

SALEM PRESS

RECENT REVIEWS

American Presidents

“Updating Salem Press’ 3rd edition, this two-volume encyclopedia by Editor Watson provides a thorough profile of each American President. The essays are written for students and beginning researchers seeking key data and background and biographical information. Each essay highlights early life experiences and the individual’s career trajectory prior to being elected president. The details of these topics vary in length but generally offer key insights into the factors that influenced the person’s eventual election to office. The remainder of each essay details the president’s term or terms in office, highlighting key events or issues and describing specific domestic and international challenges and achievements; some also note post-presidential years. Suggested readings with one-sentence annotations conclude essays to helpfully lead readers to additional scholarly literature. Essays feature text boxes with excerpts from key historical documents, presidential speeches, notable quotations, and brief profiles of VPs and first ladies to provide additional historical context. As in similar earlier editions, more than 200 illustrations and pictures provide additional context to the descriptive text; front matter includes a list of contributors and an introductory essay.

Volume 2 includes 12 appendixes with information on election results, cabinet members, presidential libraries, and other ready reference data. Online access is now available with purchase, making this an accessible, well-written resource for novice researchers; it would be of value in any public, high school, or undergraduate library. **Summing Up:** ★ ★ Recommended. High school, community college, and undergraduate students; general readers.”

- CHOICE

“A two-volume historical reference, *American Presidents* chronologically presents thorough biographies of all 43 U.S. presidents from George Washington to Barack Obama. This edition is the first to include the current president’s biography, and has revised and updated entries for several recent presidents, the bibliography, and all appendixes. Many new photographs and illustrations enhance the publication and online access is newly available, as well.

Preceding the biographies are two excellent essays discussing the presidential office itself and touching on the general characteristics of its holders, as well as its origins, processes, duties, and evolution through modern times. Each biographical entry then offers rich information about the president’s birth, education, political rise, election, time in office, post-presidency, and death. The particular administration’s legacy is also assessed. Readers will find sufficient space given to a president’s most remarkable moments, such as Lyndon B. Johnson’s work with the Voting Rights Act of 1965, or Franklin Pierce’s struggles with slavery and territorial expansion.

The book employs a number of tools which both organize and enhance the material. Shaded text boxes convey brief biographies of First Ladies and Vice Presidents, as well as important primary document excerpts such as Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation. Each entry opens with listed administration information, such as years of term(s), birth and death dates and location, political party, and cabinet members. Essays conclude with updated, annotated bibliographies for further reference

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The end of volume two offers a generous amount of supplementary information and include the U.S. Constitution and amendments, the Law of Presidential Succession, a timeline for each president, election returns, presidential libraries, a glossary, an index and much, much more.

This book works well as a companion to *American First Ladies*, third edition, published by Salem in 2015.”

- ARBA

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