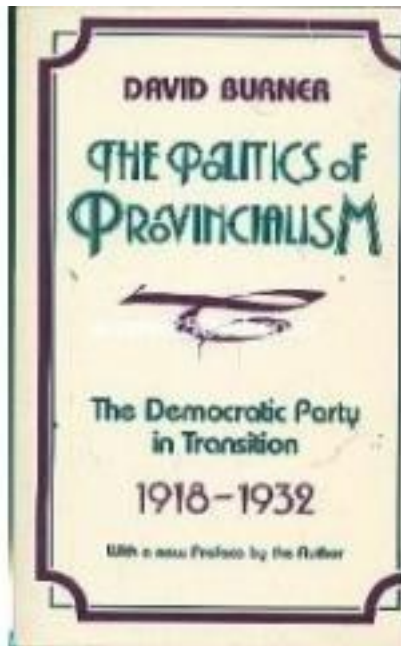


# The Politics of Provincialism: The Democratic Party in Transition, 1918-1932



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著者:

出版者:

出版时间:

装帧:

isbn:9780674689404

PREFACE  
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This story of rural and urban provincialism within the Democratic party of the 1920s is a critical look at regional and social clashes in a time before the mass media has lessened differences within most of American culture. I did not intend to be particularly hard on either Al Smith's urban Democrats or the rural wing of the party looking to William Jennings Bryan and then to William Gibbs McAdoo. But although The Politics of Provincialism is probably harsher on the McAdoo Democrats for their ties to the Ku Klux Klan prohibition and anti-Catholicism some academic

liberals said that the chapter called "The Brown Derby Campaign" amounted to a demolition campaign against Al Smith--in the style of Leslie Fiedler's "Hemingway in Ketchum" or Paul K. Conkin's *The New Deal* concerning FDR. Except for Lawrence Levine's contemporaneous sympathetic study of Bryan's last decade *Defender of the Faith* (1965), political histories had disdained the Bryanites, perceiving them as bigoted persecutors of a more vigorously and tolerantly democratic urban immigrant culture. Many American historians had been raised on the liberal traditions of the New Deal that owe so much to urban voters in the Democratic party. My unfavorable remarks about the hinterland nativists therefore must have seemed no more or less than a dispassionate transcription of the truth while my observations about the big city were taken by some to be a gratuitous attack on social forces that have rejuvenated and remade American society. I intended no such attack. My own upbringing was upstate rural and Protestant. But one component of that Protestantism was the

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