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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 inter-
esting 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 pre-
vious study of any note is Bascom
Timmons’s breezy 1953 tome pub-
lished 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 biogra-
phy, had previously crafted a his-
tory of First Lady Frances Folsom
Cleveland.

Like most contemporary
Americans, Dunlap knew very lit-
tle 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
age of 51—left his bank presidency and joined Pershing’s army as a colonel. He retired from his brief military service as a brigadier general and was appointed the first director of the Bureau of the Budget in 1921 by President Warren Harding. Chosen to join Calvin Coolidge as vice-president from 1924–1928, he then was selected as ambassador to Great Britain by President Herbert Hoover. He ended his national-level Republican service by heading up the Reconstruction Finance Corporation in 1932. Thus, for over a decade, Charles Dawes was often in the public eye serving his government in one capacity or another.

Dawes’s archive at Northwestern University is quite large, and Dunlap has plumbed its depths. The literature surrounding Dawes’s life is extensive and the author’s citations reflect the broad resource net she cast in constructing her narrative. Charles Dawes was a colorful character who did not suffer fools gladly. He often spoke bluntly and would have readily spurned “politically correct” speech. But he also had a soft heart for the poor and down-trodden and spent freely on acquiring hotels for the homeless to live in. Dawes was a self-made man who valued hard work and thriftiness tempered with Christian generosity. He spent his life promoting solid Republican values of small government with restrained budgets. Franklin Roosevelt’s philosophy of big government spending was anathema to him.

This is a well-researched and smoothly written account of an important American businessman and politician who spent much of his adult life actively engaged in the issues confronting the nation and its government. Dunlap’s new book should stand as Dawes’s major biography for years to come.

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The Suburban Church: Modernism and Community in Postwar America

By Gretchen Buggeln

(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015. Pp. xxx, 346. Illustrations, appendices, notes, sources, index. Cloth, $140.00; paper, $40.00.)

Every suburb in Indiana has them, often by the half-dozen: the inexpensive, intimate, brick, stone, and concrete churches erected during the building, and church-going, boom that followed World War II.