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act that led to the intervention of federal authorities. Still, accidents were to claim more casualties than clashes with government forces.

A western group that formed in San Francisco and came under the command of Charles T. Kelley in Oakland spent some five weeks in Iowa. Kelley's men entered the state at Council Bluffs, where Jack London joined them, then marched to Des Moines, where President B. O. Aylesworth of Drake University presided at a sympathy meeting and compiled data collected by Drake students on the marchers' occupations, politics, religions, and nationalities. The contingent next sailed down the Des Moines River to Keokuk on boats made by members before heading for St. Louis.

By vividly recreating the marches of the industrial armies during the grim spring of 1894, Professor Schwantes contributes to our understanding of a protest movement of poignant interest. Still, the book disappoints on some counts. At points, text and dust jacket ("His narrative . . . shows how Coxeyism presaged the New Deal relief and recovery programs") claim too much for Coxeyism. To be sure, Schwantes shows caution in his analytic final chapter, "Coxeyism in Perspective," but overall, narration outweighs analysis. One especially misses an explicit comparison of the meaning and efficacy of protest marches by diverse laborers with alternative forms of organized protest, such as unions based in laborers' workplaces or political activity based in workers' neighborhoods. Schwantes sheds more light on westerners in the Coxeyite movement than did McMurry, its earlier chronicler, but he largely ignores the admittedly small northeastern protest forces, which, according to McMurry, drafted "the most radical and comprehensive program presented by any of the industrial armies" (228). In other respects—organization, coverage of incidents, and at some points even language—Schwantes's book reads more like an updating, fifty-six years later, of McMurry's study, rather than a rethinking of Coxeyism.

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

SAMUEL T. MCSEVENEY

The Decline of Popular Politics: The American North, 1865-1928, by Michael E. McGerr. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986. xi, 307 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 cloth.

In *The Decline of Popular Politics* Michael McGerr provides a detailed description of how political campaign strategies and styles changed in the North after the Civil War. His story covers an evolution through three overlapping strategies for inducing citizens to vote: spectacular, educational, and advertising. As they had before the war, both major

parties continued in the late 1860s and 1870s to rely heavily on political *spectacles* in which virtually all male voters could participate. Torchlight parades, uniformed marching units, rallies, club meetings, day-long orations, and the like gave individuals a personal sense of belonging to their party; party loyalty, in turn, induced them to vote a straight party ticket on election day. This spectacular approach also nourished powerful machines and encouraged high voter turnouts in the late nineteenth century.

The second strategy—the use of *education* rather than spectacle—first arose among the elitist, upper-class, intellectual fringe of the American political spectrum. These critics felt strongly that voters should make their decisions on the basis of issues rather than mindless adherence to the party line. Independents, Mugwumps, and other opponents of blind partisanship favored an educational approach designed to inform and encourage independent voting behavior. The 1876 Democratic presidential nominee, Samuel J. Tilden of New York, was the first to conduct an extensive national campaign using the educational strategy. But author McGerr concludes that it was Iowa Republican James S. Clarkson who perfected the educational approach. A Des Moines newspaper editor, Clarkson was an able and devoted workhorse for the GOP. The party rewarded him with an appointment as first assistant postmaster under President Benjamin Harrison in 1889, and Clarkson also served as Republican national chairman. The party fared poorly in the 1890 congressional elections and then lost the presidency in 1892, however, though McGerr correctly indicates that issues rather than the Iowa organizer's campaign methods caused these defeats. The subsequent 1896 McKinley-Bryan contest was a classic example of educational campaigning, with both parties explaining their positions on the tariff and money issues with descriptive pamphlets, newspaper articles, speeches, and other techniques Clarkson had advocated.

After the turn of the century, a third strategy, *advertised* politics, gradually replaced education. Public relations experts rather than politicians now managed campaigns that focused on individual candidates rather than on the party, as they had in the era of spectacle, or on issues, as they had in the educational phase. Campaign literature became slicker and shorter on substance; newspaper and, ultimately, radio coverage emphasized personalities.

Despite the efforts of professional publicists and managers, voter turnout fell markedly after 1900. The change from nearly unanimous participation of the electorate in the 1860s to half or even less of the population voting in the 1920s marks the decline of popular politics referred to in the book's title. Professor McGerr leaves the reader with

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two strong impressions: first, that this decline in popular participation in politics was unfortunate and, second, that the changing campaign strategies he describes were largely responsible for bringing about the decline. Yet he proves neither of these points. Indeed, the author himself frequently gives passing notice to many other factors like immigration, urbanization, modernizing media, uninspiring candidates, and alternative forms of entertainment that surely had as great if not much greater influence on voter behavior than campaign strategies.

McGerr won a Yale University prize for the doctoral dissertation on which this book is based. But, though it is well written, clear, and based on exhaustive research, it is not very interesting. One problem is that it is almost too detailed and documented. Rather than being content with straightforward declarative statements, McGerr reiterates and reemphasizes—and includes lengthy and repetitive quotations—to hammer home not very controversial or questionable points. More than that, the book suffers from its focus. A study of mechanisms for shaping and encouraging political behavior is far less riveting than revelations about the rascals and honorable gentlemen who ran for and won office, or even, for that matter, than investigations of the many issues on which they campaigned or the beliefs they held about current affairs and future prospects for the United States. One can only hope that this obviously talented and industrious historian will turn his attention to a more compelling topic in the future.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

JOHN DOBSON

The Hoosier Politician: Officeholding and Political Culture in Indiana, 1896–1920, by Philip R. Vandermeer. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985. xii, 256 pp. Illustrations, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95 cloth.

The Hoosier Politician is the first attempt by an American historian to unify many of the concerns of the “new” political historians and to apply both their quantitative techniques and theoretical interests to state-level politics. The major purpose of the book is not to give a narrative account of Indiana politics between 1896 and 1920, but to describe Indiana’s political culture—the changing institutions, political behavior, and values of Hoosiers and their politicians during the era. In attempting to describe a political culture at any particular time, the new political historian is much indebted to other social scientists, particularly political scientists and sociologists, for their theoretical contributions and quantitative techniques. In *The Hoosier Politician* Vandermeer draws heavily on political science theory and largely

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