continuing theme as Ratcliffe traces the interactions between the two parties through war, economic expansion, and economic collapse. The epilogue demonstrates how earlier partisan fights affected the rise of the Second Party System.

Ratcliffe himself proudly labels his work old-fashioned political history. The papers of political leaders, voting records, and newspapers dominate his list of sources. Disappointingly, many footnotes in support of important conclusions about voting behavior refer readers to the author’s earlier journal publications rather than citing the primary sources themselves. The book is divided into eight chapters, and most of them cover the events of just a few years. Thus the argument is broken down into very small parts with many turning points, and the entire arc is not always clear. Despite these quibbles, Party Spirit in a Frontier Republic is an important book. It will provide food for thought to those interested in the origins of the two-party system in the United States. But the freshest aspect is the way Ratcliffe demonstrates how national issues often took center stage in the politics of a region that many historians continue to characterize as an isolated wilderness.

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In the wake of the railroad strike of 1877, elite St. Louis residents established the Veiled Prophet organization. Patterned after New Orleans carnival societies, the group sponsored parades, balls, and fairs, designed to bolster their authority and to advertise the city's advantages. In The St. Louis Veiled Prophet Celebration, Thomas M. Spencer examines the shifting goals and functions of the celebration over the span of more than a century. Changes in the parade and related events, he argues, reflected important developments in the history of St. Louis.

According to Spencer, elite residents created the organization in order to reestablish control over the streets after the railroad strike. Appropriating carnival symbols, the group established an annual parade, complete with a mysterious “veiled prophet,” and used this ritual as a “show of physical power” (p. 3) to cow the working class. After the crisis of the late 1870s passed, the parade served to attract farmers to the city's agricultural fair, although it remained an unmistakable expression of upper-class authority and solidarity.
Gradually, the annual event became more explicitly didactic, as members of the Veiled Prophet organization designed parade floats that would inculcate "proper" values among the working class and teach the public about the city's glorious past.

Over the course of the twentieth century the celebration changed dramatically. The moral and educational lessons faded, and the parade became increasingly commercialized and "escapist." The turmoil of the late 1960s, however, transformed St. Louis and remade the annual Veiled Prophet parade and ball, according to Spencer. ACTION, a small civil rights group, used the techniques of "guerrilla street theater" to expose the exclusive and implicitly racist nature of the Veiled Prophet organization. ACTION proved particularly effective in challenging the use of public funds to help underwrite the Veiled Prophet ball and parade. Stung by the negative publicity, the organization grudgingly redefined its annual events, making them more inclusive. By the 1980s, its celebrations began to focus on "pure entertainment" (p. 168), shedding their hegemonic functions and becoming a popular Fourth of July fair that brought St. Louis's citizens together.

Drawing mainly from newspaper descriptions of annual parades and balls, Spencer relies on traditional methods, though he makes effective use of oral history in his discussion of recent developments. He borrows sparingly from theoretical perspectives and the techniques of the new cultural history. Spencer largely tells his story through the eyes of local newspaper editors, most of whom belonged to the Veiled Prophet organization. The voices of working-class and immigrant residents receive modest attention, and the impact of large-scale changes, such as the crumbling economy of the city, are not discussed. Furthermore, many scholars would quibble with Spencer's assertion that "pure entertainment" is without hegemonic influences. But even if Spencer stops short of exploring the undertones of battles over cultural authority and regional identity, he nonetheless provides an interesting and well-written study of changing elite notions of civic order in a major midwestern city.

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For more than three decades historiography of the founding era has been shaped by studies of ideology. Now, Roger G. Kennedy, who after varied tours of duty as soldier, lawyer, congressional candidate,