The War for Independence: A Military History. By Howard H. Peckham. *The Chicago History of American Civilization.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958. Pp. ix, 226. Bibliography, index. $3.50.)

It may not be the province of a book reviewer to debate the publishing philosophy behind a book, yet one cannot but wonder why a university press spends money which might have been devoted to genuine historical research upon an undocumented series of brief and generalized historical essays. Why, furthermore, does the *Chicago History of American Civilization* series require two books to cover the same subject? Although the emphasis in *The War for Independence* is primarily military, while that of Professor Edmund S. Morgan's *Birth of the Republic* is political, economic, and diplomatic, there are inevitable repetitions and major disagreements in interpretation between the two volumes. Together they simply constitute another narrative history of the American Revolution which, although running a poor second to the Civil War, is one of the most hackneyed topics in the gamut of the American past. What can Peckham and Morgan, in their combined 378 pages, say that has not already been said by a thousand other writers in every conceivable way—from Lossing's picture book to Churchill's mellifluous tomes?

This question seems to be especially pertinent when directed to the military aspect of the Revolution. The revived interest in military history has inundated the market with recent books on the campaigns and battles of 1775-1783. Ten years ago John C. Miller published his *Triumph of Freedom,* and this excellent survey was followed almost immediately by Willard Wallace's brief summary and Christopher Ward's blow by blow account. Then came in rapid succession the colorful narratives by Montross and Bill; the significant biographical studies by Freeman, Alden, and Crane; monographs and articles too numerous to mention by Kyte, Willcox, Barnhart, Nettles, and Knollenberg; and Alden's summary of the research of half a century in his contribution to the *New American Nation* series—to say nothing of a plethora of really good historical novels. The work of this remarkable decade has virtually rewritten the history of the American Revolution, and while there are still some gaps in the research, the general outlines have been fully sketched.

If, nevertheless, still another book on the Revolutionary War had to be written, it could not have been done by a better man than Howard Peckham. During the author's residence in Indiana he imbibed from his Hoosier surroundings a literary polish which, added to his originally felicitous style, makes any book he writes worth reading, regardless of its contents. Add to this the fact that he is now the librarian in charge of the best collection of British Revolutionary manuscripts in the country, and his selection as author of this particular volume in the Chicago series becomes eminently logical. Few historians could so well have combined solid familiarity with the vast literature of the field, ready access to important source materials, and technical skill. This becomes apparent in the introductory chapter with the following eloquent observation:

"For a century and a half the story of the Revolution was a frequent topic of Fourth of July orations delivered in the open under sunny skies. In truth, it should be a winter's tale, told around a hearth on a windy night when there are no distractions, when images rise easily in the flames, the crackling of logs suggests musket shots, and the comfortable warmth is enjoyed as a dividend of that remote victory" (p. 5).

One should not expect, however, to find anything new in so brief a treatment of so familiar a subject, yet it may honestly be said that Peckham brings a certain freshness of viewpoint and a great deal of enthusiasm to his work. He is especially helpful in clarifying such matters as chain of command and immediate tactical responsibility, although perforce he pays little attention to recruiting, finance, medical service, and logistics. He devotes less space to the interplay of politics and warfare on the American than on the British side, where his explanations of the seemingly incomprehensible moves by Howe, Clinton, Cornwallis, and Germaine are fully satisfactory. One excellent feature which might have been sacrificed to the demands of space is the treatment of the war after 1778 as a world-wide struggle, with due attention to the campaigns in the West Indies and the Mediterranean as well as on the American continent. All of this makes the behavior of Estaing and Grasse more reasonable than nationalistic historians have pictured it. On the other hand, Peckham nobly resists the revisionist's compulsion to make a lucky blunderer out of Washington, unheralded strategists out of Gates and Lee, and a misunderstood patriot out of Arnold. The story told in these pages is for the most part the traditional one, with the same heroes—Washington, Greene, Clark, Wayne, Lafayette, Morgan, Jones—that one learned to venerate in childhood, presented with their halos slightly askew but still there, and with the reputations of the same villains—Gates, Lee, Arnold, Tarleton, Butler, and Burgoyne—tarnished as usual, but painted with a little more realism.

Like all the books in the Chicago series, this one has no footnotes but contains an excellent essay on pertinent bibliography, an adequate index, and a useful chronological table. The indispensable maps are sadly missing but important place names are at least located on end paper diagrams. As one reads this book and is about to write it off as an exceptionally good potboiler, Peckham suddenly throws in something that gives it genuine superiority—such as the fighting record of a Negro Rhode Island regiment (p. 100), or the fact that a state navy led by officers with such distinguished names as Saltonstall and Revere could still be wiped out on the coast of Maine (pp. 123-124).

One of Peckham's most interesting chapters is the final one, "The Summing Up," where he comes to grips with the imponderables of history. This will be highly satisfactory to patriots. The author concludes that the American victory, obtained in spite of logic and statistics, was not the result of French aid or British ineptitude, but of three American secret weapons—the dedication of her officers, the higher morale of her soldiers, and George Washington. One may not agree completely with Peckham's analysis but one cannot quarrel with

his final sentence. "And the great lesson," he avers, "the final discovery of the Revolutionary generation in its search for political order, is revealed to us: that although the first payment for freedom is courage, the installments due to keep it are unity and vigilance."

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The South in the Revolution, 1763-1789. By John Richard Alden. Volume III, *A History of the South.* Edited by Wendell H. Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press and the Littlefield Fund for Southern History of the University of Texas, 1957. Pp. xv, 442. Illustrations, maps, critical essay on authorities, index. $7.50.)

This is one of the better volumes in the *History of the South* series. In the main, it is clearly and concisely written; it shows extensive use of secondary and monographic studies, adequately knit together with source materials; and a middle-of-the-road approach gives historical balance.

The author, well aware that there were many Souths at the beginning date (1763) of his study, concludes that the South had emerged as a section by the end of the revolutionary epoch. The major portion of the study is devoted to the five colony-states and their "western lands," but the Floridas receive appropriate attention. In covering the twenty-six years after the Seven Years' War, Alden sketches the general picture in some distinguished prose, describes the post-war British program and the South's reaction to it, narrates the expansion of the colonies, details the military engagements, analyzes the political, social, and economic changes of the period, and tells of the role of the South in the formation and adoption of the Constitution. The southern Indians—in a very different position after the defeat of the French in 1763—move in and out of the story in proper perspective.

In analyzing the new role of the British troops in North America, Alden feels that the sixteen regiments were "unnecessarily numerous," the movement of the troops in 1768 from the interior toward the Atlantic Coast denied the British claim that their purpose was the protection of the colonies (and the colonials understood the significance of the move), and that any such claim was "indefensible after 1770." Though British government in the colonies "annoyed rather than seriously injured," increasing opposition was nurtured by ineptness of the mother country officials. At the same time, internal conflict in some of the colonies was becoming serious, and it is perhaps worth noting that while the North Carolinians struggled against the "pernicious system of local government," the South Carolinians were clamoring for more local officials and control. The author is strong in his conviction that too much has been said about the Regulators as champions of democracy.

Military events are allotted almost one hundred of the four hundred pages of text. This represents unbalance, especially since only actual fighting is related. Further imbalance is found in this section, for the battle of King's Mountain is given only one page.