

engaged in fisticuffs, including a brawl with the Speaker of Indiana's House of Representatives, and even more frequently threatened to "whip" men who slighted his honor. Revival-goers nevertheless loved his emotionally charged sermons, eagerness to scuffle with rowdies, and readiness to assail rival theologies. Farmer's ministry added hundreds of Methodist converts. Ironically, he ultimately broke with the Methodists and accused their leaders of being "tyrants" who cared more about respectability than saving souls. However, Case asserts that Farmer's sectarian belligerence and republican suspicion of outside authority were core attributes of the Americanized Christianity born on the western frontier.

Case can be faulted for not engaging the most up-to-date historiography. While he cites Hatch and other

historians who were active in the 1980s and 90s, he does not reference John Wigger, Mark Noll, and other recent historians of early American Methodism. One wonders how Case would respond to Noll's assertion that the paradox of Methodism was that a religion that "had *not* been adjusted to the norms of American ideology [flourished] in the new American nation" (p. 340). Nevertheless, Case's insight that Hoosier Methodism etched a populist, combative, and ruggedly individualistic spirit into American evangelical Christianity seems pertinent at a time when these values are once again shaping our nation's culture.

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### *Abe's Youth: Shaping the Future President*

Edited by William E. Bartelt and Joshua A. Claybourn

(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019. Pp. xvii, 299. Notes, illustrations, index. Clothbound, \$65.00; paperbound, \$20.00.)

*Abe's Youth* publishes thirty papers prepared by residents of southwestern Indiana during the 1920s and 1930s. The authors of the papers—women and men who were politicians, school teachers, lawyers, journalists, and artists—were drawn together by a common quest (known in its time as "the Lincoln Inquiry") to document and share the history of

their community in which Abraham Lincoln lived from age 7 to 21. The Inquiry took the institutional form of the Southwestern Indiana Historical Society, founded in Evansville in 1920. Editors William E. Bartelt and Joshua A. Claybourn open their preface by acknowledging that "Keith Erikson's 2012 book, *Everybody's History: Indiana's Lincoln Inquiry and the Quest*

to *Reclaim a President's Past*, stimulated historians to reevaluate the Inquiry's important contributions to the history of Lincoln's life in Indiana" and they "thank Mr. Erikson for inspiring us to undertake this project" (p. xv). Though I was neither a participant nor a consultant on this project, it is gratifying to witness additional attention to this important work.

From the hundreds of presentations made during nearly two decades of the Inquiry's existence, Bartelt and Claybourn select two-and-a-half dozen that reflect their interests in Lincoln's ties to Indiana. Part One presents three papers by local boosters who speak generally and favorably about Indiana's influence on young Abraham. Part Two contains papers about Lincoln's Indiana neighbors, including the Gentrys, Grigsbys, and Crawfords. Part Three offers six papers on local history topics such as early agriculture and pioneer medicine. Part Four focuses on Lincoln and the law, exploring his connections to southern Indiana lawyers John A. Brackenridge and John Pitcher. Part Five rounds out the selection with five papers about the work of the Inquiry, its conclusions and correspondence with other Lincoln historians. For reasons that go unstated, the editors did not select any of the Inquiry's papers that discussed Abraham's father and mother or examined religion on the Indiana frontier.

Bartelt and Claybourn offer a brief summary of each piece, together with a few annotations throughout, often to correct a fact or add information about people or places named in the text. A judicious selection of illustrations, inserted between Parts One and Two, features artistic sketches of Lincoln's early life and early twentieth-century photographs of the grave of Lincoln's mother and other Indiana monuments.

*Abe's Youth* provides a convenient way to access some of the important work of the Indiana Lincoln Inquiry. It forms a nice accompaniment to *Everybody's History*, which places the activities and findings of the Inquiry into broader contexts within Lincoln studies, public history, and Indiana history of the early twentieth century. The Inquiry engaged written documents, oral histories, historic sites, and material culture to offer an interpretation of Abraham Lincoln that anticipated the work of academic historians by several decades. And within the context of Indiana's corrupt, Ku Klux Klan-ridden politics of the 1920s, their reimagining of the Indiana frontier helped support a new vision of pioneer history that constructed Indiana as the worthy boyhood home of the Great Emancipator.

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