



The American Midwest: An Interpretive Encyclopedia

From Indiana University Press

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This first-ever encyclopedia of the Midwest seeks to embrace this large and diverse area, to give it voice, and help define its distinctive character. Organized by topic, it encourages readers to reflect upon the region as a whole. Each section moves from the general to the specific, covering broad themes in longer introductory essays, filling in the details in the shorter entries that follow. There are portraits of each of the region's twelve states, followed by entries on society and culture, community and social life, economy and technology, and public life. The book offers a wealth of information about the region's surprising ethnic diversity—a vast array of foods, languages, styles, religions, and customs—plus well-informed essays on the region's history, culture and values, and conflicts. A site of ideas and innovations, reforms and revivals, and social and physical extremes, the Midwest emerges as a place of great complexity, signal importance, and continual fascination.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Any way you look at it, The American Midwest: An Interpretive Encyclopedia is impressive." ?Minnesota History

"At 1,800 oversized pages, brimming with hundreds of lively essays on every imaginable Midwestern subject, it's an autodidact's delight, and a great addition to any serious reader's library." ?Northern Ohio Live, December 1, 2007

"This book is an essential text for all Midwestern libraries.... Middle-American people, landscapes, and culture all stand to benefit from this weighty work of scholarship, as it provides us with a holistic guide for understanding ourselves, our neighbors, our regional landscape, and our place on the national stage." ?Ohioana Quarterly, Summer 2007

"A collection of provocative readings that may inspire further research." ?Choice

"Spanning 1,890 pages and weighing in at 8 pounds, the encyclopedia is a lot like its subject: big, brawny, hardworking, plainspoken, and yes, far more interesting and outrageous than you ever imagined." ?Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, May 5, 2007

"[A] welcome and instructive volume, which treats the vernacular Midwest... as a coherent and unified region." ?Indiana Magazine of History

"No matter what I write I begin there." ?Toni Morrison

"Best suited for browsing or targeted searches via the excellent index, this essential encyclopedia is suitable for patrons of all public and academic libraries." ?Julienne L. Wood, American Reference Books Annual Vol. 39

"This ambitious volume, the culmination of nearly ten years of effort by hundreds of scholars... [presents] a comprehensive and scholarly treatment of its subject while at the same time challenging the reader's expectations of what an encyclopedia should be." ?Ohio History, Spring 2008, Vol. 115

"The American Midwest was a tremendous undertaking, and the final product is a well-balanced and extremely useful volume for scholars, researchers, and casual readers interested in learning more about all aspects of midwestern geography, history, and culture." ?Michigan Historical Review, Spring 2008, Vol. 34, No. 1

"Best suited for browsing or targeting searches via the excellent index, this essential encyclopedia is suitable for patrons of all public and academic libraries." ?Julienne L. Wood, American Reference Books Annual Vol. 39, 2008

"What geography can give all Middle Westerners along with the fresh water and topsoil, if they let it, is awe for an Edenic continent stretching forever in all directions. Makes you religious. Takes your breath away." ?Kurt Vonnegut

"Unlike some state and regional encyclopedias, which seem to inundate the reader with facts and figures but never really relay a feel for their subject, this one was clearly created with the aim of endowing the reader with a sense of the American Midwest and its people.... This encyclopedia also gets kudos for one of the most comprehensive sections on labor- and class-related issues that it has been my pleasure to read..." ?

"Although the essence of a place can never be definitively captured?even in a work stretching to almost two thousand pages?this ambitious publication productively engages the question." ?South Dakota History, Vol. 37, No. 2

"You'll close this new book and start spouting fascinating?and even useful?facts to your friends long before

you realize that." ?Trevor Meers, Midwest Living

From the Publisher

2007 AAUP Public and Secondary School Library Selection

From the Inside Flap

The Midwest. The Heartland. Middletown, Winesburg, Spoon River, Lake Wobegon. In the American imagination, this is the place of hard-working people, thrifty, devoted to family values, strong in character, middle-of-the-road, sedate, cautious. It's a place of silos and skyscrapers, railroads and riverboats, farms and factories. Home to Native Americans and generations of immigrants and descendants of slaves, this vast space easily accommodates rust belt cities and amber waves of grain; small towns and snarls of highway; America's Great Lakes, great rivers, and great individuals. Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, and Abraham Lincoln once called the Midwest home, as did Black Hawk and Tecumseh, Jane Addams and Eugene Debs, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Toni Morrison, Billy Sunday and Oprah Winfrey, Count Basie and Frank Lloyd Wright. The Midwest made household names out of Cracker Jack, Cream of Wheat, Corn Flakes, Juicy Fruit, and Aunt Jemima. *The American Midwest: An Interpretive Encyclopedia* seeks to embrace this large and diverse area, to give it voice, and help define its complex, yet distinctive character. Organized by topic, the encyclopedia encourages readers to reflect upon the region as a whole. Each section moves from the general to the specific, covering broad themes in longer introductory essays, filling in the details in the shorter entries that follow. There are portraits of the region's twelve states, their geography and people: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. These are followed by entries on society and culture, community and social life, economy and technology, and public life.

Even if you are a casual browser, you will discover in the Encyclopedia facts that will engage, inform, and enlighten. It will introduce you to the region's ethnic diversity, its vast array of foods, languages, styles, religions, and customs. You'll discover Somalis in Ohio, Hmong in Wisconsin, Hispanics in Iowa, and Muslims in Michigan. You'll find thoughtful and well-informed research on the history of the region, its culture and values, and its conflicts.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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