

authors trace the evolution of rock and roll from a suspect genre favored by black artists to its domestication as symbolized by the success of American Bandstand. In a similar fashion Miller and Nowak describe the development of the television industry and its programming during the decade. They conclude sadly that the quality of the latter, at least in terms of originality and creativity, declined during the 1950s in part because the real point of the medium became not entertainment but the commercial pitch. Thus, television's vast potential disappeared as Milton Berle was replaced as Mr. Television by a corporation executive.

Miller and Nowak have written a fascinating and thought provoking book. Their research, which ranges from scholarly journals to comic books and from intellectual treatises to the late show, is impressive, and they use anecdotal material well. They do not hesitate to take advantage of their own personal experiences with the decade, which adds an additional degree of legitimacy to the result. At times they try to force events or facts to conform to those characteristics of the decade already identified as significant. But this is a minor concern. *The Fifties* is intellectually sound, well written, and a most pleasant guide through ten years of American history which well deserve the skeptical and serious treatment that this book provides.

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Agricultural Literature: Proud Heritage-Future Promise. A Bicentennial Symposium, September 24-26, 1975. Edited by Alan Fusonie and Leila Moran. (Washington: Associates of the National Agricultural Library, Inc., and the Graduate School Press, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1977. Pp. 371. Illustrations, notes, maps, graph, index. Clothbound, \$13.50; paperbound, \$9.95.)

It appears that the intention of the promoters of the bicentennial meeting at the National Agricultural Library in Beltsville, Maryland, was to focus "upon the historical as well as the continual importance of American agricultural literature" (p. 1), but few of the twenty-seven participants had much to say on the subject; some never even mentioned it. Only one paper, "Agriculture with Hoof and Horn: An Analysis of the Historical Literature of the Cattle Industry," by Walter Rundell, Jr., and Anne M. Butler, is thoroughly satisfactory, and it is restricted to developments on the Great Plains. Another

useful paper, "Horticultural Heritage," by Elisabeth Woodburn, describes in detail the publications of early nurserymen. Some of the other papers relate in a limited way to the announced theme, including those on agricultural libraries, historical research in agricultural colleges, and the editors of some leading farm magazines. A few of the contributors reveal in the footnotes to their papers that they are conversant with the leading publications in their fields of interest and make suggestions as to future research. Scattered throughout the papers and commentaries are other ideas which might prove useful. But the coverage of the entire subject is patchy in the extreme. Thus there is no significant mention of any writings on the agriculture of Indiana, or Ohio, or Kentucky, or Illinois, or indeed of the Corn Belt.

The published proceedings of the symposium will be very disappointing to any student who expects evaluations of at least the major writings in the field—general works like Percy W. Bidwell and John I. Falconer's *History of Agriculture in the Northern United States, 1620-1860* (1925), Lewis C. Gray's *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860* (1933), Paul W. Gates' *The Farmer's Age: Agriculture, 1815-1860* (1962), Clarence H. Danhof's *Change in Agriculture: The United States, 1820-1870* (1969), and Fred A. Shannon's *Farmer's Last Frontier: Agriculture, 1860-1897* (1945); the more important regional studies; specialized investigations into the evolution of field crops, animal husbandry, dairying, truck farming, and so forth; surveys of matters like the mechanization of farming and the application of science in plant and animal breeding and weed and pest control; the history of the work of the agricultural colleges and the experimental stations; and the development of farm organizations. The student might also anticipate that there would be some analysis of the sources, not only travel accounts and farm journals, but the publications of the federal government from the days of the Patent Office reports to the yearbooks of the Department of Agriculture and the tremendous collective output of the state boards of agriculture or departments of agriculture. There would be a legitimate place for farm life and the problems of farming as seen by novelists. There might reasonably be some consideration of what areas are most in need of study, what sources have as yet been underexploited, and what new techniques might be used.

One reason for the failure of the symposium to emphasize the literature of American agriculture was that the participants were a miscellaneous aggregation of "book dealers,

editors, folklorists, geographers, historians, librarians, scientists, and others" (p. 2). Some of these had little knowledge of the development of American farming and of course were without any research experience in the announced subject. It is also obvious that no effort whatever was made to enforce a rule of relevance. One paper incorporates the observations of a recent visitor to Communist China on farming there; another describes the rural medical program of the Rockefeller Foundation in West Africa and Mexico; and another paper and its accompanying commentary deal with the problem of famine in India and China.

The conference on the whole exemplified the characteristic weaknesses of such efforts. While some of the papers might be classified as specialized articles which could find a place in a journal like *Agricultural History*, others were really occasional pieces which could never achieve publication except as part of the proceedings of a program. Of the symposia sponsored by the Agricultural History Society in the last half dozen years, that of September, 1975, will be the one least noted and remembered.

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Traditions of American Education. By Lawrence A. Cremin. (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1977. Pp. ix, 172. Notes, index. \$8.95.)

This book, consisting of lectures given by Cremin at the University of Wisconsin to inaugurate the Merle Curti Lectures, highlights aspects of his three volume study of the history of American education. The themes of the addresses are the successful transformation and modification of European educational institutions during the colonial period (1607-1783), the "development of an authentic American vernacular in education" during the national period (1783-1876), and the "transformation and proliferation of American educational agencies" during the metropolitan period (1876-1976) (p. viii). Defining education broadly as "the deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit, evoke or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills or sensibilities, as well as any outcomes of that effort" (p. viii), Cremin proceeds to examine diverse educational influences, although he does not always make clear in what ways these influences were and were not "deliberate, systematic and sustained" efforts to education. Nevertheless, his scope is significant as he looks at such diverse educational influences