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Gregory A. Borchard. *Abraham Lincoln and Horace Greeley.* Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2019. 168 pp. $16.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-8093-3046-1.

Wayne Calhoun Temple, Douglas L. Wilson, Rodney O.; Davis. *Lincoln's Confidant: The Life of Noah Brooks.* Edited by Dougdas L. Wilson and Rodney O. Davis. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019. xvii + 283 pp. $34.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-252-04217-1.

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Evan Rothera on Borchard, _Abraham Lincoln and Horace Greeley_ and Temple, _Lincoln's Confidant_

Gregory A. Borchard and Wayne C. Temple are experts in their respective fields. Borchard, currently professor of mass communication and journalism in the Hank Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, has written several books about the press during the US Civil War era. Temple, recently retired from the Illinois State Archives, has authored a number of books about Lincoln. Both of these volumes examine Lincoln's dealings with journalists—Horace Greeley on the one hand and Noah Brooks on the other—and allow readers to examine Lincoln's relationship with the press.

Borchard's volume, a relatively recent addition to Southern Illinois University Press's Concise Lincoln Library series, focuses on the relationship between Lincoln and one of the most famous newspapermen of the nineteenth century, the mercurial Horace Greeley of the *New York Tribune*. Both men, Borchard contends, "combined remarkable political and journalistic talents to create legacies much larger than those of ordinary men" (p. ix). Interestingly, they did not have much contact until the late 1840s. An 1847 political rally in Chicago was either the first time they met or the first time Lincoln captured Greeley's attention. This political rally inaugurated a series of events in which their careers intersected. Borchard asserts, "their shared belief in the United States united them, personified in their mutual admiration for Henry Clay" (p. 3). Despite these shared beliefs, their relationship was rocky and Lincoln often found Greeley a weak reed on which to rely.

Borchard begins by considering Lincoln and Greeley as self-made men. Both belonged to the Whig Party. Henry Clay's defeat in the 1844 presidential election crushed them and "marked a critical turning point in the careers of both men" (p. 26). He argues that Clay's defeat led Lincoln and Greeley to Congress and revealed "to the nation both who they were and what the likely trajectories of their subsequent lives would be" (p. 26). Lincoln served a full term in the Thirtieth Congress (1847-49) and Greeley a partial term. Greeley's term was a lure from William H. Seward and

Thurlow Weed to convince him to support Zachary Taylor for president in 1848. Thus, Borchard contends, "for a few fateful months in the late 1840s, Lincoln and Greeley shared in their service as Whig legislators, developing a trajectory for their collaborative efforts in the years to come" (p. 27). Borchard probably errs here as many scholars agree that Lincoln's time in the House of Representatives was disappointing. Nothing about his one term suggested to most of his contemporaries that he was presidential timber. Furthermore, it is hard to see how the two men developed a trajectory for collaborative efforts when they barely collaborated with each other.

Lincoln's presidency is the critical period in any discussion of these two men. This period saw both at the apogee of their power and the most sustained contact between the two. Greeley, for most of his life a disappointed office-seeker, clearly would have appreciated an appointment from Lincoln, but he never received one. He was justifiably disappointed, especially after campaigning hard for Lincoln in 1860. Lincoln, however, found through painful experience that Greeley was mercurial and inconsistent. Greeley could be a bellicose supporter of the war effort one minute—he was famous for the phrase "on to Richmond"—and suffering a nervous breakdown and urging surrender the next minute. Still, Lincoln found good uses for men far worse than Greeley and, according to Borchard, considered him an ally and continued to have respect for him. The two men could work in tandem because Lincoln was very shrewd about managing the press. Indeed, Lincoln may have arranged for Greeley's famous editorial, "The Prayer of Twenty Millions," so that he could respond to it. But Greeley also created problems for Lincoln, such as proposing a ridiculous conference with Rebel emissaries about peace that produced nothing but controversy for Lincoln.

Two problems with Borchard's analysis merit comment. For one, he may read the relationship Lincoln and Greeley had in the 1860s back into the 1840s and 1850s. They had more interaction in the 1860s, so must they not have done so during the earlier period? This was not really the case. Yes, Lincoln and Greeley served together in Congress. However, Borchard does not find much interaction between the two men while they served in the House. Indeed, Greeley charged Lincoln, among others, with bilking the taxpayers by submitting inflated expense accounts. Furthermore, neither man seems to have left a strong impression on the other in that period. Ten years later, Greeley and some eastern Republicans did Lincoln no favors by suggesting that Illinois Republicans should support Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois in his reelection contest in 1858. Lincoln wanted to replace Douglas and many Illinois Republicans reacted badly to Greeley's advice. Did Greeley like Abraham Lincoln's 1860 speech at Cooper Union? Yes. Did he support Lincoln at the 1860 Republican National Convention because he loved Lincoln or because he wanted to defeat Seward? Most historians would argue the latter reason. Although there were similarities between the two men, it is hard to argue that they had a special relationship just because both were Whigs, or members of the same session of Congress, or movers and shakers in the new Republican Party. As Borchard himself acknowledges, "while the lives of Abraham Lincoln and Horace Greeley generally followed parallel paths, those paths intersected at times, leaving the two men legacies both distinct and interrelated" (p. 5). In the early sections, Borchard makes too much of small, even inconsequential, intersections.

Second, Borchard wants to see the relationship between the two men, with the exception of a few episodes, as largely cooperative. A different view would suggest a more antagonistic and ego-driven relationship. Greeley clearly became closer to Lincoln once Lincoln became president. Some of this had to do with the fact that Greeley was always an office-seeker, if usually a disappointed one. Was he driven by a desire to move closer to

power and to be able to whisper advice into the president's ear? What role did Greeley's ego play in all of this? What did Lincoln think about having to work with a man who had charged him with theft of taxpayer money in the late 1840s and undercut him in his race against Douglas in 1858? These questions might not have definite answers, but they would be worth raising because they introduce more complexity into the story Borchard tells. In addition, Greeley did not think much of Lincoln for most of Lincoln's life. This, however, is not necessarily an indictment of Greeley. Rather, it is a reminder that while everyone wants to get right with Lincoln today, plenty of people at the time dismissed him as a rube, yokel, dolt, fool, schemer, hypocrite, or any one of a number of nasty things. Greeley, in underestimating Lincoln, was not an outlier, but quite like many other people at the time. Rather than painting a picture of a largely cooperative relationship, there would have been considerable value in thinking about the real and painful clashes and disagreements between the two men and how their relationship changed over time.

Borchard makes an inadvertently telling comment when he notes that Lincoln, in a dispute with Greeley about the failed peace conference, turned to the owner of the *New York Times*, Henry J. Raymond, "a stalwart supporter of the administration whom the president had learned he could trust in confidence" (p. 86). One could never make such an assertion about Greeley. However, as Wayne C. Temple illustrates, one could make this statement about Noah Brooks. Temple offers a cradle-to-grave biography of a newspaperman well known in his own time and less well known today. The volume, Temple's 1956 doctoral dissertation begun under the guidance of James G. Randall, illustrates the close friendship between Lincoln and Brooks. As Michael Burlingame notes in his introduction, "few people were as close to Lincoln as Brooks, a kind of surrogate son to the president, who was twenty years his senior" (p. xiii). Although Lincoln's former law partner, William H. Herndon, scoffed at the idea that Brooks was Lincoln's confidant, Temple argues, with the evidence on his side, that this indeed was the case. Moreover, had Lincoln not been assassinated, Brooks would have made an excellent private secretary for Lincoln.

Temple begins with one of the fascinating elements of Brooks's life. On the one hand, much of his fame and notoriety rests on his intimate friendship with Lincoln. On the other hand, this is hardly the sum total of the man. Brooks "won 'world-wide fame' as a journalist and a man of letters" (p. 8). In that sense, Brooks is similar to John Hay, one of Lincoln's secretaries, who also went on to have a brilliant career as a diplomat and man of letters. In his early adulthood, Brooks tried his hand at a number of different professions—everything from artistic painting to selling furniture to land speculation to journalism. He enjoyed painting but quickly realized it would not pay the bills and drifted into journalism. Wanderlust seemed to be the watchword of Brooks's early years. He grew up in Maine but then moved to Boston, Illinois, Kansas, and California, all before the start of the Civil War. Brooks first came to know Abraham Lincoln during his years in Illinois. In California, he found employment with several newspapers and became a prominent West Coast newspaperman. Tragedy, however, struck when his wife and son died in childbirth. Brooks accepted a position as the Washington correspondent of the ***Sacramento Union*** and sailed for the eastern United States via Panama.

As stated above, Lincoln and Brooks had known each other in the 1850s. When he arrived in Washington, DC, in late 1862, Brooks thought Lincoln had forgotten him. Consequently, he did not make any moves to renew the acquaintance. However, Lincoln astonished him when he asked Brooks to come to the White House. The friendship between the two men expanded and deepened. By his own account, Brooks saw the president at least once a week and, by the middle

of 1863, "announced that he frequently saw the President, and before the war was over few days passed that did not find Brooks visiting Lincoln" (p. 76). Horace Greeley could only dream of this proximity to power! Unlike many people placed in that position, Brooks did not attempt to trade on his friendship with Lincoln for political favors or personal reward. Critically, he also won the confidence and friendship of Mary Lincoln, something John Hay and John G. Nicolay never accomplished. Brooks could and did help Lincoln behind the scenes. Temple presents a fascinating story about Brooks and California patronage. Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase made numerous changes in the San Francisco Mint and Custom House without consulting Lincoln and against the wishes of the California congressional delegation. Brooks helped Lincoln soothe the wounded feelings of the Californians and fix the patronage imbroglio. Brooks also aided Lincoln by "delivering personal messages to political figures on Capitol Hill" (p. 117). In addition, Lincoln gave Brooks access to information and helped shape the reports Brooks transmitted back to his newspaper in California.

Brooks was about to commence a turn as Lincoln's personal secretary when the president was assassinated. As Temple notes, "the loss of the secretaryship, however, was not as great as the loss of a beloved friend and companion" (p. 131). Brooks briefly served as a naval officer in San Francisco, but Andrew Johnson removed him because Brooks was too close to the Radical Republicans. Brooks then returned to journalism, "where he became known as a versatile writer and a prominent California editor" (p. 141). In the 1870s, Brooks jumped from the ***Alta California*** to a position as a night editor for Horace Greeley's ***Tribune***, then to the New York ***Times***. Brooks also became good friends with authors Bret Harte and Mark Twain and wrote children's literature and short stories, before his death in 1903. In sum, his was a life fully lived and his friendship with Lincoln, while an important part, did not represent the sum total of the man.

In her inaugural address, Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff, while noting some of the unpleasant things the press said during the campaign, commented, "I prefer the noise of a free press to the silence of dictatorships."[1] No doubt most people would agree with this statement, although some world leaders likely would not. Forging a cooperative relationship with a free press can be a difficult endeavor and, over the course of US history, some presidents have proved considerably better at this than others. Lincoln, as Borchard and Temple illustrate, was both skilled and subtle about managing members of the press. Anyone interested in this subject should consult these volumes.

Note

[1]. James N. Green, Victoria Langland, and Lilia Moritz Schwarz, eds., ***The Brazil Reader: History, Culture, Politics***, 2nd ed. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 534.

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