Encyclopedia of Major League Baseball Clubs (Review)

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These two sets cover the social, political, and military history of the American War of Independence. The A–Z entries focus on prominent personalities, key battles, and significant cultural and political developments in the time period from the end of the French and Indian War (Seven Years’ War) to the establishment of George Washington as the first president. More than 50 black-and-white maps, mostly depicting battles and military campaigns, provide a sound geographic orientation for the user (the maps are identical in each volume).

Troop locations and movement are depicted, as are precise locations where famous figures were killed. Additionally, black-and-white illustrations are liberally sprinkled throughout both sets, and many of them, like the maps, are period pieces, lending a flavor of the era. Each set ends with a comprehensive bibliography of about 20 pages and a glossary defining more than 100 words and terms (barbette, redoubt, smoothbore), many of them peculiar to the entire period.

Both sets contain the same two introductory essays on the origins and military operations of the American Revolution. Like the entries in the body of both encyclopedias, they are followed by a list of bibliographic references as well as a see also category referring users to specific entries within each set. The concise and well-written entries in the two versions of the encyclopedia contain identical text—the student version simply has around 200 fewer entries, mostly for relatively less-important skirmishes and individuals. The contributors are an international mixture of history professors, independent scholars, and military historians. Each encyclopedia set contains a fifth volume comprised of primary documents. The depth and breadth of the material here should satisfy any scholar of the period. Sources begin with a sample from “Cato’s Letters” (1721), a set of newspaper essays written by British Whigs about the true nature of democracy, and extend to the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, a product of bipartisan conflict in the fledgling U.S. government that laid the groundwork for later debates about the balance of power between states and the central government. In between are gems like Paul Revere’s own account of his famous ride, British General William Howe’s military campaign strategy for 1776 as described in a personal letter, battle reports, the texts of treaties and speeches, and the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. As a whole, these documents are an excellent complement to the A–Z entries and can be just as useful to the novice as to the experienced researcher.

Overall, the student version of the encyclopedia is a little different than the main encyclopedia. In addition to having fewer entries and a more open-looking design, it offers a student-centered resource area containing a categorical index, a list of preapproved scholarly Web sites, and a brief section on how to conduct effective historical research, including the use of primary sources and maps. Though not specifically stated, it seems geared toward libraries serving high-school students and college undergraduates. Academic libraries would be better served by the main set, as it is more comprehensive. —Michael Toska

Ya/C: American Revolutionary War —The student version of this encyclopedia has features designed for high-schoolers. MEQ.

always been positive and at times have been extremely unfriendly. This encyclopedia takes a long look at the people, events, controversies, and issues that have made up the foreign relations between the two countries for the last 220 years. More than 400 entries cover people (rulers of both countries, military leaders, missionaries, and others); treaties; battles; places; and events. Entries also cover Taiwan and events involving Taiwan and the U.S. since the division of the two governments. Chinese names are in Pinyin romanization, so readers will be directed in the text to the Jiang Jieshi entry instead of Chiang Kai-shek, the person many Americans know as China’s late Nationalist ruler. There is an extensive three-page comparison table between the Pinyin and Wade-Giles romanization systems that shows the relationship between the two.

Appendices list American chiefs of diplomatic missions to China and Chinese mission chiefs to the U.S. The bibliography of primary and secondary sources features books by, among others, Zhigigniew Brzezinski, Dean Rusk, and Theodore White, who also have entries written on them in the encyclopedia. A brief chronology and basic maps of China and Taiwan provide readers with some help in placing the events described in the encyclopedia.

This is a perfect primer on Chinese-American foreign relations for those wanting a brief introduction. There is not a similar text on the market, and the contributors have done a good job of distilling the sources used to write the articles. A worthwhile purchase for university undergraduate collections as well as public libraries with interested populations. —Steve Stratton


Professional baseball is not only a competitive sport but a big business as well. After reading this encyclopedia, one will know why—the sport is based on earnings, rankings, politics, and the bottom line. Editor Riess and 32 contributors provide a glimpse into the historical, cultural, political, and economic impact of major league baseball clubs in the U.S. from their beginnings in 1876 to the present. In two volumes (the first covering the National League and the second the American League), 30 clubs are discussed, from the classic Cincinnati Reds to the newcomer Devil Rays in Tampa Bay. Entries, arranged alphabetically in each volume by team, average about 20 pages in length and include an overview and history of the club; black-and-white photos; player, team, and club stats; and a bibliography. The text is laden with historical and cultural facts about the cities, the players, and social life in the U.S. An important focus is the war way, Prohibition, player strikes, politics, and commercialization have affected the sport and the clubs. Although quick, factual data is easy to glean from various index entries and statistical charts, users will benefit by reading entire club entries.

Seventeen appendices highlight season standings; attendance (total, daily average, rankings by club); team profits and dividends; salaries; ballparks; and more. An index of personal, league, and club names is found in volume 2. An extensive bibliography is also included. Riess provides an introduction highlighting the history and business of baseball, including baseball’s beginnings with the New York Knickerbockers in 1845; Philadelphia’s Shibe Park, the first fully modern ballpark; the Negro Leagues; and the pre-, inter-, and postwar baseball eras.

This set is remarkably similar to The Encyclopedia of Major League Baseball Team Histories, edited by Peter Bjarkman (Meckler, 1990). The advantage of the current title is 16 more years of history. Recommended for academic libraries with sports programs and all libraries with an interest in professional baseball. —Sue Polanka