

Robert V. Remini. *The Jacksonian Era*. Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1989. Pp. x, 139. Paper, \$8.95.

This book is a fine summary of Remini's extensive work on the Jacksonian period. Well-written and easily read, it may serve as either an introduction or quick review of the era. It is a volume in the American History Series, which editor John Hope Franklin describes as works where major historians write "not only where the subject stands in today's historiography but also about where they stand on their subject." Remini succeeds in doing both.

Remini deals with the basic political events of the era: the Bank War, presidential elections, Indian removal, and nullification. Beginning with Andrew Jackson as an American symbol, and taking us through his 1828 election to the presidency, the work introduces the student to the era's leading figures: Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, John Quincy Adams, and Jackson's successor, Martin Van Buren. Remini presents Jackson as a product of the frontier, a man of the people, and a true democrat battling scandal, corruption, and privilege. This is a view that has fallen from favor in recent years, but as Remini's many works support such a thesis, this work is a fine summary of that view.

Three key events of the Jacksonian era are examined in detail: the Bank War, the Nullification Crisis, and Indian Removal. Remini presents a good summary of each, with enough detail for teachers putting together lectures on these topics. Material on the Bank War is particularly crisp, capturing the emotional as well as the ideological issues involved.

Although primarily a political approach, Remini provides a chapter on "The Reach for Perfection," describing the many religious, social, and reform movements that characterized this same era. This is the weakest chapter, where Remini rushes from one movement to another. The final chapter, "The End of an Age," places the Jacksonian period in the broader developments of westward expansion and sectional conflict. Jackson's expansionist ideas are developed and linked to the Mexican War that set a more direct course for American foreign policy and national development. Remini brings the Jacksonian era to a close by showing how slavery and sectionalism replaced banks, tariffs, and internal improvements as the national political agenda. With the Wilmot Proviso in 1846 and the death of Old Hickory, Remini draws the era to a close.

Although historiography is not directly addressed, Remini often refers to recent corrective works and provides a detailed bibliographic essay. Within this essay, major monographs are cited for teachers preparing more detailed lessons or student research projects. Many recent titles are mentioned, providing a quick supplement to the Goldentree Bibliography Series volume Remini edited in 1979.

This work would be useful in undergraduate survey courses as supplemental reading. Its brief chapters on specific problems of the period are ideal material for essay examination questions or classroom discussions. Advanced high school students might also find much of this material of interest, given the right preparation. It also presents a working outline of the era for teachers in need of a way to organize the period for classroom use. Overall, this work is extremely useful as a teaching aid and a basic text.

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Richard E. Beringer, Herman Hattaway, Archer Jones, and William N. Still, Jr. *The Elements of Confederate Defeat: Nationalism, War Aims, and Religion*. Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1988. Pp. xi, 244. Cloth, \$30.00; paper, \$15.00.

The central theme of this book is that the generally accepted military interpretation of Confederate defeat is inadequate to understand the collapse of the Confederacy. The authors assert that the real cause of the defeat was a lack of nationalist feeling, unclear and changing war aims, and a gradual and demoralizing realization that God was not on the side of the South.

The authors conclude that the original war aim, preservation of slavery, was weakened during the war by the South's proposal to draft black troops and end slavery. The Southern commitment to states rights was weakened by the South's turn to a centralist government. They believe, also, that slavery was the only real difference between North and South. In all other loyalties and aspirations Southerners were bound to American history, the Union, and the Constitution. With the realization that the goals of the war were unreachable by continued military resistance, especially when confronted by Lincoln's lenient policy of reconstruction, the South decided to stop the conflict. Each