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John Y. Simon, Harold Holzer, Dawn Vogel, eds. *Lincoln Revisited: New Insights from the Lincoln Forum.* New York: Fordham University Press, 2007. xiii + 369 pp. $27.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8232-2736-5.

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The Latest Lincoln Round-up

Each year from November 16 to 18, members of the Lincoln Forum have gathered in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, for a symposium to discuss the most recent scholarship on Abraham Lincoln's life and his actions during the Civil War era. *Lincoln Revisited* is the third book published by the Lincoln Forum covering material delivered at this annual gathering, allowing forum members who were unable to attend and the general public to keep up with the latest research on this much-studied man and era.

Lincoln Revisited consists of eighteen essays presented at the symposium between 2003 and 2005. With the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth in 2009, this is a well-timed release to show the current state of affairs in Lincoln studies. These essays include Jean Baker's discussion of Abraham and Mary Lincoln's religious experiences, Harold Holzer's examination of the images and words of the 1860 campaign, and John Y. Simon's focus on the issue of Mormonism during the discussion of popular sovereignty in the famed debates between Lincoln and Stephen Douglas. Other essays focus on topics as diverse as Lincoln's involvement in military matters, Henry Adams's reactions to Lincoln, and the foreign complications of Lincoln's reelection.

The essays by Matthew Pinsker, Michael Vorenberg, and Frank J. Williams are especially intriguing. Beginning with Walt Whitman's sightings of Lincoln traveling from the Soldiers' Home to the White House during the summer, Pinsker sets off "for a new look at Lincoln's presidential leadership" with his essay "I See the President: Abraham Lincoln and the Soldiers' Home" (p. 82). This essay is a glimpse into Pinsker's book, *Lincoln's Sanctuary: Abraham Lincoln and the Soldiers' Home* (2003). Designed to support disabled veterans, the Soldiers' Home was located just outside Washington, D.C. Presidents and secretaries of war were invited to spend summers in this breezy, shaded area to secure political support and financing when congressional support for this endeavor waned after its creation in the early 1850s. Lincoln spent over a quarter of his presidency at this wartime retreat, while a number of crippled soldiers convalescing at the Soldiers' Home surrounded him and a new graveyard for those killed in the war was nearby.

It is Pinsker's exploration of the blurry line between the public and private Lincoln that is most interesting. His essay brings out the private Lincoln, the man seeking to escape even briefly from the White House, yet always surrounded by the war. Under strain of the war and criticism of his policies and actions, he did not lock himself away in the White House to avoid such difficulties. Every day that Lincoln spent at his summer retreat involved a half-hour commute to and from the White House, opening him to interaction with the general population for good or ill, though the extent that this interaction affected Lincoln is unclear in this essay. Pinsker's use of new sources and his focus on Lincoln at the Soldiers' Home, rather than the White House, provides a new perspective on Lincoln's presidency and his leadership during the war.

In "After Emancipation: Abraham Lincoln's Black Dream," Vorenberg elucidates how Lincoln would have permanently fulfilled the Emancipation Proclamation, especially given his support of colonization and his hesitancy to support what would become the Thirteenth Amendment. Vorenberg has tackled the subject of Lincoln's view on colonization before, when he argued that Lincoln only kept bringing up colonization to make emancipation more acceptable after signing the Emancipation Proclamation.[1] In this essay, Vorenberg argues that Lincoln still believed in colonization until late in the war, and he shifts the debate to Lincoln's changing views of black intellectual abilities. The key to his interpretation is the Whig Party in which Lincoln was immersed for decades and the ideology that remained with him when he switched to the Republican Party. This ideology "held an optimistic vision of a positive, though limited

role for the federal government" and a belief that "slavery had stunted the moral and intellectual development of African-Americans" (p. 221).

In Vorenberg's view, only outside circumstances drove Lincoln to immediate emancipation and away from gradual emancipation. After meeting with educated black elites and seeing the capacity of black soldiers, the cornerstone of Lincoln's black dream shifted toward the education of former slaves. At the same time, the policy of colonization slowly faded away over the course of 1863 and 1864; Vorenberg argues that Lincoln finally abandoned colonization sometime in the months before a February 1865 cabinet meeting. Lincoln asked for compensation for loyal slaveholders at this meeting, but made no mention of colonization. Lincoln had tied these two issues together in all his previous attempts to garner support for compensated emancipation.

Discerning Lincoln's attitudes about colonization and figuring out what he believed is a difficult task, and people have argued over this topic since his time as president. Vorenberg demonstrates the fluidity of this argument; his interpretation that appeared in his 1993 article differs from the one that appears in this essay. With this new interpretation, Vorenberg makes a compelling argument for tying the issues of colonization and education together, though a longer study with additional evidence would be a welcome addition to the literature on this topic. In ending his essay, Vorenberg critiques Lincoln's focus on educating freed slaves. He wonders if this emphasis contributed to the failure of Reconstruction, as Lincoln's "dream of an educated society rested on the wrong assumption that only blacks required special education in order to create multiracial harmony in the future," while no mention was every made of educating whites about black freedom (p. 229).

"Abraham Lincoln and Civil Liberties: Then and Now," authored by Williams, the chief justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court and a well-known scholar of Lincoln and the Civil War era, was the most interesting essay in this collection because of its close connection to current political issues. Every American war has resulted in some sort of conflict between military necessity and civil liberties, from the Alien and Sedition Acts to the current issue of military tribunals, with which Williams is closely involved (he was appointed to the U.S. Military Commission review panel in 2003). Williams discusses the issue of Lincoln and civil liberties, a topic long debated by historians. He focuses on Lincoln's political and legal approach to this issue, not the law. With a rebellion breaking out and Congress not in session, Lincoln suspended habeas corpus because it was necessary and because he expected Congress to ratify his actions when they later assembled. In another example, since Lincoln could seize property based on military necessity (and slaves were property), Lincoln could order the seizure of slaves and free them with the Emancipation Proclamation. Given Lincoln's legal training and his belief in the constitutional system and the American government, the means were just as important as the ends.

Williams places this debate about Lincoln's actions and civil liberties within the framework of the current War on Terror. He makes a very apt point when he refers to Mark Neely's conclusion in *The Fate of Liberty* (1991) that no government, whether now or in 1861, is truly ready to deal with these issues and that no clear precedents or ground rules exist. Williams ends his essay by detailing the legal decisions regarding the trial of foreign combatants by military tribunals and concludes that "the legal waters remain murky about the president's authority over citizens and non-citizens detained as enemy combatants" (p. 276). In the end, even after all the criticism that Lincoln faced during his time in office, Williams argues that "Lincoln emerges … with a reputation for statesmanship … for his judicious application of executive authority," while he wonders if President George W. Bush will emerge with the same reputation (p. 277). Perhaps a larger question, which Williams hints at in the last paragraph, is how the actions of presidents during times of war influence the actions of future presidents, creating a precedent that can be followed even with murky legal waters.

The essays in this collection constitute recent additions to the well-trodden ground of Lincoln scholarship. As expected in an edited collection work such as this, some of the contributions tend to summarize larger projects. In these cases, there is a want of more evidence or more depth, but this can serve as an excellent motivation to seek out the longer scholarly works those essays represent. This book also lacks an index, which would be a useful and welcome addition even in an edited collection of essays. Anyone with an interest in Lincoln's life and actions in the Civil War would be well served in reading this work.

Note

[1]. Michael Vorenberg, "Abraham Lincoln and the Politics of Black Colonization," *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association*, 14 (1993): 23-46.

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