



Claiming Lincoln: Progressivism, Equality, and the Battle for Lincoln's Legacy in Presidential Rhetoric

Jason R. Jividen

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Abraham Lincoln is clearly one of the most frequently cited figures in American political rhetoric, especially with regard to issues of equality. But given the ubiquity of Lincoln's legacy, many references to him, even on the presidential level, are often of questionable accuracy. In *Claiming Lincoln*, Jividen posits that in much 20th-century presidential rhetoric, especially from progressive leaders, Lincoln's understanding of equality is slowly divorced from its grounding in the natural rights thinking of the American Founding and reinterpreted in light of progressive history.

Claiming Lincoln examines the manner in which rhetoricians have appealed to Lincoln's legacy, only to distort that legacy in the process. Focusing on Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, and Lyndon Johnson and touching on Barack Obama, Jividen argues that presidential rhetorical use and abuse of Lincoln has profound consequences not only for how we understand Lincoln but also for how we understand American democracy. Jividen's original take on Lincoln and the Progressives will be of interest to scholars of American politics and all those invested in Lincoln's legacy.

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