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BOOK NEWS

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New light shed on Lincoln's 1864 reelection

LSU Press to publish Emancipation, the Union Army, and the Reelection of Abraham Lincoln in June 2014

Baton Rouge—The Union army's overwhelming vote for Abraham Lincoln's reelection in 1864 has led many Civil War scholars to conclude that the soldiers supported the Republican Party and its effort to abolish slavery. In *Emancipation, the Union Army, and the Reelection of Abraham Lincoln*, **Jonathan W. White** challenges this reigning paradigm in Civil War historiography, arguing instead that the soldier vote in the presidential election of 1864 is not a reliable index of the army's ideological motivation or political sentiment.

Although 78 percent of the soldiers' votes were cast for Lincoln, White contends that this was not wholly due to a political or social conversion to the Republican Party. Rather, he argues, historians have ignored mitigating factors such as voter turnout, intimidation at the polls, and how soldiers voted in nonpresidential elections in 1864. While recognizing that many soldiers changed their views on slavery and emancipation during the war, White suggests that a considerable number still rejected the Republican platform, and that many who voted for Lincoln disagreed with his views on slavery.

Using previously untapped court-martial records from the National Archives, as well as manuscript collections from across the country, White convincingly revises many commonly held assumptions about the Civil War era and provides a deeper understanding of the Union Army.

Jonathan W. White is assistant professor of American Studies at Christopher Newport University and the author of *Abraham Lincoln and Treason in the Civil War: The Trials of John Merryman*.

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Civil War Studies

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