

For teachers of survey college or AP history classes, there is much to be said for *Taking Sides*, as it allows teachers to show students the range of topics scholars investigate and the approaches they take. Several of the topics have a great deal of promise in the classroom. For instance, the debate over the role of women in eighteenth-century America, the exchange over who emancipated the slaves, and the pieces about the inevitability of the Civil War represent up-to-date scholarship and are well edited and introduced. Madaras and SoRelle have done an excellent job of editing pieces for space, and their introductions and conclusions to each debate are informative and well-written.

However, out of the author's control, the internet support material for the book provided by Dushkin/McGraw Hill has not strengthened the book as much as it could have. The internet sites mentioned in the text are not keyed to the debates, but broadly relate to the period. They include some odd choices, and omit many noted and useful sites. For example, for the Civil War period, the book refers the reader to an online list of Civil War links, but not to Edward Ayers's famous Valley of the Shadow project. The Dushkin web site for students is a disappointment, as it is a compilation of sites that the creators believed students might find useful, without any critical annotation or real guidance provided.

Eastern Michigan University

Russell Olwell

**Charles W. Calhoun, ed. *The Gilded Age: Essays on the Origins of Modern America*. Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1996. Pp. xix, 347. Cloth, \$50.00; ISBN 0-8420-2499-9. Paper, \$18.95; ISBN 0-8420-2500-6.**

In his preface, editor Charles Calhoun notes that the idea of this book grew out of conversations with colleagues who agreed on the need for a book teachers could use to introduce their students to a "reconsideration of the various aspects of American life in the Gilded Age." In general, Calhoun's anthology accomplishes this goal extremely well. Composed of an introduction and fourteen essays by, with one exception, recognized scholars of the period, most of the major developments of the period are covered. Additionally, the essays reflect many of the newer interpretations of the period that have marked the work of social, legal, and business historians since the 1960s. As with most such works, the quality and value of the essays vary, but overall the book provides an updated look at a much-maligned period in U.S. history.

In an introduction Calhoun gives a brief description of the content and major conclusions of each essay and attempts to set them into context with one another. The linkage, however, is somewhat superficial, and he does not really point to common conclusions across the essays. As well, while the essays are not specifically identified

as grouped into divisions addressing aspects of a major development in the era, it is possible to do so. Four essays provide information on aspects of industrial growth, workers, immigrants, and Gilded Age cities. Three others discuss the status of women, African Americans, and Native Americans in the era. Four essays relate to politics and government, and the remaining three discuss science and technology, foreign relations, and the legal system.

As noted, the value of the essays for student use varies. In one of the best, business historian Glenn Porter provides an excellent summary of "Industrialization and Big Business." Well organized and straightforward, the essay describes the "new order" that marked the industrial and corporate society created by the changes and developments of the Gilded Age. Porter adeptly ties together a succinct overview of factors supporting rapid and successful industrialization, of the characteristics of custom production versus "big business," and of public reaction to the latter. Reflective of Alfred Chandler's well-accepted approach, Porter emphasizes patterns and institutions rather than personalities. For students used to the typical survey textbook treatment of the growth of big business, the essay offers a concise summary of a more sophisticated approach to the topic. Other strong essays, each for individual reasons, are those on workers, immigrants, urban growth, and the legal system. Students will probably find all of the essays on politics useful, although they are likely to be surprised by Calhoun's assertion that most Gilded Age politicians worked hard and by Lewis Gould's favorable view of the Republican Party.

Other essays are not as strong. For example, "Science and Technology in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century" will be of little interest to most students. Author James Fleming provides interesting information on the professionalization of the American scientific community and the growing involvement of government funding of scientific research, but devotes only two pages to a few examples of the tremendous technological advances and inventions of the era. As well, the essays on Native Americans, African Americans, and women will probably be less useful for students. The first two are hampered by having to cover such broad topics, and the latter by its emphasis on middle-class women and their organization.

As a whole the book is an excellent addition to the study of the Gilded Age. Instructors at both the high school and college level will find many of the essays useful for providing a concise summary of newer interpretations of the period, and should be able to glean both lecture and discussion material on many topics. Some essays provide direct discussion of changes in interpretation that will be particularly valuable. College students in a Gilded Age course would benefit from both the essays themselves and the excellent citations and suggestions for further reading included with each. I strongly recommend the book for use by instructors at the secondary and college levels, and by students at the college level.