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Alcohol and Drugs in North America: A Historical Encyclopedia is an updated version of the 2003 ABC-CLIO encyclopedia, Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History: An International Encyclopedia, edited by Jack S. Blocker Jr., David M. Fahey, and Ian R. Tyrrell. Several entries from the previous work have been revised and some have been omitted. Of the 256 total entries, 85 are completely new to this edition.

Alcohol and Drugs in North America: A Historical Encyclopedia provides a overview of the history of drugs and alcohol, primarily in the United States and Canada, including illegal drugs such as crystal meth and LSD, regulated legal drugs such as alcohol and tobacco, and unregulated legal drugs such as chocolate and energy drinks. It provides an alphabetical listing of entries as well as a “Guide to Related Topics” that arranges the entries by general topics such as “Government and National Groups,” “Laws and Law Enforcement,” “Treatment and Rehabilitation,” and more. There is also a Chronology listed starting from 1765 with “Bakers chocolate company begins in Dorchester, Massachusetts” to 2013 with “National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism scheduled for merger with the larger National Institute on Drug Abuse in October.”

Similar works include the Encyclopedia of Drugs, Alcohol, & Addictive Behavior published in 2008 and edited by Pamela Korsmeyer and Henry R. Kranzler, which boasts 545 entries including a deeper focus on foreign cultures and societies. What sets Alcohol and Drugs in North America: A Historical Encyclopedia apart is its geographic focus on North America.

The encyclopedia has several weaknesses. For example, while it does have an entry on beer and whiskies, it does not have a separate entry for bourbon, however bourbon can be found by looking in the Whiskies entry. It also does not include a separate entry on the history of the Kentucky Bourbon industry which is a glaring oversight for a work on the history of alcohol in North America. However, in the Whiskies entry there is one sentence that acknowledges that “Bourbon” is named after the original Bourbon County, Kentucky” (743).

Recommended for public and academic library collections.—Rachael Erod, Reference/Instruction Librarian, The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina, Charleston, South Carolina


There is no shortage of reference resources devoted to various aspects of the sporting world. Works covering issues like the Olympics, sports management, sports marketing, women in sports, and ethnicity in sports, to name a few