

Wessel, David. In Fed we trust: Ben Bernanke's war on the great panic. Crown Business, 2009. 323p index ISBN 9780307459688, \$26.99 In Fed We Trust combines the methodical approach and careful documentation of a good reporter and editor, which author Wessel is (The Wall Street Journal), with the drama, pace, and anticipation of the novelist Dan Brown. Authors have tried to capture the policies of the US's central bank--the Federal Reserve System--and the mindset of its previous presidents; William Greider's *Secrets of the Temple* (1989) and Bob Woodward's *Maestro* (CH, Jun'01, 38-5695) are two of the better ones. But Wessel treats its head since 2006, Ben Bernanke, almost in "real time" as the Fed chairman wrestles with the financial panics and global economic meltdowns of the last three years. The interactions of Fed and Treasury officials--principally Bernanke, Geithner, and Paulson--with venerable Wall Street firms (Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch, Bear Stearns), the insurance behemoth AIG, leading commercial banks (Bank of America, Citigroup, Wells Fargo), and mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac offer chilling insights into monetary policies and Bernanke's "whatever-it-takes" mantra during the US's worst economic performance since the Great Depression of the 1930s (or at least since 1982, depending on one's measuring rods). Already a virtual classic. *Summing Up: Essential*. All levels and collections. -- A. R. Sanderson, University of Chicago