



The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War

Michael F. Holt

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The political home of Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, Horace Greeley, and the young Abraham Lincoln, the American Whig Party was involved at every level of American politics--local, state, and federal--in the years before the Civil War, and controlled the White House for eight of the twenty-two years that it existed. Now, in *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*, Michael F. Holt gives us the only comprehensive history of the Whigs ever written--a monumental history covering in rich detail the American political landscape from the Age of Jackson to impending disunion.

In Michael Holt's hands, the history of the Whig Party becomes a political history of the United States during the tumultuous Antebellum period. He offers a panoramic account of a time when a welter of parties (Whig, Democratic, Anti-Mason, Know Nothing, Free Soil, Republican) and many extraordinary political statesmen (including Andrew Jackson, John C. Calhoun, William Seward, Daniel Webster, Martin Van Buren, and Henry Clay) struggled to control the national agenda as the U.S. inched towards secession. It was an era when Americans were passionately involved in politics, when local concerns drove national policy, and when momentous political events rocked the country, including the Nullification Controversy, the Panic of 1837, the Annexation of Texas, the Compromise of 1850, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Holt captures all of this as he shows that, amid this contentious political activity, the Whig Party continuously strove to unite North and South, repeatedly trying to find a compromise position. Indeed, the Whig Party emerges as the nation's last great hope to prevent secession and civil war.

The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party is a magisterial work of history, one that has already been hailed by William Gienapp of Harvard as "one of the most important books on nineteenth-century politics ever written."

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