

THE ONLY THINGS YOU WILL FIND IN  
THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD ARE DOUBLE  
YELLOW LINES, DEAD FROGS, AND  
ELECTORAL LEVERAGE: MID-ATLANTIC  
POLITICAL CULTURE AND INFLUENCE  
ACROSS THE CENTURIES

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**Abstract:** The Mid-Atlantic region of the United States, from its very inception, attracted visionaries, exiles, pacifists, and warriors—often united only by their suspicion of an overly assertive government. Over the course of the past four centuries, the Mid-Atlantic engendered melting-pot politics and a spirit of private initiative—allowing for partnerships with government when necessary. The middle of the Eastern Seaboard ultimately influenced the political culture of the middle of America—helping to bind the North together during the Civil War, laying the foundation for the New Deal, and continuing to influence national elections through the twenty-first century.

**Keywords:** Mid-Atlantic region; Eastern American political culture; labor; Virginia Military District; Pennsylvania industry; Pennsylvania historiography

*H*istorical change may begin with small or great events. In 1646 an English cobbler named George Fox proclaimed that legitimate political authority came from the Heavens, not from the Crown.

Acting upon this belief, Fox set into motion a chain of events leading to the establishment of a new religion (the Society of Friends, or Quakers) and a colony 3,000 miles across the Atlantic (Pennsylvania). A generation after Fox began his spiritual journey, Catholic and Protestant armies clashed at an Irish river called the Boyne. Having spent a century fighting Irish Catholics, and serving as military buffers behind which the English authorities ruled, the Scots-Irish settlers had become a fiercely independent, fighting people. Although the Protestants won, tens of thousands of impoverished Scots-Irish Presbyterians flocked to Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey. Thanks to sectarian strife and divine revelation, America's "middle colonies" became a haven for warriors and pacifists—and for visionaries and the desperate poor seeking a better life. Their ideals, as well as their fears and grievances, produced a political culture that was as cautious of governmental authority as it was (often) violently disruptive.

For scholars of early America there has been general concurrence that the English colonies could be grouped into regions with distinctive economies, mores, and politics. "Albion's seed," as the historian David Hackett Fischer observed, had a distinctive DNA. A self-righteous Massachusetts Puritan and a profane Scots-Irish Pennsylvanian would have recognized that their similarities were in proportion to their differences—and both would have found an aristocratic Anglican Virginian to be too full of himself for their tastes. Even still, the Puritan, the Anglican, and the Presbyterian were more akin to each other than they were to the African slaves, German pacifists, and Dutch traders who also came (willingly and not) to the American colonies.<sup>1</sup>

Historian Michael Zuckerman produced a harsh appraisal of New England, a region which he found to be lacking when compared to the Middle Colonies: "By persisting in intolerance as the rest of the English empire came to new accommodations to religious diversity, [the New England colonies] consigned themselves to inconsequence in the wider world of Western Protestantism." Moreover, Zuckerman continued, "By failing to garner gold or grow staples, they confirmed their insignificance in the estimation of metropolitan mercantilists." Zuckerman's assessments have merit. Dynamic Boston devolved after the American Revolution into a regional economic center. As for the Puritans, their exemplar city of the Protestant Reformation acquired a distinctive Irish Catholic accent in the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

Unlike Boston, New York City after the Revolution emerged as a national economic force, as well as a multiethnic port of entry where the world came to trade. As a driver of the American economy, and as chief

architect of the nation's cultural melting pot, the Mid-Atlantic region became, in Zuckerman's formulation, *the* template for the United States writ large: "In economic action and attitude, Americans of later ages also followed in paths prepared by the middle colonist." Then again, even if Boston became an economic and political backwater in the nineteenth century as Philadelphia and New York City thrived, at least New England was not the South. Below the Mason-Dixon Line could be found a virulent region where, Zuckerman pithily observed, "slavery subtly infected every ambition." Philadelphia birthed the republic; Charleston poisoned its soul.<sup>3</sup>

William Pencak, a contemporary of Zuckerman's, constructed a powerful, often amusing, analysis of the Mid-Atlantic region. As Pencak wrote of New York City's early leaders, they had chosen "not to complicate their social vision with a strong sense of religious mission." New York, which established an international standard for unethical politics, never set out like Boston to be a moral beacon to those living in darkness. It was always about the money—switching from Dutch to English masters meant that only the currency and letterheads changed.<sup>4</sup>

Puritan Boston, with its zeal for order, enacted speed limits, as well as trash disposal and fire suppression ordinances. Quaker Philadelphia and "amoral" New York were less coercive. If New Yorkers and Philadelphians wanted a street repaired, then they had to contribute their share of money and labor. This was not surprising. A colony like Pennsylvania, founded by Quakers who were suspicious of government, inevitably regarded civil administration as a necessary evil that had to be constrained as much as possible. New Yorkers embraced the same sentiment, if not the theology.

Historian Sam Bass Warner described this sentiment as "the spirit of privatism," where the pursuit of wealth operated side by side with a fear of expensive and expansive government. Confronted with contaminated drinking water, streets buried under layers of horse dung, and violent gangs, Philadelphians and New Yorkers of the early nineteenth century cautiously expanded the power of municipal government. Mid-Atlantic citizens did not emulate either the authoritarian New Englanders or the localist southerners who appeared to view nearly all governmental activity (and certainly any activity above the county level) as despotic.<sup>5</sup>

As Pencak observed, colonial New England represented "a fairly homogeneous society outside Rhode Island," in contrast to the pluralistic Mid-Atlantic, which contained settlements known for their "contentious population." Such people of the Mid-Atlantic, Pencak believed, seemed "prone to offend one

another." In Philadelphia, the "City of Brotherly Love," colonial-era mobs led by women murdered other women they suspected of being witches. The Salem Witchcraft trials were, in comparison, models of due process and calm deliberation. Of course, the end results were the same—regardless of whether the perpetrators were civil representatives or those acting outside legal authority.<sup>6</sup>

It also may be fairly added that while Boston had its share of ignominy across the centuries, it was New York City, as historian Tyler Anbinder recounted, that gave America a slum of epic proportions. New York's "Five Points" neighborhood achieved a storied place in the popular consciousness that has endured into the twenty-first century. Five Points inspired a 2002 blockbuster Hollywood film starring Leonardo DiCaprio and a riveting BBC America television series (2012–13) enlivened by blood-soaked Irish Catholic Democrats and opium-addled Protestant Republicans.<sup>7</sup>

After Independence, the Mid-Atlantic's religious, ethnic, and racial groups continued their violent contests for political power—the addition of new immigrant groups further compounding the difficulty in achieving public order. Ultimately, Pencak wrote, "institutions and reform movements arose in the early nineteenth century to quell democracy run amuck." Reform movements, while gradually improving all-important sanitary conditions, had their limitations. Reformers never fully suppressed gang violence, but eventually succeeded in weakening the criminals' hold over the Democratic political machines. Temperance was a clear-cut loser in the cities, though if civil rights success was measured in terms of reducing body counts over the long haul, it may be said that Irish Catholics, African Americans, and Scots-Irish learned to battle each in the electoral arena more than in the neighborhood streets.<sup>8</sup>

There is no question that Zuckerman, Pencak, Warner, and Anbinder are correct in viewing the Mid-Atlantic region as a model for interpreting American cultural, economic, and political evolution. It is also clear that the Mid-Atlantic, as Zuckerman and others have argued, provided a template for the post-Revolutionary development of America's western frontier. Most particularly, the Mid-Atlantic asserted enormous influence over the "Northwest Territory"—the region that became known as the Midwest. However, the same observation could be made for New England and for the South. When Americans of the nineteenth century decided to move west, they often meant it literally.

The remnants of New England Puritanism headed westward to the upper reaches of the Midwest. Along the banks of Lake Erie, in what was called the Western Reserve of Connecticut, could be found settlements

named New Haven and Yale. Here the advocates of abolition, Catholic immigration restriction, and temperance held political sway. New England's transplants viewed government as a weapon with which to strike down foes and to empower the righteous. By the eve of the Civil War, the Great Lakes Rim produced such Radical Republican senators as Ben Wade (Ohio) and Zachariah Chandler (Michigan). To Wade and Chandler, political compromise was little more than complicity with the devil.<sup>9</sup>

In lower Ohio there was an area designated as the "Virginia Military District." Unable to pay its Revolutionary War veterans, the Old Dominion offered them land grants in the Ohio Territory. Southerners, who paid homage at the altar of Andrew Jackson, brought with them their racial attitudes and fear of an overweening federal government. Virginians named their settlements Georgetown and Washington Courthouse and wrote constitutions (in Ohio and Indiana) that denied blacks citizenship rights and access to public schools. During the Civil War, southern Ohio elevated antiwar "Copperhead" Democrats, notably congressmen Clement Vallandigham (Dayton) and George Pendleton (Cincinnati). Vallandigham had the distinction of being the only congressman in US history to be exiled by the federal government for disloyalty, while Pendleton ran as the antiwar Democrats' 1864 vice presidential nominee.

In the middle of the Midwest, in line from Pennsylvania and New Jersey, came the Mid-Atlantic's Scots-Irish, Irish Catholics, Germans, and even reformist Hicksite Quakers leaving the conservative confines of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. As the Mid-Atlantic stood between the ideological extremes of New England and the South and, demographically, represented the American melting pot in all its contentiousness and accommodations, so too the middle of the Midwest stood between Yankee Cleveland and the Virginia Military District. Although the Midwest as a historical region has not received the scholarly attention given to the colonial Mid-Atlantic, a few historians, most notably Nicole Etcheson, have begun to give the area west of the Alleghenies its due.<sup>10</sup>

It was in central Ohio that two new settlements came into existence: Delaware and (New) Lancaster. Delaware received hundreds of settlers from the Delaware River Valley. Among the Pennsylvanian migrants who arrived in Delaware village and county was an ethnic Dutch family named Rosecrans. This family produced one of Ohio's 200 Union generals (William Rosecrans) and the first bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Columbus (Sylvester Rosecrans.) Both William and Sylvester Rosecrans converted to Catholicism

before the Civil War—a practice more common in the Mid-Atlantic and the Midwest than in New England.

(New) Lancaster came into being at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Lancaster's founders hailed from Pennsylvania, the streets were plotted and named on the basis of the Philadelphia grid, and its first newspaper was published in German. While most of Lancaster's settlers were from the Mid-Atlantic, Connecticut Yankees and Virginians could be found in the town and in Fairfield County. During the Civil War, Lancaster and its county sired five Union generals (four of which came from the same family), an ethnic German regiment, and the first two recipients of the Medal of Honor—all the while rejecting the abolition of slavery. (The 61st Ohio Volunteer Infantry received the nickname, "The Flying Dutchmen," in recognition of its German, or "Pennsylvania Dutch," heritage, and for how fast troops ran away from the Confederates at Chancellorsville. Fittingly, the 61st Ohio redeemed itself at Gettysburg.)

The history of Thomas Ewing and his family illustrates the influence of the Mid-Atlantic on the Midwest. Thomas Ewing's Scots-Irish ancestors fought at the Boyne and then departed Ulster for New Jersey. His father, George, served in two New Jersey regiments during the Revolution, endured the hardships of Valley Forge, and settled in southern Ohio. Raised in poverty, Thomas Ewing taught himself Latin, labored as a salt boiler, became the first graduate of the first public college west of the Alleghenies (Ohio University), and settled in Lancaster where he read law. He subsequently married an Irish Catholic woman whose ancestors had fought against the Scots-Irish. In melting-pot fashion, they raised their children in the Catholic Church and scornfully dismissed the virulent nativists in the Western Reserve.

In the decades before the Civil War Ewing became a wealthy lawyer, confidant of Whig Party leaders Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, US senator, US secretary of the Treasury, and US secretary of the Interior. Ewing adopted William Tecumseh Sherman, the son of his deceased friend, Charles Sherman. Thomas Ewing got Sherman into West Point and welcomed him as a son-in-law when he married his daughter Ellen. Extended family members included US attorney general and New York native Henry Stanbery and Republican presidential nominee and Pennsylvania native James Gillespie Blaine. Sons Hugh, Tom, and Charley Ewing, like their brother-in-law Sherman, became successful Union generals, battling guerrillas in Missouri, laying siege to Vicksburg, and marching through Georgia.

As a Whig politician before the Civil War, Ewing had advocated a partnership between business and government in the development of canals, roads, and railroads. Ewing greatly admired New York's Erie Canal, which had linked New York City to Lake Erie, and envisioned Ohio tying Lake Erie to the Ohio River. He believed that the federal government should provide subsidies for infrastructure and promote a stable national banking system. In turn, entrepreneurs, *not government officials*, would provide the labor, materials, and leadership for the economic development of the West. On the issue of slavery, Ewing had taken a moderate stance. He opposed the expansion of slavery on the basis of economic, rather than moral, grounds, and was willing to see the peculiar institution contained in the South rather than abolished outright.

The Radical Republicans of the Great Lakes Rim and the Democrats of the Virginia Military District despised political moderates like Thomas Ewing. During the Civil War, Ewing warned President Abraham Lincoln against embracing emancipation as it would alienate many in the Midwest who were fighting to preserve the Union but not to abolish slavery. Southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois Democrats excoriated the Ewings and their allies, charging that they were destroying states' rights by fighting for the Union and allowing for a federal role in tying the East to the West with subsidized railroads. Radical Republicans, outraged by Ewing's stance on emancipation, regarded him as a traitor.

In the Lancaster area the political dynamics of the Civil War were clear to see. Nearly all the young ethnic German males whose grandparents came from Pennsylvania fought in the Civil War and voted Republican; nearly all the English Anglicans and Methodists whose family came from Virginia and Maryland decried the Union's military operations and voted Democratic. Historians, in describing American politics after the Civil War, have observed that northerners and southerners "voted the way they shot." An addendum may be in order: many northerners chose whether or not to shoot in the first place based on ethnic, familial, and geographical considerations.<sup>11</sup>

If not for the presence of Mid-Atlantic transplants to the central Midwest serving as buffers between the ideological extremes of the upper and lower portions of the region, it is difficult to see how Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois would have provided the Union with legions of soldiers, the best military commanders (William T. Sherman, Philip Sheridan, and Ulysses Grant), and enormous amounts of provisions. Instead, a civil war within a Civil War

would have been a strong possibility in the Midwest—in which case the South might well have achieved its independence.<sup>12</sup>

For decades after the Civil War voting patterns in the Mid-Atlantic and the Midwest (as was true in the South and New England) were rigidly fixed. Democrats in Pennsylvania could be found either in the Irish Catholic neighborhoods of Philadelphia, or in the counties bordering Maryland. Adams County, Pennsylvania, which narrowly gave a plurality of its votes to Lincoln in 1860, went Democratic in 1864 and voted that way after the Civil War. Not coincidentally, Gettysburg, which had witnessed some of the worst carnage of the Civil War, served as the Adams County seat. Pennsylvania at large, however, became firmly Republican—not giving its Electoral College votes to a Democratic presidential candidate until 1936.

In Ohio the Virginia Military District remained staunchly Democratic, northern Ohio rock-ribbed Republican, and the center of the state was split. Central Ohio determined which party won the state's Electoral College votes; that outcome often decided national presidential elections. It should be recalled that while disputed votes in the South were at the center of the 1876 presidential election controversy, Ohio governor Rutherford Hayes carried his home state by just 7,516 ballots. Had Hayes not fought for every vote in central Ohio, the Republicans would have lost the White House regardless of the actual outcomes in Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina.

The electoral realities described above have not changed in the twenty-first century, even while the political dynamics were fundamentally altered. Republican areas of strength in nineteenth-century Pennsylvania and Ohio are now fiercely Democratic, while formerly Democratic areas are bastions of the Republican Party. Two facts, however, have remained constant. First, central Ohio continues to hold the balance of power in the state and remains a battleground for presidential candidates (Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York in recent decades have not been “swing states” like their Buckeye kin). Second, in terms of ideology southern Ohio and Pennsylvania are just as distrustful of an assertive federal government in the twenty-first century as they were in the nineteenth century. The key is that the parties changed—and it was cities in the Mid-Atlantic and the Midwest that made this change possible.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century great industrial centers arose in the western reaches of the Mid-Atlantic and in the Great Lakes Rim. Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago were linked in a booming economy of automobile and steel manufacturing, as well as oil refining



and electronics assembly. Such industries depended upon vast quantities of unskilled, inexpensive workers. Industrialists recruited immigrant workers from southern and eastern Europe. Forty million immigrants came to America before the 1920s, of which half remained in the United States. Croatian, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish, and Slovak Catholics went to the "Industrial Heartland," as did the Greek and Russian Orthodox and Eastern European Jews. They spoke a dozen languages (none of which were English), and did not vote or join labor unions.<sup>13</sup>

For many Republican politicians immigrants were a perfect constituency. Their numbers swelled the US House delegations and Electoral College votes of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan. Best of all, since immigrant workers were not citizens and could not vote, Republicans ignored them. That would prove to be a politically damaging stance in the long run. The southern and eastern European Catholics and Jews who settled in America reproduced at rates far higher than native-born Protestants. Their children claimed birthright citizenship and spoke English. Millions of them reached the voting age of twenty-one nearly simultaneously—at the beginning of the Great Depression. Between 1920 and 1936 the US electorate increased 40 percent; nearly all that increase occurred among the children of immigrants in cities like Pittsburgh and Chicago. Their political loyalties were a question waiting for an answer.

The Democrats provided the answer: federal funding for public works jobs, Social Security, unemployment insurance, the minimum wage, and collective bargaining rights for industrial workers. At the same time, Catholic clerics in Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Cleveland, and Chicago placed the moral weight of their Church behind labor union organizing. Drawing inspiration from Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical, "*On the Condition of Labor*," and Pope Pius XI's 1931 encyclical, "*Reconstructing the Social Order*," Bishop Hugh Boyle (Pittsburgh) and George Cardinal Mundelein (Chicago) defended unions and the New Deal from communist and corporation attack. In Pittsburgh, Catholic priests walked on union picket lines and offered their churches as safe places for union meetings.

Meanwhile, Irish Catholic Democrats in the cities of the Industrial Heartland built multiethnic and religious political machines. In Boston and New York, Catholic Church leaders were often hostile to labor unions, while Irish politicians, as political scientist Steven Erie observed, proved unwilling to share power with Italians, Jews, and blacks. (Philadelphia's Irish Democrats behaved no differently, but a Republican machine built around Jews, blacks,



FIGURE 1: Arthur Rothstein, "A Group of Steelworkers discussing Politics, Aliquippa, Pennsylvania." Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection fsa 8a09939 (American Memory website).

and Italians had locked them out of electoral power since the late nineteenth century.) In Pittsburgh Democratic machine boss David Lawrence forged alliances across religious, ethnic, and racial lines. While the Buffalo, Chicago, and Cleveland Democratic machines followed suit, the integration process went much further in Pittsburgh. The Catholic Church, the steelworkers' union, and the Democratic Party became an indivisible "Iron City Trinity." Even Republican industrialists, like the Scots-Irish Presbyterian Mellon family, would be welcomed by the Iron City Trinity in the common cause of revitalizing Pittsburgh's infrastructure and environment after World War II.<sup>14</sup>

There were others who did not welcome the political changes occurring in the Mid-Atlantic and Midwest. Southern white Democrats were no more pleased than the Boston Irish with the growing political clout of Pittsburgh and Chicago. In spite of that, their loyalty to the Democratic Party continued well into the next generation. Southerners believed states' rights were secure so long as the federal government did not promote unions and civil rights in Dixie. Southern Democrats also rationalized that receiving billions in federal subsidies for agriculture, electricity, oil, and water did not constitute any

weakening of states' rights. Subsidies were just overdue reparations from the North for having waged an unjustified war on the South—not an opening for greater federal oversight of Dixie's labor and race relations.<sup>15</sup>

For the rural white Protestants of southern Pennsylvania and Ohio in the 1930s, like the big-city industrial managers whose forebears had been anti-Catholic Radical Republicans, there could be no Dixie-style rationalization. Unlike southerners, they witnessed immediately and first-hand the assertion of federal power and heavier taxation that came with the New Deal and Franklin Roosevelt's presidency. Federal tax revenues and borrowed money flowed to urban Catholics and Jews; only a trickle went to the rural Protestant hinterlands. Meanwhile, small-town and urban white Protestants saw their political power slipping away.

Violent, often lethal, strikes swept Cleveland, Chicago, and the lesser mill towns and coal patches of the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic. Small-town Ohioans and Pennsylvanians blamed the violence on the heavily Catholic and Jewish Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), rather than on a well-armed management. As they could not seek political shelter (and federal funds) from the southerners who controlled most of the all-powerful committee chairs in Congress, the rural bastions of the Democratic Party in nineteenth-century New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio turned increasingly to the Republicans. Southern white Democrats took longer to make the switch, but by the early 1990s were in ideological lock step with Ohio's Virginia Military District and Adams County, Pennsylvania.

Republican strategist and George W. Bush adviser Karl Rove understood the electoral dynamics of the Mid-Atlantic, Midwest, and South better than many academics and campaign managers. Building upon Kevin Phillips's insightful 1969 analysis of the electoral interplay between region and ethnicity, Rove identified 100 key exurban counties. These counties were areas of rapid population growth that had emerged at the periphery of urban counties. While some urban counties had continued to experience population growth after the economic restructuring of the 1980s (particularly those in the south), many in the north had declined. Northerners had either left for the booming Sunbelt, or moved to neighboring exurban counties to escape rising crime rates, disappearing jobs, and failing public schools. As the deindustrialized cities of the north contracted, so did the ranks of Democratic-aligned labor unions and the electoral base of party of the New Deal.<sup>16</sup>

As in the nineteenth century, the middle of the Midwest, largely settled by migrants from the Mid-Atlantic, held the balance of electoral power. It

was not unusual in 2000, 2004, 2008, and 2012 for the residents of Fairfield and Delaware counties to see George W. Bush, Bill and Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, and John McCain at some political function—and to see them on multiple occasions. Al Gore and John Kerry either failed to make an appearance, or made a quick visit and then disappeared. Rather than slug it out in central Ohio's exurban counties, they kept to the 1930s campaign model and rode motorcades through the deserted streets of Cleveland. Gore and Kerry did the same thing in Pennsylvania—scattering legions of pigeons in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. Although exurban Philadelphia proved more forgiving of Gore and Kerry than exurban Columbus, by losing Ohio they lost the national election.

While surveying 400 years of regional politics in a few pages is a daunting proposition, we can confidently conclude with a few broad observations. Historians assaying colonial and early nineteenth-century America, such as Pencak, Zuckerman, Warner, Fischer, and Anbinder, have given students of politics an enduring framework for understanding the social roots of contemporary elections. The Mid-Atlantic region certainly stood apart from New England and the South, offering up melting-pot politics, political accommodations, and a balanced approach to the issue of how much power should be given to government. From the Mid-Atlantic perspective, government should neither be a tool of coercion (New England) nor stand completely aside as education and infrastructure needs are unmet and the civil rights of groups repressed (the South). In that regard the Mid-Atlantic and the central Midwest are siblings, navigating around extremists and determining who is worthy to be president of the country.

Historians, political scientists, and journalists are well advised to study demography and geography. While demography may not be destiny, the cultural, ethnic, and ideological characteristics of people, as well as their historical aspirations, fears, and grievances, shape our electoral contours. America's regions, while sharing DNA, have some peculiar chromosomes that make for interesting, and sometimes bickering, offspring. The best contemporary political analysts and media commentators, notably Michael Barone and Joel Kotkin, understand this point very well.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to appreciating region and demography, scholars would be well served by looking at more than small fragments of the past. Historiographic evolution, by its very definition, requires time. Moreover, continuities and discontinuities become clearer over the long haul. The strength of Sam Bass Warner's classic work, *The Private City*, is that he examined Philadelphia from

the colonial era to the twentieth century. Tyler Anbinder cheerfully investigated the nineteenth century, detailing the many wondrous, and baleful, contributions the Five Points neighborhood made to American politics and culture. Steven Erie, in *Rainbow's End*, examined Irish machine politics over a 145-year period and across a dozen cities—and thus created a model for studying urban politics that has maintained its analytical value. To understand the dynamics of contemporary presidential election in a battleground state such as Ohio, it is necessary to study the nineteenth century and subsequently discern the ideological and cultural influences exerted on the Midwest by the legacies of colonial Mid-Atlantic, New England, and the South.

On a final note, one which my generation of historians should appreciate, I offer an observation from the most baneful, yet entertaining, television show of the 1970s, *The Love Boat*. I recall an episode featuring the cruise ship doctor, helpfully known as “Doc,” who received a reproach from a former medical school colleague and passenger aboard the *Pacific Princess*. The world-renowned specialist chided Doc for throwing away his intellectual potential to become a generalist—“knowing less and less about more and more.” Doc retorted that his blinkered colleague “knows more and more about less and less.” This exchange has stuck with me over the decades. Good scholars will shape our understanding of political history for years to come because they intuit that Doc had the better perspective.

## NOTES

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