Best Historical Materials

RUSA History Section Historical Materials Committee

RUSA History Section Historical Materials Committee contributing members: Brooke Becker, Chair; Michelle Baildon; Patricia Clark; Suzi Williams Kaplan; Jean Schmidt Kiesel; Joel Kitchens; Janalyn Moss; Jenny Presnell; Marika Anne Soulsby; and Alicia White.

W elcome to the annual review of "Best Historical Materials." Each year members of the Historical Materials Committee, RUSA History Section identify and review numerous bibliographies, indexes, and websites to offer our recommendations of English-language resources in the field of history. We recognize that this year has been difficult for many of us in libraries. With shrinking or nonexistent budgets, many of us are worried about merely maintaining our current collections, much less adding materials. We've also noted that in light of changing publishing models, an ever increasing number of publishers have stopped or drastically reduced the number of bibliographies and indexes in print. Despite this trend, we were pleased with the number of submissions for both print and electronic resources. With all this in mind, the Historical Materials Committee presents eight resources, a balance of four print bibliographies and four websites. The print bibliographies are from 2007–09. All websites are freely available and accessible via the Web. Reviews of these sites were completed in late April and May of this year.

Members of the library profession are invited to submit suggestions of print indexes and bibliographies as well as online resources to the committee for consideration. Nominations from any historical time period will be considered. Suggestions, with appropriate bibliographic information, should be sent to Brooke Becker (babecker@uab.edu). The next submission deadline is October 31, 2009.

Civil Rights in Mississippi Digital Archive, www.lib.usm.edu/~spcol/crda. The University of Southern Mississippi.

Materials in this website pertain to Mississippi's civil rights movement, particularly the seminal 1964 Freedom Summer Project in Hattiesburg. The site contains 149 oral history transcripts, some with digital audio, of individuals involved in the movement in Mississippi, along with diaries, correspondence, pamphlets, newsletters, posters, journals, photographs, and other items selected from the University of Southern Mississippi's manuscript collections. The historical context section details the history of the civil rights movement in Hattiesburg and Mississippi; explains the role of Oxford, Ohio, in the movement; and lists Freedom Summer civil rights incidents by county or city. A thorough explanation of copyright permission policies for the collection along with a list of other civil rights collections completes the collection. Keyword searching of the collection is available through the cooperative Mississippi Digital Library.—*Alica White, Penn State Mont Alto Campus*

Holocaust in Hungary: A Selected and Annotated Bibliography: 2000–2007. Ed. and comp. Braham Randolf and Julia Bock. Boulder, Colo.; New York: Columbia Univ. Pr., 2008. 160p. $40 (ISBN: 0-88033-628-5).

This third bibliographic volume continues a series of bibliographies on the holocaust in Hungary. Browseable chapters include "Personal Narratives," "Fictional Accounts," "International Reactions," "Education and Textbooks," "Documentaries and Films," "Museums," "Illustrations," and "Denial Literature." The entries are easily browseable, but an index assists in more precise subject identification. Bibliographic citations are multilingual (Hebrew, Russian, and Yiddish) with sparse, nonanalytical annotations. A nice essay about the history of holocaust publishing in general and of Hungary's place in that record introduces the volume. With the focus on Hungary, there are no serious competitors. The audience for this volume and the others are certainly academic, advanced undergraduates to graduate students. Recommended for advanced collections in holocaust studies.—*Jenny Presnell, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio*

National Archives Experience: Digital Vaults. http://digitalvaults.org.

This amazing website contains a database of some twelve hundred documents, photographs, drawings, maps, and other materials drawn from the vast holdings of the National Archives and covering all periods of U.S. history to about 2004. Users can collect images and use them to create posters, slide shows, and educational games or find materials for further research.

The site opens with a rotating display of images. Moving the cursor over one activates a pop-up with its title and record details. Details include a short description, tags (descriptors) that link to related images, links to educational resources (lengthy essays and suggested teaching activities), and additional resources (links to related materials in the Archives and articles from *Prologue*, the Archives' quarterly journal). Instructions are available but hardly necessary.—*Jean S. Kiesel, Edith Garland Dupré Library, University of Louisiana at Lafayette*

Peake, Louis A. *The United States in the Vietnam War, 1954–1975: A Selected, Annotated Bibliography of English-Language Sources*, 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2007. 377p. $150 (ISBN: 0-415-95770-2).

Since 1986, the first edition of Peake's bibliography has been used in the study of the Vietnam War and is listed in the *Columbia Guide to the Vietnam War* as a guide to "older, standard works." It covers the war's progress through the administrations of five presidents and includes antiwar sentiments in the world. The second edition, now a volume in the Routledge Research Guides to American Military Studies, adds only 150 new entries while updating and revising the old ones. Peake adds a section titled "Overlooked—but not Forgotten" and renames the subtitle to emphasize "English-Language Sources." Although it is considered a good place to start for students of this war, its price is too high for small library budgets.—*Patricia Clark, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas*

Sexton, Donal J. *The Western European and Mediterranean Theaters in World War II: An Annotated Bibliography of English-Language Sources*. New York; London: Routledge, 2009. 600p. $150 (ISBN: 0-415-95769-9).

This volume contains more than 3,900 annotated entries and is a substantial revision of a similar title published twenty-five years ago. Sexton includes general and specialized reference works, articles in scholarly journals and popular magazines, monographs, memoirs, and unit histories, but not websites. The book is organized by reference works, special studies, and the war in the air, land, and sea, and includes author and subject indices. In a nod to the changing nature of military historiography, Sexton includes materials on women and minorities; however, finding these materials using the subject index is often challenging. There are also a few inaccurate entry numbers. This book should appeal most to history buffs, but serious scholars may also find occasional gems.—*Joel D. Kitchens, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas*

Travelers in the Middle East Archive (TIMEA), http://timea.rice.edu. Rice University.

This extensive collection of images, texts, and maps document European and American travels to Egypt in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The collection includes photographs, book illustrations, postcards, stereographs, museum and exhibition catalogs, travel guides, travel narratives, and cultural studies of Egypt and Cairo. It can be browsed by title, place name, creator, date range, or broad subject categories, such as Art and Artifacts, History and Politics, and Religion and Festivals. In addition to primary sources, it includes educational modules that contextualize the material and offer research strategies, as well as GIS maps with information about historical and religious sites, place names, water, elevation, and political boundaries. Gathering hard-to-find material, TIMEA should be useful to researchers at all levels interested in Western interactions with the Middle East in this period.—*Michelle Baildon, MIT Libraries, Cambridge*

Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade, www.slavevoyages.org. Emory University.

This resource, sponsored by Emory University and the National Endowment for the Humanities, is a visually rich and authoritative website that provides information on the slave trade that spans (and is organized by) five continents. In addition to the text-based resources of traditional bibliographies, *Voyages* also includes maps, images, lesson plans, and a database of African names. Content (much of which is downloadable) is organized so that users can navigate the website in many different ways, such as searching by material type or geographic region. New users will find the website's glossary helpful in understanding specialized terminology.

Because of the website's unique interface, the scope of information available, and the fact that the content is available to the general public via the Web with software demonstrations, *Voyages* would be a recommended resource for both introductory and advanced research.—*Marika Soulsby, Penn State Greater Allegheny, McKeesport, Pennsylvania*

Woodward, David R. *America and World War I: A Selected Annotated Bibliography of English-language Sources*. New York: Routledge, 2007. 432p. $150 (ISBN: 0-415-97895-5).

This is an update of a bibliography published in 1985 by David R. Woodward and Robert Franklin Maddox. Primarily, it includes English-language materials (both originally published works in English as well as English translations of materials). Concentration is given to those works published prior to 2006. The arrangement is by subject and includes the sections "Reference Works and the Internet," "Manuscript Depositories and Libraries," "Origins and Outbreak of the War," "Military Aspects of the War," "Home Front," "Social and Cultural Impact of the War," "Diplomacy of the War," and "Peace Settlement." The stated objective is "to give wide coverage, including both landmark works and a sampling of the literature for a particular subject." Dedicated posthumously to Maddox, this book would be a valued addition to most scholarly collections.—*Brooke Becker, University of Alabama at Birmingham*

How Do We Assess Tutorials' Use and Effectiveness?

Assessment and evaluation are essential components of any type of instruction. Particularly because of the time and effort invested in developing online tutorials and the comparatively stable product that results, assessment and evaluation are critical elements of online instruction. Online tutorials should be evaluated for usability, and depending on the purpose for which they are designed, for their contribution to learning or skill development.

Evaluation

Tutorials can be effectively evaluated by usability testing during development (formative evaluation) as well as by observation, student achievement, and interviews when the tutorial is completed (summative evaluation) to measure adherence to the original goals. Usability testing need not be elaborate or involve large numbers of users to be beneficial. A small group of users can provide useful feedback quickly and inexpensively. Usability experts suggest that observing and testing as few as five users will provide useful and actionable information by collecting the users' success rates, verbal reactions, task performance, check-listed criteria, and subjective satisfaction.

Many methods are suggested in the literature for evaluating learning as a result of online tutorials. Methods include pretesting to evaluate prior knowledge and posttesting to determine student satisfaction, learning, and reactions to the course content, materials, and methods. Brief surveys, questionnaires, and reaction pieces that measure confidence in executing a specific skill, using a resource, or performing an activity, as well as suggestions for improvement, queries regarding what was learned, what was unclear, and what might be changed in the future, can also provide useful information.

If a tutorial is not required as part of coursework, it may be difficult to motivate users to complete elaborate assessment tools. A brief assessment tool designed using Web-accessible forms may lower some of the barriers to including assessment tools in online tutorials. Collection of use data is often a minimum standard, but not necessarily an effective means of assessment or evaluation.

CONCLUSIONS

If you have not yet jumped on the online tutorial bandwagon or are considering a change in your approach, many resources exist to help you. We encourage you to carefully examine your motives, goals, and objectives for developing or enhancing online tutorials and to take advantage of the increasingly helpful software available as well as the experience of colleagues who can point the way forward. Take a look at some collections of online tutorials for ideas about topics and approaches that are uniquely suited to online tutorials. This approach may provide an opportunity to exercise your creativity and imagination while providing enhanced learning opportunities for your learners.