

ness men cannot have too much information about Adam Smith, if only the readers approach the inspired one with critical insight into his shortcomings.

Historical Societies' Interest in Business History

There has recently come to the editor's desk a copy of a booklet entitled *Historical Societies in the United States and Canada: a Handbook*.¹ This booklet lists 1,467 historical organizations in the two countries, most of which are small local societies. For each of some 900 of these, the booklet gives the officers, the number of members, the annual income, a brief statement of the contents of the society's library or museum, and its publications. This book should be valuable to persons doing research in business history as a directory of societies and libraries to consult in any given locality about business records.

The business historian, of course, wonders how much *business* is represented in these collections. One knows that there is much business material in some of the large State historical libraries. The McCormick Historical Association in Chicago is an exception which proves the rule that there are few specialized collections of business records. One suspects that there is little business material in the collections of the Fillmore County Historical Society in Minnesota, which has "historical materials, records, relics, and household equipment kept at the home of the curator, Mrs. J. C. Mills."

¹Compiled and edited by Christopher Crittenden, editor, and Doris Godard, editorial associate, and published by The American Association for State and Local History, Washington, D. C., 1944.

Indeed, there is no definite indication that any considerable percentage of the societies or libraries, especially the smaller ones, are interested in the history of business. It would appear that even where there is such an interest, the emphasis has been on the pioneer, the petty-capitalist type of business man. Generally speaking, business men, particularly the larger mercantile, industrial, and financial capitalists, have not found much room in the archives of historical societies.

A New Book in American Social History

The attention of the readers of the BULLETIN is called to a new volume (V) in the series, *A History of American Life*. The book is *The Completion of Independence, 1790-1830*¹ by Professor John Allen Krout of Columbia University and President Dixon Ryan Fox of Union College. The series is a social history. The recent book gives a very readable and effective account of various aspects of American development at the beginning of the period of great expansion and change in the nineteenth century. It is notable because of the way it treats the history of business.

The first thing that strikes the reader in this connection is the frequent use of the word "business;" earlier books almost never used the word, but used "economic" instead. Several chapters are devoted largely to business, a truly remarkable proportion in view of the neglect of business in the past. Those chapters, significantly, are written in terms of business men, business organization, the function of different types of business, and the contributions of business. Altogether the book draws a useful and interesting picture of business from 1790 to 1830. It is true that it does not deal largely with business in operation or with problems of administra-

¹New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944. \$4.00.