

its workers. It is the traditional view of history from the top. The reader is left wondering who were the people who salvaged and inventoried the records, how did they go about their work, how did they look upon their work, and what became of them when the program fell victim to the war effort. As a case study, therefore, Noggle's essay is incomplete; hence, it is only partly successful.

Noggle succeeds more fully in communicating the state of mind among historians and others toward the study of American history in the 1930s. The HRS county studies, along with the FWP state studies, enjoyed a large measure of popularity, according to Noggle, because they were a manifestation of the growing interest among citizens in defining and evaluating what it was to be an American, particularly in the face of the threats of economic collapse and fascism. The public records of America's past were certainly critical to this evaluation process, and Noggle makes this point well.

In addition to the essay and the appendix, the book contains a brief but helpful bibliographical note; regrettably, it does not contain an index. The author has produced a very thoughtful and well-researched study, one, it is hoped, that will inspire similar efforts in other states.

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Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Freedom, 1822-1832. Volume II. By Robert V. Remini. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981. Pp. xvi, 469. Illustrations, notes, index. \$20.00.)

Few presidents, before or since, have seized the public imagination as much as Andrew Jackson. Generations of some of the best historians in America have used their talents to explain Old Hickory's influence. Now, Robert V. Remini, a leading Jackson scholar, proposes a major reinterpretation of his subject's life. In this second volume of a planned trilogy, he advances the story over the ten-year period from Jackson's retirement as governor of Florida in 1822 through his reelection as president.

The central theme of the book is the conflict between corruption and liberty in America. By corruption, says Remini, Jackson and his supporters meant not only venality, but misuse of government power against freedom. Indeed, the author contends, James Monroe's administration "was perhaps one of the most corrupt in the early history of the United States" (p. 15).

Instead of the Era of Good Feelings, the period ought to be called the Era of Corruption. From the president and the Cabinet down to officials in the states, there were shocking revelations of malfeasance in government, which angered and frightened honest people. Over and over Remini hammers at his thesis, and in overstressing it he makes it dubious. The election of 1824 was a struggle over "liberty, public virtue, and centralized power in the federal government" (p. 80); Jackson's victory four years later affirmed the public's "demand for the restoration of morality and virtue to civic life, and a reform of those practices that had corrupted officials, expanded government, and endangered freedom" (p. 148). Other issues—the bank, internal improvements, the tariff, even slavery—Remini believes were secondary. Whether the Era of Good Feelings was as corrupt, or the Jacksonians as virtuous, as Remini concludes is open to challenge. After all, whereas John Quincy Adams's Tobias Watkins absconded with \$7,000 from the Treasury, Jackson's collector of customs at New York, Samuel Swartwout, made off with over a million.

This is an interesting and important book. Remini has benefited from the advances in Jacksonian scholarship since publication of Marquis James's two-volume biography and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s *Age of Jackson*. In addition to the expanded secondary literature, the author has profitably used the documentary collections now available, especially the Jackson papers at the Hermitage.

The most unfortunate aspect of the volume is its prose. Remini obviously wants to establish rapport with the reader through a conversational style. He achieves that, but at the cost of craftsmanship and grace in his writing. It seems unnecessary, for Remini is ordinarily a very fine writer. Despite this, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Freedom* is a valuable contribution to Jacksonian historiography.

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American Farmers: The New Minority. By Gilbert C. Fite.
(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981. Pp. ix, 265.
Table, illustrations, notes, index. \$19.50.)

Gilbert C. Fite's volume is one in a series on *Minorities in Modern America*, edited by Warren F. Kimball and David Edwin Harrell, Jr. In discussing the transition of farming activity from majority to minority status in the American economy, primarily since 1920, the author focuses on the productivity