

was encouraged by a wide variety of sources: guidebooks, land speculators, leaders of organized settlement colonies, thousands of tourists who were part of aggressive railroad advertising, newspaper editors, and government officials, such as governors Alexander Ramsey and Willis Gorman. In a separate article, Jane Carroll relates the story of the openly partisan journalistic voices. Counteracting reality, promoters emphasized Minnesota's climate, health, water and timber resources, and agricultural potential. "A favorite ploy was to emphasize Minnesota's centrality—not its northness" (59). Defensive about any criticism, boomers often drew a direct connection between winter conditions and the hearty character of residents, an image still perpetuated a century and a half later.

"Day in the Life" sketches of residents add a personal dimension to the territorial story. Included are depictions of interactions between Dakota and Ojibwe people struggling to control their ancestral land; descendants of European fur traders and their Indian wives; and Swiss, Irish, African-American, and Swedish immigrant women.

Everyone associated with this publication should be proud of the final product. The scholarship is solid and highly readable, based mainly on primary and selected secondary sources. Five maps enhance the text, as do magnificent reproductions of contemporary paintings and photographs. Careful editing is evident throughout. This is simply a beautiful piece of work that should attract the interest of scholars and a wide reading audience.

Political Abolitionism in Wisconsin, 1840–1861, by Michael J. McManus. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1998. xiv, 288 pp. Notes, tables, bibliography, appendix, index. \$39.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY VERNON L. VOLPE, UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT KEARNEY

Following years of reinterpretation of antebellum politics and society, revised studies of individual states are most appropriate. Political historians who have reexamined the opponents of slavery and the origins of partisan loyalties have raised questions about the antislavery origins of the Civil War while also criticizing antislavery forces for an inconsistent commitment to racial equality. Wisconsin, like Iowa, represented an important "western" Republican state that opposed slavery's expansion, and thus warrants special analysis. Michael McManus has attempted to meet this historiographic need with a detailed study of abolitionist politics in Wisconsin. While partially fulfilling this function, other aspects of the work remain surprisingly disappointing.

McManus proposes to challenge the so-called ethnocultural interpretation of political instability in the 1850s. Yet he does not use small-unit election returns, reporting that township returns for Wisconsin are difficult to locate. Instead, he relies on county-level data and employs mostly uninspired quantitative analysis. His analysis of Liberty Party voting, for example, makes little effort to locate the sources of third-party commitment. Discounting numerous previous works stressing religious motivations for such third-party activities, his lone comment is that antislavery views also flourished outside the churches. Despite this failure to examine abolitionist origins, he nonetheless advances conclusions about the Liberty Party's nature and abolitionist doctrine, relying mainly on the comments of a few leaders and party journals. The result is a rather misleading view of the often disorganized third-party movement.

McManus's main purpose in this respect seems to be to validate the work of his mentor, Richard Sewell, whose works on John P. Hale and antislavery politics stressed the continuity between Liberty and Free Soil roots and the emerging Republican coalition. Hardly an original interpretation in itself, this view dates back to the work of Theodore Clark Smith, Dwight Dumond, and other pioneers in antislavery historiography. Conceding that majoritarian politics and racial beliefs circumscribed Republican efforts on behalf of African Americans (particularly in the prewar years), Sewell and McManus nonetheless insist that Liberty Party "parentage" guided the Republican efforts (92, 131). Always true to a limited but debatable extent, this view can nevertheless spawn such exaggerations as the claim that Liberty and Free Soil supporters favored "identical programs" to eradicate slavery (53).

In some ways Wisconsin is an ideal state to demonstrate this link; the state often led the way in radical opinions. But in other respects the state is less representative; tiny Liberty Party percentages rose to commanding Republican majorities in a newly admitted state that experienced impressive population gains. While some similarities remained between Liberty appeals and those of the Free Soil movement, and to a lesser extent the Republican Party, this approach seems to offer few interpretive advantages. McManus's emphasis on the now rather conventional idea appears rather unimaginative and indeed somewhat ingratiating.

More original and intriguing is his development of the states' right wing of Republicans in Wisconsin. This position developed quite naturally from party leader Sherman Booth's well-known role in a famous fugitive slave case and, of course, from efforts to deny southern interests control of the federal government. McManus thus may

exaggerate the extent of states' rights sentiments among Wisconsin Republicans, but the issue did play a role in intraparty factionalism, the study of which represents McManus's main contribution with this work. Garrisonian-like remarks, or even those reminiscent of nullification, might nonetheless better be viewed in the context of intraparty rivalries and otherwise viewed as a tactic employed against southern domination in government. Nonetheless, the "conditional Unionism" that McManus examines among Wisconsin antislavery forces adds a further dimension to the texture of antebellum politics.

This volume makes a worthy contribution to the study of the Civil War's antislavery origins, but dust jacket claims that the book pre-empt's other interpretations are quite undeserving. Despite the rather startling innovations of the past generation, this work remains primarily a conventional study with a mostly standard interpretation. Yet the careful examination of the issue of Unionism among Republicans suggests what can be accomplished when a student ventures beyond the work of his mentor.

Patriotic Toil: Northern Women and the American Civil War, by Jeanie Attie. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998. xiii, 294 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$37.50 cloth.

REVIEWED BY THERESA R. MCDEVITT, INDIANA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Histories of the American Civil War have most often focused on the activities of military males. The conflict itself would have been far shorter, however, if civilian women on both sides had not supported it with their labor and donations. In countless ways—from taking up occupations vacated by enlisted men to providing medical services at home and at the front—women sustained the war effort. Particularly important to the struggle were the donations women sent to state, local, and private soldiers' aid societies—gifts whose value has been estimated at nearly \$50 million. Such contributions were especially significant given the unexpected nature and duration of the war and the weak and decentralized federal government's limited ability, particularly at the start of the conflict, to provide adequately for the troops it had assembled.

In *Patriotic Toil* Jeanie Attie examines the tensions that arose surrounding the highly significant wartime benevolent efforts of northern females. Attie places her study within the context of decades of prewar change and debate over the nature of women and their proper place in society. She explains that while women were generally excluded from public life during this period, they were able to escape the confines of

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