



Fall 9-8-2015

History Professor's Book Outlines Lincoln's Views on Immigrants

Winthrop University

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Recommended Citation

Winthrop University, "History Professor's Book Outlines Lincoln's Views on Immigrants" (2015). *Winthrop News 2015*. 161.
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History Professor's Book Outlines Lincoln's Views on Immigrants

Quick Facts

- Silverman's book investigates Lincoln's evolving personal, professional and political relationship with the wide variety of immigrant groups he encountered throughout his life, revealing that Lincoln related to the immigrant in a manner few of his contemporaries would or could emulate.
- The topic remains relevant today as the United States and other countries wrestle with how to manage large migrations into their societies.



Jason Silverman

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – Winthrop University **History Professor Jason Silverman's** highly touted book, "Lincoln and the Immigrant," is now available from the Southern Illinois University Press.

Released this month, the book examines Lincoln's views on the place of the **immigrant in America's society** and economy, and offers a new perspective on the 16th president. The topic remains relevant today as the United States and other countries wrestle with how to manage large migrations into their societies.

Between 1840 and 1860, America received **more than 4.5 million people from foreign countries** as permanent residents, including a huge influx of newcomers from northern and western Europe, hundreds of thousands of Mexicans who became U.S. citizens with the annexation of Texas and the Mexican Cession, and a smaller number of Chinese immigrants. Some Americans sought to curtail the rights of immigrants but Lincoln advocated for the rights of all classes of citizens.

Silverman's book investigates **Lincoln's evolving personal, professional and political relationship** with the wide variety of immigrant groups he encountered throughout his life, revealing that Lincoln related to the immigrant in a manner few of his contemporaries would or could emulate.

Advance copies of "**Lincoln and the Immigrant**" attracted national attention this summer and has resulted in several opportunities for Silverman to speak about Lincoln's perspective.

"Despite the enormous number of books that have been written about Abraham Lincoln, there has never been a full-length study about Lincoln's views on immigration," wrote Thomas R. Turner, editor of the Lincoln Herald, about the book. "Silverman admirably fills this gap in the literature with his well-written and thoughtful study, demonstrating once again that an imaginative scholar can still provide new information about our 16th president."

Silverman, Winthrop's **Ellison Capers Palmer Jr. Professor of History** and its senior professor of the university faculty, will now be the keynote speaker at an **Oct. 16 naturalization ceremony** for immigrants on the grounds of the **Lincoln Cottage** in Washington, D.C. He was already set to speak Oct. 15 about his book during a **Cottage Conversation series** at 6:30 p.m.

During October, the Cottage has a museum exhibit, "Lincoln and the Immigrant," in the **Robert H. Smith Visitor Exhibition Center**.

Other events for Silverman include:

- A **Virtual Book Signing** at the **Abraham Lincoln Book Shop** in Chicago, Illinois, at noon, Nov. 21. The signing will be broadcast live on the Internet at <http://virtualbooksigning.net/>. The event is a

blending of a classic bookstore with a modern day book promotion, where listeners can e-mail questions and request inscriptions in the books they just purchased online. The **Abraham Lincoln Book Shop**, which was established in 1938, has been devoted to the study of the Civil War and the Great Emancipator. Over the years, it has served the needs of collectors and scholars, professional historians and independent writers, dedicated first edition hunters and casual history enthusiasts. Among its devotees was **poet Carl Sandburg**, who wrote a six-volume definitive biography on Lincoln.

· Silverman will be **one of four Lincoln scholars** invited as a speaker Feb. 12 at the **annual Abraham Lincoln Association Symposium**, Old State Capitol, in Springfield. He will speak on “Thieves, Greasers and Mongrels: The Emancipator Encounters the Immigrant.” The Old State Capitol is where Lincoln began his political career and served four terms in the Illinois House.

· The **Lincoln Cottage** has invited Silverman to join the Scholarly Advisory Group for a two-year term from 2015-17. As part of the group, he will provide at least one written or oral contribution of scholarship annually, offer suggestions on speakers for the Cottage Conversation series and give feedback on its major initiatives.

Silverman is the author, coauthor or coeditor of 10 books, including “Immigration in the American South,” “1864–1895: A Documentary History of the Southern Immigration Conventions” and “A Rising Star of Promise: The Civil War Odyssey of David Jackson Logan, 17th South Carolina Infantry, 1861–1864.”

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