



Lincoln in New Orleans: The 1828-1831 Flatboat Voyages and Their Place in History

Richard Campanella

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In 1828, a teenaged Abraham Lincoln guided a flatboat down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. The adventure marked his first visit to a major city and exposed him to the nation's largest slave marketplace. It also nearly cost him his life, in a nighttime attack in the Louisiana plantation country. That trip, and a second one in 1831, would form the two longest journeys of Lincoln's life, his only visits to the Deep South, and his foremost experience in a racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse urban environment.

Lincoln in New Orleans: The 1828-1831 Flatboat Voyages and Their Place in History reconstructs, to levels of detail and analyses never before attempted, the nature of those two journeys and examines their influence on Lincoln's life, presidency, and subsequent historiography. It also sheds light on river commerce and New Orleans in the antebellum era, because, as exceptional as Lincoln later came to be, he was entirely archetypal of the Western rivermen of his youth who traveled regularly between the "upcountry" and the Queen City of the South.

Featuring new data sources, historical photos, and custom-made analytical maps and graphs, Lincoln in New Orleans brings new knowledge to one of the least-known but most influential episodes in Lincoln's life.

This is a Lincoln story, a Mississippi River story, a New Orleans story, and an American story.

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