statement that "he [Stevens] had long been powerful in Pennsylvania politics" (p. 27).

Yet this is clearly an important book in the field of American Civil War history, based on an impressive quantity of research in government documents, manuscript collections, and books and articles that relate to the topic, with lesser use of contemporary newspapers and periodicals. Blueprint for Modern America demonstrates the advantages for American political history of the kind of investigation that has borne fruit in this book. It is to be hoped that Professor Curry's example will inspire similar explorations of the operations of Congress, not simply during the last two years of the Civil War but also in other periods of our national history.

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The significance of the Jacksonian assault on the Bank of the United States inevitably eludes the introductory student in American history. Even most American historians find the Bank War dull and confusing. But, as Robert Remini argues, "The Bank was the single most important event during the entire middle period of American history." The author has written a tidy synthesis of the Bank War that should convince all readers of the magnitude of that battle.

The author views the Bank War essentially through the prism of politics. He acknowledges the broad opposition to the BUS that included rising entrepreneurs who felt oppressed by the Bank's restrictions on paper money, the hard money advocates, and the strict constitutionalists. The core of the conflict, however, involved politics. The war on the BUS became a crusade for the Jacksonian Democrats and it assisted them to strengthen the party's organization. Furthermore, the war set the mold of Jacksonian politics.

In its early stages the Bank War was a test of will between Andrew Jackson and Nicholas Biddle. Jackson emerges from these pages as a stubborn and dogmatic old man (sixty-one years old in 1828) who harbored the frontier prejudice against banks and who only superficially understood the complexities of finance. When baited his explosive temper vented its fury on his adversaries, and in battle,
whether it be against Indians, British, or political opponents, he accepted no quarter. Jackson's adversary in the Bank War was the bank president, Nicholas Biddle, who stood in perfect contrast to the Hero of New Orleans. Handsome, wealthy and intelligent Biddle understood the complexities of finance and recognized that his bank offered some vital services to the nation. Yet, he was arrogant, vain and lacking in political tact. Biddle was as committed to the defense of the BUS as Jackson was to its demise. The Bank War became a duel between equally implacable foes.

Jackson, while privately committed to either controlling or demolishing the BUS, at the outset remained discreetly cautious. The President recognized that the Bank had considerable sympathy in Congress and that most citizens favored an extension of the Bank's charter. Jackson, therefore, intended to delay his attack on the BUS until he had dispensed with the election of 1832. Biddle, however, aroused the ire of the President by seeking a renewal of the Bank's charter in 1832, four years early. Jackson then plunged headlong into the battle and forcefully vetoed the bank renewal bill. With that stroke, Jackson closed the door to compromises; and, in fact, Biddle would have accepted no compromise.

The subsequent autumn and Presidential campaign provided Jackson an opportunity to submit his case to the people. The Jacksonians fashioned the campaign as a crusade to protect the common people from the monied interests who supported the BUS. This strategy determined the nature of politics for a decade. The Jacksonians paraded as the champions of democracy and castigated their opponents, the Whigs, as defenders of aristocracy. The chapter on the 1832 Presidential election brilliantly recounts the depth of political chicanery, the viciousness of political propaganda and the extent of graft common to the politics of the Jackson period.

Though the Bank issue lost Jackson some votes (the author unfortunately fails to analyze the returns), the President interpreted his victory as a mandate to kill the BUS. He, therefore, proceeded to finish his task in 1833 and 1834 by ceasing to deposit government funds with the BUS. Instead the administration deposited the revenue with certain "friendly" state banks selected by Amos Kendall, a member of Jackson's inner council.

The major result of the Bank War, the author cogently argues, was that it enhanced the power of the Presidency. Jackson's use of the veto, particularly the veto of the bank renewal bill, compelled Congressional leaders hereafter to consider the President's opinion on
proposed legislation. Jackson skillfully employed Presidential persuasion to bring appointments of friendly congressmen to committees and to whip wavering party members into line. As he campaigned against the BUS in 1832-33, Jackson claimed that only the Presidency was the true representative of the people. Finally he used the power of the Presidency to consolidate the party and to assert the President as the unchallenged party leader. With the end of the Bank War Jackson had transformed the character of the President from the prototype of a prime minister into an office of assertative leadership so necessary for the effective operation of democratic government.

This volume is indeed a fine study. The author vividly portrays the principals involved in the fight and superbly captures the drama of the struggle. He explains with considerable clarity the complexities of finance and politics. Though he essentially views the war from the cockpit of the White House, Remini has written a well-balanced and judicious account. Furthermore he supplies an extensive bibliography which includes the more recent scholarship. The Bank War will need no other history for some time.

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Dr. Oliver Perry Chitwood's contribution to West Virginia University's centennial in 1967, *Richard Henry Lee: Statesman of the Revolution*, bears the hallmark of a lifetime of study, teaching and writing on colonial history. A Virginian himself and a graduate of the College of William and Mary with a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University, he is now professor emeritus of history at West Virginia University.

Lee, the subject of this biography, might have written another "Gentle Art of Making Enemies," with his genius for turning his friends and their kinfolk into lifelong enemies. One might divide his life into three periods, his early political career in the Virginia House of Burgesses, his contributions through the Continental Congresses and the House of Burgesses to the Revolutionary War and his post-Revolutionary political career in the new Congress, all marred by quarrels.