

## The Forgotten Emancipator

Congressman James M. Ashley was a member of the House of Representatives from 1858 to 1868, and was the main sponsor of the Thirteenth Amendment to the American Constitution, which declared the institution of slavery unconstitutional. Rebecca E. Zietlow uses Ashley's life as a unique lens through which to explore the ideological origins of Reconstruction and the constitutional changes of this era. Zietlow recounts how Ashley and his antislavery allies shared an egalitarian free labor ideology that was influenced by the political antislavery movement and the nascent labor movement – a vision that conflicted directly with the institution of slavery. Ashley's story sheds important light on the meaning and power of popular constitutionalism: how the Constitution is interpreted outside of the courts and the power that citizens and their elected officials can have in enacting legal change. The book shows how Reconstruction not only expanded racial equality but also transformed the rights of workers throughout America.

REBECCA E. ZIETLOW is Charles W. Fornoff Professor of Law and Values at the University of Toledo, College of Law. She is a recipient of the University of Toledo Outstanding Faculty Research award and a leader of the Thirteenth Amendment Project. She is the author of *Enforcing Equality: Congress, the Constitution, and the Protection of Individual Rights*, and her work has been published in the *Columbia Law Review*, *Boston University Law Review*, *Ohio State Law Journal*, *Florida Law Review*, and the *Wake Forest Law Journal*.

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# The Forgotten Emancipator

*James Mitchell Ashley and the Ideological  
Origins of Reconstruction*

REBECCA E. ZIETLOW

*The University of Toledo College of Law*



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*To David, Alice, and Zoe  
and  
To the memory of Sally Ashley*

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