

country to the public addresses of conventions and other public gatherings. Numerous tables outlining congressional voting, broken down by the respective geographic regions of the nation and the various partisan divisions of the day, bolster the study. *Tariff Wars and the Politics of Jacksonian America* is well-written, maintains a smooth narrative, and

offers a consistent, concise analysis in every chapter; it should be on all standard reading lists of any course on Jacksonian America.

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### *Lincoln and the Democrats: The Politics of Opposition in the Civil War*

By Mark E. Neely Jr.

(New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. ix, 211. Notes, illustrations, index. Cloth, \$75.00; paper, \$24.99.)

Northern Democrats during the Civil War have been grossly understudied; therefore, we should caution against making broad generalizations about their character and motivations. Such is the general thrust of Mark E. Neely's slender but illuminating *Lincoln and the Democrats*, a book that draws on the author's vast knowledge of nineteenth-century politics, the Constitution, and Abraham Lincoln. If this is, as stated in the introduction, Neely's last book on the Civil War, he will have made another signal contribution to the field. By carefully pruning away questionable interpretive underbrush, he has well prepared the ground for future studies on this crucial topic.

Provoked by a series of unsatisfying historiographical tropes about Northern Democrats, the author uses his deep familiarity of the era to probe the veracity of assertions made by numerous historians. In the process, he topples several long-standing historical narratives, most notably assertions that Northern Democrats were politically treasonous and motivated by white supremacy. In crafting his counter-arguments, Neely is keen to make good use of the party's partisan press, citing lengthy runs of several papers from key states like New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

In fact, Northern Democrats, Neely argues, were firmly loyal to the Union and the Constitution, though

not enthusiastic cheerleaders of the Lincoln administration. Democrats dutifully financed the war through bond drives; mobilized soldiers, both conscripts and volunteers; and participated in Republican-led humanitarian efforts like the U.S. Sanitary Commission. Their opposition to Lincoln rested in his perceived unconstitutional prosecution of the war and circumscription of civil liberties, transgressions that potentially threatened the very existence of the Democracy.

In articulating their loyalty, Democrats ingeniously crafted a historical myth linking the current incarnation of the party with the nation's founding. The Democracy became synonymous with the country, a permanent fixture upon its political landscape so long as the government of the Constitution was faithfully executed. The party's perceived harassment only validated their criticism of Lincoln as a political tyrant and constitutional usurper. Like the Whig Party during the Mexican War, Northern Democrats made much hay of various constitutional issues they thought compromised the president's legitimacy. However, also similar to their Whig predecessors, Democrats were careful to support Union armies in the field with supplies and money—the lessons of Federalist obstruction during the War of 1812 were well heeded.

On the question of racism, Neely reminds his readers that as a social attitude it was near universal among white people of the era. As a political program, however, it is limited in its explanatory power. Democrats did not include any formal statements about white supremacy in any of their political platforms. Nor did Democratic leaders like New York governor Horatio Seymour or General George B. McClellan want to make the presidential campaign of 1864 a referendum on race and slavery. In contrast, the party's most bitter racists, like pro-slavery advocate John H. Van Evrie, had little party influence. It makes sense to scrutinize Democratic commitments to white supremacy, argues Neely, post 1865, with Southerners' reintegration back into the party. During the war years, however, their voices were absent.

Neely seems convinced that Democrats floundered badly in their efforts to oppose Lincoln's conduct of the war on constitutional grounds. Scholarly assertions of their commitment to constitutional conservatism seem unfounded. Conversely, Neely sees the president's constitutional scruples broadened and liberalized by the war-time demands of the office. What was once a standard antebellum Whig liberal constitutionalism evolved into universalist assertions on individual human rights. The stage was set for Lincoln

to push for slavery's abolition by the war's conclusion.

*Lincoln and the Democrats* is a deep and probing book that will become more valuable as future scholarship takes up its many interesting and provocative points.

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### *Charles Gates Dawes: A Life*

By Annette B. Dunlap

(Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2016. Pp. 352. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$40.00; paper, \$24.95.)

Like a character in a Herman Wouk novel, Charles Gates Dawes (1865–1951) spent the majority of his adult life thriving in the midst of the action while in the service of his country. For a long time, he has deserved a good biography—the only previous study of any note is Bascom Timmons's breezy 1953 tome published soon after Dawes's death—and finally a worthy treatment has appeared. Annette B. Dunlap, an independent scholar who was contacted by the Evanston History Center to write Dawes's biography, had previously crafted a history of First Lady Frances Folsom Cleveland.

Like most contemporary Americans, Dunlap knew very little about Dawes when she accepted her assignment. As has been the case for many prominent Republicans of

the 1920s, after Franklin Roosevelt's election in 1932 Dawes went into the wilderness never to return. But for much of the first third of the twentieth century, Charles Dawes was widely known as the owner of one of Chicago's major banks and a Republican stalwart. Born in Ohio, he earned a law degree and moved to the frontier town of Lincoln, Nebraska, to start his legal career. Seeing little future in the law, Dawes became interested in manufactured gas and relocated to Evanston, Illinois, in the mid-1890s where business prospects were much better. He added banking to his portfolio, dabbled in Illinois state Republican politics, and was tapped by President William McKinley to serve as his Comptroller of the Currency.

When the United States entered the First World War, Dawes—at the