

1850s. Eventually, the Wisconsin Supreme Court would rule that the Fugitive Slave Act was unconstitutional, only to be overturned by the United States Supreme Court. In *Ableman vs. Booth* (1859), the Court ruled that the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was legal and that federal courts and statutes were superior. By then, the legal and constitutional issues surrounding Glover's rescue had become part of a larger set of political concerns centering on slaveholders' increased domination of the federal government. Wisconsinites—like many others in the North—were now eager to support a Republican Party that promised to protect them from a federal government that robbed free white northerners and the states of their freedoms in order to protect and promote the interests of slaveholders.

This short summary does no justice to Baker's rich, complex case study. Baker is well-read in the secondary literature on a great range of topics: nativism and immigration; local, urban, and regional history; the

history of mobs and crowd action; popular politics; constitutionalism; and the politics of race and slavery.

Historians will value Baker's deep contextualization of the Glover rescue in the historical literature. Students and general readers will appreciate the well-written, fast-paced narrative, along with the complexities of the past revealed in Baker's analysis. Professors will find the book useful for all of the above reasons, and a paperback edition would work well in classes on popular politics, antebellum history, Midwest history, historical methods, and constitutional history. In sum, H. Robert Baker has produced a fine work of historical scholarship that speaks to both historians and a wider audience.

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Conceiving a New Republic

The Republican Party and the Southern Question, 1869-1900

By Charles W. Calhoun

(Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006. Pp. x, 347. Illustrations, notes, index. \$35.00.)

Involving some of the most momentous issues in American history, the Republicans' "Southern Policy" in the decades after the Civil War has long attracted scholarly attention. Charles

Calhoun's *Conceiving a New Republic*, impressively researched and thoughtfully argued, is a major and welcome contribution to this body of scholarship.

With varying degrees of emphasis, previous scholars have generally argued that political expediency was the major factor underlying Republican support for establishing the Fifteenth Amendment, enforcing black suffrage in the South, periodically attempting to recruit white southern voters, and finally abandoning efforts to maintain political rights for black southerners. Without denying the influence of the partisan imperative, Calhoun focuses on the ideological context within which Republicans developed and defended their policies, emphasizing the consistency with which they identified their goals and actions with achieving republicanism.

But the Republicans' grand plans for truly representative government faced great obstacles. Most powerful were the unrelenting racism and violence with which southern whites met their efforts. Other complications related to republicanism itself, none more important than the question of federalism and the degree to which the national government should interfere with state and local governments, particularly over the conduct of elections. These matters divided Republicans, who disagreed as well on how to respond to southern white intransigence.

Republicans developed a variety of methods to assure what Calhoun calls their "republican project." Federal legislation to enforce the Reconstruction amendments promised to support both southern Republicans

and republican government in the South, but intermittent military intervention under President Ulysses S. Grant failed to protect black political rights. President Rutherford B. Hayes preferred a course of conciliation, which failed abysmally. Other Republican leaders vacillated between attempts to divide the Solid South by appealing to economic interests and efforts to create a "Solid North" by campaigning against southern outrages. Such a bloody shirt approach, Calhoun insists, was not diversionary or cynical, for Republicans genuinely feared that Democratic control of the federal government would not merely displace Republicans but destroy republicanism. Hopes for the republican project finally died when Republicans failed to enact the Lodge Federal Elections Bill in 1890. Thereafter, Democrats disfranchised blacks and repealed Reconstruction legislation, and Republicans adapted by encouraging blacks to exercise "the republican virtues of hard work and self help" (p. 260) rather than their republican political rights or by simply redefining republicanism to exclude black Americans.

In deftly tracing the attitudes behind these evolving policies, Calhoun also casts new and sometimes provocative light on many familiar subjects. Republican maneuvers leading to the Compromise of 1877, for instance, pointed more toward saving at least some of the republican project than toward abandoning black rights. And federal attempts to pros-

ecute election law violations foundered on the failures of southern juries, not on a lack of Republican commitment. Republicans' persistent futility, Calhoun concludes, lay in the limits of political institutions to overcome popular opinion, irresolute in the North and entrenched in the South.

While Calhoun's focus effectively demonstrates the role of ideology in shaping Republican attitudes toward the South, it obscures the fact that many of the same Republicans who dreamed of republican government in the South regularly obstructed republican government in the North. There they enacted gerrymanders for the virtual disfranchisement of Democrats, rescinded woman and Mormon suffrage, restricted the vote by education and nativity, and

bitterly fought to preserve representation systems so biased in their favor that they established minority rule. However genuine, Republican support of republicanism, in the end, extended only to its role in supporting Republicanism. No longer needed after the realignment of the 1890s, Republicans abandoned it.

Nonetheless, this is a significant book, full of insights and providing an important new perspective on the period; it deserves a wide audience and careful attention.

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A Commonwealth of Hope
The New Deal Response to Crisis
 By Alan Lawson

(Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006. Pp. xv, 280. Essay on sources, index. Clothbound, \$45.00; paperbound, \$19.95.)

Like many of the other one-volume syntheses of the New Deal, Alan Lawson's *Commonwealth of Hope* focuses on the potpourri of reformist ideas driving 1930s liberalism. However, rather than cataloging these ideas, and branding the New Deal an experimental goulash, Lawson identifies a singular undergirding theme, the "Cooperative Commonwealth." It is effective.

Briefly noting the European and early American roots of the term, Lawson sees the vision of a cooperative commonwealth among late nineteenth-century reformers (Edward Bellamy for example) who saw hope in the way the nation's activities and institutions were coalescing into larger units. Historian Robert Wiebe observed the same tendency among