

Homer E. Capehart: a Senator's Life, 1897-1979

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The picture we get of the Kansas bands after they had evaded removal is not well defined. The Chippewas and Munsees in time will lose federal recognition, so that for their recent history the scholar can no longer draw on the voluminous government archives that are both a blessing and a trial to the researcher. The Potawatomis, Iowas, Missouri Sacs, and Kickapoos, however, are still to some degree wards of the government. They felt threatened by the termination policies of the 1950s and reacted vigorously. But like so many other Indian wards of the United States, they have become dependent on those government programs. The author quotes an anthropologist about the Kickapoo economy being devastated by budget cuts in Washington, and Herring also depicts the Sac business office being full of empty desks as a result of a decline in federal grants. It is ironic that Indians who pride themselves on their resistance to the United States have now become dependent on that government's support.

This is a complicated story but one well worth telling. It also is a highly successful effort to shift the emphasis from a discussion of government policy and its application by agency officials to an evaluation of Indian tactics and stratagems. We need more studies of this type—thoughtful, well researched, and cogent.

Homer E. Capehart: A Senator's Life, 1897-1979, by William B. Pickett. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1990. xii, 243 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$27.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY EDWARD L. SCHAPSMEIER, ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

This is the first scholarly biography of Homer Earl Capehart (1897-1979), who served in the U.S. Senate from 1945 to 1963. Its author, William B. Pickett, a native Hoosier, has a keen grasp of Indiana politics and its relation to the national scene.

Homer Capehart was an archetypical Midwest conservative as well as being a self-made man. He became a millionaire in the 1930s as a seller of automatic phonographs. His efforts made Wurlitzer the leader in the jukebox industry. Capehart's entrepreneurial ingenuity led him to found his own successful company and later to engage in profitable commercial farming.

Capehart won his seat in the U.S. Senate without ever having held prior elective office. He defeated former Secretary of Agriculture Claude Wickard. After being twice reelected, Capehart was narrowly defeated in 1962 by Birch Bayh.

The author portrays Capehart as a pragmatic conservative who was basically a protectionist and a nationalist (really a euphemism for

isolationist). Although he sympathized with organized labor and the plight of the lower class, Capehart opposed much of the New Deal. He regarded Franklin Roosevelt's performance at Yalta as a tragic sell-out to Stalin. Capehart's conservatism represented the economic thinking of the business community and the self-reliant individualism of small towns and rural areas. While more moderate and less doctrinaire than his Indiana cohort in the Senate, William Jenner, Capehart flirted with McCarthyism and had close ties with Old Guard reactionaries. As a Taftite in 1952 Capehart slowly accommodated to Eisenhower's Modern Republicanism and internationally oriented foreign policy. The author indicates that while Capehart was "never close" to Ike, he "gradually warmed to the president" (130, 132). Eisenhower secured Capehart's support at times and on other occasions sought to outmaneuver him.

In seeking his fourth term in 1962, Capehart tried to exploit John Kennedy's mistakes in the Cuban fiasco, but failed. Times had changed. By the 1960s Capehart resembled the liberal's caricature of him as a right-wing mossback out of tune with modernity. His militant anticommunism no longer had its former appeal, and his call for a balanced budget fell on deaf ears. Even his physical appearance (fat, bald, and round-faced) and lack of oratorical ability contributed to an image that seemed outdated.

Capehart's defeat was attributable in part to the decrease of the proverbial tobacco-chewing constituency of rural and small-town Indiana. Capehart, with a perpetual cigar stuffed in his mouth, appeared hopelessly archaic and out of step with the growing interests of urban voters. Likewise, he never felt comfortable with the increasingly global outlook of U.S. foreign policy. In Iowa, Capehart's counterpart was Bourke K. Hickenlooper—who retired rather than face the new generation of voters. Despite Capehart's flawed legacy, he was essentially a decent man who acted upon his firmly held convictions. He died before his domestic brand of conservatism again became fashionable.

This account of his career sheds much light upon how the often confusing Senate produces legislation. It also reveals how the democratic process operates on the state level. Most of all, however, this is a thoroughly researched, well-written, and insightful biography of a significant conservative. Although a relatively uneducated and unsophisticated man, Capehart devoted his political efforts to "preserve the meaning of America, [which] he had decided, was that individual effort counted" (181). It is an illuminating work for those historians who want to understand the political mode of thought of an influen-

tial conservative and to discover the reasons why he rose to national prominence.

Max: A Biography of C. Maxwell Stanley, Engineer, Businessman, World Citizen, by Ros Jensen. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1990. xii, 221 pp. Illustrations, notes, appendixes, index. \$22.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY JOSEPH F. WALL, GRINNELL COLLEGE

The subtitle of this biography provides in capsule summary the three-part division of the life of Claude Maxwell Stanley of Muscatine, Iowa. In all three areas, Stanley was to achieve success that far transcended what could have been the narrow, parochial confines of the small-town stage he had selected as the proper setting for the roles he was driven to play out to the fullest range of his quite extraordinary talents.

Born in Corning, Iowa, on June 16, 1904, the elder son of a much decorated colonel of the famed Rainbow Division in World War I, young Stanley early showed an aptitude for and a consuming interest in civil engineering. In many respects, Stanley's life is a study in paradox. He venerated his soldier father, yet he was to spend much of his adult life in pursuit of a goal to make his father's career obsolete. An economic conservative and a staunch defender of laissez-faire, Stanley was to achieve his first financial success as an engineer in pushing rural electrification projects under New Deal auspices, and his first political victories came in his battles with private utility companies. Having achieved international success and renown as an engineering consultant, he would, much to the consternation of his brother and partner, Art Stanley, largely turn his back on Stanley Consultants, Inc. in order to promote the fortunes of the Home-O-Nize Company, which he founded in 1944 for the manufacture of household furnishings. Failing to achieve success in producing kitchen cabinets for the home, he was to win a great fortune in manufacturing furniture for the business office. A hard-headed, practical engineer with no initial interest whatsoever in the aesthetic, he would late in life become absorbed in an appreciation for African art and would assemble one of the finest collections of that genre to be found in the United States. Stanley always pushed inordinately hard in any enterprise to which he directed his attention, whether it was in getting the contract to build a diesel power plant in Liberia, in promoting the program of the World Federalist Association in the midst of the Cold War, or in acquiring a particularly fine west African ritual mask. Here was a fierce competitor who hated to lose and seldom did.

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