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Charles Sumner and the Conscience of the North (American Biographical History Series)

Frederick J Blue

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before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Charles Sumner and the Conscience of the North (American Biographical History Series):

Book by Blue, Frederick J.

Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved."Americans today probably recall Charles Sumner from history texts only as the man who was savagely beaten into bloody unconsciousness on the floor of the United States Senate. Perhaps they also remember that this violence was committed by a South Carolina congressman following Sumner's bitter and personal attack on slavery and its defenders. Undoubtedly, the 1856 attack was the most dramatic experience in the senator's life, requiring three and a half years of recuperation before he was fully able to resume his congressional responsibilities. Despite the sensational nature of these events, however, they are merely symbolic of Sumner's larger career. He should be remembered instead as a stern voice of conscience who constantly reminded nineteenth-century Americans of what many preferred to ignore: that slavery and racial injustice are immoral. Sumner

worked selflessly with others to create a political system that would address these issues. He first led a revolt against the Whigs when they failed to respond and then helped to form the new Free Soil and Republican parties, all the time forcing them to focus on slavery-related issues before the Civil War and civil rights after it. This brief biography of Sumner, moreover, attempts to portray the senator's accomplishments and shortcomings within the context of issues that remain relevant to this day."