspects of World War II in Poland. The bulk of the book delineates the outbreak of war, military campaigns, resistance and underground movements, the Polish government-in-exile and, in particular, the war’s impact on the Jewish and Christian populations of Poland; additional brief chapters cover the prewar and postwar periods. A chronological/topical organization allows access to the 408 books listed, which have useful descriptive annotations. Included are works originally published in English as well as those translated from Polish, German and other European languages and, in some cases, works in Polish with English summaries. Recommended for academic libraries supporting European history programs.—*Claire Gabriel, New York University, New York.*


This is a well-organized, comprehensive, model guide to a social, political, and athletic movement in American history. Following a helpful introduction, the compilers provide a historical overview with useful footnotes that places the Turners within the context of German and American history. The bibliography identifies and describes approximately two thousand publications and archival collections and arranges them into six chapters which reveal the work’s depth and scope: national; circuit and district publications and historical publications; society publications and historical records; materials of the Normal College of the American Gymnastic Union; publications on physical education; and writings on the American Turners. Appendices (Turner societies, addresses, and repository codes) and indexes complete the guide. Recommended for academic and research libraries.—*Nancy M. God-

Reference publications on American social movements. This volume is the latest in G.K. Hall's series on American social movements. An index and classified chronological arrangement guide the reader to annotated references to books and articles about the movement for human rights for gays and lesbians. Ridinger has included a historical essay, with references, as a preface to each section. After a brief introductory chapter on the (largely European) philosophical foundations of the movement, Ridinger begins in earnest with the short-lived Society for Human Rights in Chicago, in 1924, and postwar "homophile" societies such as the Daughters of Bilitis and the Mattachine Society. The final chapter concerns recent history since the Stonewall uprising in June of 1969. This large section includes interviews, newspaper articles on local communities, and coverage of AIDS. A useful feature is the list of local gay and lesbian newspapers. Recommended for college and university libraries, and public libraries with collections in American history.

—Jennifer Schaffner, California Historical Society, San Francisco, California.


In The American Civil War, history professor Steven Woodworth has marshaled the talents of 47 people to write bibliographic essays on all aspects of the war. In addition to traditional military and political analyses, one finds information on maps, photographs, medicine, fictional accounts, and more, grouped into eleven general subject areas. The contributors not only identify major works but place them in historical context; for convenience, each essay ends with a list of works cited. The dual criteria of value to modern research and reasonable availability determine which books, articles, and other resources have been included. Students seeking primary sources will be pleased with the careful attention given them here. A detailed subject index and an appendix listing publishers and dealers of Civil War material complete the volume.

Of the 50,000 books and pamphlets published about the Civil War since the conflict began, Civil War buff David Eicher has chosen 1,100 for his Civil War in Books. The books included are all recognized classics and/or reflect modern scholarship. The bibliography is organized around battles and campaigns, Confederate and Union biographical and autobiographical works, general works, and unit histories. Again, students looking for primary sources will find much to choose from. Each entry includes full bibliographic information and a lengthy annotation. The volume concludes with an index of authors and editors, an index of titles, an appendix listing publishers of Civil War books, and an appendix identifying major Civil War bibliographies. The expertise, care, and clarity evident in both these works will benefit researchers from beginners to scholars in all types of libraries.—Hope Yelich, The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.