
Jim Crow: A Historical Encyclopedia of the American Mosaic is essentially an abridged edition of the editors’ earlier two-volume The Jim Crow Encyclopedia published by Greenwood Press in 2008. The 275 entries in the latter edition have been pared down to 104 “geared toward the needs of high school students” and selected to “focus on the most important people, events, and institutions involved in the creation, maintenance, and eventual dismembering of Jim Crow” (xv).

The subtitle “American Mosaic” suggests more than the abridgement delivers. Coverage of “the American mosaic” is more fully treated in the original Jim Crow Encyclopedia which, for example, includes articles such as “Asian Americans,” “Japanese Internment,” “Bureau of Indian Affairs,” “Native Americans,” “Hispanics/Latinos,” and “Jews in the South,” all absent from Jim Crow: A Historical Encyclopedia of the American Mosaic. Such attention as the abridgment pays to “the American mosaic” is mostly subsumed under broader categories such as “Eugenics,” reprinted from the earlier edition, and in overview articles addressing Jim Crow in states in which segregation was the norm and which included a significant population of other minorities as for example Native Americans in North Carolina and Mexicans in Texas.

Random spot checking indicates that the abridged edition by and large reprints the original articles as published in 2008. Save for minor differences here noted these checked articles are identical: “Confederate Flag,” “Health Care,” “Nadir of the Negro” (One additional, not current, citation for “Further Reading” is in the abridged edition), “Red Summer,” and “Wells-Barnett, Ida B.” (Wells-Barnett’s inclusive dates are in the 2008 article’s title and a black and white portrait reproduction is in the abridged version).

Jim Crow: A Historical Encyclopedia of the American Mosaic includes more black and white illustrations than does its predecessor and has a short section not found in the latter of five primary source documents reprinted in whole or in part. Oddly, not numbered among this section of primary source documents is the excerpt from Berea College v. Kentucky, 1908, pp. 1–3, 10–11 which is included in the “Berea College v. Kentucky” article in the Jim Crow Encyclopedia but not in the abridged edition’s otherwise identical entry. Minor rewriting in the “Introduction” and an updating of websites in the concluding “Selected Bibliography” further distinguish Jim Crow: A Historical Encyclopedia of the American Mosaic from the Jim Crow Encyclopedia.

Although The Greenwood Encyclopedia of African American Civil Rights: from Emancipation to the Twenty-First Century 2 vols. (Greenwood, 2003), itself a revised and expanded version of the earlier Encyclopedia of African-American Civil Rights (Greenwood, 1992), shares many of the same people, events, and organizations among its 900 entries and 120 primary source documents its focus is on the actions taken to achieve civil rights for African Americans. In contrast, both editions of the Jim Crow encyclopedias have as their central purpose a historical introduction to the pernicious system of discriminatory laws created to segregate and disenfranchise African Americans. Especially useful in this regard are historical summary articles such as, for example, these essays (identical in both editions): “Black Codes,” “Disenfranchise-ment,” “Lynching,” “Prisons,” and “Sundown Towns.” These summaries complement The Greenwood Encyclopedia of African American Civil Rights by giving students the historical context for the centuries-long civil rights struggle.

Libraries that already own The Jim Crow Encyclopedia need not acquire Jim Crow: A Historical Encyclopedia of the American Mosaic. Libraries that own neither encyclopedia should consider whether or not the abridged edition is sufficient to meet their needs while weighing the greater cost of the original 2-volume work that remains in print.—Sally Moffitt, Bibliographer and Reference Librarian for Anthropology, History, Philosophy, Political Science; Africana Studies, Asian Studies, Judaic Studies, Latin American Studies, Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; Cohen Library Enrichment Collection Langsam Library, University of Cincinnati, Ohio


Over forty years ago, Alfred Crosby published The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural consequences of 1492 (ABC-Clío, 1973), dissecting the many biologic and economic changes resulting from Christopher Columbus’s voyages to America. Dr. Cumo has built on this and created this quick reference work, which adds to and updates information on plants, animals and diseases which moved from the Old World to the New or vice versa. The scope of the volume also incorporates more modern “Columbian exchange” occurrences, such as the Irish Potato Famine and the Slave Trade and expands to discuss worldwide examples. The alphabeti-cal arrangement and index provide easy access to information in 106 well written articles. Articles follow a standard format, divided into several sections. One section discusses the origins of the disease, insect or food, either Old or New World, and summarizes the documented appearance of the item in literature or letters. For each disease, an explanatory paragraph on its symptoms, dissemination, vaccines and outcomes furnishes a brief background and overview. Another section covers the Columbian Exchange(s), with such data as what group was first to carry it to the other World; this also includes alternative, often competing, theories of the movement, when multiple scenarios have been proposed over the years. In addition, some “old legends” and misinform-ation are touched on and corrected.

The second edition of this work has been expanded to four volumes and has increased its coverage greatly. Although the editors state clearly that the work is not meant to be comprehensive, it does provide an excellent, and general, overview of religion within American culture. Each volume, in many ways, can stand alone, but together they provide a wonderful introduction to the state of religion in the United States and its influence on American culture.

Volume 1 focuses on ethnicity, institutions, and communities. The broad topics include African American religions, Asian American religious communities, Buddhism in America, Catholicism in America, Hinduism in America, Islam in America, Judaism in America, Latina/Latino religious communities, Native American religions and politics, New Age, new religious traditions, Orthodox Christianity, and Protestantism in America. Under each major topic are from four to six related articles. For example, under the section on Asian American religious communities are separate entries for Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Pacific Islander, and South Asian religious communities in America. Under New Age are shorter articles on channeling, goddess spirituality, New Age bestsellers, Raëlian Movement, Whiteshamanism, and Wicca. Thus, the full range of organized religion is covered with the exception of groups such as Unitarian-Universalists, atheists, and humanists. Many of the topics from this work, especially on specific religions, are covered in a variety of other resources such as the Encyclopedia of Religion in America (CQ Press, 2010) which provide greater historical depth. The strengths of the articles in the current set are their currency and their specificity, especially as related to popular expression of religion in the United States.

Volume 2 covers broad, general topics that are not covered in other encyclopedias of religion in the United States. These topics include the body, death, generations, material culture, popular culture, popular theologies, public theologies and political culture, ritual and performance, sacred space, sacred time, science, sexuality, and violence. These general articles and the more specific entries associated with them are among the more interesting readings within the work. The entries are as varied as Asian body practices (such as T’ai Chi), piercing, autopsies, generation X, religion in the news, evil in the twentieth century, feminisms, tourism, shopping malls, the fourth of July—called “the most hallowed of days” in the “calendar of American civil religion,” (708)—evolution, masturbation, and lynching. While providing interesting reading, there are also idiosyncrasies, such as the exclusion of yoga and Reiki from Asian body practices.

Volume 3 is the most difficult to characterize since it represents a hodgepodge of information that, while interesting, seem supplementary. It includes sections on tradition, diversity, and popular expression each of which includes articles of substantial length. Tradition includes articles such as “Religion after 9/11: An Ambiguous Legacy” and “The Sex Abuse Scandal in the Roman Catholic Church.” Under Diversity are articles such as “Latina and Latino Muslim Religious Cultures,” “Interfaith Marriage from Colonial Times to the Present,” and “The New Atheism.” In the section on Popular Expressions can be found articles on “Paranormal America,” “Religion in Prison,” and “Travel and Religion.”

The final volume provides more than eighty primary documents from throughout American history. The first document is “Privileges and Prerogatives Granted by Their Catholic Majesties to Christopher Columbus (1492)” and the most recent is President Obama’s first inaugural address. In between are a wide variety of documents from the Maryland Toleration Act to an excerpt from McGuffey’s Reader, from the notice of Georgia’s secession from the union to Ronald Reagan’s Evil Empire speech. This volume also provides a compiled bibliography of works cited in all the entries and a comprehensive index.

Comprised of the work of over 170 contributors, this set displays a remarkable consistency of tone and style and provides a marvelous and very interesting discourse on the place and role of religion in American life and culture. It covers historically relevant overviews while also delving into specific subject areas. Thus, it will be an excellent addition to most libraries but especially for academic collections that support courses in American history, religion, and popular culture.—Gregory A. Crawford, Interim Director, School of Humanities, Penn State Harrisburg, Middletown, Pennsylvania


The Sage Encyclopedia of Educational Technology is an intelligent attempt to update and contextualize knowledge about the multifarious world of educational technology. Editor J. Michael Spector has broadly defined educational technology...