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The Documentary History of the State of New York. Fine Books Company.

Reviewed by Richard Jensen
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The O'Callaghan collection of original documents from New York has been a standard source for historians of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. It is comprised of hundreds of highly revealing primary sources related to social, demographic, political, economic and Indian history. It comprises 4,000 pages in four large volumes, fully indexed. This CD-ROM edition, for Mac or Windows, is basically a collection of images made from each page of the original text, which are read using the excellent Adobe Acrobat reader (which is included on the CD-ROM). <p> Thus we have a photographic reprint on CD-ROM, with very little value added. The texts have not been scanned or OCR'd. Indeed, the variety of fonts, and the many broken or faded characters, not to mention the old spellings and abbreviations, would make OCR a difficult project, even with a powerful tool like Omnipage Pro. As it stands, none of the text is searchable; pages can be imported into a word processor as images, but not as words. The CD-ROM takes advantage of Acrobat: a click on a line in the table of contents or index of illustrations will, however, switch immediately to that page. Historical accuracy is another thing. The documents are highly accurate, and the view of "New Amsterdam" is attractive. However, the "Wild Animals of New Netherland" features a handsome unicorn set against palm trees. <p> This CD-ROM will be useful primarily to reference libraries in New York that do not have a paper copy of O'Callaghan. <p>

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