

Brazil Today: An Encyclopedia of Life in the Republic. Ed. by John J. Crocitti and Monique M. Vallance. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2012. 2 vols. acid free \$189 (ISBN 978-0-313-34672-9). Ebook available (978-313-34673-6), call for pricing.

Brazil's prominence on the global stage is on the rise. Its economic and political clout grows. The nation, which will play host to both the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Summer Olympics, will gain more attention as the sporting events draw closer. Despite Brazil's size and increasing importance, few general overviews of contemporary life in the country currently exist in English. *Brazil Today* sets out to remedy this. Co-edited by John J. Crocitti (*The Brazil Reader*) and Monique Vallance, *Brazil Today* provides readers with a comprehensive overview of all facets of contemporary Brazilian life from 1960 to the present.

The entries are arranged in alphabetical order by topic within two volumes. Each volume begins with a List of Entries to be found within the work. As both this list and the entries themselves are alphabetically arranged, this list seems redundant. More useful is the Topic Finder, which is also found at the start of each volume and arranges entries by topic. The first volume contains an introductory piece on contemporary Brazil, an introduction to Brazil's geography, and a chronology of Brazilian history from 1415 to the present.

The work is successful in covering an admirable assortment of topics, so that all aspects of modern-day life in Brazil receive coverage. There are entries on politicians, cultural figures, and important places and events. Each entry is signed by its author. When an entry mentions a person or subject that has received its own entry, bold-type is used to signify that such an entry exists. Entries conclude with a "See Also" list of additional entries that may merit attention and a list of "Suggested Readings."

Because many people contributed to this work, there is a lack of uniformity in writing style that can be aggravating at times. To take one small example, some authors use only Celsius to describe temperatures, while others provide temperature data in both Celsius and Fahrenheit. Most puzzling of all was the very first entry in volume one, which surprisingly suggests that the tropical state of Acre has an average temperature of 25 degrees Fahrenheit.

One of the strengths of *Brazil Today* is the amount of space dedicated to the geography of the country. Entries provide users with overviews on each state and each major city, and on geographical features that have shaped the nation. Also, an introduction to the country's geography is found at the start of volume one. Thus it is surprising that there are no maps to be found within either volume. The addition of maps would have made the work much more useful and usable. It is frustrating to read of places and not be able to quickly consult where they are in relation to other parts of the country.

Despite these flaws, the work does fill a void that currently exists for general reference sources related to Brazil. Larger public libraries and academic libraries hoping to expand their Latin American collections would do well to add

this. Institutions that have purchased similar ABC-CLIO title (*China Today, India Today*) may also want to consider purchasing this item.—*Sharon E. Reidt, Technical Services Specialist, Marlboro College Library, Marlboro, Vermont*

China at War: An Encyclopedia. Ed. by Xiaobing Li. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2012. 605 pages. Acid free. \$100.00. (ISBN: 978-1-59884-415-3). E-Book available (978-1-59884-416-0), call for pricing.

Few would argue with the proposition that China is a force to be reckoned with. Boasting the world's largest population and giving rise to one of its oldest civilizations, this nation has proved to be a formidable foe during wartime, much to the dismay of United States General Douglas MacArthur and the United Nations forces he commanded during the Korean Conflict. That alone makes this title a welcome addition to the reference literature on Asian military history, more so due to the absence of any similar material, although a number of narrative works on this topic are in print.

Four plus millennia of raids, revolutions, and rebellions are a lot to squeeze between two covers, but editor Li has done a commendable job of presenting the most compelling and significant "people, events, ideas, battles, and technologies in Chinese military history" (xvii). Coverage is necessarily broad based, with entries ranging from ancient times ("Great Wall," "Gunpowder") to the latest military technology ("Nuclear Program"). Interestingly, the scope here encompasses more than the purely martial, as literature (*The Art of War* by Sun Tzu), foreign relations (Uncle Sam's open door policy), social history ("Silk Road," individual dynasties) and geography ("Hong Kong") make appearances within these pages. Their inclusion is appropriate, as nothing occurs within a vacuum; these entries demonstrate that many disparate factors can, and do, influence the development of a nation's armed forces. All told, some 250 signed and cross-referenced articles are present, each concluding with a short bibliography of print works for further research. It should be noted at this point that emphasis is on land warfare; coverage of aerial combat is minimal and naval developments nonexistent.

Special features include an introductory essay, written by the editor, that gives the reader a bird's-eye view of China's military history. An appendix lists "Chinese Dynasties and Governments," while a Chronology presents a timeline of major battles and important developments of this country's armed forces. Lastly, a glossary of military terms/abbreviations and a bibliography of pertinent literature round out the volume.

Xiaobing Li was an apt choice for helming a project such as this. Currently a professor and Chair of the Department of History and Geography at the University of Central Oklahoma, he also holds the Directorship of the Western Pacific Institute, likewise at UCO. Additionally, Li has been widely published in his field, *A History of the Modern Chinese Army* (University Press of Kentucky, 2007) being a representative title. His experiences while serving in the People's Liberation

Army in China lend a personal perspective to his scholarship. The “Contributor’s List” reveals that the authors all have solid academic and/or scholarly credentials.

Well researched, clearly written, and presenting a unique topic, this work is strongly recommended for purchase by larger public libraries and academic institutions supporting geography or history curricula, as well as China or Asia studies.—*Michael F. Bemis, Independent Reference Book Reviewer*

Cold War: The Essential Reference Guide. Ed. by James R. Arnold and Roberta Wiener. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2012. 443 pages, acid free \$89 (ISBN 978-1-61069-003-4). Ebook available (978-1-61069-004-1), call for pricing.

One of the ironies of modern history is that the “Cold War” was much hotter than the 24-hour-news-covered conflicts since that time. Millions of people died in Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Afghanistan and the many smaller clashes of the East-West stare down.

A new book about the Cold War is welcome if for no other reason than to put history in perspective since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union. This single volume’s 85 interesting entries tell about a time when many world leaders rejected capitalism, and the possibility of nuclear war destroying civilization seemed much more likely than it does today. The Cuban Missile Crisis, the Berlin Airlift, the nuclear arms race, Josef Stalin, and other important subjects are included.

The guide suffers somewhat, however, in having so few entries, although it should be noted that the title does include the word “Essential.” Among the subjects not directly addressed are Iran, Nicaragua, Chile, Vo Nguyen Giap, Douglas McArthur, and Pope John Paul II. The index does help readers find references to many subjects that do not have their own entries. One of those is the Soviet Union itself, which has many indexed references, but none of them point to the decisive events of 1989-1991.

Besides the alphabetically organized entries about key individuals and events, there are 17 primary source documents and several essays, including one about whether Ronald Reagan brought the Cold War to its peaceful ending. A bibliography and a chronology are included, the latter of which does provide a terse review of those final years.

By comparison, the five-volume *Encyclopedia of the Cold War: A Political, Social, and Military History* (ABC-CLIO, 2008), edited by Spencer C. Tucker, has roughly 1,300 entries, scores of maps and 171 primary documents. Another work with which librarians may be familiar is *The Cold War, 1945–1991: Leaders and Other Important Figures* (Gale Research, 1992), edited by Benjamin Frankel. It focuses mainly on biographies but also has an extensive Cold War chronology. Having been published right after the Cold War ended, it no longer has the advantage of historical perspective.

Libraries that already own the Tucker encyclopedia probably do not need the Arnold and Wiener guide, but libraries that do not own Tucker and have tight space and tight

budgets should find the new book useful. It’s also worth having to update the Frankel work.—*Evan Davis, Librarian, Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, Indiana*

Daily Life Through American History in Primary Documents. Ed. by Randall M. Miller, Theodore J. Zeman, Francis J. Sicius, and Jolyon P. Girard. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Greenwood, 2012. 4 vols. acid free \$399 (ISBN 978-1-61069-032-4). Ebook available (978-1-61069-033-1), call for pricing.

Edited by four history professors, this multi-volume set purports to cover the grand sweep of American History, from the establishment of the Jamestown colony to the present. Yet the stated intent is not to give a grand, overall view, but rather a sharply focused one on “the daily habits and doings of people” (xiii). The primary resources used to present this angle are the usual suspects: letters, diaries, memoirs, newspaper articles, and speeches. There is great diversity in the voices heard here, including colonizers and colonized, immigrants and natives, slaves and free people, young and old, men and women. The four volumes are arranged chronologically, and within each volume there are chapters on domestic, economic, intellectual, political, recreational, and religious life. These chapters all contain a few pages of helpful background information before the excerpts from the featured primary sources. These source selections vary in size, but tend to be about a page in length, and are followed by a bibliographic citation for readers who may wish to further pursue investigation. Each individual volume also contains a “Historical Overview” of 15-20 pages that is well-written, accessible, and provides an excellent introduction to the time period covered.

A real strength of this set is the broad range of people, events, places, and time periods covered. Entries are quite entertaining as well as diverse. For example, the first volume, *The Colonial Period through the American Revolution*, contains “Dancing and Racial Mixing in the Taverns,” “Benjamin Franklin, ‘The Morals of Chess,’” “Arguments over a Smallpox Vaccine,” and “An Essay on Monarchy and Liberty.” The supplementary chronology in each volume provides a helpful context in which to place these wide-ranging entries. While there is no cumulative bibliography anywhere in the set, there is a rather extensive list of “Suggested Readings” at the end of Volume Four.

Although there are no glaring deficiencies with this set, some entries do appear in unexpected places. For example, while one would expect to find entries on cornhusking and sleigh rides in the chapter on “Recreational Life,” the entry on “A Public Execution of Pirates” in the same section is surprising. Also, the inclusion of some entries, such as the “Star Spangled Banner” and “Yankee Doodle” seems unnecessary. The sources themselves in this case are simply the words to these well-known songs, and the complete lyrics of each are easily accessible via an Internet search. The provided background material offered on these entries is scant and does not justify their inclusion here. Also, there are no cross references,