

tendance, types of displays, sponsorship, and unique characteristics, as well as a brief bibliography.

The value of this work is enhanced by a scholarly introductory essay (with footnotes) that presents a brief but illuminating history of agricultural fairs in the United States. They came to this country from Europe, but nowhere in the world have they become more popular than in America. Every state in the union has an annual agricultural fair of some kind. For many contemporary city people the state, county, or privately sponsored agricultural fair (say by the 4-H clubs or Future Farmers of America) is often the only contact they have with a rural institution that symbolizes a link with past farm heritage.

Some interesting facts emerge from this selective but well-written directory. The largest state fair (in terms of attendance) is that of Texas, and the largest county fair is the Los Angeles County Fair at Pomona. The Indiana State Fair is the fifth largest in the nation. Its present location in Indianapolis was established in 1892. In the Great Depression of the 1930s the Works Progress Administration erected some of the buildings on the fairgrounds. The WPA was also responsible for the construction of similar permanent buildings in other states. If the number of entries in Marti's directory is proportional to actual incidence, the geographical area most heavily represented by agricultural fairs is the Midwest. Fairs range in diversity from the kinds typical to Indiana and Illinois to the varieties found in other sections of the country, such as the National Orange Show in San Bernardino or the Navajo Nation Fair in Window Rock, Arizona.

The usefulness of this directory is increased by an appendix that lists all agricultural fairs by state, a valuable note on sources, and a thorough index. Although it seems overpriced for its size, it should prove a handy reference work for agricultural historians, rural sociologists, educators, members of farm organizations, and those just interested in attending or knowing more about agricultural fairs.

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A Machine That Would Go of Itself: The Constitution in American Culture. By Michael Kammen. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986. Pp. xxii, 532. Illustrations, figure, appendixes, tables, notes, note on sources, index. \$29.95.)

Michael Kammen's book is a survey of American perceptions and understanding of the Constitution of the United States over the past two hundred years. The author reviews attitudes toward the document held by generations of politicians, judges, educators, foreign observers, and the American public. He concludes that the Constitution has endured successfully in spite of a substantial

amount of ignorance, misunderstanding, and lack of concern. Public perceptions of the document have been shaped not by thorough study but by often inadequate teaching in the schools, by periodic celebrations and publicity surrounding the anniversaries of its drafting, and, particularly in the twentieth century, by the periodic eruption of controversy over constitutional issues.

The Constitution did not become important as a national symbol until about 1860. Prior to that time general lack of knowledge about the document was not alleviated by the few school textbooks of the day. The proceedings of the Constitutional Convention were not published for several decades, and potential experts such as James Madison, who could have clarified and explained the document's contents, chose not to do so. Supreme Court judges, with few exceptions, did not see themselves as interpreters for public edification. Even the celebration planned for the Constitution's fiftieth anniversary in 1837 was blighted by a severe depression.

The Constitution received widespread attention in the 1860s as a basis for many of the issues debated during the Civil War and as a result of amendments proposed during Reconstruction. The celebration of the document's centennial in 1887, though marred by poor planning and insufficient funding, served to arouse a certain amount of interest that carried on into the twentieth century.

The vigorous debates of the Progressive Era and the simultaneous publication of important books on constitutional topics by scholars such as Charles Warren and Charles A. Beard gave impetus to calls in the 1920s for better public education about the Constitution. Periodic celebration of September 17 as Constitution Day, the publication of a few handbooks on the Constitution, and emphasis on questioning applicants for citizenship about their understanding of the document were the chief results. General public interest in some aspects of the Constitution was sparked by the court-packing controversy of 1937, but many scholars expressed concern that the general public tended to equate the Constitution with the Supreme Court.

The role of the Constitution in the resolution of controversial issues in recent times does not seem to have improved general knowledge about the document. A variety of polls have indicated widespread ignorance concerning the provisions of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, a situation Kammen feels is likely to continue. He sees some potential for the media, especially television, to aid in improving the state of affairs through carefully prepared documentaries and interviews and through television coverage of Supreme Court proceedings.

The title, *A Machine That Would Go of Itself*, is taken from a frequently quoted comment made by James Russell Lowell in the 1880s. Kammen uses it to underscore his opinion that the Constitution is not self-executing but needs widespread study and under-

standing. Intended for a lay audience, his book is informative, entertaining, and at times witty. Liberally sprinkled with quotations and references to published materials concerning the Constitution, this work awakens the reader to the amazing durability and flexibility of this seminal document and to the importance of every American's having a solid acquaintance with it.

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Free Trade and Sailors' Rights: A Bibliography of the War of 1812.

Compiled by John C. Fredriksen. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985. Pp. xiii, 399. Appendixes, index. \$45.00.)

The War of 1812 was not as encompassing, popular, or decisive as other American wars according to John C. Fredriksen in the preface to *Free Trade and Sailors' Rights*, his bibliography on the war. And despite the profound effect that war had on the development of the United States as a nation and a military power and on its "manifest destiny," no comprehensive reference works existed on the subject until a couple of years ago.

The more than 5,000 entries in Fredriksen's bibliography are rivaled only by the 1,300 annotated entries in Dwight L. Smith's *The War of 1812: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Garland Publishing Co., Inc., 1985). They include dissertations, texts, book chapters, articles, and manuscripts and cover a time period from 1811 to 1884. The entries are arranged by subject with several cross-references. While the subject headings and subheadings are outlined in the table of contents, closer examination yields some surprises: subheadings are even further divided into bibliographies for battles and military and political figures (e.g., Battle of Tippecanoe, Tecumseh). The subheadings can also be found by using the comprehensive, but awkward, index.

Free Trade and Sailors' Rights includes some helpful appendixes and a list of manuscript resources. Only the collections of the Indiana Historical Society and Indiana University's Lilly Library are listed. Surely the Indiana State Library and institutions at Lafayette, Fort Wayne, and Terre Haute, Indiana, have some manuscripts worth noting. A list of significant works of fiction and an author index might have made interesting additions to this bibliography, although they may have served only as distractions from the geographical orientation of the book. *Free Trade and Sailors' Rights* substantially fills the need of scholars and librarians for a comprehensive reference work on the War of 1812. Fredriksen has a clear and broad view of the early history of the United States. Readers should look forward to his further contributions to the history of that era.

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Library, Noblesville, Ind.

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