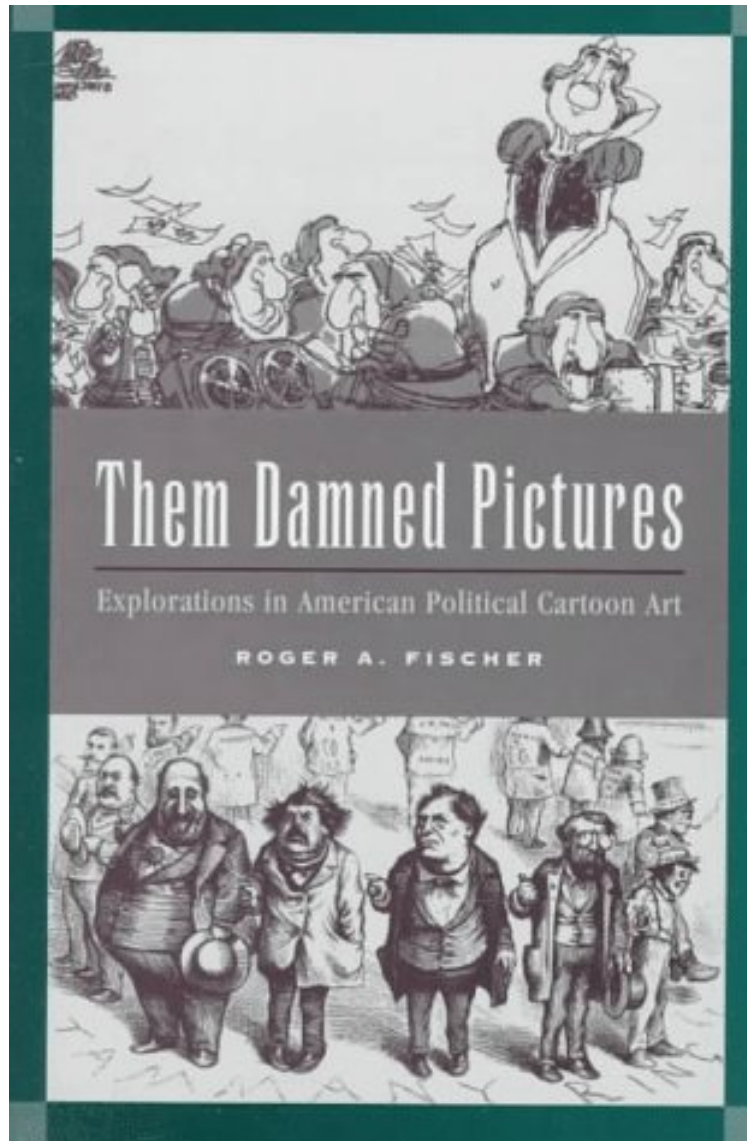


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Them Damned Pictures: Explorations in American Political Cartoon Art

Roger A. Fischer

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Roger A. Fischer : Them Damned Pictures: Explorations in American Political Cartoon Art before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Them Damned Pictures: Explorations in American Political Cartoon Art:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good bookBy SPOBI love political cartoons, especially ones from the 1800s. I enjoyed the ones here very much, although I wished the some were full page (like others) so you can read

the little stuff in a Nast cartoon. There's a little too much chatter (for me) about the times of the country when the cartoon was done, as opposed to just a caption explaining it. And a few more cartoons. It's just my preferences, however, and this is really good book, very broad ranged and well presented. The book came at the correct time and in VG condition, so opinion of the seller is very positive. (I'm not sure if this review is JUST for the book or both)

From Kirkus sFischer (History and American Studies/Univ. of Minn., Duluth) offers nine essays on various aspects of the history of American political cartooning. Pulitzer Prizewinning cartoonist Jeff MacNelly once noted that if they couldn't draw, most political cartoonists would probably have become hired assassins. It's a quote so witty and on the money that Fischer repeats it three times. As he observes, political cartoonists tend to be sharp-tongued as well as sharp-witted iconoclasts, and although their power has diminished in this century, they still attract unwanted attention to greasy politicians; after all, Paul Conrad made Nixon's "enemies list." Of course, in the previous century, before TV, radio, and the wire services, the potency of the cartoon image was greater. In the first and most interesting essay in this volume, Fischer revisits the war between Thomas Nast and his nemesis, William "Boss" Tweed, but what the author finds is a far cry from the legend. Tweed, he argues, wasn't the great crook of popular belief, nor did he meet his demise at the hands of the cartoonist. However, he readily allows, "it was Nast who elevated graphic assassination to an art." Fischer traces the elevation of Populist William Peffer, a rare third-party success who served in the US Senate, into a demonic figure by cartoonists who distorted his record mercilessly; the use of "filler" cartoons in 19th-century magazines that indulged in scurrilous racial and ethnic stereotyping; and the treatment of the Statue of Liberty and Lincoln as iconic figures. The result is an uneven collection, always informative, intermittently entertaining, but too often a seemingly endless catalog of ideas and representations. The best thing about this book is (as Boss Tweed called them) the "damned pictures" themselves. -- Copyright 1996, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.