

SOURCES

Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). The short single-volume set (338 pages), offers the brevity in its coverage that high school researchers and general interest readers will enjoy. The authors declare that the encyclopedia “was written for a wide audience, to include lay people, students, academics, and policymakers” (xvi), and the writing and contents are accessible and jargon-free but lack the depth that academics would desire. Editors F. Erik Brooks and Glenn L. Starks have both published works on the history of the U.S. Government and HBCUs and last collaborated on *How Your Government Really Works: A Topical Encyclopedia of the Federal Government* (Greenwood, 2008). The encyclopedia is arranged to provide a sequential history of HBCUs, divided in six major time periods such as “Reconstruction through 1899,” with each featuring a well-researched introductory essay providing the context of the development of HBCUs. One page entries on individual HBCUs are arranged according to the date they were founded, with twenty to thirty schools included in each section. This organization helps to contextualize the founding of the school, but there could be more about the unique history of individual HBCUs. The content for the entries on the individual HBCUs offers some information about academic strengths and institutional histories but are somewhat limited as “these histories were primarily obtained from each school’s official website” (xvi). The reviewer checked institutional histories in the encyclopedia with the websites of fifteen HBCUs and found that the entries in the encyclopedia were very similar to the history pages on the colleges’ websites.

There are also sections with primary documents such as relevant legislation and laws and a list of websites and DVDs about HBCUs. The “Website and DVD Resources” section provides references to resources that are mostly general interest and does not have the depth of directories of other works on HBCUs. The “Notable Alumni” section, a major portion of the encyclopedia at sixty pages, provides a comprehensive list but is far too heavy on professional athletes, including many who were not major players. As a consequence, the strength of the alumni section loses its value as a browsable index of accomplishments of alumni.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities: An Encyclopedia is an affordable addition to the surprisingly few books on HBCUs. *Historically Black Colleges and Universities: A Reference Handbook* (ABC-Clio, 2003) is a recent title with mostly similar contents, without an in-depth alumni list, but does have a more comprehensive annotated directory of relevant organizations and sources. Although not a reference book, *America’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities: A Narrative History* by Bobby L. Lovett (Mercer University Press, 2011) is a well-researched and extremely readable history of HBCUs that is encyclopedic in its coverage and could serve as a more appropriate reference text for universities or colleges.

Although much of the content in *Historically Black Colleges and Universities: An Encyclopedia* is freely available online, the aggregate context of both the short essays next to histories of the HBCUs presents the reader with all the information he or

she would need to begin to understand the history of HBCUs. Recommended for public and school libraries.—*Shannon Pritting, Interim Coordinator of Reference, SUNY Oswego*

India Today: An Encyclopedia of Life in the Republic. Ed. by Arnold P. Kaminsky and Roger D. Long. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-Clio, 2011. 2 vols. acid free \$189 (ISBN: 978-0-313-37462-3). E-book available (978-0-313-37463-0), call for pricing.

This two-volume set edited by Arnold P. Kaminsky (California State University) and Roger D. Long (Eastern Michigan University) “seeks to place India’s evolution since independence in 1947 in its historical context and to demonstrate the persistence of tradition in the shaping of modern political, social, economic, and artistic forms” (ix).

The 251 entries are arranged alphabetically and are written and signed by the eighty-three international contributors. There is a topic finder in both volumes that organizes articles into fifteen browsable categories, such as “Diplomacy and Relations with Other Nations and Regions,” “Medicine and Health,” “Politics and Parties,” and “Religion.” The essays vary in length from a half page to ten pages, with the more in-depth articles addressing broad subjects like the “Economy,” “Environment,” “Literature,” and “Population.” Each entry concludes with a list of further reading and cross-references that direct the user to related topics. Readers can also consult an extensive sixty-four page selected bibliography in volume 2.

As the title of this source suggests, the articles provide information and statistics on the current situation in India, along with many topical entries on matters like 1984’s “Bhopal Gas Disaster,” “Bollywood,” “Election of 2009,” and the “Look East Policy.” Many of the essays also refer to India’s history because “an understanding of India today is impossible without reference to its colonial past” (ix). In addition, volume 1 contains a useful twenty page “Chronology” that highlights some of the most significant events of India’s history from August 1947 to May 2011.

Stanley Wolpert’s four-volume *Encyclopedia of India* (Scribner, 2006) is much larger in scope and has a greater emphasis on India’s comprehensive history. However, there are some overlapping topics between the two encyclopedias and each also contains entries from Kaminsky, Long, and the editorial adviser, Damodar R. SarDesai. *India Today: An Encyclopedia of Life in the Republic* would serve as an excellent supplement to Wolpert’s since it addresses a lot more of India’s current events, culture, and politics.

India Today: An Encyclopedia of Life in the Republic is the only encyclopedia of its kind to explore the development of this diverse and vast country from the beginning of its independence to the present. This encyclopedia is geared towards the general reader and is highly recommended for all libraries, especially those specializing in South Asian history.—*Megan Coder, Associate Librarian, State University of New York, New Paltz*