Many very interesting similarities between Lincoln handling a case and Lincoln handling a country are pointed out. Lincoln's appeal to a jury or a judge becomes Lincoln's appeal to a cabinet member or the country. For those having close acquaintance with the problems and techniques of lawyers, this volume presents a unique series of analyses by way of analogy. The author tries to show that Lincoln, who began his practice of law without formal training and with very little training of any kind, grew in stature to become a man highly skilled in legal techniques and that he embarked upon the affairs of the presidency with equally negligible preparation, but grew in skill as a statesman in the same way he had grown in the skills of his profession.

The appeal of the book is by its very nature limited, but even those without legal training or special interest in law will find that the assembled facts and the reasoning presented add much to their understanding of Lincoln.

Crumpacker, May, Beamer, Levy, & Seerer
South Bend, Indiana

Nathan Levy

*Politics and the Crisis of 1860.* By William E. Baringer *et al.* Edited by Norman A. Graebner. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961. Pp. xii, 156. Readings, index. $3.00.)

This volume consists of five essays presented originally in 1960 at a Civil War conference at Gettysburg College. The common theme is slavery's impact on American politics. Although the five authors agree that slavery was at the heart of the sectional conflict and that emotionalism was partly responsible for the crisis of 1860, they differ significantly in explaining how and why the crisis came.

Three focus attention on events that transpired in 1860. Robert W. Johannsen argues powerfully that the breakup of the Democratic party at Charleston, which resulted from uncompromisable differences over the territorial question, sealed the fate of the Union. Don E. Fehrenbacher and William E. Baringer turn to the Republican camp to disclose the crisis. According to Fehrenbacher the choice of candidate and platform at the Wigwam in Chicago was unacceptable to southerners because it portended the doom of their society. Thus they left the Union "to hold back a future that appeared to have no place for them" (p. 60). Baringer attributes the crisis to fiery campaign statements of Republican editors and politicians; their words generated such anger and fear in the South that after Lincoln's election—which in fact constituted nothing revolutionary in the political and constitutional system—moderates failed to placate the southern mind, and secessionist leaders, exploiting Republican threats, led their states out of the Union.

Norman A. Graebner surveys the antislavery movement in American politics from 1840-1860 and advances a twofold explanation of the crisis of 1860. Southern secessionists pursued objectives that could not be achieved within the political system, while northern antislavery leaders pursued objectives that could not be achieved under the Constitution. The second half of this interpretation challenges Fehrenbacher's argument, which cannot be easily discounted. Graebner himself insists
that Republicans could not abandon their antislavery program without destroying their political machine (p. 31). Why, in time, they could not have implemented such a program is not adequately explained. Indeed, for antislavery leaders perhaps Lincoln’s election was a momentous step toward achieving in the political arena, under the Constitution, the objectives they sought.

Avery Craven stresses the disruptive pressures of inflammatory antislavery pronouncements and of Republican determination to establish “the Modern World of Nationalism, the Industrial Revolution, and Freedom” (p. 134). His stylistic, well-balanced essay reflects mature thought, considered judgment, and compassionate understanding.

The selective bibliography includes many of the best works on Civil War causation. In the future similar bibliographies should contain this volume.

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Frederick D. Williams


The history of publishing and the publishing trade in the American Middle West offers a large and heretofore little explored area for scholars interested in American cultural studies. With the exception of scattered articles as well as space devoted to publishing in the Middle West in Ralph L. Rusk’s The Literature of the Middle Western Frontier (1925), W. H. Venable’s Beginnings of Literary Culture in the Ohio Valley (1881), and R. Carlyle Bulley’s Old Northwest (1950), however, almost nothing of a reliable nature has been written on this large area. Walter Sutton’s new book must stand as a “first” as an authoritative attempt to review in thorough manner the history and function of the book trade centering in an important middle western city during the nineteenth century.

Professor Sutton’s intention in writing his book may be seen in the Preface. Recognizing there the need to tell the story of the careers of book publishers and sellers and of the impact of their work upon the people who read their printed material, he sets about the “task of rescuing these figures from obscurity and of retracing their activities . . . ” (p. vii). His retracing carries the reader through the development of Cincinnati’s “regional publishing industry from its pioneer beginnings, through its periods of greatest importance, into its decline in the years following the Civil War” (p. viii). In achieving that avowed task, the book chronicles, specifically, the forces leading to and the development of the pioneer publishing industry, tells the story of the major publishing houses, such as the houses of James, of Derby, and of Clarke, and, finally, describes the shift of the book industry away from Cincinnati in the late nineteenth century and the reasons for that shift. Throughout, the recounting is well supported in footnotes referring the reader to the available records of the period: