

the reader will look in vain for mention of organized terrorist groups like the Jayhawkers or the Ku Klux Klan. This sanguine approach may account for his conclusion: "perhaps it will be in the South after all that racial harmony and justice will take deep root and prosper." Nevertheless, this is an admirably lucid, comprehensive, and concise synthesis, and a useful addition to the shelves of scholar and student alike.

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Mr. Madison's War: Politics, Diplomacy, and Warfare in the Early American Republic, 1783-1830. By J.C.A. Stagg. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983. Pp. xviii, 538. Notes, appendix, index. Clothbound, \$50.00; paperbound, \$18.50.)

The War of 1812 has never had the hold on the national consciousness as the two major conflicts that preceded and followed it: the American Revolution and the Civil War. The relative lack of interest in the war is probably owing to its failure to resolve the stated principal problem that led to the war: the impressment of American seamen by the British navy. Also, several brilliant victories were offset by major disasters that left the two sides in a virtual stalemate at the end of the conflict.

Most studies of the War of 1812 can be divided into two groups: studies on the causes of the war and studies on military operations during the war. J.C.A. Stagg attempts to break from this pattern by focusing on James Madison and his political philosophy and on how he implemented that philosophy in conducting the war. In a superbly researched and written volume, Stagg has managed to say something new about an important period in American history.

In his first two chapters, which cover the period 1783-1812 and occupy a full third of the book, Stagg concentrates on two questions: "why James Madison believed he could win a war against Great Britain, and win it, moreover, by seizing Canada" and "why the war occurred when it did" (p. ix). Although the author has a good discussion of the development of Madison's thought after the Revolution and the place of Canada in his thought, the analysis could have been strengthened with a discussion of the allure of a Canadian conquest to many American leaders both before and during the Revolution. Madison was greatly influenced by their ideas. In both cases, the conquest of Canada failed, in Stagg's words "from the practical difficulties of waging a Canadian war" (p. 502).

The remaining two-thirds of Stagg's book is devoted to a discussion of several factors that influenced the conduct of the

war, including state-federal politics, diplomacy, Indian-white relations, and army operations. The author succeeds remarkably well in integrating these important themes into a coherent story. Rather than emphasizing the ineptness with which the Americans conducted the war, a popular approach to the War of 1812 among historians from the time of Henry Adams, Stagg focuses on "a detailed study of what the Madison administration intended to happen in the War of 1812, of how it translated this intention into specific policies, and only then to consider what happened to those policies as they were carried out" (p. x).

While the study is well balanced, there are some problems. Some readers will be dismayed with the harsh treatment of William Henry Harrison. Stagg portrays Harrison as an indecisive, incompetent leader through the use of several quotations from his enemies, but a more balanced appraisal of Harrison would have to include statements from his friends and discuss his accomplishments. It could not have been simply blind luck that made Harrison the most successful commanding general in the Northwest during the War of 1812.

There are other weaknesses in *Mr. Madison's War*, although they are not wholly the fault of the author. A select bibliography, a more detailed index, and maps would have made the work more useful. The hefty price for the hardcover edition is a part of a disturbing trend in the publishing world that might result in many worthy academic works not being published at all or only being available to more affluent individuals and institutions.

Despite these drawbacks, *Mr. Madison's War* is an important work that deserves to be read and reread. Stagg has made a significant contribution to our understanding of the history of the early American republic.

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Speaking of Abraham Lincoln: The Man and His Meaning for Our Times. By Richard Nelson Current. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983. Pp. 196. Notes, index. \$17.50.)

This volume contains eleven speeches which deal with the life and influence of Abraham Lincoln, delivered between 1955 and 1982 by the noted scholar, Richard Nelson Current. Eight of these addresses were published previously. They discuss Daniel Webster as a political exemplar for the younger Whig, President Lincoln as a model and inspiration for his successors (Democratic and Republican), and "recent Lincoln scholarship" (p. 39). The last mentioned of these essays was written in 1960 and, unfor-