

friendship, as Jefferson in turn sought Monroe's help in founding the University of Virginia, convincing the sitting president to become a member of the board of visitors. In Jefferson's final years, they drifted apart again, as debt forced Monroe to sell his Albemarle home. Fittingly, concludes Cunningham, these two friends, who shared parallel careers as governor, diplomat, secretary of state, and president, both died on July 4—Jefferson in 1826, Monroe in 1831.

Intended for a general audience, this nicely written, carefully researched, generously illustrated volume not only shows each man's importance to the early American republic, but also underscores the vital contributions of their decades-long collaboration. The book's brevity ensures the superficial treatment of some complex subjects, however. In discussing the Monroe Doctrine,

Cunningham implies that Monroe followed Jefferson's advice to act in concert with the British, when in fact the president promulgated his doctrine unilaterally. Building his narrative almost exclusively around the written correspondence between the two Virginians, Cunningham at times strings out quotes from their letters without much analysis. Heavy reliance on their written correspondence, moreover, results in very thin treatment of those often critical times when both men were together at the same location, such as at Annapolis in 1783, and in Philadelphia in the early 1790s.

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1816

America Rising

By C. Edward Skeen

(Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003. Pp. xvi, 299. Illustrations, map, notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$35.00.)

Sometimes a period of time seems to focus events, trends, and meanings in such a way that it defines an era, casts a deep shadow, or fixes the terms of collective experience for a generation. In living memory, December 7, 1941, the year 1968, and September 11, 2001, stand out as examples of such

focusing. Historians of the early American republic have recently been drawn to similar red-letter periods: Andrew Burstein in *America's Jubilee: How in 1826 a Generation Remembered Fifty Years of Independence* (2002) and Louis P. Masur in *1831: Year of Eclipse* (2001). In 1990 Kenneth Stampp pub-

lished *America in 1857: A Nation on the Brink*, an events-driven look at an action-packed year that virtually guaranteed the coming of the American Civil War. In 1943 Bernard De Voto published what is still my personal favorite, *Year of Decision, 1846*, a sprawling epic, the print equivalent of a four-hour cinematic extravaganza, that brought into brilliant perspective a number of easily overlooked events converging on the Polk administration (itself easily overlooked) that truly redefined America.

Now comes C. Edward Skeen with *1816: America Rising*. Never one to indulge his own ego, Skeen wisely acknowledges the probability (proved out by this reviewer) of being compared to other one-year studies, protests (correctly) that his work began long before the two most recent examples of the genre, and takes steps (also correctly) to disabuse the reader who might think that he wants to claim for 1816 anything like the panoramic impact of De Voto's Wagnerian drama. But *1816: America Rising* nevertheless brings together in one convenient account a remarkable convergence of events, trends, and surprises that amply reward the attention given them by the author (and readers) of this nifty volume.

Specialists know that 1816 found a place in living memories (at least above the 35th parallel) as the "year without a summer." Skeen reviews reports of hard frost in June as far south as Steubenville, Ohio, and of the first frost of the new winter on August 29 in Richmond, Virginia.

Add to this freakish weather volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, sun spots, and eclipses of the sun and the moon, and some people cast their minds on Biblical end times. This year seemed to people at the time to mark a turning point—perhaps the turning point—in American history, and even human history.

Following this dramatic setup, Skeen reviews in clear, readable prose the American situation at the close of the War of 1812 with special attention to political issues that exercised "men of affairs"—and have exercised most historians since. The twists and turns of the Fourteenth Congress are lovingly displayed in four chapters that highlight the tariff and bank controversies, the horrible Compensation Act, and the ever-puzzling dilemma of internal improvements. Stepping away from congressional debates, Skeen examines July 4th celebrations as national ritual that was taking on recognizable liturgical form. One chapter focuses on national defense and the much-needed reform of militias and the national army, another on state-level problems that forced Supreme Court decisions with national implications. Finally, the birth of sentimental and humanitarian movements receives a nice overview in two chapters that track, among other things, the founding of new prisons, Bible societies, peace movements, and a national society dedicated to the emancipation and removal of African American slaves which resulted in the creation of Liberia.

Specialists may find this story all too familiar, but other readers will discover a delightful rendering of at least some of what worried the American people at the dawn of the nation's second generation. Adequate notes and a bibliographic essay will guide interested readers further into the literature. Subscribers to the *Indiana Magazine of History* are quite likely to

find *1816: America Rising* worth their time and attention.

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American Vanguard

The United Auto Workers during the Reuther Years, 1935-1970

By John Barnard

(Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004. Illustrations, notes, bibliographical note, index. \$49.95.)

Born out of a series of epic confrontations with some of the nation's largest corporations, and occupying a highly visible place as one of America's largest and most visionary unions, the United Auto Workers (UAW) fascinated observers during its glory days and has since received considerable attention from labor historians. Recent scholarship has tended to be critical of the UAW, questioning both the collective bargaining and social achievements of the union and its most prominent leader, Walter Reuther. In this sweeping history of the first four decades of the UAW, John Barnard flatly rejects this view and describes the UAW as an "American vanguard" at the forefront of efforts to humanize the workplace and fashion a social contract more favorable to working-class Americans.

Barnard vividly recounts and astutely analyzes the shop-floor, intra-union, and political dynamics surrounding the UAW's formation. Throughout the union's history, disputes over such crucial issues as the pace of work, supervisory treatment, job security, and adequate compensation inspired auto worker activism. Shop-floor militants—mostly socialists and communists—successfully united a diverse labor force and capitalized on a rare historical convergence of impaired credibility of top corporate leadership, state and public tolerance of militant labor action, and self-portrayal of union actions as upholding important American principles. Yet, as Barnard soberly notes, even after electrifying triumphs at General Motors in 1937 and Ford in 1941, the UAW leadership's broader ambitions were thwarted by GM's