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*Democracy Reborn: The Fourteenth Amendment and the Fight for
Equal Rights in Post-Civil War America* (review)

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the boarding experience in a variety of American places, such as the instant cities of the West, or racially segregated towns of the New South, differed from what she describes on the Atlantic seaboard. Moreover, she hints that race was a key element that helped Anglo-American women define who they were in an ever-shifting commercial world, but she has little to say about the lives of African-American housekeepers and boarders in the nineteenth century. Given that black Americans have enjoyed a long tradition of boarding going back to the early antebellum era, particularly in northern cities such as Boston and Chicago, their conspicuous absence from Gamber's tale is disappointing.

Even with these weaknesses, however, this book is an important scholarly contribution that helps us understand how the most basic challenges of life, in this case finding housing on the mean streets of the nation's largest cities, had a profound impact on the American past. It is a model of creative social history that encourages scholars to transcend traditional intellectual boundaries and begin new conversations in a fragmented academic world.

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Garret Epps. *Democracy Reborn: The Fourteenth Amendment and the Fight for Equal Rights in Post-Civil War America*. New York: Henry Holt, 2006. xii + 333 pp. ISBN 0-8050-7130-X, \$27.50 (cloth).

In the spring of 1866, Congress drafted what would become the Fourteenth Amendment—a promise of citizenship and civil rights for all Americans regardless of race. However, the Redeemer years following its ratification blurred its importance, illuminated latent racial prejudice, and then provided for the failure of civil rights—not normally the makings of a success story. Yet, despite the racial issues of this nation, the Fourteenth Amendment has remained a part of the Constitution—ready to serve its duty to uphold the ideals of the nation. Garrett Epps examines the men and the process that led to the founding of that moment—the creation of one of the most idealistic and revolutionary aspects of the Constitution. Comparing the writers of the Fourteenth Amendment to the original founding fathers of the

Constitution in 1787, Epps argues that the writers of the Fourteenth Amendment were Re-Framers of the nation, who fixed the Constitution to live up to its ideals, after America's second Revolution, the Civil War (11).

According to Epps, the problem with the original Constitution was the issue of slavery. In 1787, divisions existed between nonslave and slave states, but were less imperative than problems between large and small states. Neither side wanted to discuss slavery, lest it bring disunion before the union had even started. So, the only mention of slavery was the 3/5ths Clause: "Representation within the House shall consist of all free persons, and 3/5ths of all others." This was a compromise until the Civil War decided the issue of slavery. The lack of "others" after the Civil War posed a new problem—one that Republicans in the Congress did not want to face. When the Southern states were readmitted into the union, how should their representation be decided? If all former slaves were freed, they should be included for representation—but that would give the Southern states eighteen more seats in the Congress than they had before the war—enough to overturn any Republican agenda that came up. The paradox was how to ensure that African-Americans became free citizens without giving Southern Democrats control of the Congress.

Certainly, there was no foolproof plan, or even a consensus, on one. But there were several brave, intelligent, optimistic men and women who were the new framers of our more liberal constitution. Epps uses biography, congressional documents, newspapers, and letters to paint a biographical picture of a cast of characters who, although human and flawed, were strong-minded. Thaddeus Stevens, the nineteenth-century version of Benjamin Franklin, pushed through the thirteenth amendment—and was an old cranky politician. Charles Sumner, who became a martyr, even before the war started, following his caning on the floor of the House by Preston Brooks, was a force to be reckoned with—very loud, very forceful; he wanted to lead the committees and lead the charge, refusing compromises. Charles Schultz toured the South and brought back one of the many, although not the most famous, travel accounts of the backward South. His report on the unrelenting racism of the South directly opposed President Johnson's account, and helped pit the Congress against the President. Robert Dale Owen, the Ugly American, the socialist utopian, wrote the first version of the Fourteenth Amendment. Frederick Douglass, as an elite African-American, was a symbol of the fight for civil and political rights of freed slaves. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the Women's Rights leader, opposed the Fourteenth Amendment, not because of opposition to African-American men, but because for the first time it singled out only men as eligible for those rights. Epps captures these

and other characters, all pitted against the inflexible, unforgiving, egotistical President Andrew Johnson, in surprising biographical detail, without sacrificing argument or interest.

Biographies probably outsell other historical monographs. Often ignored by academics as not serious work, that attitude has changed in the last few years. Most biographies use historical context to analyze an individual. However, Epps uses biographies to analyze an historical event.

The Republican Congress wanted to insure that African-Americans gained and kept their civil and political rights, so that Southern states could not undermine them. One way was to remake Southern states into little Republics that would support racial equality. The resulting Fourteenth Amendment, of course, did nothing of the kind. It was undermined by the Southern states, by the Supreme Court, and by the increasing laxity of Republicans, thereby allowing the Southern states to pass the Black Codes, and keep its segregated character. Epps argues that despite this failure, the importance of the Fourteenth Amendment should not be diminished. It is a "kind of prophecy, or a promise to history" (270) that Americans need to listen to, try to understand, and live up to its ideals. *Democracy Reborn* is tailored to a broad audience, but maintains intellectual investigation.

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Richard E. Holl. *From the Boardroom to the War Room: America's Corporate Liberals and FDR's Preparedness Program*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2005. x + 191 pp. ISBN 1-58046-192-1, \$75.00 (cloth).

In August 1939, the U.S. military remained terribly ill equipped for a major international conflict. The average infantry soldier was armed with a 1903 Springfield rifle, field artillery depended upon 75-mm howitzers designed for the First World War, and armor consisted of about five hundred outdated tanks. U.S. industry, still almost completely geared for peacetime production, was in little position to be of much help. By December 1942, however, the once "disarmed forces" of the United States had become a military superpower and American industry the "arsenal of democracy." According to Richard E. Holl,