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Book Review: Encyclopedia of Constitutional Amendments, Proposed Amendments, and Amending Issues, 1979–2015

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ranging from escaped slaves and violent insurrections to landmark legislation, to influential national movements and organizations. It is certainly only a starting point for research in this area, but not a bad one at that.—Mike Tosko, *Subject Librarian, The University of Akron, Akron, Ohio*

Asian American Religious Cultures. Edited by Jonathan H. X. Lee, Fumitaka Matsuoka, Edmond Yee, and Ronald Y. Nakasone. *American Religious Cultures*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2015. 2 vols. Acid-free \$189 (ISBN 978-1-59884-330-9). Ebook available (978-1-59884-331-6) call for pricing.

Asian American Religious Cultures (AARC) is an encyclopedic collection of essays and entries aimed at high school students, college undergraduates, and nonspecialist readers. This collection, written by a variety of experts, touches upon specific elements of Asian American religious cultures.

While the nineteen essays vary in length, their focal point is distinct: critical topics related to Asian American religious culture. The editors' selection of critical topics is notable; for example, two topics: religion, race, and orientalism and interpretation stand out as issues that require a thoughtful and comprehensive response, which AARC provides.

The more than 200 entries in AARC supplement the essays by providing information related to specific elements of Asian American religious cultures. For example, a brief entry on dragons discusses the role that dragons have played both historically and currently in Asian American religion. Another excellent example is the entry on Mormons. With Anglo-American roots, one does not often consider Mormonism to be a topic for discussion among Asian Americans. However, the contributor of this article, Garry Trompf, differs. Trompf provides a brief but excellent introduction to the impact of the Mormon Church in Asian countries and segues into an overview of Mormonism today among Asian Americans. Even though both of these entries are brief, the contributors provide bibliographic information providing resources for further reading. This is an invaluable asset. These two entries serve as examples which the remainder emulate.

There are several topics that a potential student may pursue in relation to Asian American religious culture that were not included in AARC. To accommodate these scenarios, the AARC includes brief references to refer the reader to related topics. For example, AARC does not have an essay or an entry on Baptists, however, it does have "Baptist" listed in the entries and it simply says "see Morikawa, Jitsuo." Jitsuo Morikawa, a Baptist minister of Japanese ancestry, played a critical role in the American Baptist Churches, and this entry provides a brief snapshot of Baptist work in Asian American culture. These references abound in the AARC and they add tremendous value to this work. AARC also includes an index which serves as an invaluable tool for patrons desiring to do research on Asian American religious cultures.

An earlier work by the same publisher, ABC-CLIO, and edited by two of the editors of AARC, is titled *Encyclopedia*

of Asian American Folklore and Folklife (EAAFF). While these works do sound similar, they do have distinctions. The objective of EAAFF is to answer the question "What is Asian American Folklore and Folklife?" The answer to that question will involve religion and religious institutions, but it also entails customs, traditions, languages, and other cultural aspects of Asian Americans. The EEARF provides a broader, but still valuable, perspective, whereas AARC provides more depth information on one particular aspect: religion.

While AARC is a notable and unique source, one must remember that the intended audience for this work is high school students, college undergraduates, and non-specialist readers. It would be a good starting point for undergraduate students, but it would not provide the resources needed for detailed research or analysis. Because of that, AARC would be a welcome addition to any library lacking content in this area and looking for a good place where patrons can start their inquiries on these topics.—Garrett Trott, *Librarian, Corban University, Salem, Oregon*

Encyclopedia of Constitutional Amendments, Proposed Amendments, and Amending Issues, 1979–2015. 4th ed. By John R. Vile. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2015. 2 vols. \$189 (ISBN 978-1-61069-931-0). Ebook available (978-1-61069-932-7) call for pricing.

Amending (pun totally intended) such works of reference on a semi-regular basis is key to staying current. In this fourth edition author John R. Vile has again made the necessary revisions to reflect the enduring engagement and discourse pertaining to the practice of amending the US Constitution. It should be noted that if you are looking for a straight-forward, chronological overview of the amendments in their historical contexts, this would probably not be the go-to source. Instead, Grey House Publishing Inc.'s *Constitutional Amendments: An Encyclopedia of the People, Procedures, Politics, Primary Documents, Campaigns for the 27 Amendments to the Constitution of the United States* (2012) or Gale's *Constitutional Amendments: From Freedom of Speech to Flag Burning* (2008) would be the preferred choice. Vile's contribution takes a more nuanced approach to the study of this specialized field by including entries on related (unresolved) issues, influential people and organizations, Supreme Court decisions, and as noted in the title, proposed amendments that failed to pass Congress and ratification. In light of this diverse content, one can see how releasing new editions of the work every so often is indeed warranted.

As for its organization, entries are alphabetic, and listed only as such in the front matter. Because of the varied content, I would have also liked to have seen a thematic clustering of entries somewhere up front, as is often present in such works, but no such luck with this one. There is, however, a "List of Cases" with corresponding page numbers in the back, just before the index. Entries are generally quite concise and to-the-point, with suitable cross-references and

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strong “Further Reading” suggestions. To give you an idea of what I mean by “concise,” the entry on the “Federal Marriage Protection Amendment” takes up more than two and a half pages (approximately five columns).

The four appendices are nice additions, but only one, I think, is really exceptional. Appendixes A, B, and C consist of the text of the Constitution itself, the dates amendments were proposed and ratified, and a list of the number of proposed amendments by decade—good to have, but all just a Google search away. Appendix D, “Most Popular Amending Proposals by Year and Key Events, and Publications Related to Constitutional Amendments,” however, is a very helpful piece of supplemental material. Lastly, the bibliography is truly a work of art. Vile has had a long and distinguished career as scholar of the US constitutional amendments, and this compilation of important works would be the first place I would look if starting to help a student on any related research endeavor. I would recommend this reference to students from high school through college undergraduate, although the above-mentioned bibliography would be a score for students/researchers at any level.—*Todd J. Wiebe, Head of Research and Instruction, Van Wylen Library, Hope College, Holland, Michigan*

Foods That Changed History: How Foods Shaped Civilization from the Ancient World to the Present. By Christopher Cumo. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2015. 451 p. Acid-free \$100 (ISBN 978-1-1108-3536-0). Ebook available (978-1-4408-3537-7) call for pricing.

Foods that Changed History: How Foods Shaped Civilization from the Ancient World to the Present, is an expansive work with almost 100 entries that cover a wide range of foods that have had a major historical impact. The entries summarize the origin of the foods and then cover the periods in time that they were culturally significant to different societies for a variety of reasons.

It is important to note from the start that this work is intended as an introduction for students to the food studies field. Arranged in an encyclopedic format with alphabetic entries, it is easy to navigate and the entries receive equal treatment throughout. Students from a variety of disciplines would consider this a valuable tool when beginning their research because Cumo has done an excellent job of balancing the dry factual information with the more interesting analysis of how the different foods helped shape different cultures and at times served as the catalyst for major change or discovery. An example of this would be Cumo's entry on cinnamon that details its role in the spice trade that led to greater exploration on other continents by Europeans. He treats the topic objectively and describes both the positive effects these developments had on European society and the terrible injustices many of the native groups in the new world suffered at the hands of the European explorers.

While this work is interesting and does an admirable job of covering a large number of foods, it is certainly not the

only book to cover this topic published in recent years. *Fifty Foods that Changed the Course of History*, by Bill Price, was published in 2014 (Firefly Books), and covers several of the same foods as this book. The major difference between the two works is that Price uses a chronological format to frame his work, he has a lighter tone throughout, and he covers fewer foods. Each has its strengths, and selection should be based on your patron groups, potential audience, and budgetary constraints.

Overall, this work is an easy to use reference resource that provides an interesting historical overview of a wide range of foods that have directly impacted the development of modern day civilization. Considering the cost and the number of books recently published on this topic, I would recommend this work only for community college or university libraries supporting relevant majors.—*Marissa Ellermann, Head of Circulation Services Librarian, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Carbondale, Illinois*

Ghosts, Spirits, and Psychics: The Paranormal from Alchemy to Zombies. Edited by Matt Cardin. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2015. 409 p. Acid-free \$89 (ISBN 978-1-61069-683-8). Ebook available (978-1-61069-684-5) call for pricing.

Producing a reference book about the paranormal presents a unique challenge. Various aspects of the phenomenon—under the rubric of “the supernatural”—have been and remain common to virtually all religions. Furthermore, as this work's “Introduction” notes, “the idea of the paranormal is ubiquitous and inescapable in American culture” and “is entrenched” (xix) throughout most of the rest of the world. Yet the actual existence of the paranormal is in very serious doubt, and authorities in most mainstream disciplines reject it as pseudoscience. As the “Introduction” suggests, however, a new paradigm that sidesteps this “skeptic/believer dichotomy” (xxiii) seems to be emerging.

To tackle this slippery topic, editor and college English instructor Matt Cardin has assembled 121 alphabetically arranged entries by 57 contributors, most of whom work in academia. Subjects range from individuals (Edgar Cayce, Carl Jung, and so on) to important institutions such as the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry and the Rhine Research Center and from paranormal “powers” such as telepathy to treatments of the paranormal in the arts and the media. Most entries run from two to four pages, are objective in approach, and are clearly written without being simplistic. Each concludes with “See also” references and a short bibliography, and some include short timelines and excerpts from key documents as well. Additional features include a “Guide to Related Topics,” a twenty-one-page chronology, a general bibliography, and an index.

Only two generally comparable works have been published in the last decade. Patricia D. Netzley's *The Greenhaven Encyclopedia of Paranormal Phenomena* (Greenhaven Press/Gale, 2006) contains nearly 300 entries, some of them