

Book Reviews and Notices

The Politics of Long Division: The Birth of the Second Party System in Ohio, 1818–1828, by Donald J. Ratcliffe. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2000. xvii, 455 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$65.00 cloth.

Reviewer Kenneth J. Winkle is professor of history and chair of the history department at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. He is the author of *The Politics of Community: Migration and Politics in Antebellum Ohio* (1988) and *The Young Eagle: The Rise of Abraham Lincoln* (2001).

Over the past generation, historians have focused on explaining the transition from the First Party System to the Second as a way of illuminating the foundations of popular political participation and partisan identification in the nineteenth-century United States. A handful of explanations—class antagonisms, political ambitions, sectionalism, opposition to the spread of slavery, ethnic and religious orientations, and the spread of market capitalism—have by turns won acceptance and vied for primacy as the debate has unfolded. Now Donald J. Ratcliffe applies his considerable knowledge of Jacksonian Ohio to pose a multidimensional explanation that considers all of these factors to revise our understanding of antebellum party formation.

Historians agree that the Second Party System emerged relatively early in Ohio. As early as 1828, the controversial confrontation between Andrew Jackson and John Quincy Adams evinced a well-fleshed-out party system. As Ratcliffe acknowledges, "Clearly the presidential election of 1828 represents the decisive moment when a majority of voters first formed commitments to what became the Democratic and National Republican-Whig parties" (13). Party divisions remained generally stable throughout the 1830s and 1840s, until resistance to the westward spread of slavery upset the balance between the two parties and provoked the pervasive sectionalism of the 1850s. Ratcliffe disagrees, however, with traditional interpretations of both the timing and foundations of the Second Party System. His exhaustive research into local records, newspapers, letters, diaries, and election returns provides a detailed portrait of a political system taking shape a decade earlier than once assumed, gelling during what he labels the "multiple crisis" of 1818–1820 that combined an economic depression with the first stirrings of antislavery. The First Party System disappeared after 1815, with Federalists dwindling to an ineffective and unpopular mi-

nority in the wake of the War of 1812. The ascendant Republican majority broke into factions during the Panic of 1819 and the Missouri Crisis. National Republicans demanded federal economic intervention, sided with the Northeast in the debate over slavery, and won the election of 1824 under the aegis of Adams and Henry Clay. Jacksonians, however, seized on the emerging partisan divisions to recruit new voters. By 1828, voter turnout had more than doubled to sweep Jackson into office. Ratcliffe concludes that multiple factors intersected during the formative crisis to ground the new parties simultaneously within socioeconomic, ethnic, religious, community, and personal dimensions. The early political imprint, forged in the early 1820s, persisted for the next generation.

The Politics of Long Division is the most comprehensive analysis of popular politics in Ohio during this and indeed any period of history. The book benefits from the author's decades of experience with the topic and impressive familiarity with the relevant source material, primarily manuscripts and newspapers. The narrative bristles with insights into prominent personalities and local political events while presenting a political process wracked by far greater complexity and subtlety than previously imagined. It proves less persuasive when addressing the state and national levels. Ratcliffe does, however, undermine the sometimes false clarity of previous interpretations. His contribution here is to provide a model of political analysis that recommends a closer look at local and personal factors and an earlier starting point for popular participation.

A Perfect Picture of Hell: Eyewitness Accounts by Civil War Prisoners from the 12th Iowa, edited by Ted Genoways and Hugh H. Genoways. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2001. xiv, 337 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, biographies, bibliography, index. \$42.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

Reviewer Garold L. Cole is professor emeritus at Illinois State University, Normal. His latest book is *Civil War Eyewitnesses: An Annotated Bibliography of Books and Articles, 1986-1996* (2000).

A Perfect Picture of Hell is an anthology of diaries, letters, and memoirs written by soldiers of the 12th Iowa Infantry about their experiences in Confederate prisons. Between April 6, 1862, and July 15, 1864, members of the regiment were captured in battles at Shiloh, Corinth, Jackson, and Tupelo and incarcerated at the infamous prisons of Libby, Belle Isle, Cahaba, and Andersonville, as well as at lesser known locations in Mississippi, Georgia, and Florida. To my knowledge, this is the only scholarly book to focus on the prison experiences of a single regiment.

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