

Abraham Lincoln, the Quakers, and the Civil War: "A Trial of Principle and Faith."

By WILLIAM C. KASHATUS. (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2014. 180 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$37.)

In *Abraham Lincoln, the Quakers, and the Civil War*, William Kashatus explores aspects of the largely unknown relationship between the sixteenth president of the United States and the Religious Society of Friends. The author contends that Lincoln and American Quakers shared similar religious sensibilities and a steadfast belief in the immorality of slavery. Friends and President Lincoln both struggled to reconcile their principles to the ever-increasing harvest of death produced by civil war. The conflict posed serious fundamental problems for pacifist Friends, who grappled with mandatory military service required by the draft and the use of violence in the name of emancipation. Lincoln, and later Congress, made accommodations for Quaker conscientious objectors, but their moral dilemma remained unresolved. Kashatus explains that the president and Quakers were friends in common affliction. They both endured great emotional and spiritual challenges throughout the war and found great comfort and guidance in each other.

Though much of this book is valuable to the reader, there are some surprising oversights that detract from the author's work. Kashatus deftly presents Friends' beliefs and the various divisions within their religious society, but an explanatory footnote or an appendix would have been helpful in providing background information on the origins of Quaker schismatic sects and the role of Friends' Yearly Meetings. Quakers periodically visited Lincoln during the war, and, according to Kashatus, provided him with reassurance and spiritual guidance. While Kashatus makes it clear that these visits fortified and strengthened the chief executive at critical times, their impact on actual policy formation still remains unclear.

Kashatus's effort to establish a close connection between Lincoln and Quakers does not stand on solid ground. He asserts that the president's knowledge of his Quaker ancestry "may have inspired him to adopt some of their peculiar practices [and that] Lincoln exhibited many Quaker traits in his own lifestyle such as refusing to swear oaths, pretend affection, or remove his hat in deference to people in positions of authority. He also demonstrated a preference for simplicity—another quality associated with early Quakers—by dressing in plain black-and-white clothing; writing speeches, addresses, and letters noted for their austerity and brevity; and shunning the use of titles for people, including himself" (6). However, Lincoln did swear oaths—to be a member of the Illinois legislature, to be admitted to the state bar, to be a member of the US House of Representatives, and to be president of the United States. With regard to plain dress and speech, Lincoln was very conscious of his image, position, and reputation. His humble Western origins led him to dislike pretense. To suggest that the religious affiliation of some ancient kin "may have" influenced him is quite a stretch.

Kashatus overplays Quaker influence upon Lincoln. In his retelling of the *Trent* affair, he points to the neglected role of John Bright, a British Quaker, abolitionist, and member of the House of Commons. While Lincoln did correspond with Bright, who played an important part as an ardent pro-US spokesman in Parliament, non-Friends Prince Albert, US ambassador Charles Francis Adams, and US secretary of state William Henry Seward were certainly much more influential in peacefully resolving the diplomatic crisis between Britain and America. Moreover, considering the remarkable volume of British imports of American wheat at the time, it is possible that Midwestern Quaker farmers were actually more important than John Bright. The author notes Lincoln's friendship with Pennsylvania Quaker and secretary of agriculture Isaac Newton, "who endeared himself to the president because he befriended Mrs. Lincoln, preventing embarrassing public disclosures of her extravagant expenses" (84). Yet Kashatus does not explain exactly what Newton did or how it was connected to his faith.

This book needs a judicious editor. It contains some oddities in capitalization, a peculiar use of italics, and an outdated figure for the Civil War's death toll—620,000, when the latest scholarship has that figure at 750,000. *Abraham Lincoln, the Quakers, and the Civil War* is an insightful volume but could benefit from additional research and knowledgeable editing.

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Klezmer: Music and Community in Twentieth-Century Jewish Philadelphia. By HANKUS NETSKY. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015. 175 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$64.50.)

The klezmer revival of the late twentieth century drew attention to this important area of Jewish music both through performance and through scholarship. Most writing on klezmer has focused largely on the revival itself and on its antecedent practices in the New York region. Hankus Netsky's monograph on klezmer in twentieth-century Jewish Philadelphia provides an important counterpart to this literature, drawing attention not only to Philadelphia's distinctive and creative Jewish musical tradition but also to the particularity and vibrancy of its broader Jewish culture.

The book is divided into two sections. The first, "The Klezmer Musician," grounds Philadelphia's klezmer scene in Europe; the second, "Musical Traditions," is a historical ethnography of klezmer in Jewish Philadelphia, primarily though not exclusively in the mid-twentieth century. Netsky, a major contributor to the klezmer revival, follows in its intellectual tradition in the book's first section. Indeed, the first chapter, "The Klezmer Mystique," frames the central topic of