

**Wepner Symposium on the Lincoln Legacy and Contemporary Political Science,
October 8-9, 2010 at the University of Illinois Springfield**

A Summary of the Proceedings

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The Wepner Symposium brought together a number of political scientists to discuss the legacy of President Abraham Lincoln and how it relates to contemporary political science scholarship, with the theme of “Presidential options, Presidential decision-making, and the social consequences of Presidential decision, indecision, or non-decision.” The symposium was convened to open new lines of inquiry into politics generally, and to explore how political science in higher education and K-12 education may interact reciprocally.

Abraham Lincoln and the Lincoln Legacy

From the program introduction:

The symposium was designed to provide an opportunity to present recent political science research related to the Lincoln legacy, to relate such work to the broader discipline of political science, and to discuss the broad range of Lincoln studies.

The aim of this symposium is connect these streams of thinking that are, but should not be, strangely separated.

The magnitude of Abraham Lincoln as President is indisputable. The literature on, and inspired by, Lincoln is also formidable. (See, Merrill D. Peterson, Lincoln in

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American Memory, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, 156; and the many books of Harold Holzer.) But the Lincoln studies literature largely proceeds with little overt recognition of the work of the discipline of political science. Similarly, much of the historical or other literature on the Civil War seems to have little recognition of concepts and techniques related to the study of “secession” or “civil wars” generically, which are fundamental to some key problems of politics.

Political science, as a discipline, came into existence in the years when the memory of Lincoln was powerful. *The new research in political science is so vast that any one book can summarize only part of it.* (Edward D. Mansfield and Richard Sisson, eds., *The Evolution of Political Knowledge*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004.) Abraham Lincoln, and the legacy of Abraham Lincoln, has a strong claim on the minds of those who study politics, in its most fundamental sense, in the United States and in many places around the world. (See *Global Lincoln Conference*, Oxford University, July 3-5, 2009.)

Yet contemporary political science is not one of those places where the Lincoln claim is strong. Instead, the discipline’s overt memory of Lincoln *or consciousness of a Lincoln legacy as intellectually relevant to contemporary work, is weak.* A major political science meeting can have hundreds of papers, including papers on secession and civil war, but not much overt recognition of the Civil War.

This could be, in part, an artifact of the theories, and especially the methodologies, of the past decade, or two decades. But it is not so. There are many political science books on how wars have started, but the contemporary political science, reflected in the

Social Sciences Citation Index or JSTOR, shows almost no awareness even of the problems examined in David Potter, *Lincoln and His Party in the Secession Crisis*.

Within the need to connect two way of thinking, this symposium begins with the core fact of Lincoln's having been President, and from that core fact adopts the theme that it seems theoretically used to think about the options open to (or seen by) Presidents, the decision-making engaged in (or avoided by) Presidents, and the social consequences of Presidents do (or avoid doing).

Within this framework, the symposium has two aims.

Two Aims

Aim One: *The symposium is designed to provide an opportunity to present recent political science research related to the Lincoln legacy, to relate such work to the broader discipline of political science, and to discuss the broad range of Lincoln studies. New reciprocal discussion is the first aim.*

Aim Two: *The symposium is also designed to encourage discussion from the experience and interests of K-12 social studies teachers. What is known about Abraham Lincoln and the Lincoln legacy? What do 21st century students bring with them to the learning process? How can intellectual interchange between the college-university community and the K12 community be facilitated?*

Friday, October 8, 2010

All sessions held in Conference Room G of the Public Affairs Center at the University of Illinois, Springfield

Session One

Thinking About Lincoln: The Ownership and Interpretation of Abraham Lincoln

Discussion theme: Groups have competed for the "ownership" and interpretation of the Lincoln legacy, and other groups have rejected or avoided the Lincoln legacy (as in some recent conservative literature, on one hand, and in some African American scholarship on the other).

"Abraham Lincoln as Political Scientist"

Tim Miller (*University of Illinois Springfield*) and Kristina Miller-Stevens (*Old Dominion University*)

In the first session, Tim Miller and Kristina Miller-Stevens addressed the particular qualities of Lincoln himself, taking on the question of whether or not he could be considered a political scientist. Noting the potential pitfalls and critiques of such a topic, they nonetheless present an overview of Lincoln's life, beliefs, and decision making that could conceivably support such a contention. "Lincoln," they say, "did indeed practice a rather rudimentary empiricism of the day." He also thought deeply about issues of liberal democracy and the moral and philosophical dimensions of the concept, "and in so doing, likewise explored the dynamics of public opinion and justice." Another point they touch on, and which was revisited later in the day, was the fact of Lincoln's firm understanding of the "emergency" nature of his day and that when undertaking major decisions in the course of the Civil War, he "did not casually stumble into these quite radical actions." In all, their study provides a good deal of evidence that could help support the notion that Lincoln was indeed a "political scientist" of sorts. Clearly, this is a contestable assertion, but an interesting one. Rather than commit the kind of mistake that Skowronek warns against and place this paragon

of scholarly leadership on a normative pedestal against which to measure all other presidents, it would be more humble and wise to understand how this personality and leadership style fit into the context of the time and how it can aid or inhibit presidents and leaders of all stripes and in other contexts.

“Is Lincoln a Good Model for Presidential Leadership?”

Stephen Skowronek (*Yale University*)

Stephen Skowronek’s paper challenged the practice of placing Lincoln on a pedestal as a paradigmatic example of how presidents should always behave. While Lincoln was an admirable president, to be sure, he faced significantly different circumstances than any other, before or after. Different historical situations make any singular model difficult to take seriously as a universal exemplar of how a president should behave. As Skowronek notes, “Lincoln transformed America. Do we really want every president to do that?” (3) He points to such icon-worship as that at issue here as being a motivating factor in the “rise of presidentialism in America” (14). Historical context, and the individual context of the man himself, makes clear how dubious an enterprise any broad generalization of Lincoln-as-paradigm is. The key to Skowronek’s remarks is encapsulated here: “Lincoln told us to think anew, to set aside received dogmas and to speak clearly in our own voice to the situation and the problems at hand. That is the model we should be emulating, the one that recognizes the risks of getting entrapped in models” (13).

Session Two

Presidents and the Challenge of Maintaining the Union

Discussion theme: Presidents in facing the problem of nation-leading have had to deal with (and sometimes avoid) the problem of maintaining the United States, the problem of chattel slavery in the political economy, and the question of whether and/or how the United States can incorporate

non-white peoples into the body politic.

“Six Presidents and the Dissolution of the Union: From James K. Polk to Abraham Lincoln”

Fred I. Greenstein (*Princeton University*)

Fred Greenstein gave an overview of the leadership styles of presidents from James K. Polk to Abraham Lincoln in session 2 on presidents’ attempts to maintain the Union in the mid-nineteenth century. He noted that this was a “wonderfully rich period” in which to gain a better understanding of the Presidency. The two decades between Polk’s arrival in the White House and Lincoln’s assassination were turbulent politically, and in this volatile atmosphere, the personalities and styles of the men who attempted to lead were key in understanding how the Union eventually dissolved. While context surely plays a role, as we see in the presentations and comments outline above, the individual characteristics are also integral to gaining a full sense of how any political process plays out. In this case, how did the personalities of these men make a difference given the volatility around them? Greenstein notably compared Polk’s “macho” style to Lyndon Johnson’s own a century later. Given the variation in the men who followed - the short-lived Zachary Taylor, Millard Fillmore and “doughfaces” Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan, and finally Abraham Lincoln - it is an interesting and valuable exercise to better appreciate how individual leadership styles make a difference in crisis situations.

Commentary

Dave Robertson raised the importance of emotional intelligence in understanding presidential leadership and the differences made by individual leaders.

Bert Rockman pointed out that leadership is always circumstantial, a function of conditions that force action rather than individual action that forces conditions.

Session Three
Presidents and Military Command

Discussion theme: Explicit and implicit bargaining and command relationships between the Chief Executive and the general officers through the exercise of command over the military.

“The Political Consequences of Divergent Strategic Narratives”

Pinky Wassenberg (*University of Illinois Springfield*)

Pinky Wassenberg’s paper on “The Political Consequences of Divergent Strategic Narratives” showed how the narrative frameworks that presidents construct have a profound impact on their relationship with military commanders, who can find themselves building their own, competing narratives. In the case of Lincoln and General George McClellan, the two competing narratives concerned the issue of pursuing a “hard” or “soft” war strategy. The debate was not only internal, and from a general standpoint, conflict between narratives is key to the organization of power because “stakeholders use their strategic narratives to attract potential supporters to build political momentum for their version of the story” (5-6). Wassenberg notes that the political arena is particularly ripe for narrative conflict “in a time of transition from one military conflict paradigm to another,” times when the very nature of conflict fundamentally evolves (8). In the aforementioned McClellan case, the president found himself pressured electorally as he waited to remove the general until after the 1862 elections and then immediately saw McClellan become a leading Democratic candidate for the 1864 presidential election. The case of Harry Truman and Douglas MacArthur was similar - MacArthur himself had political ambitions and the debate between the

two men on their own personal strategic narratives expanded to include the electoral rivalry between the Democratic and Republican parties. As Wassenberg asks in her conclusion, “do we see the pattern of clashing Presidential and commander strategic narratives repeating” as a commander with possible presidential ambitions in David Petraeus could find himself at odds with President Obama, while a Republican Party stands on the sidelines prepared to embrace him with open arms?

Commentary

The concept of strategic narratives certainly involves both context and personal style, but as discussed here, it is driven by the personalities and preferences of the key actors involved - the presidents and commanders. Vice Admiral Richard Thunman, in his commentary, noted the importance of the oath officers swear to obey the president, and for the need for respect between presidents and their high-ranking commanders. He discussed a number of additional examples of conflict between presidents and their subordinate military officers, and also pointed out the particular “type” that is ostensibly inherent in recently-fired General Stanley McChrystal’s history as a Special Ops officer. That particular institution has a tendency to either attract or mold its soldiers into something of a maverick sensibility, which can be one important factor in the way presidents relate to field commanders who hail from such a background. Once again, the personality and leadership style is a key. Thunman earlier commented on the way in which charisma helped leaders get followers behind them, using the example of replacing submarine commanders and the fact that crews would often become more detached after having been oriented to a particular commander.

Another point to recognize about military leaders and the advice they give is that their “professional judgment” often relates to military decisions, not “political” decisions, a point raised by Rockman. The very act of setting a withdrawal date is not a military strategy but a *political* one, aimed at a different set of goals than the ones the generals are probably most concerned with. So, what exactly is the dividing line between “professional judgment” and “insubordination”? Certainly, there could be a contextual element here, but one’s personal proclivities also play a significant role. As noted, McChrystal’s background in Special Ops, or the political ambitions of a General McClellan, or the apparent narcissism of a General MacArthur certainly help to determine how far they are willing to go in testing that tenuous dividing line.

Session Four

The Lincoln Legacy and the Problem of Exclusion and Inclusion

Discussion theme: Presidents and the exclusion and inclusion of subordinated groups, notably the problem of slavery and emancipation, but other subordinated categories as well.

“Lincoln’s Liberalism and Same-Sex Marriage”

Jason Pierceson (*University of Illinois Springfield*)

“Lincoln’s Legacy and Women’s Rights: The Diffusion of Mandatory Gender Quota Laws”

Adriana M. Crocker (*University of Illinois Springfield*)

In session 4, on the Lincoln Legacy and the Problem of Exclusion and Inclusion, Jason Pierceson and Adriana Crocker touched on the role of the Lincoln legacy in two contemporary areas of human rights expansion: the gay rights and women’s rights movements. Lincoln did not contend with either directly as president; indeed, the women’s rights movement was only just beginning, modestly, around that time, and gay rights were still almost a century from becoming a major public issue. But, in both

cases, the legacy of Lincoln is instructive in understanding human rights issues generally and the way in which social and governmental institutions reckon with them. Certainly, as has been touched on in other aspects of this symposium, Lincoln was concerned, perhaps primarily with the salvation of the Union. But, one cannot discount the slavery issue and the role which it played in provoking the Civil War or that which Lincoln played in ending slavery and beginning the process of securing a more expansive realization of human rights than had been the norm prior to his election and inauguration. Lincoln's beliefs and efforts on this front can help to provide new theoretical insight as to how political leaders can play a role in expanding human rights. Pierceson's research, in the judicial realm, and Crocker's research, in the comparative field, thus attempt to applying the lessons of the Lincoln legacy to substantial problems that are contemporary in nature and wider in scope than typical presidency-centric studies.

Session Six

The Lincoln Legacy and How Institutions Have Been Adapted

Discussion theme: The Lincoln legacy may be evaluated in reference to the capacity of American government, after Lincoln, to deal with critical problems of adaptation.

"Deflecting the Ex-Post Veto Player: The Strategy of the 14th Amendment Dred Scott Override"

Rick Valley (Swarthmore College)

Rich Valley's paper, "Deflecting the Ex-Post Veto Player: The Strategy of the 14th Amendment *Dred Scott* Override," examines the politics involved in cementing the Citizenship Clause in the 14th Amendment as a means of overriding the *Dred Scott* decision on African-American citizenship. The institutional constraints involved in

polymaking that are integral to analyses involving veto players, as here, are fundamentally *context*-based. Actors decide based on their institutional constraints.

“Abraham Lincoln and the Concept of Emergency Federalism”

Lenneal Henderson (*University of Baltimore*)

Lenneal Henderson raised the issue of “emergency federalism” and discussed how Lincoln responded to the unprecedented crisis facing the nation in the form of the civil war. There is sometimes a wide disparity between what is happening “on the ground” in cases like Fort Sumter at the beginning of the war, or other similar instances requiring “emergency management”, and the decision making and rhetorical expressions of elites. Presidents like Lincoln strive to connect to the emotions of those most deeply affected by the crisis at hand, but often must take a different tack when addressing the problems involved. This touches on the next major theme, leadership style, but also speaks to the issue at hand - the way in which circumstances condition leadership.

Commentary

Shamira Gelbman (*Illinois State University*)

Shamira Gelbman posed a number of counterfactuals to further probe the way in which history as it actually played out served to provoke the outcome of interest, in this case the inclusion of the Citizenship Clause. Simple questions like “What if Lincoln had lived?” can offer useful thought exercises with which to refine our theoretical understanding of the processes at work, not only in this one instance, but as a useful general model. The more insight we have as to how circumstances shaped a given event, the better we can understand the fundamentals involved in that process.

Session Six
Lincoln and Obama

Discussion theme: How “the people” have seen these two distinctive persons in the Presidency? How should scholars see the practical relevance of the Lincoln legacy and the Obama presence for contemporary issues?

“Jackson, Lincoln, and Obama”

Joe Lowndes (*University of Oregon*)

Joe Lowndes expands our scope in assessing the presidency to examine the nature of the chief executive as an image connected to national identity in his paper “Jackson, Lincoln, FDR, Obama: The Presidency, the Body Politic, and the Contest over American National Identity.” Lowndes argues that “the racial meanings of Obama’s candidacy and presidency...cannot be fully understood without recourse to understandings of the ways in which past presidents have also embodied political meaning” (36). Presidents themselves become battlegrounds for groups to fight over their vision of national identity. As Lowndes contends, “Presidents...provide unique sites of political identification in the American context, because it is through them that national identity is interpreted” (37). Skowronek earlier touched on the “rise of presidentialism” in American politics and cautioned against idolatry in assessing the presidency. Connecting identity to the person and image of the president, as Lowndes does, can be a key means by which to better understand how that process works, and thus how identity can aid or hurt a president in his attempt to lead. But beyond the impact on presidential behavior, we must first assess the question of how presidents connected to the public’s perception of national identity. Lowndes offers insight as to how different presidents become larger than themselves and have an impact on politics

that is outside the narrower definitions of discourse and interaction between elites, or elites and public opinion. Individual presidents surely become part of the symbolic tapestry of the American political faith, and understanding this process and how groups compete over ownership and national identity goes beyond simply understanding presidential leadership.

“The Lincoln and Obama Legacies: The Perils of Channeling”

Wilbur Rich (*Wellesley College*)

Wilbur Rich discussed the differences in the historical contexts of the two presidents even though Obama has been persistent in employing “symbolic connections to Lincoln” (3). Some of these are obvious - the fact that both presidents hail from Illinois, that both served in the Illinois legislature, and Obama’s use of the Lincoln Bible in taking the Oath of Office. But, when assessing Obama’s leadership in race policy, Rich finds a key difference between the two in their respective political times. While some similarities could be seen (both faced quite polarized countries), and while the temperament and rhetorical abilities of both seem to be on somewhat equal ground, the contexts of their times are divergent enough to determine why Lincoln was forced to face the race issue head-on and why Obama, contending with a number of other issues, not least of which is tackling deep economic problems, and a much different media environment that allows for rapid information dissemination (which Lincoln did not have to face), finds it much more difficult to take on the challenge of promoting any changes in racial policy. Per Rich, “it is impossible for Obama to assert leadership in this area” (23). He concludes that the task of “creating a post-racial society is a difficult

transition to make” and that Obama’s election alone has not singularly provoked such an outcome, one which may require a number of administrations to fully realize (25-26).

“Abraham Lincoln, Barack Obama and the Virtues of the Positive State”

James W. Ingram III (*San Diego State University*) and Shoon Lio (*University of Illinois Springfield*)

James W. Ingram III and Shoon Lio discussed “Abraham Lincoln, Barack Obama, and the Virtues of the Positive State,” connecting the sixteenth president to the forty-fourth in their belief in the “positive state,” one committed to expanding and defending individual rights. This once again connects the two presidents, this time in their shared philosophy of state duties, organization, and responsibility. While times were different, and this certainly affected the way in which the two leaders, as Rich discussed, were able to lead effectively in a given area like rights expansion, their commitment to similar philosophical ideals surely played a role in their actions, and continues to drive, to some degree, Obama’s own presidential behavior. This further expands the scope of possible scholarship into the Lincoln legacy by touching on the shared (or, in other possible cases, divergent) political philosophies held by presidents and other leaders. How does a leader’s worldview get translated into action? How does context - historical circumstances, institutional realities, etc. - condition their ability to do so, and realize their ideals? And how does their conception of the role of government and the responsibilities of the state affect not only their own approach to their job as president, but also the way others perceive them?

Session Seven

Lincoln Studies and Political Science: What now should scholarship take up and how?

Discussion theme: Summary of findings and issues and discussion of the considerations that should be taken into account by scholars, by academic evaluators, by private grantors, foundations, and the National Science Foundation.

The scope of potential scholarship that takes Abraham Lincoln and his presidency as a basis from which to develop hypotheses, and find new ways of testing existing theories, is thus not simply constrained to the context of presidential decisions or the personal traits of those involved in such high-level interaction. Lincoln, his presidency, his times, his beliefs can provide us with a starting point for study in any number of other areas, such as national identity, comparative politics, judicial politics, human rights, or philosophy and belief systems.

This wide-ranging discussion also included a round table on where there are further intellectual opportunities for in the crossover between political science scholarship and scholarship on Lincoln and the Lincoln legacy as a part of contemporary political science. Tom Schwarz, the Illinois State Historian, cautioned against making Lincoln look too much like us and disconnecting our assessment of Lincoln from his nineteenth century context. Where the current historical focus is on Lincoln and race, and Lincoln as commander in chief, Schwarz asked where we can take scholarship on the questions of citizenship, of the development of Lincoln's belief system and the moral component of political discourse, of Lincoln's relationship to the Congress and his party, of his use of the media, of his use of patronage as a political tool, and of the Confederacy as a system of government.

Dave Robertson identified three possible jumping-off points for future research: Lincoln as an important case at a crucial point in American history (with 1860 as a key realigning election), Lincoln as "dropping a pebble of thought into the global pond"

(e.g., human rights in Latin America, as in the topic of Crocker's paper, or in the notion of national identity), and in the use of Lincoln as a rhetorical weapon in American politics (connecting back to Rich and Lowndes' papers). Bert Rockman reiterated the need for context in understanding certain processes, noting that exceptional times will produce exceptional leaders, and advocated for the use of counterfactuals in better understanding the practice of leadership. He called the difference a leader makes, "the great mystery of the enterprise," and pointed to opposition and institutions as particularly instructive constraints on a leader's decision making. Tom Schneider continued the discussion by pointing to political rhetoric and its consequences as an important area to study.

Richard Sobel called for using historical examples like Lincoln and his Cooper Union speech as good ground from which to produce hypotheses to test. He notes that the key difference between "history" and "political science" is that the latter is theory-driven, and noted how the former can aid in this. Lenneal Henderson called for a greater discussion of citizenship, interest group formation, and political opposition in light of Lincoln's example, and of deeper study into Lincoln and foreign policy, a neglected area of research but one which is relevant in our current age of globalization. Peyton McCrary argued for the use of primary sources, long the domain of historians, to test theories. Thomas Schwarz pointed to a conference on the "global Lincoln" held at Oxford last year, outlining the different ways in which various countries see Lincoln, his role in the concept of nationalism and as a unifying figure, and on the changing meaning of American exceptionalism in the domestic and global realms. Janet Martin

discussed the need to tie Lincoln and the presidency more general into the discussion of human rights and women's rights. And Matthew Holden argued that political science cannot be motivated by liberal and progressive ideals alone, but must be driven by a need to better grasp *power*, its forms and organization, and understand that exclusion is an unavoidable part of any political system.

Bert Rockman also discussed the value of counterfactuals as a useful means of developing theory and refining our understanding of the world. He asks what would have resulted if the South had not been the first mover in the Civil War, the role of myth and reality in perpetuating legacies of political leaders, and issues of racial equality and how we deal with changing demographics. In all of these areas, as in those listed above, the legacy of Abraham Lincoln offers further insight into human behavior, the role of institutions, the impact of public and personal opinion and identity, the liberal ideal of expanding human rights, as well as presidential politics, decision-making, and problems of leadership in general.

An extraordinary case to be sure, but as outlined here, we can take much from the legacy of Abraham Lincoln, generally three key elements to bear in mind regarding the study of politics: the importance of context, idiosyncrasies, and universality. A proper understanding of any political phenomenon requires a comprehension of the historical nature of the different cases, from which we can better understand the similarities and differentiate the causal mechanisms. The individuals involved, being engaged in a human social interaction, can play key roles as well, and so the idiosyncratic nature of their personalities and leadership styles can make crucial

differences between cases. And, finally, regardless of these differences, we can often see how seemingly unrelated cases and lessons can be used to develop deeper understandings and generalizable theories of politics and human behavior. The Wepner Symposium helped to bring together three often disparate and opposed strands of social inquiry, and spoke to the value of probing deeply into history in a more comprehensive and intellectually satisfying way than much of political science often finds itself doing.

Session Eight

“What Shall We Teach the Young?”: A Forum on the Lincoln Legacy, Political Science, and K-12 Social Studies

Discussion Theme: We need some new understanding of the question, as Aaron Wildavsky once put it, of “what shall we teach the young?” With the question of “what?” also goes “how?” The symposium is designed to mingle the expertise, experience and interests of those who conduct research and teach at the college-university level and the expertise, experience and interests of K-12 social studies teachers. What is known about Abraham Lincoln and the Lincoln legacy? What should be known? What do 21st century students bring with them to the learning process? How can intellectual interchange between the college-university community and the K12 community be facilitated?

The final session, held in Representative Hall of the Old State Capitol, Rogers Smith began with a call to teach the young of the virtues of political life. In keeping with Lincoln’s own belief that politics was a noble calling, one in which an individual could make a positive contribution to society, Smith challenged the three main beliefs that many, especially among the young, have about politics today: that “government can do no good,” that politicians are beholden to special interests and “bad,” and that they make too many compromises and sacrifice their integrity in the process.

He shows how Lincoln can be seen as challenging each of these points. Lincoln,

for example, believed that the government did and could make a difference in people's lives, a vision which was controversial both in his time and ours, and was not opposed to significant government intervention in the economy, especially in helping those who could not help themselves and in stimulating industrialization and advancing the United States from a poor, undeveloped country into a major industrial power by the twentieth century. And while Lincoln was certainly a politician, and not opposed to compromise, he was also willing to push public opinion and hold fast to certain principles which he would not compromise. Smith also argues that Lincoln's career showed real moral growth, and that while he once was not a proponent of real racial equality, he became one by the time he died. Smith expressed dissatisfaction with the way students are educated about Abraham Lincoln today - arguing for an end to an overly cynical view of political and historical leaders. No one man or woman is perfect, but in understanding all human behavior as cynical and depraved, there seems only to be a perpetuation of that pessimistic mindset that looks down on the vital task of politics.

Justin Blandford, of the Old State Capitol, followed Smith by arguing that students would do well to slow down (a difficult request in the fast-moving, ever-connected 21st century) and connect more deeply with their history by reading and immersing themselves in reading, as Lincoln did. He noted that while Lincoln read many "serious" works, he also checked out *Frankenstein* from the library - perhaps reading Mary Shelley's original work would be a unique way to connect with the sixteenth president, through a shared experience. Blandford discussed the role of social

media in promoting competition between people, putting primacy on popularity rather than working together and holding to certain principles. He argued that we need to help the young understand what they can and should compromise, and what they should not. Another key item he raised was the definition of “rival” in today’s world - where it once met a competitor, it now seems to mean “enemy.”

Camesha Scruggs followed Blandford by noting that she once had a more cynical view of Lincoln, but that her view grew to see him as a “change agent,” a man who “went out on a limb” for things he believed in. On the issue of what to teach the young, she says just that - tell them to go out on a limb even if it seems scary. She also reiterates Smith’s and Blandford’s points about connecting more deeply with Lincoln and getting a more comprehensive understanding of the man, his evolution over time, and his personal convictions and growth.

The symposium also brought into sharp relief a dichotomy between the study of politics in the academy and the state of social studies in the primary and secondary education. In the discussion that followed, Paula Shotwell and Margie Atkins, two Springfield teachers expressed their alarming at the increasing irrelevance of political science to the social studies to the educational curriculum at the primary and secondary levels. They were not talking about a deficiency in political science scholarship, but about the fact the realities of K-12 decision-making deprive them of the opportunity and motive to remain connected and to use political science in their curricular. They portrayed a reductionist educational world in which the focus is on rote skills rather than thinking and developing actual knowledge. Passing standardized tests becomes

the Holy Grail of the education system rather than actual teaching the young to process any type of information, think for themselves, analytically assess what they observe, and use that knowledge to be productive members of society. The teachers provided a very worrisome portrait of an environment increasingly hostile to the intellectual canon that is a key part of human society and history. They said that that a proper foundation is simply not being laid for a future generation of social scientists. Touching on the public responsibility of the scholarly community, Richard Sobel asked, "What can we do to help?"