[Review of the book *China and the Modern World: Imperial China and the West Part II, 1865-1905*]

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of American baseball, Posnanski covers a number of players in the Negro Leagues, who for decades couldn’t play in the segregated Major Leagues. Posnanski’s ranking of players within this volume isn’t meant to be definitive; sometimes a player’s ranking corresponds to his uniform number, but other times the reasoning is unclear (the author addresses his ranking methods in a later chapter). Posnanski acknowledges that it takes gall to rank the 100 greatest players in history, and that many will disagree with him, but he contends that these disagreements and debates are part of what makes baseball fun. His devotion to the game shines through in his poetic, inspired, and entertaining writing. The volume includes a preface by George F. Will and a glossary of baseball terms. VERDICT This thought-provoking volume is a must-have for baseball fans.—Dave Pugi, Ela Area P.L., Lake Zurich, IL

### CONTENT

Launched in 2021, the Booker T. Washington Papers Digital Edition delivers enriched online access to a massive 14-volume edition of Washington’s correspondence, speeches, and other papers (originally published between 1972 and 1989 by the University of Illinois Press). The Digital Edition is hosted on the University of Virginia Press’s Rotunda platform, along with the papers of James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, George Washington, Ulysses S. Grant, and many other influential figures in early U.S. history. As one of the country’s most influential Black leaders, Booker T. Washington (1856–1915) is overdue for representation in such a collection.

### USABILITY

The Rotunda platform resembles Chadwick-Healey or other legacy platforms from 15 years ago. The pages fail to adjust automatically to the sizes of smartphones or tablets, and the navigation and content feel cramped. A compass tool enables researchers to click between pages, but this tool is superfluous and hard to use. Content is exclusively in HTML format and downloadable only as JPEG images—and only one page at a time. To offer a reading experience comparable to print, the publisher should allow researchers to download entire documents and volumes as PDFs. Pagination from the original print edition is embedded in the HTML text, enabling researchers to conveniently locate page numbers when citing materials. An “about” page provides guidance on navigating, searching, and customizing the site (including deactivating the compass feature).

Structure and searchability are where this resource shines. The Digital Edition is uniquely interactive. It enables researchers to drill down easily to pinpoint documents by decade, year, month, and day and to search with precision across all 14 volumes of Washington’s papers simultaneously—capabilities that put regular static ebooks to shame. The Digital Edition also features a complete subject index with hyperlinked references; clicking on a page number in the index takes researchers to the corresponding page in the text.

Disappointingly, the Digital Edition doesn’t include supplements (e.g., scholarly essays, biographies, photos, video lectures, teaching guides)—there is only the content that was published in the original print volumes.

Researchers can browse “contents” (volume-level and chapter-level access that mirrors the layout of the print editions); interact with the “chronology” to search by date (decade, year, month, and day); or conduct keyword searches and limit results by content type (primary sources versus footnotes), persons’ names (authors or recipients), date range, and other elements.

### PRICING

The resource is available for one-time purchase, with costs ranging from $215 to $2,146, depending on the buying institution’s Carnegie classification. Individuals can purchase access for $215. Pricing is transparent and posted openly online.

### VERDICT

The Booker T. Washington Papers Digital Edition will appeal to historians and advanced researchers. For these patrons, the robust searchability and the completeness of Washington’s papers might outweigh the outdated user interface and limited ability to download content. By investing in platform improvements, the publisher could make this resource a must-have.

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China and the Modern World: Imperial China and the West Part II, 1865–1905

Gale; gale.com/c/china-and-the-modern-world-imperial-china-part-ii

By Rob Tench

CONTENT

Like the first part of this series (Imperial China and the West Part I, 1815–1881), this resource provides in-depth information on the internal dynamics and politics of Chinese and British relations, as well as China’s relationship with other Western powers interested in expanding their profile and footprint in the Pacific. The archive consists of extensive primary source material from five FO17 collections of the British Foreign Office, held at the UK National Archives.

The monographs, manuscripts, periodicals, and newspapers housed in this archive provide researchers with the ability to explore the context in which events occurred and the impact of the West on China and the Chinese. The archive includes a comprehensive digital library of primary sources, providing researchers with the opportunity to conduct in-depth research on a wide range of topics.

Using innovative search technologies, researchers can quickly locate and access the information they need. The archive includes a user-friendly interface, making it easy to navigate and conduct research. Researchers can access the archive via a secure website, ensuring the confidentiality of their research.

The archive is an invaluable resource for anyone interested in the history of China and its relationship with the West. It provides a wealth of information on the internal dynamics of China and its external relationships, as well as the impact of Western influences on Chinese society.

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Burgess (singer of the English rock band the Charlatans) started a Twitter listening party that took off during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, where band members and creators live-tweeted commentary about their albums while thousands of participants listened and weighed in. This compilation explores 100 albums and archives a sampling of the tweets, providing song-by-song analysis with recording notes, insider views of backstage drama, and abundant photos and artwork. VERDICT A sure hit with fans of Burgess’s listening parties and those interested in behind-the-scenes dish on music, musicians, songwriting, and the industry.


Canadian outdoors enthusiast Callan (*Once Around Algonquin: An Epic Canoe Journey*) reminds readers that cold weather needn’t be an obstacle to camping. Here he covers winter camping basics, with guidance on choosing trip mates, meal planning, identifying animal tracks, and staying safe. His humorous, informative book includes detailed photographs, checklists, pithy quotes, and recipes. The updated edition adds chapters on weather forecasting, baking in the bush, and selecting boots and snowshoes. VERDICT Highly readable for folks snug at home or preparing for ice fishing, shelter building, or axe sharpening. Callan’s mix of encouragement and safety-first practicality will be helpful to those planning winter outings.


Educator and classical organist Condy suggests classical music to restore the soul that’s afflicted by pessimism, pettiness, sloth, guilt, or the like. The entry for each emotional ailment includes a brief general introduction and one or more symphonic selections to counter the malaise. Troubled by urban overload? Finnish composer Einojuhani Rautavaara’s *Cantus Arcticus* mixes birdsong and other natural sounds with orchestral music to rejuvenate listeners. Feeling inadequate? Tchaikovsky’s *Piano Concerto No. 1* and Edward Elgar’s *The Dream of Gerontius*, originally penned by critics, are reminders that severe criticism needn’t dampen the spirit. VERDICT Readers will learn of musical suggestions to invite passion as well as soothe grief. Of interest to those seeking gentle, at-home, nonmedical solace and mood-elevating ideas.


Keene (Cherokee; American studies and ethnic studies, Brown Univ.) celebrates 50 noteworthy Native American, Alaska Native, and Kanaka Maoli people, urging readers to look beyond persistent stereotypical messages about Indigenous cultures and explore the harmful consequences of settler colonialism. Keene profiles mostly living individuals, of varying ages, gender identities, and tribal affiliations, including environmental justice organizer and artist Jihan Gearon (Diné and Black); athlete Nick Hanson (Inupiaq); cultural educator Earl Kawa’a (Kanaka Maoli); seed keeper Rowen White (Akwesasne Mohawk); and teacher and culture keeper Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu (Kanaka Maoli). Portraits of the subjects, illustrated by Sana (Chamorro), are enlivened by rich colors and bold graphics. VERDICT Bright and appealing yet never simplistic, this is a strong addition for every library.


In this diverting collection examining TV series from the past two decades, “compulsive binge-watcher” and *Mental Floss* managing editor Wood carries on the blog’s tradition of “smart, quirky content presented in a witty, upbeat voice.” Wood has compiled summaries, cast lists, notable episodes, infographics, and photos galore. Contributors revisit shows like *Friends, Battlestar Galactica,* and *Black-ish,* make the case for the programs’ cultural impact and why it matters, hit the high points (occasionally with spoilers), and share behind-the-scenes tidbits. Snappy writing and insider details abound.

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**REFERENCE**

**odicals, correspondence, letters, historical photos, ephemera, and other historical documents here provide extensive detail on China’s 19th-century diplomacy, international relations, economy, trade, politics, religion, education, science, technology, imperialism, and globalization, with substantial holdings on related topics of interest, such as piracy, riots and rebellions, transnational immigration, and cross-cultural communication.**

**USABILITY** The homepage is relatively spartan but effective, with a large basic search box, an advanced search option; a general description of the database; and links to access individual collections, publications, research tools, an “about” page, user search history, and more.

The many search options make resources easy to find, retrieve, and filter. From the main page, users can enter a term in a basic search box, access the advanced search page, or immediately find all five individual collections within the database. On the advanced search page, users have three options for searching: advanced search, publication search, and topic finder. Under advanced search, browsing is available by keyword, entire document, document title, author/creator, issue number, publication title, place of publication, subject, manuscript number, or Gale document number. Results can be limited by publication date, collection, content type, document type, illustrated works, and language (Chinese, English, French, and Japanese). Under publication search, users can locate materials by individual publi-
VERDICT Streaming services, reboots, and syndication make all of these shows accessible. Likely to see heavy use in most libraries.


In this whimsical guide to pigeons commonly found in U.S. cities, science illustrator Mosco (Atlas Obscura Explorer’s Guide for the World’s Most Adventurous Kid) blends pigeon history, biology, identifying characteristics, and trivia sidebars. Mosco’s amusing yet accurate artwork enlivens this book, which tackles subjects like DNA, domestication, pigeon war heroes, and mating, nesting, and feeding. VERDICT This informative selection will encourage city-dwelling nature lovers to observe and enjoy these ubiquitous birds that often get a bad rap.


This guide to edible blooms covers the more obvious varieties (lavender; chamomile), but Nelson (founding art and photo director, Wilder Quarterly) also looks at examples not generally associated with food, including kudzu and snapdragons. The majority of the book is dedicated to exploring over 100 individual flowers (purslane; tulip), with information on growing season, flavor, and which parts of the flower are edible. Glaviano’s sumptuous, detailed photographs present blooms as works of art. The book concludes with nearly 20 recipes for adventurous palates, including rose jelly and hopping clover kombucha. VERDICT A treat for organic farmers and anyone who loves to cook.


A visual journey to delight even those readers who were unaware of the purpose (or existence) of stompboxes—the electronic and digital pedals that control and manipulate guitar sounds. Photographer Paz’s (Dust & Grooves: Adventures in Record Collecting) “pedal portraits” capture the industrial beauty (along with every scratch and scuff) of musicians’ well-used stompboxes, including the Emie Ball VP Jr. owned by cross-genre guitarist/composer Kaki King, and the Fox Tone Machine belonging to iconic sideman/guitarist Adrian Belew. Edited by Epstein (Big Hair and Plastic Grass) and jazz trumpeter/composer/critic Rotondi, with sidebars that offer quotes from musicians and details on the manufacture and use of stompboxes. VERDICT A fascinating reference for musicians, with additional interest for industrial designers, photographers, and those who appreciate hi-res portraits of functional beauty.


The great outdoors is calling to many and who can make use of this compact U.S. camping travel guide. The Puglisis (parents who host the RV Atlas podcast) compile their favorite campsites, supplemented by recommendations from dedicated campers. Most sites are family-oriented, with accommodations for RVs. Jellystone Parks (sites aimed at families with children) and Kampgrounds of America (privately owned campgrounds across Canada and the U.S.) appear often. Badges mark sites that are ideal for specific needs (glamping; romantic getaways), and some entries highlight surrounding attractions (Route 66; Mount Rushmore). Maps, websites, and guidance on interpreting online reviews add to the volume’s utility. VERDICT A well-organized resource that will be of particular interest to RV campers and those with children.


Physician Walker approaches Black health care from a wellness and prevention perspective, with notes on treatment for some conditions. Chapters cover high blood pressure, cancer, sickle cell disease, aging, environmental factors, and more. Walker emphasizes the importance of healthful eating, daily exercise, and adequate sleep and suggests dietary supplements in some situations. A glossary, list of references, and guide to resources (websites; Stroke Riskometer; Lead Poisoning Home Checklist) add utility. VERDICT The fundamental health information is well supported, clearly presented, and helpful. Walker’s inclusion of historical context for Black health issues is key.

Pricing: Costs start at $7,250 for the collection, with a hosting fee that begins at $65 annually. Public library pricing is based on population served and starts at $4,830 for the collection, with a hosting fee that starts at $44 annually. Academic library pricing is based on an institution’s full-time enrollment and other institutional variables. Subscriptions are available upon request. Institutions holding two or more Gale Primary Source collections receive complimentary access to the Gale Primary Sources cross-search platform, which allows users to discover connections between other archival collections published by Gale. A free trial of the product can be requested at bit.ly/2ZmXqwP. VERDICT The archive is a notable resource for researchers and students of mid-19th- and early 20th-century China and Chinese-British relations. Both the selection and scope of the sources are excellent, with multiple search options and useful features for downloading, saving, and citing documents and information. Part II will certainly enhance holdings for libraries that already subscribe to Part I, but Part II also works as a stand-alone resource.

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