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# Sources: Inspired by True Events: An Illustrated Guide to More Than 500 History-Based Films

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## SOURCES

read that is enjoyable while being informative.

Black and white photos are provided, but unfortunately in comparison to books also covering this topic such as *Hats: A History of Fashion in Headwear*, by Hilda Amphlett, which has several pictures per chapter, this volume only has eighty images in total. While Chico does give detailed descriptions, several entries on obscure or archaic headwear such as the Escoffin headdress worn by European ladies in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, would have benefitted from an illustration (139). Conversely, images of well-known headwear such as a bicycle helmet are provided. Had Chico been more judicious in her choice of images and illustrations, the book would have been more informative and helpful for a wider range of users.

Overall this general reference book provides excellent descriptions, historical context, and discussions of cultural importance. It looks at headwear internationally rather than focusing solely on one region or culture, so I would recommend its purchase for universities with relevant academic programs. This is also available for purchase electronically, which is nice as it provides options when selecting for purchase.—*Marissa Ellermann, Public Services Librarian, Vincennes University, Vincennes, Indiana*

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***Inspired by True Events: An Illustrated Guide to More Than 500 History-Based Films.*** 2nd ed. Ed. by Robert Niemi. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2013. 607 p. acid free \$100 (ISBN: 978-1-61069-197-0). E-book available (978-1-61069-198-7), call for pricing.

With the growing emphasis on media literacy, academics routinely choose feature films and documentaries to supplement their courses. But with the myriad of available media, how to choose? More importantly, how does one select a film that reflects and critiques rather than distorts or attempts to rewrite American history? Expanding coverage in his *History in the Media: Film and Television* (ABC-CLIO, 2006) from 350 films and film series to 500, author Niemi (professor of English and American Studies at St. Michael's College) narrows his criterion for inclusion to films that deal with an actual, documented historical incident rather than a treatment of the generic history film. The arrangement is chronological pertaining to the events the films depict and the entries range from roughly half a page to two pages in length with occasional illustrations. An extensive index is provided that includes film titles, actors, historical figures, and related events. When appropriate, Niemi offers a brief treatment of the discrepancies between the historical reality and the film's portrayal along with his assessment of the film's overall quality. This selective survey includes primarily American productions dealing with military history, sports, music and art history, politics, race relations, and crime, with the bulk of the entries covering military history. The coverage is more expansive than the seventy-nine essays in the excellent *The Columbia Companion to American History on Film* (Columbia, 2006) but the depth of the historical analyses and film

scholarship in the *Columbia Companion* make it the stronger contender for the standard work in the field.

A further reading option at the end of each entry would have been easier to navigate than the general bibliography, so this may frustrate users looking for Niemi's source material on a particular film. Instructors, however, who are searching for films to fit the themes of their classes will find this work helpful for quickly determining a film's quality and validity. For general academic collections and public libraries with an emphasis on film studies.—*Robin Imhof, Humanities Librarian, University of the Pacific, Stockton, California*

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***Music in American Life: An Encyclopedia of the Songs, Styles, Stars, and Stories That Shaped Our Culture.*** Ed. by Jacqueline Edmondson. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2013. 4 vols. acid free \$415 (ISBN: 978-0-313-39347-1). E-book available (978-0-313-39348-8), call for pricing.

Providing an encyclopedic overview of the impact of music on American life is a Herculean task. Music saturates American culture. It is experienced in a vast variety of ways, ranging from movie soundtracks to commercial jingles to the intimate iPod. *Music in American Life* attempts to frame "the significant role music has played in American life" (xxiii).

This four-volume set, also available as an e-book, contains more than 500 entries, focusing specifically on American music and musicians. Foreign artists are mentioned but only within broader articles related to American culture (for example, The Beatles are mentioned in articles on "British Influences on Rock Music," "Musicians as Actors," and others). The writing level is appropriate for high school students and higher. Articles provide suggestions for further reading, and occasional cross-references. The final volume includes a selected bibliography and discography, a listing of music festivals, and related websites.

The principle failing of this resource lies in its coverage. While the editor wisely warns the readers of the perils inherent with such an ambitious undertaking—"not every artist, band, or topic can be included as a main entry" (xxiii)—there is no further clarification as to the decisions and guidelines used when deciding who and what *would be* included. This results in a hodgepodge of entries with no apparent logical criteria for the user to depend on. The encyclopedia states that "the emphasis of these volumes is on the first decades of the twenty-first century" (xxvi), and there are articles on current artists such as Beyoncé, Britney Spears, and Lady Gaga, but other comparable artists such as Taylor Swift, Christina Aguilera, and P!nk are missing. Why does Grandmaster Flash have an article devoted to him, but not Run-D.M.C. or the Beastie Boys? Neither Stevie Wonder nor Diana Ross has an entry (although there is a short article on The Supremes). Conversely, there are also entries that seem out of place because they are included: Eric Whitacre and Frank Ticheli, for example. While both are current, accomplished composers in "classical" or "art" music, they do not have the same level of cultural recognition and familiarity held by the