humor, or of Chicago itself, this volume represents a good investment.

Ball State University, Muncie Wes D. Gehring

Trial By Fire: A People's History of the Civil War and Reconstruction. By Page Smith. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1982. Pp. xvi, 1038. End maps, index. $29.95.)

With this massive volume the indefatigable Page Smith presents the fifth volume in his "People's History" of the United States, a project that began with his two-volume history of the Revolution. Smith is a narrative historian, a skillful storyteller with a unerring eye for interesting and enlightening detail. This approach makes his work somewhat old-fashioned; it is not what most academic historians are doing these days, as Smith, who has all the credentials of the professional historian, well knows.

But this book is not addressed to academic historians. Smith's goal is to reach a popular audience, to provide a readable study based on modern scholarship but accessible to the general reader. He feels that much of modern historical scholarship, especially that concerning Reconstruction, seldom gets beyond the confines of the academy. As a result, the true record of Reconstruction and its accomplishments is largely unknown. Revisionist historians have provided a fuller and more accurate picture, but their specialized work, Smith insists, has not reached the general public which still considers Reconstruction as a tragic era marked by unrelieved corruption and motivated by a vindictive desire by the victorious North to punish and humiliate the defeated South by imposing upon it domination by ignorant blacks and their vicious, self-seeking white allies, the carpetbaggers and the scalawags. Thus this long book is designed to reach the public that the academic historians have failed to reach.

If his intended audience provides one meaning for the "people" in Smith's subtitle, his approach to his material provides another. He seeks to depict the lives and fortunes of the people by including ordinary, everyday, homey incidents and by making extensive use of diaries and letters to present these incidents in the words of the participants themselves. Smith's work lacks the methodological apparatus characteristic of the new social history, which shares his goal of describing the lives of the common folk but not his methods. The new social historians would insist that surviving diaries and letters are not typical in any statistical sense; in fact, most are the work of people who are hardly typical in any sense. If the opinions of ordinary soldiers as expressed in

letters and diaries are not typical, they do express the views of ordinary people. The same cannot be said of the diaries of such people as Gideon Welles and George Templeton Strong, which Smith uses extensively. Nevertheless, if the heavy use of such material does not qualify Smith as a new social historian—a goal that he does not seek in any case—it does give his story a dramatic quality that is absent in so much of modern historical scholarship.

Because this book is not intended to be a work of original scholarship, it would be improper to criticize it for its failings on that score. One questions, however, if Smith has fully achieved his purpose, if the book will reach the audience for which it was designed. A thousand pages of text present a forbidding task even for an avid reader. Although the many interesting anecdotes and descriptions might hold a reader's attention, they might also obscure the major themes Smith attempts to present.

At the same time, despite its inordinate length, the book scants important parts of the story. Smith gives little attention to what may be called economic reconstruction—the roles of merchants, landowners, blacks, and northerners in building a new work regime and credit system and in writing the laws and establishing the precedents necessary to build a free labor society on the ruins of the slave labor system. Sharecropping, tenancy, and the crop lien do not even get the attention necessary to warrant an entry in the index.

Despite these reservations, the book can be recommended to the readers for whom it is designed. Smith has written good popular history. In these days when so much of the history written for the popular audience is bad history, Smith's achievement is an important one.

Purdue University, West Lafayette Harold D. Woodman

How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War. By Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983. Pp. xii, 762. Maps, illustrations, notes, figures, appendixes, tables, bibliography, index. $24.95.)

Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones here present a major study of the military conduct of the Civil War, with special emphasis on strategy and logistics. The beginning student of Civil War military history will find the work an unmatched guide to how war was fought in the midnineteenth century. Anyone already well versed in Civil War history will find immensely stimulating the authors' interpretations of Union and Confederate