

scrutiny: Is it true that "Jacksonian Democracy . . . did not begin over clashing economic and social interests"? Was none of the effort "to redirect party policies and restate a fundamental political philosophy" "inspired by economic or social changes taking place in the nation" (p. viii)? Were Van Buren's contemporaries in fact wrong in regarding him as "something less than a political statesman" (p. 1)?

Seemingly eager to take the *Autobiography* at face value, Dr. Remini sometimes interprets Van Buren's behavior with more sympathy than critical realism can justify. The same evidence in the hands of a more skeptical critic might prompt a highly disparaging evaluation of the eighth President's character. John Quincy Adams, admittedly a hard Puritan to please, complained of Van Buren's "obsequiousness, his sycophancy, his profound dissimulation and duplicity." At times, the author is apparently apprehensive: "Fundamentally," he concludes, "Van Buren was no 'magician' or 'intriguer'. . . ." (p. 3); he was indeed an intriguer "only occasionally, when a situation demanded it" (p. 2).

In his concluding remarks, the author indulges in some unduly expansive rhetoric: Van Buren and his colleagues "put together a splendid organization, and then gave it to the people" (p. 198). Van Buren "never fully realized that from these simple beginnings a great party of the people emerged, cutting across all sections and classes of the country and holding the Union together" (p. 197).

Professor Remini has clearly demonstrated Van Buren's skill in political organization, but the stereotype of the "intriguer" remains. Perhaps his forthcoming biography of Van Buren can reveal more fully the enigmatic personality of the man John Quincy Adams described as "an amalgamated metal of lead and copper" with a "tincture of aristocracy."

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The Jacksonian Era, 1828-1848. By Glyndon G. Van Deusen. *The New American Nation Series.* Edited by Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959. Pp. xvi, 291. Illustrations, maps, bibliographical essay, index. \$5.00.)

If, as Charles Dickens once said, books are the children of authors, then Professor Van Deusen can be justifiably proud of a lusty, exciting, colorful offspring. This latest addition to the *New American Nation Series* is among the best so far; and if succeeding volumes maintain the level of quality of *The Jacksonian Era* in combining scholarship and readability, then this most recent ambitious project in a cooperative American history will at least match the venerable old volumes of A. B. Hart and his colleagues.

The old *American Nation Series* was conceived and presented just at the end of a period when history was a staple in the reading diet of intelligent laymen. Since then there has been a decline in the interest with which scholarly history has been received by this public. Whether overspecialization, the emphasis on the monographic approach, and historians' lack of respect for the literary aspects of their craft should bear

the heaviest responsibility for this, as is so often averred, or whether this dearth of interest means a lack of confidence in history as an important source of knowledge and enlightenment by a harassed and confused Present cannot be discussed here. Suffice it to say that in any case the best interests of good history can be impressively served by more books like *The Jacksonian Era*.

Beginning with an admirable essay on the social history of the Jacksonian setting, Professor Van Deusen conducts the reader, who in the case of this reviewer was always entranced, expertly down the main highroad of American history from the milepost of the election of Jackson to the milepost of the election of Taylor—not, however, without a series of excursions into fascinating byways, skillfully chosen to enlighten and entertain the reader with appropriate detail. In illuminating Jackson's era the author has chosen to emphasize traditional political-economic-diplomatic history. He has eschewed any startlingly "original" interpretation of the period, seeking, as this reviewer sees it, to present a judicious and balanced view of the events and forces of the times through a reasonable consideration of the evidence. One slight disappointment to this reader was the relative lack of emphasis upon the emergence of the Jacksonian ideology. A more detailed consideration of its origins, manifestations, modes of thought, general influence and adherents, etc. would have been valuable in such a work, considering the crucial part the Jacksonian period played in the development of a general American ideology.

The book concludes with an excellent bibliographical essay which provides a reliable guide to the enormous mass of Jacksonian literature. While every such bibliography must of course from the very nature of it be selective, J. L. Blau's collection of *Social Theories of Jacksonian Democracy*, with its stimulating introduction, might have been included.

In sum, here is as good a popular, in the very best sense of the word, treatment of an important and exciting period in the history of the United States as one could desire. The author, the general editors, and the publishers are to be commended.

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Eureka: From Cleveland by Ship to California, 1849-1850. By Robert Samuel Fletcher. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1959. Pp. x, 145. Map, illustrations, index. \$3.00.)

As the title indicates, this account of a gold rush expedition via Cape Horn is unusual in that the barque *Eureka* began her voyage at the Great Lakes port of Cleveland, Ohio. For some of us who are witnessing the final completion of the St. Lawrence Seaway, it may come as a surprise to learn that an American craft with a twenty-six-foot beam should have journeyed from a point so far inland over a century ago. But thanks to the special permission of the English Privy Council (and American Minister to Britain, historian George Bancroft), the Welland Canal was made available, and the vessel's fifty-nine passengers, most of whom were from northern Ohio, began