



# Jefferson, Lincoln, and the Unfinished Work of the Nation

*Ronald L. Hatzenbuehler*

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Although the nation changed substantially between the presidential terms of Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln, these two leaders shared common interests and held remarkably similar opinions on many important issues. In *Jefferson, Lincoln, and the Unfinished Work of the Nation*, Ronald L. Hatzenbuehler describes the views of two of our nation's greatest presidents and explains how these views provide valuable insight into modern debates.

In this groundbreaking new study—the first extended examination of the ideas of Lincoln and Jefferson—Hatzenbuehler provides readers with a succinct guide to their opinions, comparing and contrasting their reasoned judgments on America's republican form of government. Each chapter is devoted to one key area of common interest: race and slavery, the pros and cons of political parties, state rights versus federal authority, religion and the presidency, presidential powers under the Constitution, or the proper political economy for a republic. Relying on the pair's own words in their letters, writings, and speeches, Hatzenbuehler explores similarities and differences between the two men on contentious issues. Both, for instance, wrote that they were antislavery, but Jefferson never acted on this belief, while Lincoln moved toward a constitutional amendment banning slavery. The book's title, taken from the Gettysburg Address, builds on both presidents' expectations that Americans should dedicate themselves to the unfinished work of returning the nation to its founding principles.

Jefferson and Lincoln wrestled with many of the same issues and ideas that intrigue and divide Americans today. In his thought-provoking work, Hatzenbuehler details how the two presidents addressed these issues and ideas, which are essential to understanding not only America's history but also the continuing influence of the past on the present.

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