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World Oceans: A Reference Handbook

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REFERENCE

Tucker, the author and editor of more than 60 books on military history, contributes another notable work with this single-volume encyclopedia of military sieges. He defines a siege as any “effort by a military force to blockade a city, fortress, or enemy position with the intent of securing its submission, either by cutting off its food or water supply...or by taking it by assault.” His book opens with an essay discussing siege warfare, and concludes with an index and contributor bios. The bulk of the volume is devoted to 100 chronologically arranged entries on the sieges it defines as the most significant in history, beginning with the Siege of Troy (1194–1184 BCE) and concluding with the Siege of Mosul (2016–17). Each entry covers the siege’s lead-up, the siege itself, and its aftermath. Tucker includes sieges that he says changed the world, in Jerusalem (70 CE), Rome (537–38), Constantinople (1453), and Leningrad (1941–44). This guide is complemented with illustrations, maps, informative sidebars, and suggestions for further reading. **VERDICT** Never glossing over the human casualties and physical destruction wrought by war, Tucker’s thoughtful work will help readers understand the evolution of siege warfare. Highly recommended for those interested in military history.—**Dave Pugl, El Area P.L., Lake Zurich, IL**

POLITICAL SCIENCE

LeMay, Michael C. First Amendment Freedoms: A Reference Handbook. ABC-CLIO. (Contemporary World Issues). Feb. 2021. 372p. ISBN 9781440869297. \$63. REF This look at the U.S. Constitution’s First Amendment follows the structure of other titles in the series: an overview, problems and solutions, nine focused essays, over 50 profiles of institutions and individuals, data and primary source material, an annotated resources list, a chronology (1649–2018), a glossary, and an index. LeMay (political science emeritus, Cal State Univ., San Bernardino; *Immigration Reform*) covers religion, speech, press, and assembly and petition. Religion gets by far the most space, despite there having been much recent contentious political foregrounding of free speech issues. LeMay is authoritative, but his writing is sometimes repetitive and not always clear or effectively organized (e.g., the connection between the First and Fourteenth Amendments is mentioned early on in the book, but not explained until later). Explication of U.S. Supreme Court reasoning can be thin, especially for decisions that seem contradictory. However, the text effectively formulates the many questions raised by the amendment and offers a good starting point for research. **VERDICT** Although readers

might wish for more attentive editing and deeper analysis, the excellent scholarly essays and the information consolidated here will be valuable to students of U.S. history and the Constitution.—**Patricia D. Lothrop, formerly of St. George’s Sch., Newport, RI**

★**Silverstein, Helena. The Supreme Court. Greenwood. (Student Guides to American Government and Politics). Mar. 2021. 163p. ISBN 9781440873003. \$40. REF**

The inaugural volume of this series is a concise, authoritative primer on the U.S. Supreme Court. Silverstein (government and law, Lafayette Coll.; *Unleashing Rights*) clarifies, without simplifying, the court’s complex situation, evolution, and impact. Seven coherently scaffolded chapters cover judicial review, multiple theories of constitutional interpretation, court structures and procedures, the selection of justices, factors that affect SCOTUS decision-making, the court’s relations with media and the public, and (in a key chapter) the impact of decisions. Silverstein concludes by mulling the future; readers should note that the book went to print before the 2020 election and the death of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, so Justice Amy Coney Barrett isn’t covered, but the author does consider the court’s “conservative shift.” A chronology (1787–2019), a bibliography, and an index assist researchers. Among the work’s most valuable features is an introduction outlining the history of the institution and the development of its powers and place in government, through key chief justices, cases, and reversals. Silverstein’s evenhanded and well-grounded exposition of controversies and differing viewpoints is admirable. Specific case examples, well-chosen quotations, succinct chapter conclusions, and relevant scholarly references explain the nature, scope, and import of the court’s functions. It’s regrettable that the book doesn’t analyze the implications of the so-called “shadow docket” that’s increasingly important in the court’s ideological battles. **VERDICT** Silverstein’s insightful, thorough, well-organized, lucidly expressed guide to both basic and abstruse aspects of the court will be essential for students of U.S. history and government.—**Patricia D. Lothrop, formerly of St. George’s Sch., Newport, RI**

SCIENCES

McIntyre, Shauna M. Organic Food and Farming: A Reference Handbook. ABC-CLIO. (Contemporary World Issues). Mar. 2021. 338p. ISBN 9781440870033. \$63. REF Freelance writer McIntyre divides this comprehensive overview of organic food into seven sections: background/history; problems, controversies, and solutions (hy-

droponics, animal welfare, GMOs, pesticide drift); nine essays from practitioners and academics; profiles of individuals and organizations; data and documents (such as legislation); annotated resources (print, visual, internet); and a detailed chronology (1840–2020), glossary, and index. Only in the history and profiles chapters, and very occasionally elsewhere, does the book look beyond the United States. McIntyre’s thorough and evenhanded consideration covers organic food and farming both as an industry and as a societal and philosophical phenomenon. Citing reliable sources throughout, she examines the consequences of consumer- or farmer-driven organic rules and standards and market regulation; she also looks at the way many discussions center on differences between organic and “regular” farming, rather than the values of organic farming. Her analyses of the economics of organics, and of issues like nutrition, environment/climate, and social justice, are in-depth. Extensive recent sources (within chapters, as well as in the data and resources sections) are excellent spurs for further exploration. **VERDICT** McIntyre’s presentation of this complex subject combines authentic expertise with clear, objective communication for a nonexpert audience. Invaluable for new and advanced students of U.S. agriculture, business, and society.—**Patricia D. Lothrop, formerly of St. George’s Sch., Newport, RI**

Newton, David. World Oceans: A Reference Handbook. ABC-CLIO. (Contemporary World Issues). Feb. 2021. 350p. ISBN 9781440875434. \$63. REF

With this excellent addition to the series, Newton (chemistry and physics, formerly Salem State Coll.) informs readers of the hazards facing oceans. He emphasizes early and often the importance of laws and practices that sustain the marine ecosystem. He skillfully addresses issues facing the world’s oceans (overfishing, sea level rise, reef erosion, pollution) and explains their potential effects on oceans, marine flora and fauna, and humankind. Newton spotlights a number of figures active in ocean preservation, including Sylvia Earle, Sir John Murray, Greenpeace, and the Surfrider Foundation. The book includes a “Data and Documents” section, with five tables and 13 documents of core numbers and studies; particularly informative are tables on the 1993–2019 rise in sea level and the 1979–2019 Arctic Sea ice minimum. The list of resources includes books, articles, reports, and websites. **VERDICT** Compelling and convincing for all readers, especially those interested in oceans, climate change, and consequences of neglecting and abusing the sea.—**Rob Tench, Old Dominion Univ. Libs., Norfolk, VA**

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