

Death in the Pot: The Impact of Food Poisoning on History, by Morton Satin (258

pages, August 2007), reviews some recent and historical episodes of food adulteration and tampering. Modern incidents include the dioxin poisoning of Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko in 2004, the discovery of a virulent strain of *E.*

coli as a result of the 1993 Jack in the Box outbreak, the Spanish toxic oil outbreak of 1981 (attributed to cooking oil, but was it pesticides?), the Jamaican ginger extract adulteration that left thousands of Americans paralyzed with “jake leg” in 1930, and the case of the private cook Mary Mallon who was arrested in 1907 and detained for years as a typhoid fever carrier. Among the earlier cases he discusses are ergot as a cause of the Salem witchcraft outbreak, arsenic ingestion accounting for King George III’s madness, and epidemics of lead poisoning in wine that led to the decline of the Roman Empire. \$24.00. Prometheus. 978-1-59102-514-6.

The Encyclopedia of Religious Phenomena, by J. Gordon Melton (380 pages, October 2007), serves as a general introduction to spiritual and mystical experiences, sacred sites, and seemingly paranormal events associated with the major religious traditions. Melton layers a scholarly outlook over a concise and popular treatment of such phenomena as Marian apparitions, spiritualist séances, sacred shrines and relics, and psychic healing. Well-written and illustrated, with many suggestions for further reading. \$24.95. Visible Ink. 978-1-57859-209-8.

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Fool’s Gold: Why the Internet Is No Substitute for a Library, by Mark Y. Herring (191

pages, September 2007), points out the dangers (to both libraries and the general public) of an overreliance on the Web as an information resource. Many of the pitfalls he identifies are well-known—disinformation and fraud, often-irrelevant search-engine results, link rot, the googleization of everything, the dead end of e-books, the myth of the paperless society, and the paucity of pre-1990s information—but Herring assembles it all entertainingly if occasionally crankily, such as when he addresses rampant Internet pornography or what he perceives as misguided, overzealous mass-digitization advocates. \$45.00. McFarland. 978-0-7864-3082-6.

A Land So Strange: The Epic Journey of Cabeza de Vaca, by Andrés Reséndez (314

pages, November 2007), tells the story of the ill-fated Narváez expedition, which left Spain for Florida in 1528. After a forced landing near Tampa Bay, 300 men set out on a trek inland, but following many misadventures with the Indians, grueling marches, debilitating illnesses, and a harrowing raft voyage across the Gulf to the Texas coast, only four survivors—Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and three companions—made their way back to civilization by walking across to the Pacific and south to Mexico. Their experiences with the Indians, both as captives and as traveling healers, convey the precariousness of first contact. The author’s account is well-documented and less speculative than Paul Schneider’s similar *Brutal Journey* (Holt, 2006). \$26.95. Basic Books. 978-0-465-06840-1.

Lincoln Legends, by Edward Steers Jr. (264 pages, October 2007), tackles 14 myths about Abraham Lincoln’s life and sets the record straight in this scholarly analysis. Beginning with the doubtful authenticity of the birthplace cabin in Hodgenville, Kentucky, Steers goes on to deconstruct legends about the



gravesite of Ann Rutledge (Abe's first love), Lincoln's baptism, his purported homosexuality, Mary Lincoln's alleged Confederate sympathies, the lost draft of the Gettysburg Address, Edwin Stanton's complicity in the assassination plot, the innocence of Dr. Mudd, and the identity of the man who held Booth's horse outside the Ford's Theatre. \$24.95. University Press of Kentucky. 978-0-8131-2466-7.

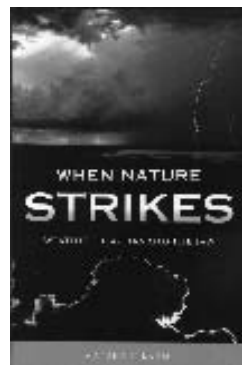
Definitely not a myth is the story of the attempted theft of Abraham Lincoln's body from its tomb in Springfield in 1876 by a group of counterfeiters who planned to hold it for ransom in return for the release from Joliet prison of a fellow con man. *Stealing Lincoln's Body*, by Thomas J. Craughwell (250 pages, April 2007), describes this little-known crime, the prevalence of counterfeiting in post-Civil War America, and the subsequent 1901 re-interment of Lincoln's corpse in a steel cage surrounded by theft-proof concrete (inspired by railway-car magnate George Pullman's own burial in 1897). \$24.95. Belknap Press. 978-0-674-02458-8.

If you are surprised by the audacity of 19th-century counterfeiters, don't be. As Stephen Mihm explains in *A Nation of Counterfeiters: Capitalists, Con Men, and the Making of the United States* (457 pages, September 2007), "the history of bank notes, both real and counterfeit, captures the get-rich-quick scheme, the confidence game, and the mania for speculation" that obsessed the era. Mihm says that the transformation of flimsy paper bank notes into concrete capital is "part of the hidden history of America's economic development." In fact, it was only the government crackdown on counterfeiters of the 1870s that led to a more stable currency—punctuated by debates over gold or silver standards and the establishment of a central bank—and ended a wild and wooly century of forgery. \$29.95. Harvard University. 978-0-674-02657-5.

Maps: Finding Our Place in the World, edited by James R. Akerman and Robert W. Karrow Jr. (400 pages, November 2007), accompanies the 2007–2008 Chicago exhibition of maps spearheaded by the Newberry Library and the Field Museum of Natural History. Like the city-wide exhibits, this volume covers many eras and map genres, from simple pathfinding to world and regional maps, charting American history, conceptual maps, and mapping imaginary worlds. The final chapter is a masterful essay on the development of maps as consumer merchandise by art historian (and cocurator of the exhibition with Akerman) Diane Dillon. \$55.00. University of Chicago. 978-0-226-01075-5.

Another essential volume for any map library is the *Historical Atlas of the United States*, by Derek Hayes (280 pages, January 2007), a brilliant work of art on many levels, from its selection of 535 significant, full-color historical maps to its interpretation of their content. A joy to peruse casually, this volume also serves as an excellent visual introduction to American studies. \$39.95. University of California. 978-0-520-25036-9.

When Nature Strikes, by Marsha L. Baum (227 pages, July 2007), examines the intersections of meteorology and the law, from torts arising from a slip on the ice and contracts covering hurricane damage, to weather-safety inventions protected by patent law, redress for faulty forecasts, civil liability of coaches for athlete heat deaths, looting and other crimes in the wake of a disaster, and



legislation regulating weather emergencies. Baum notes that legal issues in the future will encompass global warming law, weaponization of the weather, and medical malpractice lawsuits for failure to consider weather-sensitivity disorders. This fascinating look at the social consequences of severe weather is accompanied by a glossary of terms from acid rain to winter weather advisories. \$44.95. Praeger. 978-0-275-22129-4. ❧