

Reference Books

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Editor

American Revolutionary War: A Student Encyclopedia. Ed. by Gregory Fremont-Barnes and Richard Alan Ryerson. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-Clio, 2006. 5 vols. acid free \$485 (ISBN 1-85109-839-9).

[Ed. note: Also see the review of *The Encyclopedia of the American Revolutionary War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, ed. by Gregory Fremont-Barnes and Richard Alan Ryerson (ABC-Clio, 2006), page 87.]

All students in the United States study the American Revolution as part of their history or social studies curriculum. It is arguably the most important historical event and period in our country's history. While most reference texts dedicated to this topic have a college and adult audience, the editors of this encyclopedia aim to educate younger students about the war and this pivotal period in American and world history. *American Revolutionary War* covers the Revolutionary period from the end of the French and Indian War in 1763 to the birth of the United States and the ratification of the Constitution in 1789. Its scope includes coverage of topics that will allow students to view the Revolutionary period as a continuation of the disintegration of the British Empire and imperialism, the role of other nations in the American Revolution, and the part that Native American tribes played in the war.

Although the editors attempted to provide a balance to the military aspects of the war by providing entries on art and music of the period, for example, the encyclopedia consists mostly of military and biographical entries. With more than eight hundred individual entries, it is no surprise to find entries for "Benjamin Franklin" and "Battle of Trenton." However, many topics are included that go beyond the obvious, such as colonial doctor and soldier Edward Hand and African American poet Phyllis Wheatley. Every battle and campaign of the Revolution is included, as well as entries for dozens of officers. Two highlights are the longer essays included in the first volume, "Origins of the American Revolution" and "Military Operations of the American Revolutionary War, 1775–1781," which provide much-needed context. Each volume includes a comprehensive alphabetical listing of entries and several general maps; specific maps are also included in each volume.

American Revolutionary War also contains the requisite table of contents, cross references throughout, and cumulative index in the last volume, but the most unique aspect, which should appeal to students and teachers alike, is the more than 150 reprinted primary documents. There are the usual suspects such as the *Declaration of Independence* and the *Bill of Rights*. Students will also find letters from loyalists and patriots, as well as speeches from important figures such as George Washington and Benjamin Franklin. Each document includes a concise introduction for identification information

and context. Some of these documents are not hard to locate when conducting research at the college level, but having them in one place should be beneficial for younger students. Librarians and teachers alike will find a very well-written article entitled "How to Read Primary Sources" extremely useful for the instruction of historical research. Two other pieces, "How to Read Maps" and "How to Read Charts and Graphs," will also provide guidance. The encyclopedia is rounded out with almost nineteen pages of bibliography, a great place to start for any student of history.

American Revolutionary War: A Student Encyclopedia should be compared with another version of the same material, *The Encyclopedia of the American Revolutionary War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, also published by ABC-Clio and the work of the same editors (see review below). *American Revolutionary War* will be most useful for high school and public libraries, while *The Encyclopedia of the American Revolutionary War* may appeal to academic libraries. For a more compact reference work, academic, public, and high school libraries should consider the *Historical Dictionary of Revolutionary America* (Scarecrow, 2005).—Michelle S. Millet, *Information Literacy Coordinator, Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas*

Cities of the Middle East and North Africa: A Historical Encyclopedia. Ed. by Michael R. T. Dumper and Bruce E. Stanley. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-Clio, 2006. 425p. alkaline \$95 (ISBN 1-57607-919-8).

Cities of the Middle East and North Africa is a truly unique and fascinating resource for historical, socioeconomic, and cultural information on the major cities of the North African and Arab worlds. Including cities both ancient and modern, this volume discusses more than five thousand years of urbanization and development and facilitates research on individual localities as well as allowing comparative and cross-cultural analysis of the entire region. Given the great interest in the Middle East and North Africa today, this volume is both timely and prescient.

The overriding theoretical premise of this volume, in the words of editors Dumper and Stanley, is that "Cities need to be brought back into the analysis of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)" (xi). The editors contend that urban life "drives the economy, politics, and social development of this disparate region" (xi). Dumper and Stanley both specialize in urbanization and the Middle East, and their interest in these areas is apparent throughout the encyclopedia. They have relied on a limited number of expert contributors, authoring more than half of the articles themselves. This permits a certain uniformity of tone and yet allows flexibility in the contents of each section. While it might have been interesting to introduce diversity in the choice of contributors—particularly for the entries on ancient cities—the uniformity offers an opportunity for clear comparison of different cities, cultures, and regions.

The encyclopedia is arranged in alphabetical order by city. Each signed entry includes population information and a short summary of the article. The main text generally con-