

*There I Grew Up**Remembering Abraham Lincoln's Indiana Youth*

By William E. Bartelt

(Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society Press, 2008. Pp. xiv, 240. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$27.95.)

William E. Bartelt spent several summers guiding tourists through Lincoln's Boyhood Home in Spencer County, and in this book he guides readers through the various texts that provide much of the knowledge about Lincoln's boyhood. In one sense, the book is a collection of primary sources; but rather than following the typical format of such collections, Bartelt instead renders a narrative, with the key source materials tucked into chapters that introduce and expand upon them. This narrative format is certainly more approachable for general readers seeking information on Lincoln's years in Indiana.

Much of Bartelt's material is taken from the William Herndon interviews and letters. Herndon, Lincoln's Illinois law partner, began gathering material on Lincoln's life soon after the 1865 assassination. Additional material includes Lincoln's own short descriptions of life in Indiana, manuscript and land records, and excerpts from records of the church Lincoln attended in his Indiana youth. Not every pertinent document is included, but Bartelt has made judicious choices, and his accompanying narrative provides some low-level analysis. For the most part, however, the documents just sit on the page, open for readers to interpret. Bartelt's

background information is generally useful, although his approach to politics in the 1820s seems rushed. And a deeper discussion of the meaning of the "Articles of Faith" of the Little Pigeon Baptist Church, as detailed in John F. Cady's 1941 article in this journal, might give readers a far better sense of the particular Calvinist-tinted theology that was a part of Lincoln's upbringing.

This intrinsically interesting collection, however, may have missed a larger opportunity. Much recent scholarship has focused on the issues of memory, and clearly any book focusing on 1865 remembrances of Indiana in the 1820s must contend with the complicated subject of memory, both as an object of historical study and as a barrier to historical analysis. To give one example: many of the Spencer county interviews reveal similar stories, perhaps because when Lincoln rose to national prominence, much storytelling took place within the community. The interviews reflected communal memories. Obviously, a book aimed at a general readership is not going to confront the theoretical issues that intrigue university-based historians, but this volume would have provided a good chance to introduce the "history of memory" to a lay audience.

In the bicentennial year of Lincoln's birth, Hoosiers seeking to learn about the impact of their state on this formidable president will find this book enjoyable. Bartelt never offers his own argument about that impact, but readers will come away with their own conclusions from their encounters with the primary sources.

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Lincoln's Rise to the Presidency

By William C. Harris

(Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007. Pp. xii, 412. Illustrations, notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$34.95.)

One trend in Lincoln scholarship over the last fifteen years has been an increased interest in the pre-presidential Lincoln. The most obvious example is the massive Lincoln Legal Papers project that collected and digitized nearly 100,000 documents, which were published in 2000 in a DVD-set, and are now available on the web. Scholars such as Michael Burlingame, Kenneth J. Winkle, and Douglas L. Wilson have added considerably to our knowledge of Lincoln before Washington.

Like these scholars, William C. Harris is also interested in the pre-presidential Lincoln. While he is indebted to their work, he has a different focus. Harris is interested in Lincoln's "remarkable political rise from obscurity to his inauguration as president" (p. 3). Here, he is on ground that, surprisingly, is not well-trod. The last books to examine Lincoln's political career in Illinois in such

detail were Don E. Fehrenbacher's *Prelude to Greatness: Lincoln in the 1850s* (1962) and Paul F. Simon, *Lincoln's Preparation for Greatness: The Illinois Legislative Years* (1965). Two-score-and-two years later, Harris's well-written and well-researched book fills a gap in Lincoln scholarship.

In looking at Lincoln's rise in politics, Harris stresses Lincoln's brand of conservatism. Harris concludes that Lincoln's conservatism was "rooted in his background as a Henry Clay Whig, his close association with border state rural people, his cautious nature, and the racial and political realities he faced in central Illinois" (p. 2). This conservatism was evident in Lincoln's 1838 address on "The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions," where he sounded a common Whig theme of reverence for law and the Constitution.

Early on in his political career, however, Lincoln also evidenced his