

Reagan's Victory: The Presidential Election of 1980 and the Rise of the Right

Andrew Busch

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Presidential Procession: The anecdotal journalistic accounts of presidential elections written by the late Theodore White, and Jack Germond, and Jules Witcover belong to an outmoded genre of political reporting. Their lengthy, personal narratives were popular when print journalism was the source of political news. For better or worse—and frequently worse—election analysis is now often reduced to meaningless television sound bites or unverified blog ramblings. That is why this new series, “American Presidential Elections,” from the University Press of Kansas, is most welcome.

The first entry, *Reagan's Victory: The Presidential Election of 1980 and the Rise of the Right**, by Andrew Busch (University Press of Kansas, 200 pages, 12 photographs, hardcover, \$35.00, 0-7006-1407-9, softcover, \$16.95, 0-7006-1408-7) is an illuminating investigation of this key contest, which brought Reagan and the Republican Party's conservative wing to power. Busch, professor of government at Claremont McKenna College and author of *Ronald Reagan and the Politics of Freedom*, offers an admiring but fair appraisal of Reagan's victory over a hapless Jimmy Carter. A useful summation of the Reagan presidency, which, however, downplays the impacts of the huge deficits created by Reagan and the Iran-Contra scandal, is included. Nonetheless, Busch succeeds admirably in providing an election analysis that is concise and informative.

This first entry into the series predicts success for the entire slate when the polls close.

KARL HELICHER (August 18, 2009)

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