

REFERENCE NOTES

A program of the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office (HESO) at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

July 1999

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INFORMATION BITS

Rubber Bands

To improve our delivery of reference materials, we have started using large four-prong rubber bands to bind together the reference question memo and accompanying books. Since these rubberbands are fairly expensive, as far as rubberbands go, we would like to try and reuse them. We would appreciate it if you could please send them back to us through the delivery system, if at all possible.

New Reference Email Address

MINITEX Reference now has a group email address! If you have comments on our new Web form, want to spotlight your library in the next *Reference Notes*, or have a comment on any on-going discussions, please send us an email! Our address is:

ref@othello.lib.umn.edu

New Web Reference Request Intake Form Is Up and Running!

MINITEX Reference is proud to introduce a new method of forwarding reference requests to MINITEX. Our new Web intake form is currently up and running. This form allows you to send us reference requests on the weekend or after MINITEX office hours as well as during regular business hours. We are still happy to take your reference questions over the phone or by fax. The following are some brief instructions and tips to get you started:

How do I login?

Click on Reference under “Programs and Services” on the top left of the main MINITEX page (www-minitex.lib.umn.edu). On the next page click Online Reference Service. At the prompt, enter your OCLC library code (or SELCO for SELCO). To go directly to the code prompt, the address is <http://kinglear.lib.umn.edu/reference/refdb>. You may want to bookmark this shortcut.

Where do I enter my question?

After your code has been accepted, click on “Send a Request.” This will take you to the actual intake form. Enter the appropriate information in the yellow area of the page, including all the information known about the question and how the patron will use this information.

What if I need to edit the form?

After you submit the form, the data entered is then summarized. You now have the opportunity to go back and edit the form or send it directly to MINITEX Reference.

How do I receive the REFRQ number?

If you have included an email address on the form we will email you your REFRQ number; if not, we will call you with the information. You will receive the REFRQ number within 24 hours or by the next working day. We will be checking for incoming reference questions throughout the day, Monday-Friday.

What if I have more than one question to send?

Enter one question at a time. After you send the first question, click on “Send Another Request.” The intake form will pop up with the librarian’s name, email, and phone number already entered.

NOTE: You might receive a Java script error if your browser is at version 3 or lower. We should still be able to receive your requests. The first time you get this error, please call us to verify that we have indeed received your request.

We want to make this process as easy as possible. Please contact us with any questions, suggestions, or concerns you might have!

<http://kinglear.lib.umn.edu/reference/refdb>

NEW PRINT RESOURCES

Was John Tyler President before or after Zachary Taylor? Find the answer to that question and other facts about our nation's history in the following reference books.

The Presidency A to Z, Michael Nelson, Advisory Editor, 1998. (ISBN: 1568023596)

This is just one volume of Congressional Quarterly's 4 volume collection titled, *Encyclopedia of American Government*. The other 4 volumes cover Congress, the Supreme Court and elections. The volume covering the presidency is full of alphabetical essays that cover the powers, concepts, and evolution of this institution and the personalities that occupied the office of the President of the United States.

The American Heritage Encyclopedia of American History, John Mack Faragher, General Editor, 1998. (ISBN: 0805044388)

Useful if you need some brief facts about ideas, battles, court cases and people that influenced the direction of this country.

American Eras: The Revolutionary Era, 1754-1783, Robert J. Allison, Editor. (ISBN: 0787614807)

Many of us know about the major events and battles that shaped our nation during the Revolutionary War, but what do you know about the lives of ordinary people-the food they ate, the clothes they wore or the games they played? Not only does this reference book cover the major events, but also the economy, religion, and science of the era. Other volumes of *American Eras* cover the years 1600-1899.

Note: John Tyler was the 10th President of the United States (1841-1845) and Zachary Taylor was the 12th President (1849-1850).

Reference Notes

MINITEX Library Information Network
University of Minnesota, S-33 Wilson Library
309 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55455-0414

Reference Phone.....612-624-4150, WATS 800-462-5348
Main/Reference Fax.....612-624-4508

Beccone, Jean.....612-626-9843, becco001@tc.umn.edu
Friedmann, Beth.....612-624-7873, fried004@tc.umn.edu
Parker, Mary.....612-624-1024, m-park1@tc.umn.edu
Woessner, Jeanette.....612-624-5025, woess001@tc.umn.edu

Main Website.....www-minitex.lib.umn.edu
Reference Email.....ref@othello.lib.umn.edu
Office Hours.....Mon-Fri., 8:00am-4:30pm
Reference Intake Form.....
.....http://kinglear.lib.umn.edu/reference/refdb

Reference Collection Development: Electronic or Print Resources? An Ongoing Discussion...

We don't want to let this topic fade so we thought we would contribute some thoughts and ideas in hopes of spurring an ongoing discussion of reference collection development issues.

We posed the question of how do you choose between print and electronic reference resources to the folks on the LIBREF-L LISTSERV. LIBREF-L is a roundtable discussion among reference librarians and other interested persons. LIBREF-L is owned and moderated by Kent State University Libraries. The following is a summary of some of the responses we received.

Some valid reasons for purchasing reference resources in electronic formats are:

- ◆ Electronic versions are usually updated more frequently.
- ◆ Electronic versions do not take up shelf space.
- ◆ They can offer more "value" than a print version, (i.e., being able to search a huge number of volumes instead of looking through each individual volume).
- ◆ In a networked environment, more than one patron can access the materials at a time.

Some valid reasons for purchasing reference resources in print/paper formats are:

- ◆ There are many costs involved in maintaining electronic resources like printers, monitors, paper, ink cartridges, technical support, etc.
- ◆ A book sitting on the shelf is easier to maintain than a CD-ROM network of electronic products.
- ◆ Computers can break down.
- ◆ In many cases, print versions are less expensive and fit in with library budgets.
- ◆ We do not know how long electronic archival versions will be available.

Some may say it is foolish to get gung-ho about electronic resources replacing reference volumes. The individual library's situation must be weighed in terms of what they can afford. In some cases, electronic resources can make reference work easier, but sometimes we all love getting our hands on a book.

Please feel free to agree or disagree and send us your thoughts. We would love to print your comments and thoughts in the next issue of *Reference Notes!*

WEB SITE HITS

July 4th, picnics, parades and fireworks made us think about the rich heritage of this country, so we decided to explore the Web to find American history resources. The quality of the sites we found was impressive. For those patrons who are looking for information on the founding fathers, the history of the flag, the text of such documents as the Declaration of Independence or the Federalist Papers, as well as more obscure materials, here are a few of the resources we found.

“Smithsonian National Museum of American History”

www.si.edu/organiza/museums/nmah

Current exhibits at this museum include *The Great Locomotive Switch*, *The Duke Ellington Collection*, and *Preserving the Star-Spangled Banner: The Flag that Inspired the National Anthem*.

The site has virtual exhibitions, resources and activities for teachers and children, a timeline and many other resources. The virtual exhibit on the Star-Spangled Banner describes the current two-year conservation effort to restore the 185-year-old flag that was the inspiration for the national anthem. The conservation process is described and updated as the work progresses.

The exhibit also provides information about the development of the flag as a national symbol and the Smithsonian’s role as caretaker of the flag.

“National Archives and Records Administration—The Founding Fathers”

www.nara.gov/exhall/charters/constitution/confath.html

The 55 delegates who convened in Philadelphia in May 1787, to write the Articles of Confederation were appointed by the 13 original states. Only Rhode Island declined to send delegates. If you want to know more about the delegates, there are short biographies of each at this Web site. Some of those appointed who did not attend the Constitutional Convention sessions were Patrick Henry, John Adams and John Hancock. The youngest delegate was Jonathan Dayton, 26, and the oldest was Benjamin Franklin, 81.

“Core Documents of U.S. Democracy”

www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/dpos/coredocs.html

This Web site has links to the full text of many documents. They range from the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the

Federalist Papers, the Gettysburg Address, the United States Code, current Congressional bills, Supreme Court decisions: 1937-1975, Proclamations and Executive Orders: April 13, 1945-January 20, 1898, and the *Federal Register*. GPO Access defines the *core documents* as a “core group of current and historical Government publications documents that define our democratic society.” The site solicits input from citizens on suggestions for new core documents.

“Words and Deeds in American History”

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/mchtml/corhome.html>

This site is part of the Library of Congress American Memory project. It contains about 90 selected documents “spanning from the fifteenth century to the mid-twentieth century.”

These are primary documents from the Library’s Manuscript Division. They include papers of presidents, members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, political activists, artists, scientists, inventors and other prominent Americans. The collection may be searched by keyword, name and subject indexes, or browsed chronologically.

While browsing the collection we found Thomas Jefferson’s drawing of a macaroni machine and instructions for making pasta, ca. 1787, and a letter from Eleanor Roosevelt to Walter White detailing the First Lady’s lobbying efforts for federal action against lynchings, March 19, 1936.

“Academic Info: United States History”

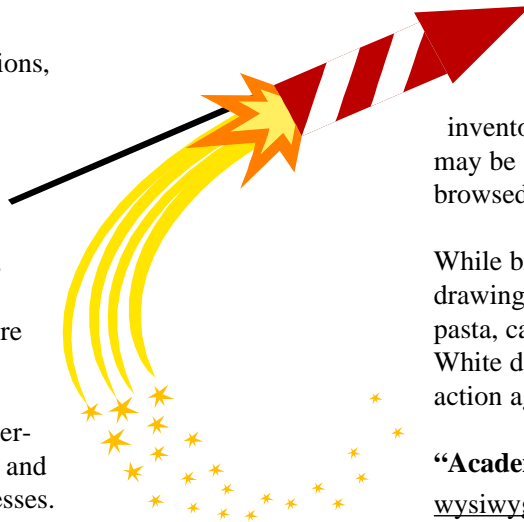
www.academicinfo.net/hisus.html

This site calls itself “An Annotated Directory of Internet Resources on the History of America.” It is a comprehensive listing of links to many Web resources on American history. At this point it is 7 pages of links divided into subject areas. It includes links to Native American studies, Latin American studies, African American studies, Canadian studies, as well as links to other meta-indexes and general directories. It will also lead you to other academic sites (History Departments Around the World), digital libraries and archives, teaching materials and presidential libraries. It is an independently created directory, but appears to be current and selective.

“POTUS – Presidents of the United States”

www.ipl.org/ref/POTUS

This Web site was selected by *Library Journal* as one of the “Top Web Sites for 1997.” It is part of the *Internet Public Library’s* Web site and has a wealth of information about each of the presidents. It includes such information as election results, cabinet members, and links to biographies, audio and video files. The files can be searched by name or by subjects and topics.



REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

Occasionally, MINITEX Reference Services receives a request for a poem, quotation, picture, story or something that cannot be found by checking standard sources. The Reference staff would like to appeal to the collective memory of MINITEX participants for assistance. Please forward any leads on the following questions to Reference Services at: **612-624-4150** or **800-462-5348**. Here is what we are looking for:

Information on the poet Ralph Winder who wrote poetry about the Korean War (1351).

Value of a 1938 Silent Glow Oil Burner (1310).

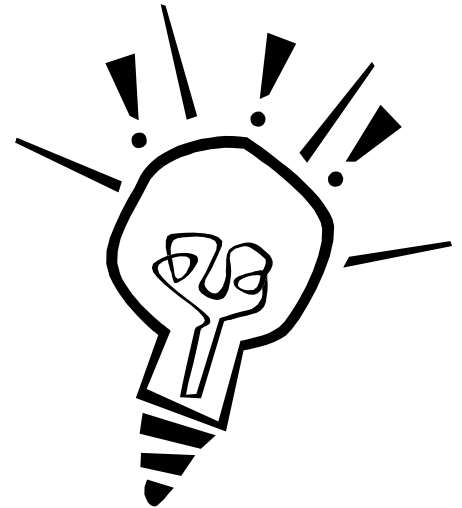
From the last *Reference Notes* we are still looking for:

Information on the artist / painter John Redwood. (1217)

Information Found!

In our question about Amber Days as days when you can predict the weather (909), the term should have been Ember Days.

Nancy Rotramel from Library Development and Services called us about an old wives tale of the Episcopal Church that says that the first Ember Day predicts the weather for the current month, the second day for the month following, and the third Ember Day for the month after that. *Holidays and Festivals Index* cites Ember Days as the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday following, respectively, the first Sunday in Lent; Pentecost; September 14, Holy Cross Day; and December 13, St. Lucy's Day. An interesting history of Ember Days is covered in Chapter 3 of *Handbook of Christian Feasts and Customs*, 1958.



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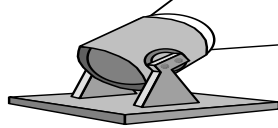
do you think about *Reference Notes*?

great reference books



topics you would like addressed

fantastic web sites



spotlight on your
reference library

We would like to know what you would like to see in upcoming *Reference Notes*. Please either call us at 800-462-5348, send us an e-mail (see page 2 for addresses), or fill in your comments below and mail this form to MINITEX Reference.

Terrific web sites, reference books, and other sources you use:

Comments / Suggestions:

Name: (optional) _____

Library: (optional) _____ Phone: (optional) _____

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1999 EVENTS CALENDAR

- June 5-10 **Special Library Association** will be holding their annual conference at the Minneapolis Convention Center. Please see their web site for more information: www.sla.org/conf/99conf/index.shtml
- June 16 **Academic Library Advocacy Day** at St. John's University in Collegeville, MN
- July 2, 1999 **National Literacy Day** Contact: Focus on Literacy, Inc., P.O. Box 504, Laurel Springs, NJ 08021