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Review of *Congressional Populism and the Crisis of the 1890s*, by Gene Clanton.

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Congressional Populism and the Crisis of the 1890s. By Gene Clanton. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998. Appendices, notes, bibliographic note, index. xii + 228 pp. \$35.00.

Gene Clanton, emeritus professor of history at Washington State University, has spent much of his scholarly career studying Populism; this long-awaited study of congressional Populism contributes significantly to our understanding of that party. Populists served in every Congress between the 52nd (1891-3) and the 57th (1901-3), but no one has previously examined them in depth. Clanton does so by thoroughly mining the *Congressional Record*, quoting from it liberally to provide a good taste of the animated debate between Populists and their opponents. His conclusions contradict many of the views of Richard Hofstadter and Michael Kazin regarding a populist "style" and dispute Lawrence Goodwyn's argument that Senators William

V. Allen (Nebraska) and Marion Butler (North Carolina) were Populists "in name only."

Noting that Populists "had nothing to apologize for" with respect to the overall quality of their congressional delegation, Clanton concentrates on those who spoke most and provided party leadership: Jerry Simpson (Kansas) and John Bell (Colorado) in the House; and Allen, Butler, and William Peffer (Kansas) in the Senate. He effectively connects Populists' congressional actions to their party's positions, especially the national platforms of 1892 and 1896. Populists in Congress defended public ownership of railroads, communications, and finance; argued for public works to relieve unemployment; opposed large military and naval expenditures; and advocated a graduated income tax, the purpose of which, Senator James Kyle (South Dakota) made clear, was to secure "the redistribution of the wealth." Most, including Southerners, spoke out against black disfranchisement. Several, notably Allen, sought American intervention to secure Cuban independence, but most opposed annexation of the Philippines. Clanton makes clear that fusion with the Democrats was a logical and even principled position, contrary to those historians who have viewed it as unwise or unprincipled. Fusion in 1896, he specifies, brought "no significant or lasting retreat from principles." He doesn't subscribe to Goodwyn's notion of a Nebraska-centered "shadow movement" and suggests that "Tillmanism"—the appeal of Senator Benjamin Tillman of South Carolina—better meets the definition of a shadow movement (one having the form but not the substance of the real thing).

These are only a few of the book's contributions. Though Clanton delivers on his promise to give us a visitor's gallery view of the Populists at work on the floor of Congress, he acknowledges that other sources remain to be plumbed, especially the manuscript collections of some of these Populists, their correspondents, and their opponents. He provides some analysis of voting, but acknowledges that more needs to be done; the same is true for the Popu-

lists' committee work. Clanton's study clearly sets the agenda for further work in understanding congressional Populism.

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