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Book Review: Presidents in Retirement: Alone and Out of Office, by Paul B. Wice

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Most books dealing with the lives and careers of presidents after they leave office tend to be light and simplistic. Not so this work by Wice (emer., Drew Univ.) who tries to systematically examine the post-presidential lives of the former US presidents. Wice takes his subject and subjects seriously and as such offers the reader a richer and more nuanced examination of the varied and wide ranging options pursued by former presidents. From reentering politics (John Quincy Adams; and John Tyler, who served in the Confederate House of Representatives after leaving the White House), to becoming a partisan spokesman (Fillmore), to engaging in public service (Carter), to trying to strike it rich economically (Ford), to living a life of leisure (Ford), to advising incumbent presidents (Nixon), the former presidents vary widely in their options and choices for "retirement." A few minor errors mar this work (e.g. Jimmy Carter's famous walk down Pennsylvania Avenue took place in 1976), yet it is still a very fresh and provocative exploration of what one does when going from the most powerful political leader in the world to retirement.

--M. A. Genovese, Loyola Marymount University

Summing Up: Recommended. All undergraduate collections.