traditions, or a farmer's desire to improve the quality of his every-
day life.

The larger difficulties which ultimately threatened the pol-
icy's existence and forced drastic changes in its many components
stemmed not only from the rulings of the Supreme Court but also
from the disgruntlement of farmers who thought other plans would
better fill their needs. The debates and criticism that the AAA
encountered were often a continuation of the controversy that had
raged among farm and government leaders for the previous half
century.

The final chapter of the book offers the author's assessment
of the various New Deal programs and emphasizes their impor-
tance in laying the groundwork for future decades of American
farm policy. In keeping with Saloutos's other works, the entire
book is well written, thoroughly researched, and easily read, de-
spite the necessary inclusion of statistics and technical material.

This work can be characterized as both an ending and a be-
beginning, and it serves well in both instances. The American Farmer
and the New Deal was the last scholarly effort of Theodore Sal-
outos, who died shortly before its publication. It is a fitting cap-
stone for a very substantive and productive career. The book also
marks the beginning of the Henry A. Wallace Series on Agricul-
tural History and Rural Studies, a new effort of the Iowa State
University Press. Saloutos's work sets an excellent example of
research and scholarship that one hopes will become the hallmark
of this collection.

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The Antimasonic Party in the United States, 1826-1843. By Wil-
liam Preston Vaughn. (Lexington: University Press of Ken-
$16.00.)

This is a solid study of the first third party in American
history. Vaughn is to be commended for this workmanlike mon-
graph—the first on Antimasonry in over eighty years.

The "Blessed Spirit," as Antimasonry was nicknamed, had
its origins in an incident known as the Morgan Affair. In 1826
William Morgan, a disaffected Mason living in western New York,
was planning to write an exposé of the Masonic Order's rituals.
He was abducted and never seen again. Vaughn concludes that
he probably was murdered by Masons. When it became apparent
that influential Masons were impeding the investigations into
Morgan's disappearance, a frenzy similar to a religious crusade erupted against Masonry in the "Burned-over District."

The religious aspect of Antimasonry was transformed quickly into a political party by ambitious young politicians like Thurlow Weed, William H. Seward, and Thaddeus Stevens, whose goal was to drive Masons from political life and ultimately to destroy the secret fraternity altogether. The new party was most successful in states like New York, Pennsylvania, and Vermont, where the two-party system was weak. It had more difficulty in states such as Ohio, where the two-party system was strong, or in states where one major party was predominant, as in New Jersey.

The Antimasonic party had little attraction for the South, where all reform movements were suspect, or for the West, except in the Michigan Territory, where it flourished briefly. In Indiana, Vaughn notes that although "a few state legislators had Antimasonic inclinations and the crusade was reported to have had some influence in eleven counties, Antimasonry in the Hoosier State had an ephemeral existence" (p. 169).

Antimasonry attempted to assert itself as an independent force in national politics from 1830 to 1833, but after William Wirt's disastrous defeat in the presidential election of 1832 the fortunes of the one-issue party declined rapidly. It did manage to survive for a few more years by forming coalitions with either of the two major parties. Ultimately, most Antimasons merged with the Whigs.

Vaughn examines the rise and fall of the party in exhaustive detail in every state where the "Blessed Spirit" was an active force. One caveat is necessary: those chapters on the movement at the state level are tiresome as one attempts to follow the constantly shifting alliances and Byzantine behavior of obscure politicians. The author manages to chart his way through this maze and show that while Antimasonry was of short duration, it succeeded in destroying Masonry, albeit temporarily, in the Northeast.

Vaughn concludes that Antimasonry's important political contributions were its creation of the presidential national nominating convention and its role in the formation of the Whig party.

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