often unclear what those convictions were. Cass's disposition to segregate moral concerns from practical politics, while sometimes an asset, was certainly also his greatest weakness. Statesmanship does not reside only in political expediency. Many in Cass's own party who looked for forthright principled stands on issues from banking to slavery despised and distrusted him. Lewis Cass went along to get along. Whether that best fits him for obscurity or renown, praise or obloquy, is something readers can judge for themselves.

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A. Douglas and his heavy-handed patronage policies further alienated "young, new voters" (p. 164). Although readers may quibble about whether Republicans employed "new techniques" (p. 165) in their probes of Democratic corruption, Knupfer forcefully contends that the election of 1860 was a repudiation of "old fogyism" (p. 166).

Mark W. Summers and Robert E. May investigate distinct issues relating to Buchanan's administration. Summers portrays a bumbling president unable to control the Democratic press, which turned increasingly toward Douglas during the Kansas controversy. May contrastingly commends Buchanan's diplomacy, particularly his handling of southern filibusterers such as William Walker, the erstwhile conqueror of Nicaragua. May convincingly asserts that, in this case at least, Buchanan did not take the proslavery path.

Buchanan and his successor, Abraham Lincoln, are the focus of the article by William E. Gienapp. In every category Lincoln's leadership skills are judged superior. Gienapp dismisses Buchanan's "reckless foreign policy" (p. 105) and declares that "few presidents have done more in four years to bring the opposing party to power" (p. 120). It is not surprising that Lincoln has outshone Buchanan; a more apt comparison would have been between Buchanan and his predecessor, Franklin Pierce.

The discussion featuring Don E. Fehrenbacher, Robert W. Johannsen, Elbert B. Smith, and Kenneth M. Stampp manifests the disparate opinions held within the historical discipline regarding Buchanan. Fehrenbacher emphasizes Buchanan's meddling in the Dred Scott decision, which exacerbated the schism among Democrats. Significantly, he also credits the Buchanan administration with actively suppressing the African slave trade. Johannsen questions the efficacy of studies confined to narrow aspects of Buchanan's career and calls for further research into the president's motivations and ideology. He cogently places Buchanan within the context of his times; the Pennsylvanian was a constitutional unionist who believed that moralistic agitation of the slavery issue would destroy the Union. Johannsen also stresses that President Buchanan ultimately stood firm during the secession crisis, a stand that allowed for a smooth transition with the Lincoln administration despite the creation of the Confederacy. Smith censures Buchanan for failing to comprehend the significance of the free-soil movement, thus indirectly bolstering Republican chances in 1860. Stampp retells Buchanan's bungling regarding patronage and Kansas but joins Johannsen in praising his conduct during the secession crisis.

This slim volume will not rehabilitate Buchanan's political reputation—nor was it intended to do so. It does, however, add modestly to an understanding of his presidency and underscores the need for further study.

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