

Patrick J. Maney. *The Roosevelt Presence: The Life and Legacy of FDR*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998. Pp. xiv, 255. Paper, \$17.95; ISBN 0-520-21637-7.

I commend Patrick J. Maney's work to the teacher who is looking for a compact yet thorough treatment of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal. *The Roosevelt Presence* is clear, lively, penetrating, and a pleasure to read. It presents a judicious blend of narrative, anecdotes, and analysis, and moves skillfully from personal details to the larger picture and back again. A well-conceived organizational structure and deft transitions--as from the effects of Roosevelt's polio to his resumption of a political career--also show that Maney is a writer of uncommon ability.

Moreover, Maney's book is filled with thought-provoking asides (had the voters foreseen the onset of the Great Depression, they probably would have found Herbert Hoover even more appealing), finely drawn vignettes of key players (Harry Hopkins and Oliver Wendell Holmes), and a recognition that today's readers are far removed from those of Roosevelt's time (identifying Molotov with the "cocktail" that bears his name and noting that the Pan Am Clipper landed on water). More to the point, Maney provides balanced and perceptive analyses of some rather complicated issues, ranging from the nature of Roosevelt's administrative style to the strategic considerations surrounding when and where to open a second front during World War II.

Ten chapters deal with the following topics: Roosevelt's early life, his political career before the governorship, FDR's gubernatorial career and first campaign, the first three years of the New Deal, Roosevelt's "presence" during the same three years, his difficulties during 1937-38, the transition period leading up to Pearl Harbor, the war years (two long chapters), and FDR's reputation and legacies. Two long and meaty chapters on the 1941-45 period convey a sense of slight imbalance that a page count does not bear out, and division into three chapters instead might have avoided this problem.

On the other hand, I wish that Maney had expanded his rather short concluding chapter, for it is full of provocative statements and comparisons with later presidents and presidencies. (The discussion of Roosevelt and Lyndon B. Johnson as legislative leaders is a gem.) Perhaps Maney intended brevity here as a teaching tactic, for this chapter should spark good discussions as students bring the telescope of their more recent perspectives to bear on FDR and the New Deal. There is much more to admire in this book when viewed as a teaching tool. It candidly deals with conflicting evidence (as in the Lucy Mercer affair) and leaves the reader to draw his or her own conclusions. It includes a handy chronology, a good bibliographic essay, and notes that are helpful without being intimidating to the student.

The book is not without a few missteps. The 1924 Democratic National Convention was certainly long, and at times tedious, but I doubt many would call it "dismal." Maney repeats the old canard that Al Smith intended to manage Roosevelt's

governorship from a hotel suite in Albany. He tells us twice that young FDR had been to Europe eight times before he was 15 years old. When the CIO contributed \$800,000 to Roosevelt's campaign in 1936, what did that mean in the context of 1936? (It does not sound like much today!) There is no reference to Roosevelt's failing health in the discussion of the choice of his running mate in 1944, even though FDR's health is the next topic discussed.

More seriously, Maney's evident desire to furnish plausible, middle-of-the-road descriptions and explanations of topics, though very useful for steering students through the shoals of old and ultimately unresolvable arguments, sometimes makes what he has to say a bit bland. The alternative views are there, however, for students who care to pursue them. (A good example is whether or not Roosevelt was an ideologue.) Maney does not always hue to the exact middle of the road, though, and neither is he fully consistent. He states in one instance that Roosevelt had a "coherent philosophy" but in other settings dismisses the same possibility. I found Maney's repeated assertions that Roosevelt was personally religious and interested in providing religious leadership unconvincing, based on my own reading of Roosevelt, but Maney's point of view did make me think about this topic in ways I had not before.

Nor can Maney's book, within its limitations, give the details of legislation or political maneuvering. What *The Roosevelt Presence* does well is present a unified and comprehensive picture of FDR and the New Deal within a manageable framework. Only rarely does Maney make the mistake of referring to details that he was not able to provide. I was very impressed by his grasp of a wide range of subjects, most of which have had a great deal written about them, and by his ability to put into succinct paragraphs the salient points that capture the essence of Roosevelt and the New Deal.

A handsome book with virtually no factual or typographical errors, *The Roosevelt Presence* is recommended wholeheartedly as a text or supplement in survey and more advanced courses in twentieth-century America, the New Deal and World War II, and the presidency.

National Archives & Records Administration

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**Waldo E. Martin, Jr.** *Brown v. Board of Education: A Brief History with Documents.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. Pp. xv, 253. Cloth, \$35.00; ISBN 0-312-12811-8. Paper, \$10.95; ISBN 0-312-11152-5.

This is a valuable companion to longer works on the history of the African American experience, especially the less commonly taught but extremely important history of the movement for civil rights in the United States—the struggle for equal access to educational opportunities. The "brief history" is brief enough (40 pages) and the array of documents reproduced here is wide enough to make this reviewer conclude