

The volume has some shortcomings. Some scholars may fault Cayton for his heavy reliance upon published sources, and historians of women may find his coverage disappointing. Although he includes a chapter on "The World of Anna Tuthill Symmes Harrison, 1795–1810" and provides some discussion of Native American women and Sarah Hill Fletcher, an Indianapolis resident during the 1820s and 1830s, Cayton focuses primarily upon men during most of his narrative. Yet the volume remains a very good synthesis of the history of the frontier period in Indiana. *Frontier Indiana* is well written and should enjoy a wide audience. Moreover, it will be welcomed by any historian who has an interest in Indiana or the Midwest.

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Thomas Taggart: Public Servant, Political Boss, 1856–1929. By James Philip Fadely. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1997. Pp. xii, 267. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$27.95.)

Throughout the twentieth century, Thomas Taggart has been a personage of legendary stature to Hoosiers interested in Indiana politics. Folk accounts and formal histories have uniformly characterized Taggart as the dominant figure in the Democratic party of Indiana during the first quarter of the century.

Undoubtedly, Taggart's legend has endured in the popular mind because it has some of the appeal of romantic fiction owing in part to the fact that Taggart exercised great political power from an unlikely place; *i.e.*, French Lick, then a resort town and gambling center in rural southern Indiana. Actually, in some respects Taggart's life ran according to the formula of an Horatio Alger novel. He began life in the United States as a poor immigrant youth from northern Ireland. Evidently he was a descendant of Scots-Irish Presbyterian folk. After one year of high school Taggart began his working life as a floor sweeper for a railroad restaurant and hotel in Xenia, Ohio. Later he was employed in the position of railroad depot hotel manager in De Kalb County, Indiana, and then in Indianapolis. Subsequently, Taggart became the proprietor of Indianapolis hotels and then owner of the French Lick Springs Hotel, a spa patronized by many of the nation's rich and celebrated personalities. Ultimately, Taggart was a multimillionaire whose property included family mansions in Indianapolis, French Lick, and Hyannis Port, Massachusetts.

Taggart's increasing success as an entrepreneur coincided with his rise to power in Indiana politics and government. He was Marion County auditor (1887–1895) and mayor of Indianapolis (1895–1901). Meanwhile, he served terms as Marion County Democratic party chairman and as the Democrats' state chairman. He was also chair-



THOMAS TAGGART, 1913

Indiana State Library, Indianapolis.

man of the Democratic National Committee (1904–1908) while he was the committeeman from Indiana to that national committee (1900–1916).

This is the first complete biography of Taggart. The full scope of the book's coverage is not revealed by its title. While much of the biography focuses on Taggart's roles as an officeholder and as a political boss, almost half of it concerns his business affairs and family life. Although not uncritical, the volume presents a sympathetic view of Taggart as a genial, generous, honest, and decent man who was devoted to his family and to public service. While describing Taggart as the unrivaled Democratic boss in Indiana during an age when this state's role in national electoral politics was perceived as pivotal, James Fadely concludes, "He made governors, congressman, senators, vice presidents, and even presidents" (p. xii).

The book's endnotes cite a great variety of published material, several interviews, and some manuscript collections, including the Taggart papers. Newspaper accounts furnished much of the information about Taggart's life, especially for the period when he was approaching the zenith of his success (1895–1905). The book provides fuller descriptions than analyses of Taggart's achievements in business and politics.

Thomas Taggart should be read by students of state and national political history. James Philip Fadely tells an interesting life story in a readable style that may appeal to general readers, as well as to scholars.

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Blue Lightning: Wilder's Mounted Infantry Brigade in the Battle of Chickamauga. By Richard A. Baumgartner. (Huntington, W. Va.: Blue Acorn Press, 1997. Pp. iii, 244. Illustrations, maps, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$30.00.)

In June of 1863, while fighting in their first real battle in Hoover's Gap, Tennessee, a brigade of Indiana and Illinois men advanced so rapidly and fought so aggressively they earned the nickname Lightning Brigade. Richard A. Baumgartner has written the history of this Civil War brigade during the time Colonel John T. Wilder was its commander, from December, 1862, through the Battle of Chickamauga in September, 1863. During this time the brigade helped the Union's Army of the Cumberland drive the Confederate army out of middle Tennessee and then out of Chattanooga. At the Battle of Chickamauga, Wilder's brigade managed by its tenacious fighting to slow the Confederate advance at several crucial times, thus helping the Union army avoid destruction.