Civil War Iowa and the Copperhead Movement. By Hubert H. Wubben. (Ames: The Iowa State University Press, 1980. Pp. xi, 280. Illustrations, notes, bibliographical essay, index. $15.95.)

Iowa's Civil War history is not so dramatic or so filled with conflict as that of other states of the present Middle West because the opposition to the Republicans was a much smaller minority in Iowa than it was in Indiana or Illinois. Hubert H. Wubben makes the most of it, however, and scarcely leaves a solitary aspect of the opposition unexplored. Since the Copperhead movement, as Wubben terms the anti-Republican forces, was comparatively small and insignificant, this book is in a large part a social history stressing the impact of the Civil War on social standards and behavior with a strong sidelight on economics. Some may therefore find the title a little misleading.

The author has some difficulty with definitions, most notably that of Copperhead. Members of this group are defined as Democrats who opposed the war as well as the policies of the national administration, in some cases even to the extent of favoring a Confederate victory. War Democrats come in two categories. One, not to be confused with the Copperheads, supported the war but opposed the Republicans politically. The other supported both the war and the national administration and so was almost indistinguishable from the Republicans. Fine distinctions are required, particularly in dealing with Democratic factionalism, and they are not always successfully made.

Some durable Civil War myths are effectively undermined. One is that the Germans were overwhelmingly Republican, when in fact most of them were Democrats. Another is that Democrats were grossly underrepresented among volunteers for the army. Yet another is that the fabled Knights of the Golden Circle extended its poisonous tentacles even into Iowa.

The author's steadfast objectivity accounts for his departure from long-accepted Civil War beliefs. Wubben takes nothing for granted and accepts nothing uncritically. His neutrality is perhaps carried too far in his treatment of the national administration's ruthless suppression of what was essentially a legitimate opposition, and an insignificant one at that. Also, it is doubtful if United States Marshal Herbert M. Hoxie was without both inspiration and sanction from Washington, D.C. One of the few departures from objectivity is the statement that "those cranky radical conservatives," the Copperheads, had nothing to offer but criticism of those who were attempting to

restore the Union. Actually, they had plenty to offer, the *status quo ante bellum,* the sanctity of the Constitution, and the political structure inherited from the age of Andrew Jackson.

Research is admirably done, and the writing is superb. Reliance is placed on original sources, such as local newspapers, which are too commonly neglected. Wubben's literary style makes his book interesting and absorbing as well as informative. The volume is an objective, well-researched, in-depth study of events and attitudes on the local level, just the sort of thing that seems most needed in the field of Civil War history.

Campbellsville College,
Campbellsville, Ky.
Gilbert R. Tredway

The Past before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States. Edited by Michael Kammen. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980. Pp. 524. Notes, tables, figures, index. $19.95.)

This book, originally conceived by the American Historical Association in 1977 as "a report on the part of historians in the United States to their colleagues in other parts of the world," gradually grew "broader and deeper than anyone envisioned at the outset" (p. 11). The result is a publication of great significance—a benchmark volume that professional historians will refer to frequently, graduate students studying for qualifying examinations will devour, and anyone interested in developments within the historical profession in the United States during the past decade or so will find interesting and informative.

Following Michael Kammen's thoughtful introduction, which summarizes the "marked transition [that] occurred within the guild of historians in the United States" (p. 20) in the 1970s, the book is divided into three sections. Part One—"Units of Time and Areas of Study"—examines American scholarship in seven broad temporal and geographic fields (e.g., Early Modern Europe, Asia). Part Two—"Expanding Fields of Inquiry"—focuses on eight areas of investigation that underwent substantial growth and/or change during the past decade (labor history, Afro-American history, and family history, for example). Finally, Part Three—"Modes of Gathering and Assessing Historical Material"—treats methodological innovations in research (oral, psycho-, quantitative social-scientific, and comparative history) and teaching.