

defining exactly what it is. It is recommended for high school and undergraduate academic libraries and large public libraries.—*Joann E. Donatiello, Population Research Librarian, Donald E. Stokes Library, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey*

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***Battleground: Government and Politics.*** Ed. by Kathleen Uradnik, Lori A. Johnson, and Sara Hower. Battleground Series. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Greenwood, 2011. 2 vols. acid free \$189 (ISBN: 978-0-313-34313-1). E-book available (978-0-313-34314-8), call for pricing.

This new addition to Greenwood's *Battleground Series* provides brief contemporary overviews and analysis of a wide range of contentious political and social issues, primarily as they pertain to the United States. In two volumes (630 pages), *Battleground: Government and Politics* includes a total of seventy-five entries along with a short appendix, selected bibliography, and index.

Entries appear alphabetically throughout the volumes, but to aid in identifying themes, the front matter contains a "Guide to Related Topics," which groups issues together under broad category headings such as "Civil Rights," "Economic Controversies," "Health and Welfare," and "National Security." All of the ever-popular hot button issues such as "Abortion," "Death Penalty," "Same-Sex Marriage and Civil Unions," and "Universal Health Care" are included, as are many other topics of current interest, like "Amending Power," "Cyberterrorism," "Living Wage," and "Veteran's Rights and Needs." Each entry begins with a general introductory paragraph or section (placing the issue in context, defining key terms, etc.) and then proceeds to address and explore related questions and sub-topics. Suggested books and websites for further reading are given for each entry. Appendixes 1 and 2 contain lists of pertinent court case citations and statute citations respectively, and the selected bibliography is organized into fourteen overarching themes seen throughout the work.

It should be noted that this book is clearly targeted at high school and lower-level undergraduates, or "the young adult reader," as it is laid out in the introduction. The Battleground Series in general claims to provide readers with "balanced, in-depth tools to serve as a launching pad for obtaining a thorough understanding of all sides of those debates that continue to provoke, anger, challenge, and divide us all" (xv). The key phrase here would definitely be "launching pad" as the entries, at least in the book being reviewed here from the series, are quite concise (as opposed to in-depth), and any thorough understanding would have to be obtained through other means. That is not to say there is no value in such works. As an academic librarian who works with scores of first year students each semester in selecting and developing research paper topics, this type of reference book is often one of the first places I point to, being sure to emphasize the suggested further readings. The next step might be to look for a related and current volume from the Contemporary World Issues (ABC-Clio) or Opposing Viewpoints (Greenhaven Press) series to further explore an issue.

As previously mentioned, the entries here are brief, but for the intended audience and purpose, this is to be expected. It is the breadth of issues covered, along with currency, that make this reference work stand out. There are plenty of other, issue-specific, reference books (too many to list here), many with primary sources and more substantial appendixes, available to follow-up with, but this one would make a perfectly good starting point or topic-prompter.—*Todd J. Wiebe, Research & Instruction Librarian, Van Wylen Library, Hope College, Holland, Michigan*

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***The Civil War Era and Reconstruction: An Encyclopedia of Social, Political, Cultural, and Economic History.*** By Mary Ellen Snodgrass. Armonk, N.Y.: Sharpe Reference, 2011. 2 vols. acid free \$249 (ISBN: 978-0-7656-8257-4). E-book available, call for pricing.

*The Civil War Era and Reconstruction: An Encyclopedia of Social, Political, Cultural, and Economic History* by Mary Ellen Snodgrass presents a unique point of view on the Civil War and Reconstruction. The difference between this piece of writing and others in the genre is that this encyclopedia is less focused on the military and war efforts and more focused on the social, political, cultural, and economic efforts during this era as the title suggests. Mary Ellen is the author of many books; this is her first work specifically about the Civil War era and Reconstruction.

While there are many books written about the Civil War and Reconstruction there are few encyclopedias that attempt to provide an overview of the era in the way that this encyclopedia does. Some address the era from a military stance including the *Encyclopedia of American History (Volume 5: Civil War and Reconstruction, 1856–1869)* edited by Gary B. Nash (Facts on File, 2003); others from a racial/ethnic standpoint such as Richard Zuczek's *Encyclopedia of the Reconstruction Era* (2 volumes), a part of the Greenwood Milestones in African American History Series (Greenwood, 2006).

A Topic Finder section is included in the front with the topic headings such as "African Americans," "Arts, Culture, Recreation," "Cities, States, Regions, Features," "Education," "Family, Community, Society," "Historical Events, Periods, Holidays," "Native Americans," "Organizations and Institutions (Non-Governmental)," "Religion and Religious Groups," "Science, Technology, Medicine," and "Women and Gender."

Entries in this work consist of a wide gamut of topics, including "Buffalo Soldiers," "Freedman's Bureau," "Underground Railroad," "Ku Klux Klan," "Art and Architecture," "Cook's Tours," "Horse Racing," "Recreation and Amusements," "Colleges and Universities," "Cereals and Grains," "Food and Food Preservation," "Chicago Fire," "Diseases and Epidemics," and "Clothes and Fashion" among others. Black and white photographs, maps, paintings, and documents accompany several of the entries.

Biographical information is provided, as expected, on key figures such as Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson, and Ulysses S. Grant. Additional biographies include notable