

appraisal of current procedure and suggestions for possible reform are not as complete as other aspects of the book.

The author does, however, accomplish his primary objective of illustrating that the economics of taxation cannot be divorced from the politics of taxation.

*Commission on State Tax
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Zachariah Chandler: A Political Biography. By Sister Mary Karl George, R.S.M. (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1969. Pp. x, 301. Notes, bibliographical note, index. \$8.50.)

This volume adds to the growing biographical literature on Radical Republicans. One of the conspicuous trends in the writing and rewriting of American history in recent years has been the reinterpretation and reassessment of this once maligned political group. It is a little difficult to classify Sister Mary Karl's contribution to the reassessment. In her introduction she says Chandler's life needs reevaluation in the light of manuscript materials—specifically papers of Chandler, Abraham Lincoln, Edwin M. Stanton, and John Crewell—available to her which were not available to earlier biographers. At the same time she admits that a good part of the Chandler papers have been “wittingly destroyed” and suggests that in writing the biography she may be “approaching a subject the wise historian has avoided for these very sound reasons” (pp. viii-ix).

Sister Mary Karl has woven the details of Chandler's political career into a conventional account of the Lincoln administration, Civil War, and Reconstruction. The book, perhaps because of the limitations imposed by the materials available, does little to bring Chandler to life or to reveal his philosophy, if any. The author seems never really to make up her mind about him. She says that at the time of his death everyone agreed as to his personal honesty; yet at various times she appears to accept the charges of his opponents that he was venal and corrupt. She agrees with an earlier biographer that Chandler was “a power broker, a rough and tumble politician, a fighter, and a vindictive individual” (p. 271).

Chandler, who began his career as a Whig, was one of the founders of the Republican party in Michigan and its first Republican senator. He served in the Senate almost continuously from his first election in 1857 until his death in 1879. He was a strong opponent of slavery and an early advocate of the use of Negroes in the Union Army, but he showed little humanitarian interest in Negroes and did

not think them fit to vote. He voted for the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments but did not speak in favor of them, and he tried to sabotage Charles Sumner's Civil Rights Bill.

During the Civil War he was one of the sponsors of the legislation creating the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War and served as a member of the committee. He was a strong opponent of George B. McClellan, whom he considered "an imbecile if not a traitor" (p. 64). During the political campaign of 1864 he was more intent on defeating McClellan than reelecting Lincoln, for whom he felt no great enthusiasm. He played a key role in persuading John C. Frémont to withdraw from the contest. He was strongly anti-Johnson and an ardent supporter of the impeachment. On the other hand he was a warm supporter of Ulysses S. Grant. The patronage which he dispensed as a close associate of the President during the Grant administration made it possible for him to dominate the Michigan Republican organization.

Perhaps next to his interest in personal political power his greatest interest as senator was in working for economic benefits for the Old Northwest. He labored for a homestead law, a transcontinental railroad, sound currency, and tariff protection—especially for Michigan copper.

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Emma Lou Thornbrough

All Aboard! A History of Railroads in Michigan. By Willis Frederick Dunbar. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969. Pp. 308. Notes, illustrations, maps, index. \$7.95.)

Comprehensive histories covering the railroads of various states are sadly lacking. Heretofore only Nevada had a history that presented a commendable degree of completeness. Now Michigan can be added to the list.

In this volume Dunbar does more than simply report the incorporation of a railroad line, when it was built, when it was taken over by a larger entity, and when it was abandoned—if it was. Instead, he tells about the legislative and economic climate of the times, the various political settings, and the social mores of pioneer Michigan. Among other subjects the author covers railroad land grants in the Wolverine State, the inducements of timber cutting and sawing and iron and copper mining to railroad building, and the rise and fall of Michigan's electric interurbans.

All Aboard is essentially a valuable handbook and reference source, useful to the serious transportation historian as well as to the devotee of local history. Rail buffs, hoping for a plethora of detail