

Lincoln vs. Douglas: The Great Debates Campaign. By Richard Allen Heckman. (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1967. Pp. v, 192. Illustrations, appendices, notes, selected bibliography, index. \$5.00.)

In this useful monograph Heckman of Berea College summarizes the political context, argument, and results of the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858. Relying largely upon contemporary newspaper and manuscript sources, he provides a realistic, well-documented, and sometimes vivid narrative that is sympathetic, even generous, to both contenders. Quoting impartially from Democratic and Republican papers, the author conveys a sense of the bitter partisanship and volatile excitement that prevailed. An aroused Republican editor, for example, described the Little Giant as full of "spleen, verbose nonsense and weak falsification" (p. 127), while his Democratic counterpart called Lincoln "as queer looking as he is queer spoken" (p. 90). Heckman concludes that Lincoln and Douglas "spoke as if they were trying a case with the audience as jury" (p. 33). Direct quotations from Lincoln's letters enliven the text and testify to his modesty and humor. "Douglas and I . . ." Lincoln reported after the first debate at Ottawa, "crossed swords here yesterday, the fire flew some, and I am glad to know I am yet alive" (p. 86). Reporting the same encounter, Horace Greeley's New York *Tribune* claimed that Lincoln "chawed" Douglas up.

Focusing primarily on slavery and its extension (and, like the candidates, ignoring other relevant political and economic motivations), Heckman analyzes the arguments presented, cites the opinions of conflicting scholars, and takes a firm position when he feels that the evidence warrants a conclusion. He labels as "a gross exaggeration" Lincoln's "implications that Franklin Pierce, James Buchanan, Roger B. Taney, and Douglas" were "a part of a conspiracy to make slavery a national institution" (p. 85). He disagrees with the view that Lincoln "risked defeat" in 1858 in order "to force Douglas into a position unacceptable to the Southern wing of the Democratic party." This is, Heckman says, "a fairy story which attributes to Lincoln 'fortune telling' powers he did not possess." Heckman consequently discounts the legend that Lincoln told Joseph Medill, "*I am killing larger game. The battle of 1860 is worth a hundred of this*" (pp. 92-93).

Heckman makes little effort to analyze the influence of the debating upon the voting. Nor does he cite the study of Forest L. Whan, who, after an analysis of election statistics, suggests that Lincoln fared better in those counties where he did not speak. Modern procedures make studies of shift of voter opinion feasible and should prompt the author to pursue further research on this ultimate question of the 1858 canvass.

The Public Affairs Press should be applauded for issuing this study, as well as for publishing an impressive series of monographs on American political campaigning. The editors should be encouraged, however, to provide better copy reading, larger type, and a more attractive format than they provided in this volume.