

awaiting harvest. It was largely in their failure to engage in the driven pursuit of profit, he contends, that these Hoosiers earned the label of “lazy” amid the striving market culture of the early nineteenth century.

Religion and economics, of course, intersected with politics. Like other scholars, Nation finds that residents of southern Indiana supported the Democratic party rather than the market-friendly, moral-perfectionist Whigs. That party loyalty endured through the Civil War, although Nation asserts that they remained loyal Unionists.

Nation’s study is an interesting and well-written one. Little of its discussion of religion, agriculture, and politics will be new to students of the antebellum and Civil War periods. The value of Nation’s work lies instead in its concentration on the distinctiveness of the Indiana hill country. Although he occasionally notes the existence of other subre-

gions that shared the hill country’s hostility to the market, abolitionists, African Americans, and Whig/Republicans, more of these comparisons would be welcome. Nation does a good job of conveying the area’s distinctiveness in relation to other sections of Indiana but one wonders what the hill country shares in common with other regions where similar values prevailed. The subtitle’s dateline is somewhat misleading. Although he includes a chapter on the Civil War, Nation’s discussion of Southern Indiana’s localistic moral, economic, and political culture focuses on the pre-war period. Other omissions can be traced not to the author’s discretion but to the press: pages 85 and 86 were missing from my copy.

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### *Lincoln, Religion, and Romantic Cultural Politics*

By Stewart Winger

(DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003. Pp. viii, 271. Notes, bibliography, index. \$38.00.)

One of the dominant components of Lincoln studies in recent years has been the debate over the sixteenth president’s religion and its expression in his public life. Now Stewart Winger enters the fray with this somewhat ponderous but deeply penetrating examination of Lincoln as public intellectual and theologian. Hardly a

beginner’s book, Winger’s work requires of the reader considerable grounding in American intellectual history and Lincolniana. Reading it can be hard work, but the labor is well invested, for Winger’s contributions to the scholarly discussion of Lincoln’s religious thought are profound and provocative.

At the heart of the book is Winger's "attempt to properly contextualize Lincoln's words" (p. 7). To do this, he seeks to place Lincoln's religion in a broader intellectual and cultural framework than previous historians have employed. In their interpretations of Lincoln's religion, Winger asserts, scholars have engaged in a "false choice," treating Lincoln as either a conventional evangelical or a skeptic in the Enlightenment tradition (p. 4). What they have missed is the contribution of romanticism to the president's thought. Winger's Lincoln is, first and foremost, a romantic Protestant whose religious rhetoric reflects the poetic, moral, and deeply spiritual drive of the romanticism that arose from the American Renaissance.

While readers may justifiably question Winger's thesis, they cannot ignore his impressive grasp of Lincoln's speeches and writings. Not only do these texts constitute the core sources for the author's complex case for the romantic nature of Lincoln's political theology, but they also come alive in his astute assessment of their messages. Winger masterfully explicates the renowned Gettysburg Address and Second Inaugural, as well as some of Lincoln's most obscure public presentations, such as his musings on Niagara Falls, an oration on the Subtreasury, and a "Second Lecture on Discoveries and Inventions." The latter offering, in fact, serves as the springboard for Winger's initial dive into Lincoln's quarrels with the Young America

movement for its imperialistic adherence to manifest destiny and its "enthusiasm for world-market capitalism" (p. 21). Winger uses Lincoln's debates with Stephen Douglas and his challenges to Douglas's alter ego, George Bancroft, to demonstrate the depth of moral fervor that characterized his Protestant and romantic perspective on the meaning of America.

Equally insightful is Winger's description of the roots of Lincoln's religion. Besides the powerful influence of romanticism—which Winger sees as essentially a "religious urge" (p. 220)—and the poetic spirit it instilled in Lincoln, Winger finds the Whig departure from classical republicanism as expressed in its organ, the *Whig Review*, a consistent source for the young Illinois politician. Perhaps most critical to the future president's religious views, though, was the Calvinistic "predestinarian Baptist household" in which he grew to maturity in Indiana (p. 159). Winger's discussion of this facet of Lincoln's life provides the strongest and clearest section of the book; in it, he shows that the teachings of that particular Protestant tradition regarding human nature set the stage for Lincoln's role as "an apt prophet for his generation" (p. 159). All these influences produced a political leader who engaged in the sacralization of American politics and who proposed a national religion in which the nation—as Lincoln made so clear in his Second Inaugural—is accountable to a just God. As Winger states, "Lincoln would use the

national creed to critique the national practice" (p. 179). He also reminded America that, as a nation, it was "no closer to the Kingdom of God than any other. All alike remained under the judgment of God" (p. 208). These latter words provide a cogent closing for a path-breaking book—and a poignant message for America in the twenty-first century.

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*Creating a Hoosier Self-Portrait*  
*The Federal Writers' Project in Indiana, 1935-1942*  
 By George T. Blakey

(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005. Pp vi, 262. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index, \$29.95.)

The Federal Writers' Project (FWP) was a New Deal program formed to utilize the writing, interviewing, and analytical skills of journalists, teachers, writers, and others who had lost their livelihoods during the Great Depression. Writers who would go on to gain a name in American literature—including Nelson Algren, Ralph Ellison, Eudora Welty, Zora Neale Hurston, Studs Terkel, and Saul Bellow—were all, at one time or another, employed by the FWP.

The project's most public and lasting legacy is the *American Guide* series: a combination of "state history, encyclopedia, and travel guide" to each of the forty-eight states, assembled from hours of interviews, writing, and re-writing by fieldworkers (p. 41). While the primary job of each state's FWP staff was to research, write, and see through to publication

a Guide, the project also resulted in side projects, including most notably the former-slave narratives that have been published in recent decades.

In this meticulously researched and highly readable book, George Blakey has created an essential resource, both for readers interested in this period in Indiana and American history, and for future historians. While some of the material collected by the FWP workers in Indiana appeared in the final *Indiana Guide* (1941) as well as in other publications—including newspaper columns and a collection of folklore, *Hoosier Tall Stories* (1937)—most of the material collected by the fieldworkers has never been published or used extensively by scholars.

As Blakey states in his introduction, "This massive body of information, stored in archival boxes at the