

national movements in architecture, public health, education, recreation, and transportation were reflected in this one small area of Indiana's capital. Simply doing that successfully sets this book apart from a great many local histories. Diebold and the Irvington Historical Society can take pride in this book, and those who nominate Indiana publications for awards from the American Association for State and Local History should consider it for such recognition.

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*Lincoln before Washington: New Perspectives on the Illinois Years.*

By Douglas L. Wilson. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997. Pp. xiv, 190. Notes, index. \$26.95.)

This book treats "the wrong end of Lincoln's life" (p. ix). It examines the Civil War president's early years, a period of maturation haunted by melancholy, of affairs of the heart and forays into politics, of the seedtime of legal practice and public service. Since Lincoln scholarship primarily centers on the presidential era, there is, argues Douglas L. Wilson, a regrettable lack of depth in historians' interpretations of the critical formative years of Lincoln's life and the acceptance of generations of dubious historiographical judgments.

In this compilation of previously published articles, Wilson sets out to correct this oversight. By examining afresh several long-held assumptions about Lincoln's experiences in New Salem and Springfield and about the crucial sources for that period—particularly those collected by the future president's law partner, William H. Herndon, whose work has been much maligned by historians—Wilson challenges the premises of such scholars as Paul Angle, James G. and Ruth Painter Randall, and David Herbert Donald. The result is a fascinating and, at times, bold grappling with the accepted portrait of the young Lincoln.

At the heart of the author's analysis is a refurbishing of Herndon's role as an historian. Building on his earlier study of Herndon and his informants, done in collaboration with Rodney O. Davis (1997), Wilson seeks to release Herndon from "the doghouse of Lincoln scholarship" (p. 21) to which he has too long been consigned. In doing so, he cogently argues that Lincoln's associate "deserves to be much better known" (p. 34) as a careful investigator of Lincoln's younger days. According to Wilson, Herndon recognized that, soon after Lincoln's assassination, his image was being distorted into that of a "plaster saint" (p. 39). To counteract that trend, Herndon thoroughly checked the material gleaned from his informants and conscientiously adhered to a doctrine of "necessary truth": that "even the most private and painful secrets must come out to explain the extraor-

dinary character and accomplishments” of an historical figure (p. 43). These traits of Herndon’s research alone underscore the author’s contention that fairness to Herndon is in order. Perhaps a revealing testimony to Wilson’s success at rehabilitating Herndon’s image is that Donald—whose 1948 treatment of Herndon receives judicious criticism at Wilson’s hands—in his recent highly-acclaimed Lincoln biography claims to have “learned a great deal” from the articles reprinted here, which informed his own reconsideration of Lincoln’s prepresidential years (*Lincoln*, 1995, p. 608).

Donald’s kudos reflects specifically upon Wilson’s handling of Lincoln’s relationship with Ann Rutledge. This episode is seen as merely legendary by historians who reject Herndon’s sources—evidence which, according to Wilson, “they themselves had not seen” (p. 75)—and Wilson claims it offers an insight into Lincoln’s personal growth and especially into the melancholy that tempered his spirit throughout his life. Likewise, valuable glimpses of Lincoln’s moral and emotional character emerge from an account of the angst the young lawyer felt when he broke his engagement to Mary Todd on New Year’s Day 1841, an act he later reversed out of a sense of honor. In other chapters one witnesses the unseasoned politician using an assumed name in editorially attacking his political opponent, evangelist Peter Cartwright, and the more experienced campaigner using the Declaration of Independence for “political advantage” (p. 173). Finally, students of Indiana history will find Wilson’s account of Lincoln’s 1844 visit to his Hoosier boyhood region informative; the trip proved to be a pivotal moment in his confrontation with “the humbling fact of human mortality” (p. 142).

*Lincoln before Washington* testifies that historiographical interest in the study of the young Lincoln persists, and Douglas L. Wilson clearly provides it with a reinvigorating affirmation.

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*Beyond the Boundaries: Life and Landscape at the Lake Superior Copper Mines, 1840–1875.* By Larry Lankton. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. Pp. xvi, 247. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95.)

In 1991 Larry Lankton presented a comprehensive account of the development of the mineral ranges on the Keweenaw Peninsula in northern Michigan in *Cradle to Grave: Life, Work, and Death at the Lake Superior Copper Mines*. In this companion volume, *Beyond the Boundaries*, he concentrates on the settlement of the region between 1840 and 1875 with emphasis upon the development of cop-