
This two-volume encyclopedia edited by James S. Baugess and Abbe Debolt is a comprehensive overview of important aspects including individuals, groups, movements, and ideas popular in the 1960s. This encyclopedia includes entries contributed by many scholars from the Ivy League, Europe, and Canada. The editors state in the preface that this encyclopedia is designed to provide readers with knowledge of the issues, movements, and American history of the 1960s. The editors also state that one major difference between this encyclopedia and others of its kind is that where previous encyclopedias have stressed “the life and times of the New Left and the eccentricities of the period” this encyclopedia discusses both counter culture and traditional culture (xxix).

The set includes almost five hundred entries and is categorized alphabetically. Although alphabetical categorizing is acceptable, it would be nice to see an encyclopedia categorized by subject, like music or politics, which might make it easier to browse. There is also a list of chronological events users can use as an overview at the beginning of each volume along with the table of contents. Although the chronological list is not exhaustive, it does highlight key events that happened in the 1960s. Topics range from pop culture events like American Bandstand to serious political events like the Vietnam War. Entries vary from one paragraph to a few pages in length. Some entries are accompanied by images however all are in black and white. This is slightly disappointing since some of the images on the cover are in color.

Overall, the Encyclopedia of the Sixties succeeds in its attempt to serve as an academic tool about important aspects of the 1960s by providing concise and exciting descriptions of events and issues making readers want to learn more. Although there is a slight gap in the existing literature that this encyclopedia fills with its extensive coverage, there have been other encyclopedias about the sixties that have taken a different approach on the subject. Chris Strooder’s The Encyclopedia of Sixties Cool: A Celebration of the Grooviest People, Events, and Artifacts of the 1960s (Santa Monica Press, 2007), takes a less academic approach when describing the era. This encyclopedia includes a less comprehensive overview of the sixties with two hundred and fifty entries but does include a “what happened this day” calendar which users may find interesting. Although there is some overlap in Strooder’s encyclopedia there are also references to movies and artifacts not mentioned in Encyclopedia of the Sixties.

One of the major strengths of this encyclopedia is that it includes an annotated bibliography allowing users to do further research and find primary sources if they wish to do so. Brief annotations can be found at the end of the second volume while bibliographies can be found at the end of each entry. Following the annotated bibliography, users can read about the authors and contributors or look through the index. Since this encyclopedia is to be used as an academic tool, it would be a great addition to reference collections in academic libraries.—Carla Wilson Buss, Curriculum Materials & Education Librarian, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia