

***American Civil War: The Definitive Encyclopedia and Document Collection.*** Ed. by Spencer C. Tucker. Santa Barbara, Calif., ABC-CLIO, 2013. 6 vols. acid free \$625 (ISBN: 978-1-85109-677-0). E-book available (978-1-85109-682-4).

In 2000 ABC-CLIO published the five-volume *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History* that was lauded by historian James McPherson as a comprehensive reference work covering “every conceivable subject and significant person connected with the causes, course, and consequences of the war . . .” (xxv). Thirteen years later the publisher offers a new six-volume encyclopedia on the Civil War era prominently labeled as “definitive.” Editor and historian Spencer Tucker, who was associated with the earlier work as well as chief editor of the new one, believes this encyclopedia to be “the most comprehensive and accurate reference work on the Civil War available” (xlv). Whether this is the same as “definitive” is questionable. Historians continue to seek new perspectives and understandings of the people and events of the Civil War era and occasionally discover unexamined documents that may reveal something new. Even so, the new work surpasses the previous encyclopedia because of its more extensive breadth of essay topics and the bibliographic references to selected publications from the nineteenth century through the 2000s.

The new encyclopedia has 2,648 essays arranged alphabetically and accompanied by maps, photographs and illustrations, a detailed chronology, general bibliography, subject index, and a list of essays by categories, such as individuals, events, groups and organizations, places, ideas, and movements. The essays range from two paragraphs to several pages. Composed by a variety of academic and independent scholars, the entries are clear and informative and provide cross references to related topics. A large portion of the essays were written by editors Paul Pierpaoli, Jr. and Spencer Tucker. Each essay has references to selected publications for further reading. More than 30 percent of the entries focus on people, the largest single category. Coverage of people and topics is more extensive than in the earlier encyclopedia’s more than 1,600 essays. For example, topics that do not appear in the older work are the Union Army of Ohio, Confederate Department of Tennessee, Minnesota, Black Republicans, Black Codes, *Carte de Visite* (i.e. pocket sized photographs carried by soldiers), causes of the Civil War, Cavalry Tactics, Native Americans, US Medical Department, Reconstruction, Confederate officer John Herbert Kelley, and Union officer James Winning McMillan. Also, the new work has a lengthy entry on literature that focuses on the influence of literary works during prewar years until recent times. Writers and selected fiction, poetry, and memoirs are cited that reflect different perspectives and interpretations of the causes and experiences of the war.

This encyclopedia provides additional features, including lengthy sections explaining military ranks, honors, medals, and decorations bestowed on soldiers. Volume 6 is mainly devoted to 172 selected documents arranged

chronologically with informative, introductory background information. Most are excerpts from letters, memoirs, books, legal case decisions, and military reports reflecting both Union and Confederate perspectives. The new collection offers fewer documents than the 250 that were printed in the previous work by removing, for example, every southern state ordinance of succession except for the one from South Carolina, the first state to secede. Also, the new encyclopedia does not have the extensive lists of Union and Confederate officers, government officials, congressmen, and Civil War battlefield sites that appear in the earlier work.

The new encyclopedia will be valuable to students, scholars, and the general public and is highly recommended.—*David Lincove, History, Political Science, Public Affairs, Philosophy Librarian, Ohio State University Libraries*

***Asian Americans: An Encyclopedia of Social, Cultural, Economic, and Political History.*** By Xiaojian Zhao and Edward J.W. Park. Santa Barbara, Calif: Greenwood, 2014. 3 vols. acid free \$310 (ISBN: 978-1-59884-239-5). E-book available (978-1-59884-240-1), call for pricing.

*Asian Americans: An Encyclopedia of Social, Cultural, Economic, and Political History* is a three-volume reference work that provides approximately 600 comprehensive articles that cover a wide range of topics pertaining to Asian American studies. This was a daunting project for the editors Xiaojian Zhao and Edward J.W. Park to manage since the subject of Asian Americans is so broad and diverse, and they “recognize that the completion of such an undertaking is only one step to our ever-expanding knowledge of the Asian American experience” (xix).

The alphabetically arranged entries are written and signed by more than 200 scholars and the institutional affiliations of these contributors are listed in volume 3. Each volume contains the “List of Entries,” “Preface,” and six-page introduction, “Asian Americans in the Twenty-First Century,” that is rich with statistics about population, socioeconomic status, and education. Volume 1 includes a forty-eight-page comprehensive chronology that begins with the arrival of Asian groups to North America in 13,000 BC to 10,000 BC and ends with Yitang Zhang’s breakthrough prime number theorem in 2013. Volume 3 comprises a “Selected Bibliography” along with over fifty excerpts from many different legal acts, landmark cases, and other primary documents.

There are eighteen different Asian ethnicities represented and each group is unique with their specialized cultures and histories. Readers will find the most in-depth and lengthier entries about the Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese Americans. Even though the essays about the Bangladeshi, Cambodian, Lao, Pakistani, Taiwanese, Thai, and Tibetan Americans are not as extensive, they are still very illuminating. The Bhutanese Americans entry is the smallest with only one paragraph, and the Malaysian and Sri Lankan American articles are less than one page in length.

Some of the essays also address the shared experiences

and common themes among the groups. These include the “Asian American Movement (AAM),” “Asian Music in America,” “Asian Religions and Religious Practices in America,” and “Political Participation.” All the articles conclude with cross-references and a bibliography of print and online sources for further reading.

A major portion of this encyclopedia contains biographical entries about famous people like Connie Chung, Jhumpa Lahiri, Bruce Lee, Maya Lin, Yo-Yo Ma, and Tiger Woods. However, many of the biographies are about lesser known Asian American artists, athletes, historians, politicians, scientists, and writers. This encyclopedia would be much more functional if it had biographical, geographical, and topical indexes or finders because unless you know the name of the individual there is no way of discovering these prominent figures.

A great supplement to this source is Huping Ling and Allan Austin’s two-volume work *Asian American History and Culture: An Encyclopedia* (Sharpe Reference, 2010). It incorporates information about many of the same Asian American groups and is organized alphabetically by group ethnicity. There is a fair amount of overlap between the two sources, yet Ling and Austin’s encyclopedia could be useful in filling in some of the gaps with the Hmong, Malaysian, Singaporean, and Sri Lankan Americans. Both encyclopedias also chose to include information about the native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islander people although Zhao and Park state, “To lump Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders together with Asian Americans is to marginalize these groups of people” (xix).

Overall, the editors of *Asian Americans: An Encyclopedia of Social, Cultural, Economic, and Political History* did an outstanding job compiling this reliable and significant work, and it is highly recommended for both academic and public libraries.—Megan Coder, Associate Librarian, State University of New York, New Paltz

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**Culture Wars in America: An Encyclopedia of Issues, Viewpoints and Voices.** 2nd ed. Ed. by Roger Chapman and James Ciment. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2013. 3 vols. alkaline \$349 (ISBN: 978-0-7656-8302-1). E-book available, call for pricing.

*Culture Wars in America* is a three-volume reference set with a stellar list of contributors from well-known universities. This is the second edition, updated for the Obama years. Broadly speaking, the overall content surrounds politics, education, law, various issues in popular culture, current and historical ideologies and movements, the media, and social and moral issues.

There has always been an attempt to define the social and political issues of American society. These books attempt to define these “culture wars” without “a labeling and classification of issues that suggests a moralistic either/or sensibility. Presenting players as pairs of polar opposites oversimplifies issues and fails to acknowledge their nuances and complexities” (xxvii).

The title and introduction are needlessly esoteric. The editors should have been more specific about the book’s intended purpose in the introduction. The meaning of “Culture Wars in America” may not be apparent to the average high school or early undergraduate student.

Information is easy to find because of the book’s well-organized front matter. A concise contents list by page number is in each volume. The “Topic Finder” is a hierarchical arrangement of topics within the three volumes. Volume One and volume 2 are arranged with alphabetized entries from A to Z. The entries are readable and appropriate for high school and college students. Volume 3 is Documents, which includes speeches, legal briefs, testimonies and official statements on topics like health care, climate change, and abortion. These items are timely and well chosen from significant dates in the history of the issue. The useful “Further Reading” lists at the end of each entry are a list of relevant sources, mostly books and articles.

These books will need to be replaced with a new edition in 3–4 years. At this price point, a combination of other resources, especially websites, may be a better bet. For example, the federal government’s website [usa.gov](http://usa.gov), organizational, and news websites provide much of this information in a very timely way at the same depth. Many opposing viewpoint databases serve a similar purpose as this set of books.—Terry Darr, Library Director, Loyola Blakefield in Towson, Maryland

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**Encyclopedia of Cultivated Plants: From Acacia to Zinnia.** Ed. by Christopher Cumo. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2013. 3 vols. acid free \$294 (ISBN: 978-1-59884-774-1). E-book available (978-1-59884-775-8), call for pricing.

The *Encyclopedia of Cultivated Plants: From Acacia to Zinnia* is an interdisciplinary exploration of the various relationships between plants and people that have arisen over the course of human history. As civilizations discovered desirable properties of their local flora, they developed techniques to improve these properties in successive generations of the plants while increasing and controlling the products yielded at harvest. Aesthetic, culinary, and medicinal properties of plants have also made them a focus of art, literature, and music.

Cultivated varieties, including crops grown for food, ornamental plants cultivated for aesthetic qualities, and trees harvested for timber, are listed by common name. A few entries are cross-listed when there is some variation in the common name, and the index provides additional coverage. Entries typically describe the botanical features of the plant, its history as a cultivar, the specific attributes of the plant that affect how and why it is grown and used, and its vulnerability to disease and pests. The entries vary considerably in focus: for example, “tobacco” describes the plant’s interaction with human health and the world economy, while “rosebush” focuses on the symbolism roses have had for different cultures. This is a merit for an interdisciplinary work because it allows the reader to understand the most distinctive characteristics of a given plant, which may emanate from the study of botany,