

Throughout his career, Sarah remained John's faithful wife and anchor in turbulent times. She helped to further his political career, provided much needed information when both knew their letters were being intercepted and read, and kept John well informed on the local course of the war and the family. Their letters stand not only as powerful messages between husband and wife but as two people living in extraordinary times. As such, their correspondence offers much to not only historians of the Revolutionary period, but of marriage and the family in the late eighteenth century.

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Jerrold M. Packard. *The Lincolns in the White House: Four Years that Shattered a Family*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005. Pp. 304, 32 pages of photographs. Notes, bibliography, index. \$26.95.)

The title *The Lincolns in the White House: Four Years that Shattered a Family* suggests not only the tragedies that afflicted the Lincolns and their family during the years 1861–1865, but also the interactions with the historic house that surrounded and influenced family relationships. Indeed, no contemporary historian has focused exclusively on the many social, personal, and medical travails that challenged the Lincoln family during its White House years. Packard's novel perspective should have provided opportunity for the telling of a relatively fresh story that included treatment of all the travails to which a loving family was subjected as they attempted to live their lives while one of their members governed the nation during four years of national crisis. Unfortunately, this book does not live up to this promise.

A professional writer of books about the nineteenth-century in Britain and America, Jerrold Packard has retold an established tale without offering anything new or of consequence to readers who have already read David Donald's *Lincoln*. Lincoln emerges from these pages as we have come to know him: a hard-working chief executive, dedicated to his children, and committed to his wife despite her well-known shortcomings. Because Packard took his research solely from books and a few Internet sites, he has not incorporated the most recent scholarship either on Mary or the Lincoln's marriage. Accepting the biting depiction of Mary by Lincoln's aides John Hay and John

Nicolay, Packard deprives Mary of agency for even her own life by describing her shopping as an addiction.

For Packard the central story of the Lincoln White House is Abraham Lincoln as President and man. Centering on his domestic life, Packard brings into his story topics explored in recent monographs. A visit by Joshua Speed to the White House launches Packard on a lengthy discussion of Lincoln and his friend's sleeping arrangements and Lincoln's habit of bunking in with male friends while traveling the circuit in Illinois. While setting Lincoln's emotional attachment to Speed and their sleeping arrangements within the context of mid-nineteenth century same-sex friendships, Packard concludes his digression on the friendship with the statement: "to near the day of his death, Lincoln savored Speed's physical presence near him" (103).

The extended description of Lincoln's friendship with Speed stands in contrast to the sparse treatment Packard allocates to his relationship with Mary. Looking down the index of the volume, readers will find but two entries on the Lincoln marriage. The first refers to the day that they married and the second to their relationship after Willie's death. According to Packard, by then their marriage relationship had frayed. Given his scrutiny of the dimensions of the bed in which Lincoln slept with Speed, Packard might have given at least equal treatment to the woman with whom Lincoln presumably shared physical intimacy in the White House, even though each Lincoln had an individual bedroom. Packard's Mary thus becomes nothing more than an impedimentum to Lincoln's main business of saving the Union or yet another reason that Lincoln's image changed to one of a gaunt-faced, morose man by late 1864.

Packard does include discussion of the White House as a distinct space with power to affect its residents. He positions the White House in the midst damp and humid urban climate where malaria, cholera, and other diseases thrived and were easily transmitted. Thus, he holds the White House somewhat responsible for Willie's illness and death and his mother's resulting despair. While most middle-class families in Victorian America enjoyed homes at a distance from the public world of work, such was not the case with the First Family. As Packard points out, the President's office was a short run down the hall from his family's bedrooms and parlor. Had Packard developed the implications of the geographic situation of the White House and the exigencies of living within it, his book would not have needed to digress to the President's 1841 sleeping arrangements with Joshua Speed.

To gain knowledge of the Lincolns' private life and lives, readers would do better choosing Matthew Pinsker's *Lincoln's Sanctuary* or Doris Kearns Goodwin's *Team of Rivals*. In the first, readers will learn how the Lincolns' summer retreat and private life shaped the President's official actions, most notably the Emancipation Proclamation. In the second, readers will discover the President's humanity and emotional depth as he strives to be husband and father while orchestrating his "team of rivals."

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