of the relationship between the problem of marketing Union securities and the legislation establishing the National Banking System" (p. 172). Professor Hartz, in his remarks on government-business relations, stressed the growth in political power of the federal government during the war; but Professor Elazar saw such growth as part of a continuing trend and drew attention to a similar expansion of government at state and local levels. Professor Chandler focused his remarks on the significance of the transportation revolution in the ten or fifteen years before the war. For the rest, changes in economic institutions were seen as evolutionary, stretching through the entire twenty-three year span to which the conference gave its attention, rather than as a result of the war itself.

This very good book, which no serious student of the American economy or the Civil War era can afford to be without, includes a summary of the conference by Harld F. Williamson, who served as chairman; short notes on each of the principal speakers and commentators; and a list of all the participants. Unfortunately, it lacks an index.

Indiana University 

Irene D. Neu


In 1963, under the sponsorship of Stanford University's Institute of American History, Glyndon G. Van Deusen of the University of Rochester discussed "Why the Republican Party Came to Power"; Roy F. Nichols of the University of Pennsylvania, "Why the Democratic Party Divided"; Avery O. Craven of the University of Chicago, "Why the Southern States Seceded"; and David M. Potter of Stanford, "Why the Republicans Rejected Both Compromise and Secession." Comment was provided by Don E. Fehrenbacher of Stanford, Robert W. Johannsen of the University of Illinois, and Charles G. Sellers, Jr., and Kenneth M. Stampp of the University of California at Berkeley. The four papers and four critiques are published in this book, with the Institute's able director serving as editor.

Among these experts' numerous suggestions and opinions, a few may be selected as illustrating judgments of particular scholars. Van Deusen, for example, says, "If pressed to single out the most important concrete factor" involved in his topic, "I would answer that it was the prospect of the extension of slavery" (p. 19). Fehrenbacher believes that, although "slavery in the territories had ceased to be a pressing substantive issue" by late 1858, "the odds were plainly with the Republicans" after President Buchanan's endorsement of the Lecompton Constitution (pp. 25, 29). According to Nichols, the Democratic party broke up "because of a complex series of personal failures" (p. 50). While acknowledging this as "a large factor," Johannsen adds that "something must be said" for "divisive forces" and for "issues and antagonisms . . . deeply rooted in men's minds" (p. 59).
Craven points out that "the Northern mind and conscience had kept pace" with the industry, cities, finance, and railroads of the era, while Southerners "deliberately . . . turned their backs on the nineteenth century" (pp. 71, 75). To Sellers, the South multiplied "threatening forces of outside criticism until the tension became intolerable" (p. 89). Potter thinks the Republicans "took the steps that led them into a war . . . because they could not grasp the fearfully decisive consequences" of their "rather indecisive line of action" (p. 106). Finally, Stampp attributes Republican preferences and procedures to a "variety of reasons," including political strategy, moral conviction, and national pride (p. 113).

Such excerpts do only partial justice to the nuances (most of them highly creditable) resulting from the years of research and writing which these authorities' careers exemplify. This reader subscribes to most of the judgments, notably those of Van Deusen, Nichols, and Fehrenbacher. At least twice, commentators draw model distinctions between the paper-readers' viewpoints and their own. One important line of demarcation appears in the Potter-Stampp division regarding the "supreme task of the historian" (p. 108). Quality adorns so many of the pages that constant scholarly objectives of accuracy and lucid analysis will be splendidly served if The Crisis of the Union is placed in the hands of graduate students and undergraduates in seminars and lecture rooms throughout the land.

University of Kentucky

Holman Hamilton


For many years the standard view of Reconstruction in this country has been a Southern one, namely that it was sordid in its motives, oppressive in its application, and tragic in its consequences. During the past generation, however, and especially since 1960, historians have thoroughly re-examined the period. As a result all of the old concepts have been either totally rejected or substantially modified. According to the new interpretation Reconstruction contained at least as much good as bad and represented in particular a worthwhile attempt to deal with a problem which still vitally concerns the nation—that of the Negro's place and role in American life. This revisionistic approach, which obviously has been influenced by modern-day developments on the civil rights front, already prevails among professional historians and is rapidly making its way into the textbooks and classrooms.

Kenneth M. Stampp's The Era of Reconstruction sums up the new research and is avowedly revisionistic. In general it is superior to John Hope Franklin's Reconstruction After the Civil War, (1961) the only other book so far available that presents a synthesis of recent Reconstruction historiography. Not only does it have the advantage of later scholarship, but it is better written and more objective. In fact Stampp's work can be compared favorably to Clement Eaton's History of the Southern Confederacy in that it packs a lot of informa-