



Lincoln's America: 1809-1865

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To fully understand and appreciate Abraham Lincoln's legacy, it is important to examine the society that influenced the life, character, and leadership of the man who would become the Great Emancipator. Editors Joseph R. Fornieri and Sara Vaughn Gabbard have done just that in *Lincoln's America: 1809-1865*, a collection of new and original essays by ten eminent historians that place Lincoln within his nineteenth-century cultural context.

Among the topics explored in *Lincoln's America* are religion, education, middle-class family life, the antislavery movement, politics, and law. Of particular interest are the transition of American intellectual and philosophical thought from the Enlightenment to Romanticism and the influence of this evolution on Lincoln's own ideas.

By examining aspects of Lincoln's life—his personal piety in comparison with the beliefs of his contemporaries, his success in self-schooling when frontier youths had limited opportunities for a formal education, his marriage and home life in Springfield, and his legal career—in light of broader cultural contexts such as the development of democracy, the growth of visual arts, the question of slaves as property, and French visitor Alexis de Tocqueville's observations on America, the contributors delve into the mythical Lincoln of folklore and discover a developing political mind and a changing nation.

As *Lincoln's America* shows, the sociopolitical culture of nineteenth-century America was instrumental in shaping Lincoln's character and leadership. The essays in this volume paint a vivid picture of a young nation and its sixteenth president, arguably its greatest leader.

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