Raucher, who published an article on Hoffman's concern for automotive safety in the September, 1983, issue of this journal, has given us a brief and very readable biography of an individual certainly deserving of a biography. Had he fleshed out his skeleton, one could claim that he had written the definitive life of Hoffman. Nonetheless, the book is worthwhile, both for its explorations into the business history of the automotive industry and for its insight into various economic aspects of the Cold War years.

Indiana University Southeast, New Albany John E. Findling

Novus Ordo Seclorum: The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution. By Forrest McDonald. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1985. Pp. xiii, 359. Notes, appendixes, bibliography, index. $25.00.)

Three decades ago, when Forrest McDonald published *We the People: The Economic Origins of the Constitution*, a book designed to clear the historical landscape of Beardian remnants, he promised two sequels on the making of the Constitution. The first of these, *E Pluribus Unum*, appeared in 1965 and treated the political context of the movement toward the Constitution. The present volume deals with the intellectual origins. The delay has been fortunate. McDonald brings to the subject the fruit of a career devoted to reading and contemplating the sources dealing with eighteenth-century politics. Whatever the strength of his insight, or his truly impressive synthetic ability, one can doubt that the book could have been written thirty or even twenty years ago. McDonald remains his own historian, singularly so in many instances, but he plainly builds on the work of Robbins, Bailyn, Pocock, Colbourn, and Wood. The book is both a brilliant exposition of his own views and a judicious extension of the work of the last generation on the intellectual history of the revolutionary age.

Ideas, for McDonald, are imbedded in experience. In the jargon of the time, he writes about the sociology of ideas. The point is made in a chapter on "The Rights of Englishmen" that describes the constitutional basis of the English conception of natural, legal, and prescriptive rights that were to be so important in the making of American independence. Indeed he sees the Constitution as an experiential document, the consequence of much practical give and take among politicians of varying opinions and interests. This alone would be little advance in the historiography of the subject. McDonald's contribution is in the

taxonomy of ideas that informed late eighteenth-century political activity. The Americans were conscious revolutionaries and constitution makers, but they came at the tail end of a century and a half of intense intellectual ferment. The mental constructions available to them by way of motivation, explanation, or justification were of considerable variety—and often enough contradictory. In McDonald's terms these included: "natural-law and natural-rights theory, republican ideology of both the classical-cum-puritanical and the Harringtonian-cum-Bolingbrokean variety, Montesquieu, the English legal tradition, [and] the Scottish Enlightenment" (p. 144). Superimposed on these categories was a vestige of the larger, distinctively English division of Court and Country which persisted even into the late colonial period. By dint of painstaking and lucid exposition, McDonald manages to make sense out of this vastly complex intellectual mélange.

Although the work on the whole is a model of dispassion, McDonald has his favorites. He has little patience with Bolingbrokean conspiracy theories though he respects the effects of this mode of thinking on the American experience. He prefers Hamilton to Madison and much diminishes the usual role accorded to Madison in the formation of the Constitution. The founding generation, he concludes, was wise enough to devise "a new order out of materials prescribed by the ages," drawn loosely enough to "live and breathe and change with time" (p. 293).

Indiana University, Bloomington Bernard W. Sheehan

Magnificent Voyagers: The U.S. Exploring Expedition, 1838-1842. Edited by Herman J. Viola and Carolyn Margolis. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985. Pp. 303. Illustrations, maps, appendixes, references, index. Clothbound, $35.00; paperbound, $17.50.)

Through the ages, whether it was the search for El Dorado, Prester John, or the River of the West, grand illusions have often been the moving force behind exploring expeditions. The history of the U.S. Exploring Expedition began in the 1820s as a consequence of a theory of John Cleves Symmes that held that the earth was hollow and that there were openings at the poles into which ships could sail. But there were also other forces that helped launch this successful expedition. Foremost among them was the "important interests of our commerce embarked in the whale-fisheries, and other adventures in the great Southern Ocean" (p. 43). The mission of the expedition was to gather data