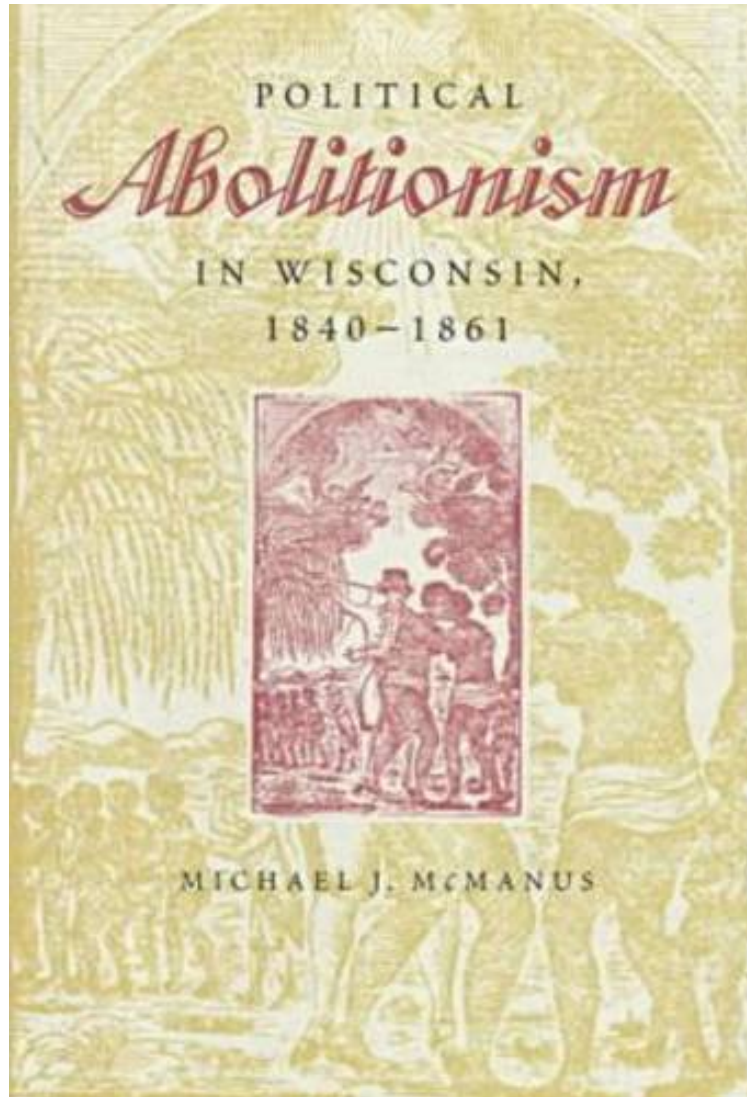


Political Abolitionism in Wisconsin, 1840-1861

Michael J McManus

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Michael J McManus : Political Abolitionism in Wisconsin, 1840-1861 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Political Abolitionism in Wisconsin, 1840-1861:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An Excellent Study of Antislavery PoliticsBy Andrew J. LangMcManus makes a forceful argument for the fundamentally antislavery character of the antebellum Republican Party. While this is an academic monograph, the author's style is crisp and readable. His conclusions provide significant support for a school of interpretations stressing the antislavery origins of the Civil War. I found it an especially stimulating to compare and contrast with William Gienapp's Origins of the Republican Party. Without going

into detail, I will say that McManus' analysis strikes me as more persuasive on a number of counts. If you want to know what secessionists were worried about, this book is a great place to start. I have to mention, that one of the book's great strengths is its attention to the instances in which a substantial minority of the voting public supported measures to extend more equal treatment of African-Americans (in this case the right to vote). McManus' study deserves a place alongside Bruce Laurie's study of Massachusetts, *Beyond Garrison*, as some of the most thoughtful works on the relationship between antislavery political parties and African-Americans.

Michael J. McManus' study of political abolitionism in Wisconsin demonstrates the overriding importance of slavery-related issues in bringing on the political crisis of the 1850s and the American Civil War. In the years prior to the war, the political struggle to free enslaved blacks and block the peculiar institutions spread into the western territories became intertwined with concerns over the future of republican institutions in America and the liberties of northern Whites. McManus shows that Wisconsin was more radical on slavery and race-related issues than most other northern states, and that slavery, rather than local ethnocultural concerns, was of greatest significance to the state's voters in the prewar years.

About the Author Michael J. McManus received his Ph.D. in history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1991. He is a partner/owner of McManus, Perkins Associates, Ltd., an investment and insurance planning firm. His essay *Freedom and Liberty First, and the Union Afterwards: State Rights and the Wisconsin Republican Party, 1854-1861* appeared in *Union and Emancipation: Essays on Politics and Race in the Civil War Era* (Kent State University Press, 1997).