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According to Vile (political science, Middle Tennessee State Univ.), America’s enthusiasm for the Stars and Stripes and its ubiquity in U.S. culture are fairly unique among the world’s nations. Here, a poignant introduction lays out how the flag has grown in importance from its colonial origins to the present. Expanding more deeply on the flag’s meaning and importance in U.S. history and contemporary life, eight comprehensive essays illustrate the flag’s role in American art, music, journalism, and politics. However, the core of this high-quality and informative work is the second part: 200 alphabetically arranged entries on a range of topics from flag etiquette and design to artistic depictions of the flag including poems, speeches, and musical selections. Scholarly references; a time line; a topical list of entries; numerous photographs, woodcuts, and cartoons; and a bibliography of articles, essays, reports, websites, and book chapters enhance the presentation, making the encyclopedia not only ideal for browsing but also a solid starting point for further study. VERDICT A masterly exploration of the American flag, with a potpourri of fun details for anyone with an interest in U.S. history, patriotic symbols, and vexillology.—Rob Tench, Old Dominion Univ. Libs., Norfolk, VA


Kindell (Encyclopedia of Populism in America) has compiled entries from more than 100 contributors for this two-volume encyclopedia for the publisher’s “Daily Life Encyclopedia” series, bridging the gap between The World of the American Revolution and The World of the Civil War, 1815–1860. The signed entries are arranged under ten sections, such as “Arts,” “Economics and Work,” “Family and Gender,” and “Politics and Warfare.” Entries list “see also” references and further readings. Scant black-and-white illustrations add little to the well-written text. Volume 1 includes a short preface, a brief introduction to each of the sections, and a chronology. Each section offers a lengthier introduction. Volume 2 features relevant primary documents for each section, a bibliography that excludes the further readings, contributors’ information, and the general index. Use of the index in Volume 2 is critical, since the arrangement of entries is not alphabetical, and more information is needed in the preface about the choice of titles for the bibliography. Nonetheless, this series provides insight into topics readers may find intriguing. Librarians will want to compare this to Christopher G. Bates’s The Early Republic and Antebellum America: An Encyclopedia of Social, Political, Cultural, and Economic History. VERDICT Recommended for general adult and undergraduate readers.—Rosanne Cordell, formerly of Northern Illinois Univ., DeKalb