

tures. Instead, he reanalyzes the crisis to illustrate the complexity of Jacksonian policy making, the importance of great men to that process, and the role of compromise in American politics.

Peterson excels in the descriptions of his principals. Henry Clay's ambition, Daniel Webster's jealousy, and John C. Calhoun's pertinacity all emerge with clarity. Although he begins with a review of the larger issues at stake in the crisis, questions that transcend the role of individuals are less prominent as Peterson continues his story. The emergence of political parties, the rise of the business lobby, and the popular meaning of competing economic policies all receive minimal attention. Peterson seems to be implicitly reaffirming the primacy of traditional political narrative over the competing claims of the various "new" histories—social, economic, cultural, and political.

To be sure, Jacksonian government constantly verged on personal histrionics. Well aware of this quality, Peterson insists that "the political life of the time, from the rhetoric of debate to the decision on specific issues, was dominated by a few leaders who enjoyed the same celebrity and power on the public stage as the dramatic actors of the age enjoyed in the theater." It is only fair to add, however, that the drama of nullification stretched beyond its star-studded cast to entangle the lives of many other citizens. Was the destruction of the American System really irrelevant to subsequent generations of American businessmen, farmers, and workers? If so, what are we to make of the fact that the most pressing controversies of the age had virtually no practical consequences outside the seemingly closed world of high-level politics?

Peterson has written a perceptive and reliable account of a great political set piece. He is also correct to reassert the importance of political history, but historians need not abandon innovative approaches to the past in order to heed his message. Jacksonian politics ought to be ideal ground for linking the high drama of congressional intrigue to the changing fortunes and aspirations of millions of Americans. Peterson justly claims that "leaders like Jackson, Clay, and Calhoun were more than ordinary politicians. They were public symbols of ideas [and] personifications of policies." There is consequently all the more reason to extend the meaning of their actions beyond the proscenium of Washington's political theater.

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HARRY L. WATSON

*The Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis.* By Michael D. Green. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982. xvi + 237 pp. Maps, notes, and index. \$18.95.)

In this well-written analysis of the Creek Indians before 1836, Michael D. Green combines ethnohistory with political narrative. The book begins with an overview of traditional Creek society, organized into independent towns but united by a matrilineal clan system. Green admires the leader Alexander McGillivray, who realized the need to preserve Creek independence by centralizing authority in a National Council. But he condemns the acculturated half-breed William McIntosh, whose corrupt dealings resulted in the fraudulent Treaty of Indian Springs (1825) that ceded two-thirds of Creek lands. Georgia governor George Troup is presented as a grasping politician who stopped at nothing to get Indian lands. President John Quincy Adams sacrificed

Creek interests to avoid a federal-state conflict, by a new "compromise" treaty. Creek leaders felt forced to agree to this cession of one-third of their lands to prevent war with Georgia and to annul the 1825 fraud.

Internal weakness and confusion for the Creeks was the result of this compromise. About one-third of their 20,000 people had to be hurriedly resettled in their remaining Alabama lands. As acculturated Creeks adopted patriarchal nuclear families and private property, disharmony resulted and weakened the clan system. After 1827 Alabama extended its jurisdiction over the Creeks. In vain did Creek leaders appeal to Washington to enforce their treaty guarantees of self-government.

Green shows that Andrew Jackson was not the first president to favor removal, but Jackson went further in breaking treaties by encouraging state governments to expand their power over Indians. The Creeks, desperate to get protection from intruders, agreed to still another treaty in 1832 that gave individuals the option of emigration. But after only half-hearted attempts to enforce this treaty, Jackson offered removal as their only alternative. As white squatters terrorized Indians off their farms, a few Creeks finally struck back in violence in 1836. The government used this "war" as justification for the wholesale removal of almost all Creeks. By this time there was no power to resist, as starving, dispossessed Indians were rounded up.

In criticism, this book has an inadequate conclusion on the 1836 outbreak and removal. Nothing is said of the further atrocities and broken treaties later experienced by the Creeks in Indian Territory. Some illustrations would have helped, and the few maps were inadequate. Green repeatedly uses the term assimilation, when he means acculturation. More could be said on the impact of social changes relating to religion, alcoholism, and family structure. But these criticisms are minor when considering the excellence of the book overall. It is a superior contribution to the new Indian history.

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WALTER L. WILLIAMS

*The Papers of Henry Clay*. Vol. 6: *Secretary of State, 1827*. Ed. by Mary W. M. Hargreaves and James F. Hopkins. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1981. viii + 1448 pp. Notes and index. \$35.00.)

The appearance of another volume in *The Papers of Henry Clay* after a nine-year interval is a welcome occasion. This one covers 1827, the third of Clay's four years as secretary of state. Like its predecessors, the volume includes correspondence both to and from Clay, personal business, diplomatic papers, and speeches—everything, apparently, except legal work for clients. Many routine papers, particularly diplomatic dispatches and patronage matters, have been simply noted, summarized, and excerpted by the editors. Even so, the volume bulks quite large. No more comprehensive collection of Clay's papers is ever likely to be wanted.

The project of editing Clay's papers was begun thirty years ago; ten volumes were planned. The first three of these appeared in relatively good time (1959, 1961, 1963), but when the project reached Clay's term at the State Department it slowed dramatically. After nineteen years and three more volumes, only three of Clay's four years as secretary have been covered. Mary W. M. Hargreaves (senior editor for this volume) and James F. Hopkins, who have edited the papers thus far, retire with their undertaking still unfinished.