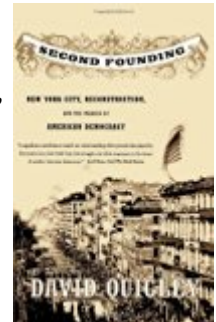


**David Quigley.** *Second Founding: New York City, Reconstruction, and the Making of American Democracy.* New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2004. xv + 238 pp. \$14.00, paper, ISBN 978-0-8090-8513-2.



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David Quigley persuasively argues that the founding fathers who produced the constitution were "profoundly skeptical of democracy" (p. ix). These men, some of whom were slaveholders and uncertain that all men were born equal, could not establish true democracy. That accomplishment, according to Quigley, emerged at the end of Reconstruction in 1877. Many historians have addressed southern Reconstruction since its end in the Compromise of 1876 that awarded the disputed election to Republican Benjamin Rutherford Hayes over the apparent winner Samuel Tilden. Quigley admirably documents the reconstruction that was centered in Manhattan as the city's small black population, aided by progressive whites, sought equality. This second founding involved "black activists, Tammany Democrats, bourgeois reformers, liberal publicists, women's suffrage leaders, and trade unionists" (p. xiii).

Quigley noted that this second founding began amid the horror of the July 1863 Draft Riot in Manhattan that terrorized African Americans who sought refuge in the swamps of New Jersey and secluded areas of Long Island. African Ameri-

can activists fought for inclusion as full citizens with the same political and civil rights afforded to many white citizens. National black activists such as Frederick Douglass, Henry Highland Garnet and Martin Delany traveled the country articulating "a black political voice on the national level. In their public speeches, through their own heroic work in the deep South by organizing local and state conventions of freedmen, [they] forever transformed race relations across America" (p. 21). In the aftermath of Lincoln's assassination, African American leaders demanded that the federal government provide them with a nationalized citizenship as well as protection for those rights. It was this vigorous articulation of their rights by black New Yorkers that "helped set the terms for emerging national debate over suffrage, citizenship, and federal power" (p. 25).

These efforts were aided by E. L. Godkin, editor of the *Nation*, the Citizen's Association and the New York Democratic Party. Godkin provided a definition of Reconstruction that emphasized "education, intelligence and the development of a cultured elite in America" (p. 29). The Citizen's As-

sociation called for reforms and a government free of corruption. Ironically, according to Quigley, "it was Tammany's racialized vision of a white man's reconstruction that proved most explosive in 1865 and would have the greatest impact on the second founding in Manhattan and across America" (p. 40). Samuel J. Tilden, a future presidential candidate, and Horatio Seymour, former governor of New York, criticized southern Reconstruction as an infringement upon states' rights. Their determination to deny the franchise and equal rights to African Americans galvanized blacks and their supporters to push for an unrestricted franchise for all black males. (Only African American men who owned taxable property exceeding \$250 in value were permitted the franchise.) Activists were motivated by the Congressional decision to grant southern freedmen the franchise in 1867. In that year, progressives failed to convince New York delegates to eliminate the voting restrictions. Black clergy were a strong voice for equal suffrage rights but despite their efforts supported by the New York City Labor Council, voters in 1869 defeated equal suffrage in Manhattan by a wide margin.

The suffrage issue was resolved in 1870 by the adoption of the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Quigley argues that scholars have underestimated the significant role played by the federal government in the lives of northerners in the late nineteenth century. He noted that "the Reconstruction amendments empowered Republican party officials in New York to launch an unparalleled process of federal regulation of urban elections." Quigley added that "nowhere is the nationalization of Reconstruction in the wake of the Fifteenth Amendment's enactment more in evidence than in New York City's fall 1870 election" (p. 71). Significantly, about two hundred black men were appointed U.S. deputy marshals in Manhattan by November 1870.

Those who resented the voting rights of blacks sought under the Tilden Commission to

limit the vote to property owners. This fear that uneducated and non-taxable males would be pawns of corrupt politicians was rejected by voters in 1877. The election of progressively minded politicians saw to it that the franchise was the right of all men regardless of race or wealth. Despite its defeat, the Tilden Commission's thesis had many supporters who insisted for decades that true democracy called for voting restrictions. In 1899, the Committee on City Affairs of the New York Reform Clubs advocated restricting the suffrage to taxpayers as a recipe for good government. Although this measure was not accepted, advocates of voting restrictions took solace in continuing to deny the franchise to women regardless of their individual wealth, and they welcomed the decisions of southern governments to disfranchise African Americans throughout the 1890s. Quigley noted that many supporters of the Tilden Commission turned to other reforms. They questioned private ownership of railroads, and they considered "civil service reform ... as the preferred means of combating the dangers of democracy in New York City" (p. 167). Other Tilden Commission supporters attacked as evil Asian immigrants, communists and anarchists.

*Second Founding*, unlike some other historical accounts, does not ignore the contributions of African Americans. Quigley places them at center stage in his narrative rather than in the wings. We are introduced to Emma Waite, whose journal notes inform us of her joys living amid Manhattan's cultural offerings, but also her disappointment and sorrow at being subjected to New York's racial caste system. It was this caste system that relegated African Americans to a second-class position that motivated activists such as *New York Globe* editor Timothy Thomas Fortune, a former slave, to eloquently and militantly attack racism.

I would have liked Quigley to expand on several themes. Fortune himself deserves fuller discussion. Known as the Dean of Negro Journalists, he severely criticized the two parties for neglect-

ing the freedmen and particularly admonished the Republican Party for its refusal to agitate for an end to lynching and political disfranchisement of blacks in the South. Fortune boldly declared that he was a race man and not a party man in an era when the Republicans were viewed as a ship in the open sea. Even though his call for a black independent party found few supporters, it represented a growing dissatisfaction with Republicans that remained until the years of the Great Depression when the majority of African Americans switched to the Democratic party of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Fortune was the founder of the Afro-American League in 1890 which advocated many of the principles adopted later by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. More extensive treatment of educational rights (or the lack thereof) would have broadened the picture of reconstruction in New York. Schools remained segregated in New York until the state's adoption of a civil rights law in 1873. But even then white fear of miscegenation hampered efforts to educate whites and blacks in the same classrooms. Nor did Quigley provide much material on the disputed presidential election of 1876. What were the political machinations that led to the Hayes presidency? Quibbles aside, however, Quigley's book is a magnificent scholarly study of interracial democracy in New York and it is one that will set the standard for others to follow.

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