

chic energies of new science and technology, typified by industry's giant engines. Adams felt his attempts, in *Mont-Saint Michel and Chartres* (1913) and in *The Education of Henry Adams* (1918), to discover a continuity between the 13th and the 20th centuries—to reconcile the images of the Virgin and the dynamo—had failed. "All he could prove," Adams wrote of himself, "was change." Yet, Blackmur insists that Adams was unsuccessful only in the sense "that we cannot consciously react to more than a minor fraction" of life. Adams's education was "pushed to the point of failure as contrasted with ordinary education which stops at the formula of success."

CIVILITIES AND CIVIL RIGHTS: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom

by William H. Chafe
Oxford, 1980
436 pp. \$13.95

In February 1960, four black students sat down at a "for whites only" Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. Within two months, the sit-in movement had spread to 54 cities in nine Southern states. Within a year, some 200 cities had engaged in at least some desegregation of public facilities in response to black-led demonstrations. By focusing on events in one city in the 1950s and '60s, Duke historian Chafe conveys an unromantic sense of the realities often lacking in broadbrush accounts of the Movement; he describes the failures of white paternalism and of uneven efforts by blacks. In 1954, Greensboro was the first Southern community to agree to comply with the Supreme Court's ruling to desegregate schools. Yet, Chafe argues, Greensboro's enlightened approach was shaped by white leaders who intended to alter "only minimally" the racial status quo. After each racial outburst, the old subtle patterns of prejudice re-emerged. Worse, adds Chafe, "North Carolina's image of progressivism acted as a camouflage, obscuring [to black activists and well-intentioned whites alike] the extent to which underlying social and economic realities remained reactionary." Only after riots in 1969 brought 600 National Guardsmen to Greensboro and threatened the town's prized reputation, did influential local white busi-

ness leaders join with blacks to bring about real change. In 1971, the school system of Greensboro was finally integrated—17 years after the famous *Brown* decision.

Contemporary Affairs

**THE STATE OF THE
PRESIDENCY**

by Thomas E. Cronin
Little, Brown, 2nd ed., 1980
417 pp. \$14.95

Americans want a President who is just and decent *and* tough and forceful. We admire humility, but most great leaders have been exceedingly vain, and the public equates being "too nice" with being "too soft." Americans themselves are, to a large extent, to blame for their disillusionment with politicians, contends Cronin, a political scientist at the University of Delaware. (Forty-seven percent of eligible voters stayed away from the polls in 1976.) Cronin reflects that "the presidency was not designed to perform the countless leadership functions that we have come to demand of it." Under the Constitution, he notes, in almost every instance (save, perhaps, the pardon) presidential powers are "shared powers." The President is not free to monopolize policymaking. Yet, today, the chief executive is expected to assume roles—international peacemaker, moral leader, economic manager—not spelled out with any clarity by the nation's founders. This edition of Cronin's 1975 study of the political pressures that have shaped contemporary Presidents' performances includes data from interviews with private citizens, White House aides, Cabinet officials, and Oval Office advisers, from the Kennedy through the Carter administrations.

**UNLOVING CARE: The
Nursing Home Tragedy**

by Bruce C. Vladeck
Basic, 1980
305 pp. \$13.95

More than one and a quarter million elderly Americans reside in nursing homes. The cost of their care exceeds \$12 billion a year. Tax dollars, paid out to public and private facilities alike, cover 80 percent of the bill. (Three-fourths of the country's nursing homes are operated for a profit.) This mishmash of state and federal buyers in absentia and cost-