

Book Review: The Constitution of the United States at the End of One Hundred Fifty Years

Reynolds C. Seitz

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BOOK REVIEW

The Constitution of the United States at the End of One Hundred Fifty Years. Indiana University Publication, Social Science Series No. 1, with an Introduction by Hugh Evander Willis. Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, 1939. Pp. 72. 75 cents.

The introduction comprising the first twenty-seven pages of this little book is by far the most interesting part of the volume. That does not mean, however, that the last forty-five pages are not meaningful. Unquestionably, careful and painstaking labor is represented in those last pages. For it is there that all the fundamental holdings of the Supreme Court have been incorporated and attached to the wording of the original United States Constitution in an attempt to give the reader as *one whole* the *real* United States Constitution as it exists after the first one-hundred and fifty years, that is, to March 4, 1939. The effort, of course, presents us with only a very brief outline of constitutional law. The authors did not intend it to do otherwise. As an outline the latter portion of this book should serve as a refresher of the memory, or as a very basic text for social science students who do not desire to specialize in government or law. Certainly, it is infinitely preferable to a copy of the original Constitution, and it is not so much longer as to destroy its practical value as an outline.

But in spite of the last forty-five pages the *great* value of the book—for there are other outlines of Constitutional Law¹—seems to be its introduction. There Professor Hugh Willis in masterly literary style has set forth his thesis which can be summarized by his own expression: "It would probably not be too strong a statement to say that more than one-half of our present Constitution is the work of the Supreme Court." In clarifying his position Willis does a brilliant job of showing just what the Supreme Court has done as a Constitution-maker in what he terms the eight periods of our constitutional history. The only possible criticism of Willis' approach might be based on the feeling that he is slightly too enthusiastic—too happy about the role of the Supreme Court in its modern control of business. Nevertheless, the introduction to this volume is a gem of literary style, and a great social science document. It should be read by every forward-looking American.²

REYNOLDS C. SEITZ.³

¹ ROTWEIN, *OUTLINE OF CONSTITUTIONAL LAW*. Academy Publication, Brooklyn, N. Y., 1937.

² For an exhaustive treatise see WILLIS, *CONSTITUTIONAL LAW*. Indiana University Press. 1936.

³ Professor of Law, Creighton University.