

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.

SUNY at Buffalo

George D. Torok

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

military defeat sapped the South's confidence that God favored their cause and further demoralized the Southerners. This demoralization contributed to a fifty-three per cent desertion rate by mid-1864. The authors effectively challenge previous interpretations of Confederate defeat such as the idea that internal dissension over states rights issues defeated the South by pointing out that independent policies of states like North Carolina did not effectively hinder the war effort.

For the student of military history, the book argues that the adherence of both sides to the nineteenth-century concept of huge turning movements advocated by Clausewitz and Jomini were used most effectively by the South. Such movements allowed Southerners to fight defensively and tended to equalize the armies and in fact put the South at an advantage. The Union blockade of the South is seen as ineffective and the general equality of the two armies' fighting capacity meant that a decisive blow to the South was never feasible. Up to the last Southern Armies were well supplied and generally equal to the North, especially when one considers the North's commitment of one-third of its forces to simply protect its supply lines in Southern territory. This did away with the numerical superiority of the North as a decisive factor. Grant's policy of warfare that amounted to large scale raids on the Southern interior were demoralizing; however, they left most of the South still in Southern control. The Southern decision not to engage in guerrilla warfare at the end indicates demoralization more than defeat.

Confederate commitment to the war was never that strong. Some three to five per cent of the Southern population fought the war as opposed to ten per cent in modern wars and much higher percentages in special cases. The authors point out that little Paraguay committed some fifty per cent of its people to a war.

The authors contend that in reality the South won the Civil War. After the war both Northern and Southern states became followers of states rights. Southern historians ignored slavery as a cause of the war and emphasized states rights as the more glorious cause. Slavery itself was merely replaced by the doctrine of white supremacy.

All teachers of history would be wise to incorporate most of these ideas into their explanations of the South's defeat. The much overrated military accounts of the war ignore other crucial factors in the defeat of the Confederacy. The South was a far more complex society than the usual explanations allow for. For the typical student the book demands a certain degree of prior knowledge, both of Civil War events and historiography. It would be helpful to use this book in conjunction with other accounts of the war. The book itself is a synthesis of earlier works on this subject like the authors' work *Why the South Lost the Civil War* and Henry Hattaway and Archer Jones's *How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War*. The book is an excellent response to other historiographical classics on the Civil War.

Mountain View College

Richard L. Means

***The Civil War: Two Views.* 75 minutes. One videocassette, teacher's notes, pre- and post-tests, simulation, chronology, activities. Available in Beta (7VB 0036) or VHS (7VH 0036). Order from Audio Visual, Inc., 17 Marble Ave., Pleasantville, NY 10570. \$189.00.**

This videocassette is intended for use by students in grades seven through twelve. Besides the seventy-five minute tape, the purchase package contains numerous teacher assistance materials such as a text transcription, sample test questions, bibliographical guides, and a creative simulation exercise section.

"The Civil War: Two Views" is a somewhat deceptive title with regard to this offering. Instead, three major subjects are addressed in the same film. Although the topics are certainly interrelated, time constraints and a less than skillful job of editing combine to produce an unbalanced product in both quality and quantity.

The video features four parts: the North before the war; the South before the war; the war itself; and the war's aftermath (Reconstruction). By far, the first two segments are the best. The script is fairly even and nicely paced while the economic, political, and social forces and factors that created a hostile atmosphere between the two diverse sections of the nation are adequately explored. The primary flaw here, however, is that some issues and events are not properly introduced, while others are presented out of chronological sequence or incorrectly.

Part Three, the war years, is also satisfactorily managed. Numerous camp and battle scenes combine with statistical data to make telling points and deliver perspective about this bloody American tragedy. But one wonders why greater use was not made of the wide range of photographic