Book Review. Cumulative Subject Index to the Public Affairs Information Service Annual Bulletins, 1915-1974

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incorporated into a new paperback, one having pocket inserts for microfiche updates. Given the extensive, increasing, and information rich literature on government publications, the library profession needs to manage the output so that librarians, students, and researchers can quickly determine those writings pertinent to their specific needs and interests.

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Public Affairs Information Service Bulletins has been an invaluable source to librarians and researchers since it was initially published in 1915. Now after more than sixty years PAIS has grown to be the most comprehensive index in the social sciences. Publications of all kinds — current books, pamphlets, periodical articles and government publications — are listed, thus providing a unique feature among information indexes. Published five times yearly, the fifth cumulative issue encompasses the full year in a bound volume. But until now, there has been no cumulation of these yearly volumes to ease research.

The Cumulative Subject Index to Public Affairs Information Service Annual Bulletins is the newest accomplishment of Carrollton Press. The Index cumulates sixty years of PAIS into a fifteen volume subject index which claims 1.2 million interfiled subject entries.

Admittedly, the editors had some difficulty incorporating the variations in indexing rules, style and terminology that occurred during the sixty year period. In order to achieve uniformity it was necessary to change some of PAIS indexing policies as well as to merge older entries under more current terminology. In all, it appears the indexing decisions were well planned as the subject breakdowns appear clear and easy to use.

The general format used in the Cumulative Subject Index to PAIS is the same as in the previous work by Carrollton Press, The Cumulative Subject Index to the Monthly Catalog of the United States Government Publications 1900-1971. Although the method used to note the individual publication in the PAIS Index is essentially the same as in their earlier work, the procedure for locating the item is not as simple. Since the Monthly Catalog itemizes each document in their index, it was natural to use this device in the cumulative index to indicate the exact publication on a specific page. PAIS, however, uses no such numbering system within their index and so Carrollton furnishes the year, page, the column and the number of the item in the column. For example (74)463L9 would be an item listed in the 1974 volume, on page 463, in the left hand column, and would be the ninth item in the column. For the most part, this system works fairly smoothly. When a column includes numerous subject headings, however, or "see" and "see also" references, the line of vision is broken so often that it is difficult to count down the column easily. The less dedicated user might find this somewhat frustrating.

In checking a number of entries under a variety of subject headings, the level of inaccuracy was found to be negligible. The errors, as one might expect, usually result from an inaccurate year or a transposition of two numbers.

Although some problems can be found, the Cumulative Subject Index to PAIS is excellent. The cumulation of sixty years of a major indexing service is no small task and to have accomplished it with so few apparent problems as Carrollton did is a credit to their editor Ruth Matteson Blackmore. The
*Cumulative Subject Index to the PAIS Annual Bulletins* is a major contribution to research in the social sciences and a necessary acquisition for all large public and academic libraries.

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College students frequently complain that textbooks provide insufficient information for a full understanding of historical events. Many simply accept this as a fact of life as they flounder around trying to grasp complex ideas with a minimum of factual knowledge. Others, looking for a more detailed account of a specific incident, discover only a few unit reading lists which are too generalized to be of much help.

Harold Sharp’s *Footnotes to American History* offers a partial solution to this dilemma through the use of 313 historical narratives of one to one-and-a-half pages each. Arranged chronologically from the colonial period to the hectic days of the Calley courtmartial and Watergate, this guide presents a brief summary of the most important features for each episode. Most of the sketches appear well chosen and concisely written, though brevity makes it difficult to fully rescue some of them from an isolated context. A few choices also seem questionable, especially those relating to little known homicides such as the Spooner Tragedy (p. 39), White Murder (p. 84), Laura D. Fair Case (p. 202), Durrant Murders (p. 296), and the “Comely Widow” Murders (p. 339). A number of these citations are included, despite their parochial nature and the fact that they were never more than minor diversions in American legal history. Unfortunately, the author omitted more significant topics such as Loyalist sentiments during the Revolution, major national elections, the Monroe Doctrine (1823), *Brown vs the Board of Education* (1954), the Dawes Severalty Act on Indian lands (1887), and a host of other possibilities. Decisions on inclusions and exclusions are understandably circumscribed by the limited number of pages allowed, but the author might have sharpened his criteria for the selection topics and explained the process in his Foreword. A detailed index helps somewhat answer this problem by alerting the reader to hundreds of events not outlined in the 313 chosen narratives.

The second thrust of this reference work is its incorporation of selective bibliographies for each subject. Unlike the broadlybased reading lists offered by most texts, these focus purely on the given topic, with an average of twelve to fifteen citations for each category. Most of the sources listed are books, though scholarly articles from historical journals are included throughout, and for the post-World War II era, newsmagazine and newspaper articles appear frequently. Sharp apparently chose publications which are readily available in most community and college libraries. Esoteric items and foreign language materials are deleted, as are publications appearing after 1975. Annotated evaluations of each of the entries would have made this a more valuable tool for academic researchers, but for the high school or college student searching for term paper guidance, it represents a useful reference. Persons wishing a more comprehensive topical approach, however, should stick with Thomas Cochran and Wayne Andrews, eds., *Concise Dictionary of American History*, and those seeking bibliographical aid should continue to consult Oscar Handlin, *et. al.*, *Harvard Guide to American History*.

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