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Anti-Immigration in the United States: A Historical Encyclopedia [book review]

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Arnold, Kathleen R. *Anti-Immigration in the United States: A Historical Encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2011. ABC-CLIO eBook Collection. Web. 19 Mar 2012.

Consider *Anti-Immigration in the United States: A Historical Encyclopedia* a newer, narrower, more explicitly academic take on a well-covered topic among reference resources. Since James Ciment's seminal, four-volume *Encyclopedia of American Immigration* published in 2001, there has been a variety of encyclopedias published focusing on the United States and immigration. Most recently, 2010 brought another *Encyclopedia of American Immigration* (unrelated to the previously mentioned work of the same name) edited by Carl L. Bankston and intended for use by the general public and high school/college undergraduates.

Anti-Immigration in the United States takes a different approach. Editor Kathleen Arnold and contributors—mainly professors, independent scholars, and graduate students from a range of disciplines—bring an easy familiarity with academic discourse that both distinguishes this work and limits its audience. Entries on ethnic groups associated with immigration in the United States and/or targeted by anti-immigration organizations introduce concepts like “intersectionality” and “marginality theory” in order to nuance summaries that would otherwise read as reductive. Of course, this use of theory can cut both ways; sometimes the effort to be explicit about perspectives and frameworks muddles the narrative, especially in an encyclopedic format. For someone using this work for multiple entries, it's also inconsistent with the more conventionally straightforward descriptions of major legislative acts and policies, which make up almost half of the entries. Other entries focus on specific historical periods, individuals, issues and theories, and organizations, and take a range of approaches to those topics.

For this reviewer and an anticipated audience of undergraduates, the most useful entries are those in which broad concepts are defined in concrete, historical relation to immigration, such as the impact of *The Bell Curve* on immigration policy, the role of think tanks in shaping legislation, or the root of legal restrictions on immigration in relation to homosexuality or HIV. As would be expected given its title, this work also gives ample room to entries on prominent anti-immigration organizations and individuals. And, as might also be expected, some of those entries read more politically than others; a few are impressively concise and objective, such as the extensive entry on “White Supremacist Groups.”

In terms of formatting, each entry has sources for further reading (both popular and scholarly) and a list of hyperlinked “see also” entries. Many entries make use of evocative black and white images, mostly from the Library of Congress, and some of the “see also” links lead to relevant primary documents (speeches, legal materials, etc.) in addition to other entries. Of course, for such a subject-specific encyclopedia, most of the entries are “relevant” to each other in some way, so the keyword search is probably the easiest way to search for specific topics. It would also be interesting to know how useful readers find the inclusion of primary documents in an encyclopedia, whether print or online.

In sum, while both public and academic libraries would benefit from an encyclopedic treatment of many of the contemporary issues addressed here—anti-immigration groups, the PATRIOT and DREAM Acts, the Department of Homeland Security—on the whole, this is a compilation best suited to college libraries. In particular, it would be best for those with strong social science programs that want to supplement more general immigration reference materials with a theoretically-oriented look at negative responses to immigration throughout United States history.