

SOURCES

though small and not in color. The crisp images used to accompany the articles are impressive. It is unfortunate that the set lacks any color illustrative materials. Had even one volume had an insert of color images (for example, color illustrations for Celtic art or a color map of the Celtic diaspora), the encyclopedia would have been significantly improved.

While the subtitle indicates that this encyclopedia is “historical,” perhaps the publisher should have included the word “linguistic” in the subtitle as well. The scope of the work is sufficiently broad to accommodate entries on Celtic history, culture, architecture, mythology, religion, material culture, and politics, but the focus of the set remains heavily weighed toward language, linguistics, and literature.

The bibliography included in the fifth volume checks in at seven thousand citations and 215 pages in length. However, the font is small and it is (unfortunately) arranged solely by author’s last name. The bibliography is an important work of scholarship in and of itself but is severely limited in its accessibility. Also, while there is a brief introduction to the encyclopedia, the work lacks a narrative essay that would help introduce novice researchers to the area of Celtic studies. Finally, had a classified list of entries been included, the thematic browsability of the set would have been dramatically improved.

Although this set is not the only English-language reference work published in the past decade on the Celts (for example, see Patricia Monaghan’s *The Encyclopedia of Celtic Mythology and Folklore* [Facts On File, 2004]; Angus Konstam’s *Historical Atlas of the Celtic World* [Checkmark, 2001]; Bernhard Maier’s *Dictionary of Celtic Religion and Culture* [Boydell Press, 1997]), *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia* will be, no doubt, the standard by which future Celtic studies encyclopedias are measured. The encyclopedia is available as both a print set and as an e-book on the ABC-Clio platform. This set is recommended without reservation for all academic and large public libraries that receive questions related to Celtic studies.—Peter H. Sezzi, Associate Librarian, Evelyn and Howard Boroughs Library, Ventura College, California

Colonial America: An Encyclopedia of Social, Political, Cultural, and Economic History. Ed. by James Ciment. Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2006. 5 vols. acid free \$499 (ISBN 0-7656-8065-3).

This carefully crafted new offering from award-winning reference publisher M.E. Sharpe is an important contribution to American historiography and will be a welcome addition to all serious collections that support American history programs. Unique in its exceptional depth, this exhaustive five-volume set encompasses nearly two thousand pages as it spans the first three hundred years of the American experience, from 1492 until the American Revolution. Notable highlights of the encyclopedia include thematic and regional chronologies, primary documents, illustrations, thematic essays, historical maps, and a number of thoughtful ancillary features. Designed to complement high school and undergraduate curricula, this set represents a significant achieve-

ment that students and interested readers and researchers will appreciate.

Edited by James Ciment, *Colonial America* is divided into four major sections. The first furnishes seven thematic essays intended to serve as an overview and an analysis of the period. The second section represents the bulk of the encyclopedia, providing 450 signed articles, ranging from several hundred to a few thousand words, from one hundred contributors. Ordered alphabetically, the articles cover a wide range of topics such as important places, significant events, race and ethnicity, biographies, religion, military and diplomatic affairs, the arts and literature, intellectual life, and many others. Contributing essayists are leading scholars from the field of American history. The informative, well-researched articles are written in precise, easy-to-understand language and are generally interesting and engaging. Articles conclude with cross references and comprehensive bibliographies.

A third major section of the encyclopedia offers annotated chronologies, seven of which correspond to the thematic essays presented in the first volume. The final section of the set contains nearly sixty primary documents organized chronologically, each with a brief introduction to provide context.

Several features enhance the work’s utility and facilitate its ease-of-use. These include many high-quality illustrations and maps, a topic guide organized by general subject areas, a glossary, separate lists of primary and secondary sources, and multiple indexes (general, biographical, and geographical). One minor quibble, however, is that the indexes are not subdivided by subject, which makes them difficult to use in a set this large.

For one of the most written-about subjects in American history, there are surprisingly few reference works devoted exclusively to colonial America. Excellent recent publications such as John R. Vile’s *The Constitutional Convention of 1787: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of America’s Founding* (ABC-Clio, 2005) and Joseph C. Morton’s *Shapers of the Great Debate at the Constitutional Convention of 1787: A Biographical Dictionary* (Greenwood, 2006) have focused on the constitutional convention, while others, such as Carol Sue Humphrey’s *The Revolutionary Era: Primary Documents on Events from 1776 to 1800* (Greenwood, 1998) and Mark Mayo Boatner’s *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* (McKay, 1966) deal exclusively with the American Revolution. One fine exception is John Mack Faragher’s *The Encyclopedia of Colonial and Revolutionary America* (Facts On File, 1990), a concise one-volume survey in dictionary form that will serve as an excellent companion volume.

Packaged in attractive, sturdy bindings using high-quality materials and paper, and unmatched in its depth and scope, *Colonial America* will undoubtedly serve as the definitive reference encyclopedia for the colonial period in American history for years to come. Thus, it is highly recommended for all high school and undergraduate libraries, and large public libraries serving interested general readers and researchers.—Vincent P. Tinerella, Coordinator of Electronic Reference Services, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb