

duce readable history books. Students and parents with curiosity, and the honesty to realize that the teaching of history and geography in the public schools is woefully inadequate and mired in "political correctness," will find Davis' contribution valuable and enjoyable.

THE BOOK contains no illustrations, but the text is broken into superbly organized chronological segments that include topical questions (e.g., "Who were the first Abolitionists?", "Why was Andrew Johnson impeached?"), "Civil War Voices" (e.g., Andrew Jackson, Sam Houston), "Documents of the Civil War," and "Songs of the Civil War." The first 150 pages cover the prelude to the war, from Thomas Jefferson's attempt to include the evils of slavery in the Declaration of Independence to Lincoln's election in 1860. Davis, of course, cogently covers the details of the war itself. The last 100 pages cover the aftermath of the war — the destruction of the South and the forging of a continental nation. The emancipation of the southern slaves — more than 4 million people set free to fend for themselves in an unfamiliar market economy — was a profound event not yet satisfactorily digested 130 years later. Understanding America's race problems begins with an understanding of the vast effect and force of the consequences of our Civil War.

The Civil War claimed more than 500,000 casualties. Historical novels, sometimes, can best bring the tragic enormity of that statistic into human perspective. Jeff Shaara's *Gods and Generals* carries on this fine tradition. A prequel to his father's *The Killer Angels* about Gettysburg, the younger Shaara's book takes us

from the beginning of the war through the battle of Chancellorsville in early 1863 where the stage is set for Robert E. Lee's fateful invasion of the north. California is the setting for early chapters of the book as U.S. Army officers such as Albert Sydney Johnston and Louis Armistead, posted at military headquarters in Benicia, decide to

Don't Know Much About The Civil War

by **Kenneth C. Davis**
William Morrow, 1996,
453 pages, \$25, cloth;

Gods and Generals

by **Jeff Shaara**
Ballantine, 1996,
490 pages, \$25, cloth;

Chancellorsville

by **Steven W. Sears**
Houghton Mifflin, 1996,
449 pages, \$35, cloth.

resign their commissions and join the Confederacy. Johnston and Armistead travel to Los Angeles (where Confederate sentiment runs high) for a drunken farewell to Winfield Scott Hancock, captain of quartermasters in California. Johnston will die at Shiloh. Confederate General Armistead will meet Union General Hancock on the field of battle at Gettysburg, once like brothers, now each a "killer angel." The book's final pages, with illustrations, give us a gripping fictional, though historically well-grounded, tale of Chancellorsville, where the brilliant and daring tactics of Lee and the death of Stonewall Jackson are portrayed.

Shaara's fictional account of the battle at Chancellorsville takes up

fewer than 100 pages. Stephen Sears' *Chancellorsville*, at 450 pages, will be regarded as the definitive historical account of the great battle of May 1863, when "Robert E. Lee was at the peak of his powers" and "Stonewall Jackson was at the peak of his fame" and the Confederate Army of North Virginia seemed invincible. Lee defeats "Fighting Joe" Hooker (but fails to destroy Hooker's Army of the Potomac), and Lee suffers the incalculable loss of Jackson, shot by mistake by his own men. The battle of Chancellorsville is really the beginning of the end for the South, as it encourages the hubris of Lee's invasion of Pennsylvania and his disastrous gamble at Gettysburg.

One cannot intelligently discuss "affirmative action" or "ebonics" without understanding that the issues are rooted in the opportunities and problems associated with the Great Emancipation of the 1860s. Harry Truman said, "The only thing you don't know is the history you haven't read yet." As Lincoln might say, it is altogether fitting and proper that we continue to study the Civil War. CPR

Correspondence

(Continued from page 22)
ern Civilization, a thing that is being lost through the neglect of those who say they love it but who actually, by and large, take it for granted. Cutting off all immigration would contribute to only a tiny degree, if at all, to slowing the disintegration of our way of life. We will be able to say conservatives are serious about sustaining their freedom when they found or buy or otherwise takeover a few newspapers, broadcast networks, film studios, universities, professional and labor organizations, and governing bodies of major religions and devote themselves sufficiently to using them to teach freedom. That's how this way of life was built; anything less is just whistling past the graveyard.

Lynn Sampson Recommends

Video

Without a Clue (Orion Home Video, \$19.95, 540 Madison Avenue, NY, NY 10022, Catalog Number 2733). I



caught my 19-year-old son laughing uproariously at this 1988 movie now available on video. A new take on the hundred-year-old Sherlock Homes stories, this hilarious film stars Michael Caine as the world's most famous detective and Ben Kingsley as the faithful Dr. Watson. However, things are not what they seem!

Music

Violin Voyager (ROM Records, \$16.95, CD, Box 491212, Los Angeles, CA

90049, Catalog Number 26004). Violinist Kim Angelis revives the charm, energy and pathos of Slavic Gypsy music. In her debut CD. Accompanied only by harp, guitar, piano, and cello with an occasional tambourine, she is able to journey between fire and tears on her versatile instrument.

Restaurants

Jacob's (2501 McHenry Avenue, Suite D, Modesto, CA 95350, 209/529-2829). Sometimes a restaurant can be as much an artistic experience as attending the symphony or a gallery opening. Eating at Jacob's is a little of both. Besides having the best fried calamari in California, the decor and service make it just about the most exquisite place in which you could ever dine.

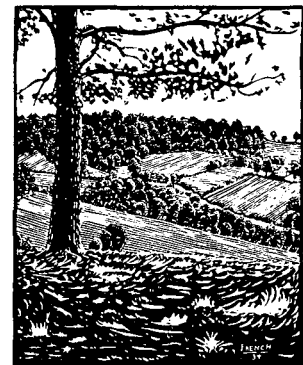
Books

Camille: The life of Camille Claudel by Reine-Mari, Paris (Arcade Publishing, Little Brown and Company, New York, \$14.95). After a disappointing

season of art gallery visits, I happened upon this 1988 illustrated biography of little known French sculptor Camille Claudel. I was instantly struck by the power that heart-felt, honest art can have and by the sadness of realizing the paucity of quality and sincerity we are suffering from in the modern art world.

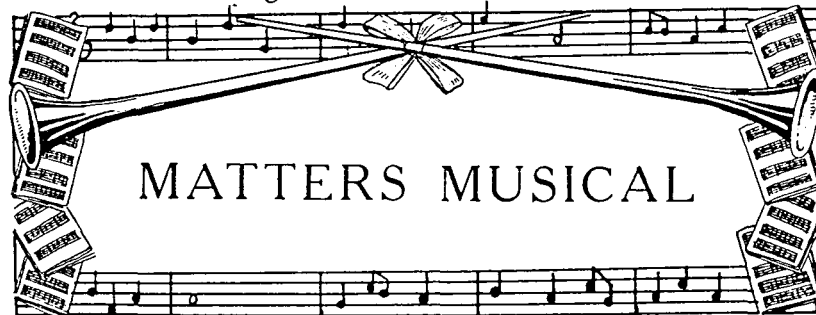
Hugging a Tree

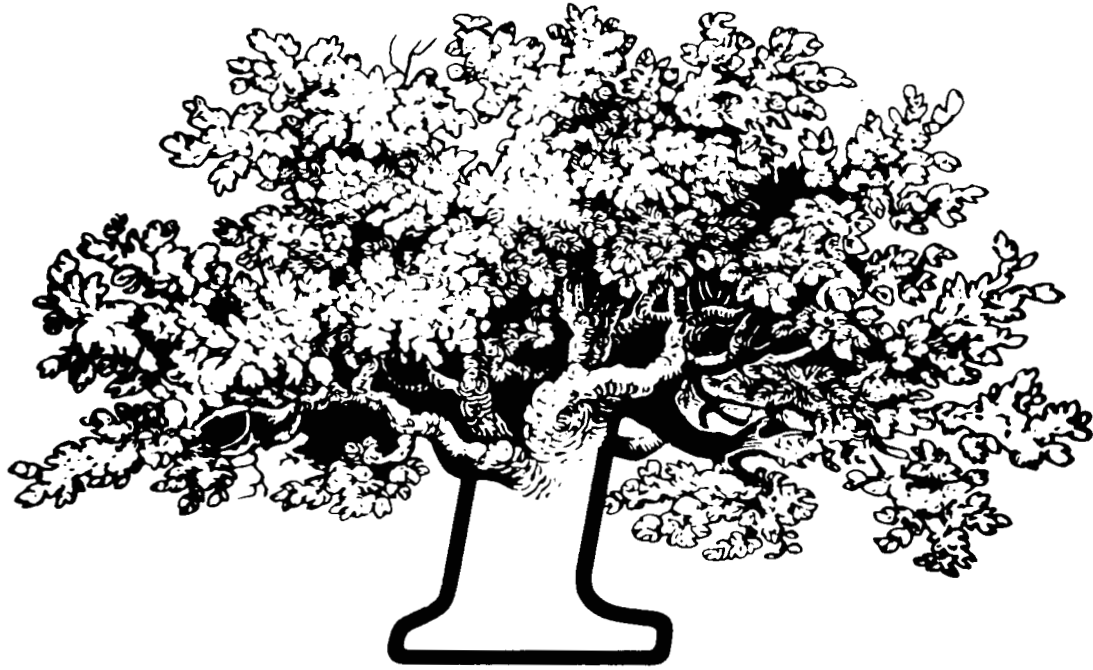
Windstar Foundation (2317 Snowmass Creek Road, Snowmass, CO 81654,



970/927-4777, Basic membership \$35). If you are looking for sensible environmentalism, then Windstar is the place. Headquartered near Aspen, Windstar devotes itself to level-headed, rational projects and maintains a 1,000-acre preserve in the Rocky Mountains, open to all year-round for hiking, birding, and wildlife viewing. **CPR**

A veteran print and broadcast arts critic, Lynn Sampson hosts "Movies Worth Watching with Lynn Sampson," daily on KCIV-FM, Modesto.





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