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By Robert North Roberts, Scott John Hammond, Valerie A. Sulfaro



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Editorial Review

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In America, we keep political time to the metronome that is the presidential election cycle. From the hotly contested Jeffersonian “revolution of 1800” to the current vitriolic contest between Obama and Romney, these electoral battles have always brought out the best—and worst—in us. To help rectify the “diminution of political education in recent years,” the authors of this set have constructed an easy-to-use, readable encyclopedia that assists students and those seeking to inform themselves in the field of the peaks and pitfalls of a presidential campaign. Volume 1, entitled Slogans, Issues, Programs, Personalities, and Strategies, is an alphabetically arranged, general treatment of the political terminology surrounding key political issues and practices, from Abortion controversy to You’re no Jack Kennedy. Other examples of entries include Campaign ads, Exit polling, Goldwater conservative, New nationalism, Rail splitter, and Voodoo economics. Each entry varies in length from a short paragraph to a few pages and is written at a level that is accessible to an audience new to the material while still offering the necessary degree of academic analysis. Volumes 2 and 3 span chronologically, covering campaigns from George Washington’s improbable run in 1788 to Obama’s hope-and-change campaign of 2008. All the great campaign slogans are here, including “Tippecanoe and Tyler, Too,” “Fifty-Four Forty or Fight,” and Goldwater’s “In Your Heart You Know He’s Right” (which Johnson supporters cleverly turned into “In Your Heart You Know He’s Nuts”). All three volumes begin with a handy time line as well as a “Guide to Related Topics” for cross-referencing. A good selection of photos and illustrations break up what is otherwise a straightforward presentation, while a chart of “Major Party Platforms” since 1840 and a helpful bibliography round out the final volume. Overall, this set is a useful addition to high-school and public library collections seeking to boost civics materials. --Brian Odom

Review

"This work reminds us that presidential campaigns are fundamentally about the act of persuasion and marketing of easily digestible ideas for public consumption. The encyclopedia also reminds the reader that this has always been true; only the modes of delivery have changed. For these reasons, this work is highly recommended." - **ARBA**

"For persons interested in the American political system, this captivating set presents useful information in all three volumes. . . . This spellbinding three-volume set is hard to set aside. It will be a valuable asset for all university and college reference departments and for researchers. Summing Up: Highly recommended." - **Choice**

"The authors of this set have constructed an easy-to-use, readable encyclopedia that assists students and those seeking to inform themselves in the field of the peaks and pitfalls of a presidential campaign. . . . Overall, this set is a useful addition to high school and public library collections seeking to boost civics materials." - **Booklist**

"A comprehensive research tool for college students and other users who are interested in political history." - **Library Journal**

About the Author

Robert North Roberts, PhD, is professor of political science at James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA. He holds a bachelor's degree, master of public administration, juris doctor degree, and doctorate from Syracuse University.

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Valerie A. Sulfaro is professor of political science at James Madison University. She holds a master's degree and a doctorate in political science from the University of South Carolina.

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