OUTSTANDING REFERENCE SOURCES OF 1984

A compilation of distinguished reference titles selected by the Reference Sources Committee of the ALA Reference and Adult Services Division

edited by K.M. Rosswurm

This year's list of outstanding reference sources flies in the face of current trends. While business, science, and technology publications are on the rise, the RASD Reference Sources Committee has chosen a group of notable sources especially strong in the humanities—particularly religion, literature, and history.

The most distinguished of the religious sources is the first English-language concordance of the Qur'an. The literature section contains the continuing volumes of an exemplary encyclopedia on European writers and a superb companion to children's literature.

The most conspicuous works of history are a wide-ranging and authoritative encyclopedia of American political history and a multivolume biographical dictionary of American military history. Other meritorious works are a visually stunning encyclopedia of mammals, an engaging companion to the American theater, and the definitive field guide to American homes.

Not only is the 1984 list strong in the humanities, it is larger than recent years. The 44 titles in this compilation are the largest number the committee has selected since 1981 and the second largest since 1979. Expanding the list are an extra number of bibliographies and guidebooks on topics from country music to Revolutionary America. The committee also examined an exceptionally large number of presidential reference sources and selected two as outstanding—one of them analyzing "also-rans."

Though the committee believes this list represents the year's outstanding reference sources, a number of notable works had to be excluded. Because we are to select the outstanding sources for small and medium-sized public and college libraries, some otherwise worthy specialized sources were omitted. Two such works are The Brethren Encyclopedia (Ambler, Pa.: Brethren Encyclopedia, 1983) and the Index to International Statistical (Congressional Information Service, 1983- ).

Also excluded from the list are works in a set or series, the initial volumes of which appeared in a previous year. Falling into this category are two of last year's notable sources, The Guide to American Law (West) and the Dictionary of the Middle Ages (Scribner's).

Annuals, yearbooks, foreign-language publications, and new editions are also omitted unless major changes in their content or arrangement were made. Five sources on this year's list fall into the latter category. The committee felt not only that the works were outstanding, but sufficiently different from their predecessors to be considered new books. Principal among them is a guide to reference sources prepared by former members of this committee and a biographical dictionary of American labor leaders. Pamphlets, works of purely local or regional interest, and how-to manuals are excluded as well.

The committee seriously considers reference sources in nonprint formats, including online databases, though none are included this year. Such nonprint formats must, however, be readily available to small and medium-sized libraries and must provide unique information or access to information unavailable through printed sources. Next year's committee will review a long-anticipated online retrieval service and a microfilm-based periodical reference service.

While there are no nonprint sources on this year's list, there is something for almost every library. Clearly, however, certain works will be more useful in some libraries.
than in others. Collection development librarians, after reading the annotations, will have to determine for themselves the appropriateness of each source for their clientele.

The committee made no effort to provide a balanced list. We attempted to identify only those reference sources of outstanding quality that we thought were of interest to small and medium-sized public and college libraries.

While the committee tries to keep the list as timely as possible, some 1983 publications are on the list. These books are included because they appeared too late for consideration by last year's committee.

Members of the 1984 Reference Sources Committee are: Frances Cable, Pennsylvania State University Library, University Park; Patricia A. Doyal, St. John's University Library, Jamaica, N.Y.; W. Michael Havener, Morris Library, University of Delaware, Newark; James R. Kuhlman, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens; Ellen Deren Safley, Library, University of Texas at Dallas; Debby L. Simone, Gainesville Public Library, Fla.; Carol M. Tobin, Princeton University Library, N.J.; Gail P. Warner, Whitman County Library, Colfax, Wash.; and serving as chair, K. M. Rosswurm, Mount Vernon Public Library, N.Y.

The "Outstanding Reference Sources of 1984" will be on display at the Reference and Adult Services Division booth during the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago. After the conference the books will be available for loan to any interested group for exhibits at regional, state, or local meetings for the cost of transportation. For further information, those interested are encouraged to contact Andrew Hansen, executive director, Reference and Adult Services Division, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.


Over 2,000 international organizations are included in this volume newly added to the Encyclopedia of Associations. The format provides the user with directory information, a brief description, annual conference meeting dates, and publications from the organization. Although not as comprehensive as the Yearbook of International Organizations, it is far easier to use. This will be a convenient source for small and medium-sized libraries and is sure to become a standard tool.


This excellent work will aid librarians and patrons who need to consult or purchase a general world atlas. It profiles 105 English-language world atlases giving title, publishing information, price, pages of maps, and an evaluation. Other sources of information—e.g., reviews—are listed. Appendices include comparison charts with categories such as price, audience, and number of maps as well as lists of atlas publishers and distributors. The essay "Finding the Best World Atlas" supplements the individual evaluations that are the heart of the book. A bibliography and index complete the guide.


The 4th edition of this standard work was completely revised and expanded to include online databases, microforms, materials for children and young adults, and basic sources that are out of print. The result is that over 80 percent of the 1,788 entries are new. The entries are divided into specific subjects and include the standard bibliographic information, plus the number of pages, price, ISBN, and a descriptive annotation. Also included is a comprehensive index. Whether this work is used as a collection development tool or as a guide in general reference work, it is ideal for medium and small public or college libraries.

Social sciences


This annotated reading list of 500 non-technical titles is grouped around "lifetasks" of older adults will confront as they age. Subjects include retirement, maintaining income and health, role loss, and widowhood. The clearly written annotations make this bibliography particularly valuable, dealing honestly and positively with the realities of aging, covering both fiction and nonfiction. Library of Congress codes for nonprint format available through National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped are listed when applicable. This should be a useful source not only for program development, but also for social gerontologists, librarians, and older adults. An author-title and subject index conclude the volume.


Population movement and growth between the 1970 and the 1980 censuses resulted in major redistricting of U.S. congressional districts. This volume explains redistricting, reapportionment, and gerrymandering and the implications these processes have on American politics. Detailed statistical information is conveniently given on each state and the 435 districts. Profiles include election returns since 1976, demographic characteristics, daily newspapers, accredited institutions of higher education, television stations, military
tary facilities, nuclear power plants, and major industries. Each state and district is represented by outline map. As an added feature, House membership from the 95th through the 98th Congress is provided. A useful volume for historical, political, and marketing information.

DataMap: Index of Published Tables of Statistical Data, 2nd ed., by JAROL B. MANHEIM & ALLISON ONDRAK. 1,069 pp. New York: Longman, 1984 (0-582-28509-7; ISSN 0264-7745), $200.

Finding statistical information is often like looking for a book lost in the stacks. Finding it requires persistence and a little luck. DataMap can make this task easier, as it indexes 29 traditional sources including the World Almanac, the Statistical Abstract, various census publications, and many UN yearbooks. This annual volume lists every statistical table available in these sources and even provides page numbers. The subject index is arranged by primary and secondary levels, when applicable, and indicates the units of measurement. For academic and larger public libraries where statistical reference work is important.


Anyone who is interested in the history of the federal government will be pleased with Government Agencies. This volume provides historical profiles, averaging five pages, of over 100 federal agencies. The essays, written by scholars, discuss the origins and development of the agencies as well as current issues. Extensive see-references, a comprehensive index, and bibliographies are included. Appendixes supplement the text and include an evolution of agency names and chronology of agencies in the federal government. Those who have used the United States Government Manual for historical analysis will find Government Agencies far superior. For all libraries.


As America's population ages, interest in continuing care retirement communities and the services they offer is growing. This paperback directory, sponsored by the American Association of Retired Persons and the American Association of Homes for the Aging, is a pioneering effort in making information on these communities readily available. Over 270 individual entries arranged by state provide basic information including the community's ownership, year opened, stage of development, current resident population, location, residential/personal care levels, nursing care levels and fees, general services, health-related services, medical insurance, and special features. The information is current as of the close of 1983 and is to be revised every two years. Well-indexed and easy to use, this book belongs in any library whose clientele includes the elderly or those who care about them.


This useful and rather unique reference source has been made even more valuable in its 2nd edition. In order to make literature about Supreme Court decisions easily accessible to undergraduates Guenther has indexed approximately 600 books and 320 periodicals published between 1960 and 1980. The central portion of the book is a chronological listing of Supreme Court decisions (1798-1980) followed by book and periodical references. A subject index and case-name index, which lists both plaintiff and defendants, are excellent. This is an invaluable reference tool for those libraries serving students doing reports on Supreme Court cases.

Science and technology


This paperback compendium of information on 400 generic drugs is an ideal ready reference tool. Organized alphabetically, by generic name, with cross-references to brand names, this is one of the most complete and easy-to-use consumer drug books currently on the market. With two pages of detailed information for each generic drug, there is room for information on usage, dosage, adverse reactions, side effects, precautions, interactions with other drugs, and interactions with substances such as alcohol, tobacco, food, marijuana, and cocaine. Descriptions of effects on lactating and pregnant women, patients over 60, and children is included for each drug. Public libraries should consider purchasing additional copies for circulation.


Landscapers and flower gardeners will be delighted with this book. Covering over 9,000 species and varieties of decorative outdoor plants found in the temperate zones, this handy-sized field guide is both complete and convenient. The text is divided into major plant categories and includes information on their hardiness, soil needs, propagation and pruning, size, flowering season, and the best varieties of each species to grow. Also included is a glossary of gardening and botanical terms and a complete index. Plopping through this book, which includes more than 2,500 full-color illustrations, is the next best thing to working in the garden.


The Encyclopedia of Drug Abuse was designed to be a companion volume to 1983's outstanding work, The Encyclopedia of Alchoholism. The format, approach, and presentation of subject matter is essentially the same in both books: alphabetically arranged short entries of a paragraph or two, with longer essays of two to four pages on the more important topics. The medical and psychological aspects of drug abuse are covered, as well as related political and legal topics. A number of very useful appendices, an extensive bibliography, and an index conclude the book. For all libraries that field questions concerning drug abuse.


This beautiful, authoritative, and readable book covers all known living mammals. The expertly written articles are enhanced by over 1,100 excellent color photographs showing the animals in their natural habitats. Scientifically correct information is conveyed in a concise but lively style that is appropriate for both public and academic libraries. Most entries are devoted to individual species, or closely related groups of species, and include information panels that give scientific and popular names, family, distribution, habitat, size, coat characteristics, gestation period, and longevity. The encyclopedia is rounded out by a bibliography of key reference works, a glossary, and an index. A stimulus to the mind and a delight to the eye.

Foods and Nutrition Encyclopedia, 2 vols.,
"A Wise Buyer’s Guide," which outlines strategies for building a collection of literature on the New Testament. The concluding section, a “Quick Reference Chart,” lists pertinent bibliographic data on each item covered in the text. The Bible Book, says the author, “includes every major scholarly tool” for study in this field and is at the same time written for laypersons in all libraries.


This first English concordance of the Qur’an is a monumental work that speaks to scholars and individuals with no knowledge of Arabic. A superbly thorough introduction details the use of the concordance and the language of the Qur’an. Terms are listed under their roots and then arranged grammatically. The main text allows access to verses in which the name Allāh appears, in addition to the rest of the vocabulary of the Qur’an. Special indexes include “Terms Associated with the Divine Name,” “Proper Nouns,” and an extremely useful “General Index.” A table of transliterations and a numerical and chronological list of the chapters of the Qur’an contribute to the author’s primary purpose: to reveal the essence of the Qur’an. The concordance is a valuable source for any collection supporting an interest in the sacred book of Islam.


These works make significant contributions to the body of literature on Christian studies. Both volumes have an alphabetic arrangement and trace hundreds of topics from historic through modern times. Bibliographies follow each signed, concise entry, and ample cross-reference guide the user. Wakefield’s work illuminates the way in which prayer influences conduct, our
Reference sources

behpur, and manner of life.** He defines spiritual practices, explains schools of thought, and profiles influential people. Subjects such as the Bhagavad Gita, feminine spirituality, and grace convey the book’s broad coverage.

The Richardson and Bowden work is an extensively revised edition of *A Dictionary of Christian Theology*, originally published in 1969. Articles elucidate the rational interpretation of religious faith, practice, and experience. Balanced treatment is given to such diverse topics as Eastern Orthodox theology, Jungian psychology, and romanticism. An index of names allows access to important people in each article. Expertly conceived and executed, both of these volumes have earned a place in most academic, public, and special libraries.

The arts, architecture, and sports


This superior, annotated, up-to-date directory to country music albums is essential for music reference work and should be considered for circulating collections as well. John Mortland, a distinguished critic and editor, discusses 100 of the most significant country albums and briefly describes 650 others. Quality was the top criterion, so that some obscure names appear along with the better-known artists. The book is arranged chronologically and by genre, covering selections from the 1920s through the 1980s. *The Best of Country Music* will be appreciated by the knowledgeable as well as by newcomers who need a guide to the best of recorded country music.


*The Complete Book of the Olympics* fulfills the promise of its title. It covers all of the winter and summer games from 1896 to 1980, with a short summary of the basic rules, an introduction to most of the events, and a brief history of the modern Games. There are summaries of unusual events, complete records of all medalists, and numerous black-and-white photographs. The information is extensive and current, and the anecdotes and trivia make it wonderful for browsing. This reference book will certainly be in demand at all libraries.


Any public or undergraduate library will welcome this readable, beautifully illustrated, new addition to art reference books. Volume 1 is a chronological survey of the history of all the visual arts, including articles describing important developments and the different genres, as well as information about individual objects of art. Volume 2 provides biographies of a fine cross section of both contemporary and classical artists. An excellent index, glossary, and bibliography leads users to specific topics and provides guidance to other materials. A work of outstanding quality that meets a real need.


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from Georgian to Split Level. While architectural landmarks are mentioned, the strength of the book lies in its treatment of ordinary homes found in typical neighborhoods. Through its thorough index, logical arrangement, and over 1,200 drawings and photographs, users will be able to locate information on practically every style of house in America. The book opens with an introductory chapter on style, form, and structure and closes with a bibliography and an index. A work such as this rightfully belongs in all public and academic libraries.


At first glance this new companion might seem to cover much the same ground as The Oxford Companion to the Theatre. Readers will be delighted to see, however, that an entirely different approach and many unique features make The Oxford Companion to American Theatre an original and invaluable work. Welcome additions are the short synopses and interesting background material on several hundred American and foreign plays which have significantly influenced American theater. Also included is information on actors, authors, producers, and theatrical notables as well as theater groups, genres, and issues. An excellent choice for all general reference collections.

Literature


The often daunting task of locating biographical and critical information on many lesser known early American writers—clergymen, travelers, printers, journalists, almanac compilers, and periodical publishers, among others—has become much less of a challenge. In each of the 786 signed sketches, two to three pages each, the writer's major publications, a brief biography, a critical evaluation, and a selective secondary bibliography are provided. Three appendixes categorize entries by year of birth, place of birth, and principal residence, while a fourth provides a chronology of the period. A detailed 40-page index to persons and subjects mentioned within the sketches complements this indispensable set.


Though similar in many respects to the well-known series of Oxford companions, this guide represents an outstanding, one-volume alternative for small libraries and branches, or an excellent supplement for larger reference collections. More than 3,100 alphabetically arranged entries describe authors, titles, characters, and literary terms. Selections from British and American belles-lettres predominate, but Stapleton's lively tour also leads through the English-language literatures of Canada, Africa, Australia, and New Zealand.


Frank Magill has succeeded once again in editing a notable literary reference work.

(Reference sources cont. on p. 337.)
The Critical Survey of Long Fiction presents critical essays, averaging 10 pages in length, on 272 English-language novelists. Each of the signed commentaries lists places and dates of birth and death, principal novels and novellas, and major publications other than long fiction, in addition to providing a brief biography, a summary of the author's achievements, a critical analysis of the author's major works of long fiction, and a secondary bibliography. The concluding volume contains 20 essays on various aspects of the genre such as the "Romantic Novel" and the development of the novella, as well as an author, title, and subject index.

In the Survey of Modern Fantasy Literature, Magill approaches his task differently but with equally successful results. Each signed article is dedicated to a single work and runs from 1,000-3,000 words. The essay presents brief information on the author, date of publication, type of work, time period, list of principal characters, critical review and summary of the story, and a selective bibliography. Spanning some 200 years and using an extremely broad interpretation of fantasy literature results in such disparate authors as Chaucer, Eugene O'Neill, and Mark Twain being represented in the 500 titles analyzed. Volume 5 concludes with 19 topical essays and an author, title, and term index. Students from junior high to college will welcome both sets.


The first 4 of 11 volumes that will extend coverage of the publisher's Ancient Writers: Greece and Rome and serves as a companion to American Writers and British Writers. The 36 signed, authoritative essays of volumes 1 and 2 and the 27 of volumes 3 and 4 primarily describe individual literary, religious, or political writers, with several focusing on topics such as Arthurian legend or Medieval drama.

Though articles vary somewhat in format, each consists of approximately 15,000 words, carefully crafted to introduce general readers to the life and works of its subject, as well as to an overview of critical opinion. Clarity of style, quality of scholarship, and the selected primary and secondary bibliographies which conclude each essay commend this set to all libraries; public and academic, high school through university. The set's concluding volumes—The Romantic Century (vols. 5, 6, 7) and The Twentieth Century (8, 9, 10, 11, and index)—are in preparation.


About the only thing the subtitle fails to mention is the extraordinary quality of this guide. In a bibliographic tour de force, Bleiler tempts us to sample the more than 7,000 stories described in his annotations of 1,774 novels and collections of supernatural fiction. Entries, arranged alphabetically by author, provide brief biographical sketches in addition to crisply written, evaluative plot summaries which frequently refer readers to works with similar themes. Aficionados and students of the genre will delight in the unique motif index which provides thematic access to each analyzed story.

International Index to Recorded Poetry,

This unique portal to the special art of spoken poetry analyzes in excess of 15,000 poems, read in more than 20 languages on some 1,700 phonodiscs, tapes, audio cassettes, filmstrips, and video cassettes issued through 1981. Approximately 2,300 poets are represented. The first of six sections groups recordings by manufacturer and provides the manufacturer's address, the readers on each recording, and label numbers. The author index notes each poet's birthdate and language of composition before listing the title and first line of analyzed poems with keyed reference to one or more recordings. Title, first-line, and reader indexes combine with a "Register of Poets by Language of Composition" to complete this remarkable new tool for libraries supporting literary studies.


This source is sure to shorten many a search through the labyrinth of literary criticism. Weiner and Means have created a master author index to 86 multiple-author bibliographies listing criticism of individual works from all literatures. Entries are arranged alphabetically by author with general criticism followed by references to individual works. Each listing includes one or more symbols and page references directing the researcher to bibliographies ranging from such standards as Twentieth-Century Short Story Explication to more specialized guides such as Darwin Turner's Afro-American Writers. A most welcome addition to all literature reference collections.


At long last a handy, one-volume encyclopedia graces the enchanting world of children's literature. New students and accomplished researchers alike will appreciate the nearly 2,000 succinct descriptions of authors, illustrators, books, characters, radio and television programs, and many aspects of children's play and learning. While Carpenter and Prichard emphasize historical aspects of British and American literature, readers will also discover summaries of books published as recently as 1983 and brief surveys of children's literature from many languages and nations. Breadth of coverage, alluring illustrations, and erudite text mark this as a new reference classic.


Sometimes, the best way to get a fix on the future is to take a hard look at the past. For your reference needs, Dow Jones presents The Dow Jones Reference Services featuring The Wall Street Journal and Barron's in index form.

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History, biography, and genealogy


This significantly revised and expanded version of a 1974 edition includes more than 200 new entries, an increase of 50 percent. The present compilation includes a larger number of women, Afro-Americans, radicals, and 19th-century labor figures. An effort was also made to provide "broad statistical portraits" of labor leaders through the use of statistics and fictionalized representative biographies. A bibliography is included. Essential for students of American labor history.


A cross between People and an encyclopedia, this work will be enjoyed by trivia fans as well as seekers of quick information about our 39 presidents. Each entry includes a portrait and basic facts, such as physical description, dates, parents, siblings, wife, children, education, religion, career, political campaigns, members of the administration, and highlights of the presidency. In addition, less useful information such as rankings among presidents, quotes pro and con, living descendants, personality, affairs, and early romances is provided. The 12-to-20 page entries pack in a great deal, including tidbits like John F. Kennedy's studies at the Stanford Business School, where Ronald and Nancy Reagan spent their honeymoon, and the fate of Grover Cleveland's illegitimate son. A short bibliography of works by and about the president ends each entry.


Certain to become a landmark reference work on U.S. military history, DAMB is a multi-volume collection of signed biographical essays arranged alphabetically, with cross-references to other entries. The individuals included are drawn from various backgrounds—military officers, inventors, writers, educators, physicians, explorers and others, such as prominent Native American warriors. The entries, nearly 400, cover American military history from the French and Indian War to Vietnam. Each essay, averaging 1,500 words, not only provides biographical information, but also gives an appraisal of the person's historical impact and concludes with a short bibliography. Six different appendixes help to identify people by such things as birthplace, war, or chronologically. An excellent place to begin research in American military history.


The Encyclopedia of American Political History provides up-to-date articles on major political issues, themes, processes, and developments. This three-volume set contains sections on 90 different topics written by experts in the field. Suitable for students and laypersons, the articles are lengthy, approximately 10-15 pages, and include substantial bibliographies. A detailed index is helpful. These volumes will serve as an excellent introduction to the numerous facets of American political history.


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cated, and when was Montgomery the capital of the Confederacy? This two-volume encyclopedia will answer many questions about places of historic importance. Each entry lists the name, alternative native name, variant spellings, ancient or former name, present-day country, geographic location, and historic significance. Numerous cross-references provide multiple entry points. Battle sites, lakes, mountains, archaeological digs, empires, and forts are included along with cities, towns, countries, and provinces.


Southwick has compiled an interesting analysis of the 88 men who were nationally nominated from a major political party for president or vice-president, but never won election to the office. The compiler refers to them as “a motley collection of the famous and the obscure.” The book is arranged chronologically into 51 chapters and covers all quadrennial elections through 1980, the Confederate States of America election in 1861, and the vice-presidential confirmations by Congress in 1973 and 1974. Each chapter includes a one-page description of the election and a multi-page biographical sketch of the losing candidate(s), except where the candidate later achieved the office. Each also contains a segment that analyzes and evaluates the candidate’s qualifications and possible success/failure at the position and a bibliography of additional sources. Also of interest are many appendices: one that rates the losing candidates by office, various newspaper polls (1948, 1962, 1982) that ranked the presidents, and a general bibliography and index. Many will find this volume helpful in analyzing American politics in general, and elections in particular.


This two-volume bibliography covers all aspects of life in America from 1763 to 1789, the economic, social, intellectual, and artistic as well as the political, military, and legal. Compiled using the collection of the Library of Congress, it lists books, dissertations, articles, and pamphlets published through December 1972. Its over 20,000 entries, many annotated, are arranged in 12 broad chapters with detailed subject breakdowns, e.g., the Battles of Trenton and Princeton; the Boston Massacre. One-third of the entries are biographical and a sketch’s appearance in DBB or DNB is noted. Considering the approach of the Constitution’s bicentennial and the continued interest in the Revolutionary period, this work will be a welcome and definitive addition to any reference collection.


As its title suggests, this is not a “how to” book, but a guide to a vast range of genealogical sources. Each of its 28 chapters begins with a chart, “Can you use this chapter?” Along with descriptions of standard record sources like censuses, church and court records, city directories, and newspapers, this work covers prison and business records, urban history, and the use of computers in genealogical research. A chapter each is devoted to research on native Americans, Hispanics, blacks, and Jewish Americans. This comprehensive guide will aid not only genealogists, but also students of U.S. business, urban, and ethnic history.