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cant for their generation than the crooner's banal words of today are for ours?

But this is democratic history. And in an age where the importance of the so-called superman—whether he be the dictator, general, atomic scientist, or the college administrator—is continually emphasized, these essays are a salutary influence. More than that, they are sometimes a pointed answer to the Pareto's doctrine of the elite and Toynbee's creative few. If we are to preserve democracy, we must respect it, and there is no better way to obtain a brimming respect for the institution than to look at the whole of the American past as Professor Blegen has done.

State University of Iowa

George E. Mowry


The story of Lincoln's efforts to become a congressman, for which there had been no adequate monograph, is presented by Mr. Riddle of the University of Illinois (Chicago Undergraduate Division) against the background of pioneer Illinois politics. Early Illinois was overwhelmingly Democratic; in the thirties Lincoln was in the minority as a Whig member of the legislature. In all Illinois, though there were perhaps two other districts where a Whig might have a sporting chance, there was only one "Whig stronghold"—the centrally located seventh congressional district. It was a coveted prize to get the party nomination from that district, and sometime in the winter of 1842-1843 Lincoln resolved to work hard for it. The idea that Lincoln lacked ambition is simply one of those misconceptions that cluster around this half-understood figure.

Having shown this ambition, along with conditioning factors in state and district politics, Riddle gives a detailed account of Lincoln's determined nomination drive. The treatment of this phase involved the story of the "Whig junto" of Springfield, the delicate adjustment between three friendly rivals—Abraham Lincoln, John J. Hardin, and Edward D.
Baker, all of whom were to meet violent deaths—, maneuvers in the party nominating convention (a new device), personal solicitation, and discreet use of every trick in the party game. Lincoln's chief obstacle was the able and popular Hardin, against whom, but in a manner "scrupulously fair," he applied the rule "Turn about is fair play." That Hardin withdrew after striving for another term, and that Lincoln was nominated, are evidences of the prairie lawyer's successful strategy, persistence, and timing.

In the campaign Lincoln had to contend with the rugged and popular preacher, Peter Cartwright, and strangely enough, he had to live down the accusation that he was "the candidate of pride, wealth, and aristocratic family distinction." There was little in that contest that was highly inspiring, but that belongs to the nature of the subject, and to the author's faithful, unexaggerated reporting. It is pointed out, truly enough, that this and that subject were not the "issues" of the campaign. Texas had already been annexed; the Oregon question had been settled by diplomacy; Whigs and Democrats were alike in favoring the newly begun Mexican War so far as this congressional election was concerned; Lincoln even made a "war speech" (pp. 169-170); both parties opposed abolitionism. (It was later that Lincoln courageously contended that the launching of the Mexican War had been unjustified.) If the tariff was an issue, it is doubtful how many votes in agricultural Illinois were influenced in the Whig sense by that factor. After all, the story of the contest boils down, not to issues, but to politics, parties, and personalities. One of the uninspiring factors was the "whispering campaign" in which the effort was made to brand Lincoln as an infidel. His convincing published answer, neglected until recently, is one of the important documents bearing upon his attitude toward religion.

In the election, Lincoln's plurality over Cartwright was 1,511; in the balloting he came off much better than his Whig predecessors, Hardin in 1843 and Baker in 1844. Not only did this election give him his sole national elective office prior to the presidency; his experience as leader in a minority party—his strategy, tact, and maneuvers in that capacity—were a part of his background as minority President. It should also be noted that in his Whig days he labored in a party whose Southern connections were always of primary importance.
It is a satisfaction to read the Riddle volume. With its close examination of sources, readable style, handsome format, illustrations, maps, appendix, and bibliography, it adds grace to Lincoln shelves and interest to the story of American politics.

University of Illinois James G. Randall

*General Gage in America, Being Principally a History of His Role in the American Revolution.* By John Richard Alden. (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1948, pp. xi, 313. Map, illustrations, bibliographical note, and index. $4.00.)

Despite the limitation imposed by the title, this first book-length study of Thomas Gage (c. 1719-1787) is the nearest thing to a biography we are ever likely to see. Though the details of Gage's early life remain somewhat meager, Dr. Alden has used the Gage Papers at the Clements Library exhaustively, the family papers from Firle Place, Sussex, and the manuscripts of many of Gage's contemporaries. His knowledge of the printed sources on American colonial history is extensive, as has been demonstrated in his earlier work, *John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier*.

The general who emerges from this intensive examination is a man of competence, moderation, good sense, and considerable penetration. If he was not in advance of his time as a thinker on imperialistic affairs, he was far from being an oppressive reactionist. But he almost constantly occupied an embarrassing or impossible position. Gage was continually bossed by willful and uncomprehending ministers who expected him to enforce their stupid policies, and by giving him discretionary power hoped to evade responsibility if those policies backfired. Gage was not to be caught in such traps and countered by insisting that ministers should make up their minds and deliver him orders.

He accurately assessed the problem of protecting the newly won West in 1763, but a dilatory and changing cabinet came to no decision until 1768. After war began, he sat tight in Boston because he was expected to subdue a rebellion with too few troops, but he suggested at the outset the only alternatives to defeat: a naval blockade of the