



Abraham Lincoln: A Press Portrait: His Life and Times from the Original Newspaper Documents of the Union, the Confederacy, and Europe

Herbert Mitgang

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“To say he is ugly is nothing. To add that his figure is grotesque is to convey no adequate impression.”

“He is destined to occupy in history...a quaintness, originality, courage, honesty, magnanimity and popular force of character such as have never heretofore...”

These starkly different 19th century newspaper depictions describe one and the same man: Abraham Lincoln. Nearly 150 years after his death, Lincoln is universally considered our most beloved U.S. president. Yet in his own time, the reception he received at the hands of journalists was far more mixed. In this essential volume, noted Lincoln scholar Herbert Mitgang has painstakingly gathered the most thorough, wide-ranging collection of actual newspaper accounts that show how Lincoln was portrayed by northern, southern, and foreign newspapers. It reveals a far more beleaguered, less godlike, and finally a richer Lincoln than has come through many other biographies.

While often revered in print, for example, he was just as often crucified, even by some newspapers in his home state of Illinois that portrayed him throughout his career as a joker instead of a thinker. Most shockingly, perhaps, one Houston paper wrote after his assassination: “From now until God’s judgment day, the minds of men will not cease to thrill at the killing of Abraham Lincoln.”

For those only familiar with the “retouched” versions of Lincoln’s life, *Abraham Lincoln: A Press Portrait* offers an often surprising and wholly unsanitized account of how his contemporaries actually saw him before, during, and after the Civil War. It is must read for the serious scholar and Lincoln buff alike.

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