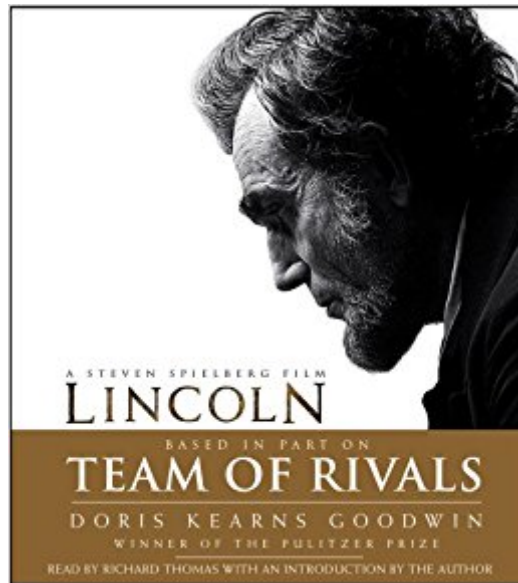




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Team Of Rivals: Lincoln Film Tie-in Edition



Synopsis

Soon to be a major motion picture, *Lincoln*, from Steven Spielberg, with a screenplay by Pulitzer Prize- and Tony-winning writer Tony Kushner, and starring Daniel Day-Lewis as the President and Sally Field as Mary Todd Lincoln. The acclaimed historian Doris Kearns Goodwin illuminates Lincoln's political genius in a highly original work, as the one-term congressman and prairie lawyer rises from obscurity to prevail over three gifted rivals of national reputation to become president. On May 18, 1860, William H. Seward, Salmon P. Chase, Edward Bates, and Abraham Lincoln waited in their hometowns for the results from the Republican National Convention in Chicago. When Lincoln emerged as the victor, his rivals were dismayed and angry. Each had energetically sought the presidency. Lincoln succeeded because he possessed an extraordinary ability to put himself in the place of other men, to experience what they were feeling, to understand their motives. This multiple biography is centered on Lincoln's mastery of men and how it shaped the most significant presidency in the nation's history.

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Customer Reviews

The life and times of Abraham Lincoln have been analyzed and dissected in countless books. Do we need another Lincoln biography? In *Team of Rivals*, esteemed historian Doris Kearns Goodwin proves that we do. Though she can't help but cover some familiar territory, her perspective is focused enough to offer fresh insights into Lincoln's leadership style and his deep understanding of human behavior and motivation. Goodwin makes the case for Lincoln's political genius by

examining his relationships with three men he selected for his cabinet, all of whom were opponents for the Republican nomination in 1860: William H. Seward, Salmon P. Chase, and Edward Bates. These men, all accomplished, nationally known, and presidential, originally disdained Lincoln for his backwoods upbringing and lack of experience, and were shocked and humiliated at losing to this relatively obscure Illinois lawyer. Yet Lincoln not only convinced them to join his administration--Seward as secretary of state, Chase as secretary of the treasury, and Bates as attorney general--he ultimately gained their admiration and respect as well. How he soothed egos, turned rivals into allies, and dealt with many challenges to his leadership, all for the sake of the greater good, is largely what Goodwin's fine book is about. Had he not possessed the wisdom and confidence to select and work with the best people, she argues, he could not have led the nation through one of its darkest periods. Ten years in the making, this engaging work reveals why "Lincoln's road to success was longer, more tortuous, and far less likely" than the other men, and why, when opportunity beckoned, Lincoln was "the best prepared to answer the call." This multiple biography further provides valuable background and insights into the contributions and talents of Seward, Chase, and Bates. Lincoln may have been "the indispensable ingredient of the Civil War," but these three men were invaluable to Lincoln and they played key roles in keeping the nation intact. --Shawn Carkonen

The Team of Rivals Team of Rivals doesn't just tell the story of Abraham Lincoln. It is a multiple biography of the entire team of personal and political competitors that he put together to lead the country through its greatest crisis. Here, Doris Kearns Goodwin profiles five of the key players in her book, four of whom contended for the 1860 Republican presidential nomination and all of whom later worked together in Lincoln's cabinet.

1. Edwin M. Stanton Stanton treated Lincoln with utter contempt at their initial acquaintance when the two men were involved in a celebrated law case in the summer of 1855. Unimaginable as it might seem after Stanton's demeaning behavior, Lincoln offered him "the most powerful civilian post within his gift"--the post of secretary of war--at their next encounter six years later. On his first day in office as Simon Cameron's replacement, the energetic, hardworking Stanton instituted "an entirely new regime" in the War Department. After nearly a year of disappointment with Cameron, Lincoln had found in Stanton the leader the War Department desperately needed. Lincoln's choice of Stanton revealed his singular ability to transcend personal vendetta, humiliation, or bitterness. As for Stanton, despite his initial contempt for the man he once described as a "long armed Ape," he not only accepted the offer but came to respect and love Lincoln more than any person outside of his immediate family. He was beside himself with grief for weeks after the president's death.

2. Salmon P. Chase Chase, an Ohioan, had been both senator and governor, had played a central role in the

formation of the national Republican Party, and had shown an unflagging commitment to the cause of the black man. No individual felt he deserved the presidency as a natural result of his past contributions more than Chase himself, but he refused to engage in the practical methods by which nominations are won. He had virtually no campaign and he failed to conciliate his many enemies in Ohio itself. As a result, he alone among the candidates came to the convention without the united support of his own state. Chase never ceased to underestimate Lincoln, nor to resent the fact that he had lost the presidency to a man he considered his inferior. His frustration with his position as secretary of the treasury was alleviated only by his dogged hope that he, rather than Lincoln, would be the Republican nominee in 1864, and he steadfastly worked to that end. The president put up with Chase's machinations and haughty yet fundamentally insecure nature because he recognized his superlative accomplishments at treasury. Eventually, however, Chase threatened to split the Republican Party by continuing to fill key positions with partisans who supported his presidential hopes. When Lincoln stepped in, Chase tendered his resignation as he had three times before, but this time Lincoln stunned Chase by calling his bluff and accepting the offer.

3. Abraham Lincoln When Lincoln won the Republican presidential nomination in 1860 he seemed to have come from nowhere--a backwoods lawyer who had served one undistinguished term in the House of Representatives and lost two consecutive contests for the U.S. Senate. Contemporaries attributed his surprising nomination to chance, to his moderate position on slavery, and to the fact that he hailed from the battleground state of Illinois. But Lincoln's triumph, particularly when viewed against the efforts of his rivals, owed much to a remarkable, unsuspected political acuity and an emotional strength forged in the crucible of hardship and defeat. That Lincoln, after winning the presidency, made the unprecedented decision to incorporate his eminent rivals into his political family, the cabinet, was evidence of an uncanny self-confidence and an indication of what would prove to others a most unexpected greatness.

4. William H. Seward A celebrated senator from New York for more than a decade and governor of his state for two terms before going to Washington, Seward was certain he was going to receive his party's nomination for president in 1860. The weekend before the convention in Chicago opened he had already composed a first draft of the valedictory speech he expected to make to the Senate, assuming that he would resign his position as soon as the decision in Chicago was made. His mortification at not having received the nomination never fully abated, and when he was offered his cabinet post as secretary of state he intended to have a major role in choosing the remaining cabinet members, conferring upon himself a position in the new government more commanding than that of Lincoln himself. He quickly realized the futility of his plan to relegate the president to a figurehead role. Though the feisty New Yorker would continue to

debate numerous issues with Lincoln in the years ahead, exactly as Lincoln had hoped and needed him to do, Seward would become his closest friend, advisor, and ally in the administration. More than any other cabinet member Seward appreciated Lincoln's peerless skill in balancing factions both within his administration and in the country at large. 5. Edward Bates A widely respected elder statesman, a delegate to the convention that framed the Missouri Constitution, and a former Missouri congressman whose opinions on national matters were still widely sought, Bates's ambitions for political success were gradually displaced by love for his wife and large family, and he withdrew from public life in the late 1840s. For the next 20 years he was asked repeatedly to run or once again accept high government posts but he consistently declined. However in early 1860, with letters and newspaper editorials advocating his candidacy crowding in upon him, he decided to try for the highest office in the land. After losing to Lincoln he vowed, in his diary, to decline a cabinet position if one were to be offered, but with the country "in trouble and danger" he felt it was his duty to accept when Lincoln asked him to be attorney general. Though Bates initially viewed Lincoln as a well-meaning but incompetent administrator, he eventually concluded that the president was an unmatched leader, "very near being a 'perfect man.'" The Essential Doris Kearns Goodwin Wait Till Next Year: A Memoir No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream More New Reading on the Civil War Lincoln's Melancholy: How Depression Challenged a President and Fueled His Greatness by Joshua Wolf Shenk Grant and Sherman: The Friendship That Won the Civil War by Charles Bracelen Flood The March: A Novel by E.L. Doctorow --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Pulitzer Prize winner Goodwin (No Ordinary Time) seeks to illuminate what she interprets as a miraculous event: Lincoln's smooth (and, in her view, rather sudden) transition from underwhelming one-term congressman and prairie lawyer to robust chief executive during a time of crisis. Goodwin marvels at Lincoln's ability to co-opt three better-born, better-educated rivals "each of whom had challenged Lincoln for the 1860 Republican nomination. The three were New York senator William H. Seward, who became secretary of state; Ohio senator Salmon P. Chase, who signed on as secretary of the treasury and later was nominated by Lincoln to be chief justice of the Supreme Court; and Missouri's "distinguished elder statesman" Edward Bates, who served as attorney general. This is the "team of rivals" Goodwin's title refers to. The problem with this interpretation is that the metamorphosis of Lincoln to Machiavellian master of men that Goodwin presupposes did not in fact occur overnight only as he approached the grim reality of his presidency. The press had labeled candidate Lincoln "a fourth-rate lecturer, who cannot speak good grammar." But East Coast

railroad executives, who had long employed Lincoln at huge prices to defend their interests as attorney and lobbyist, knew better. Lincoln was a shrewd political operator and insider long before he entered the White House—a fact Goodwin underplays. On another front, Goodwin's spotlighting of the president's three former rivals tends to undercut that Lincoln's most essential Cabinet-level contacts were not with Seward, Chase and Bates, but rather with secretaries of war Simon Cameron and Edwin Stanton, and Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles. These criticisms aside, Goodwin supplies capable biographies of the gentlemen on whom she has chosen to focus, and ably highlights the sometimes tangled dynamics of their "team" within the larger assemblage of Lincoln's full war cabinet. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Doris Kearns Goodwin, thank you for these vivid, essential truths of our 16th president and his times. Abraham Lincoln? We all have heard of him, the great president. He really was great, in so many ways, as a leader and as a complete human. He loved children, people of all sorts, and they loved him back. Eleven year old Grace Bedell wrote in 1860 to advise he grow some whiskers and he complied, and thanked her in person, in Westfield, NY, with a kiss, on his way to his inauguration. Lincoln passionately loved his intelligent but high maintenance wife Mary Todd, and adored their children. Lincoln was a handshaker, hugger and a kisser, a man of body as well as mind. Lincoln loved his many friends, gathered over a lifetime. Lincoln loved Shakespeare, and poetry, and language, and letters, and humor, and stories and jokes, such as the outhouse joke featured in the Spielberg movie. Desperately poor in his youth, in rugged frontier country, he worked hard, laboring with his unusually large and strong body, just as he strenuously applied his powerful intellect to improve his mind at every opportunity. His difficult and adventurous life, with ample failures and tragedy, fostered much wisdom and empathy. When Frederick Douglass first visited the White House in 1863, he felt Lincoln's sincere warmth and respect. Lincoln had experienced plenty of bigotry and discrimination himself as an unlettered backwoodsman. Lincoln loved debate, and welcomed dissent. The seven Lincoln-Douglas debates of his 1958 senate campaign comprise a lasting testament to his intellectual and oratory power, and to the level of political discourse of the time. The format was three hours, 90 minutes each, divided 60/90/30. Transcripts were published and widely read. "Team of Rivals" refers to Lincoln's cabinet, some of whom were considered more likely and deserving to become president than Lincoln, particularly Secretary of State William Seward. Yet he and Lincoln quickly formed a strong bond of professional cooperation and personal affection. Lincoln was kind, forgiving, gladly took blame, and generously shared credit. Among the

many great men who recognized Lincoln's special qualities was Ulysses S. Grant, another close and personal bond. Lincoln loved the law, and the Constitution. He infuriated extremists on all sides, insisting on lawful and democratic change, "government of the people, by the people". In DKG's words, a political genius, understanding that politics is the art of the possible, but in his short time in power, drastically changing those possibilities. Lincoln suffered much with every bloody battle of the Civil War, but kept up his spirits and many others' with his supreme confidence. He mourned the terrible losses and visited with troops up close many times. He touched so many, in so many ways. He loved America, and all Americans, including the South: "with malice toward none, with charity for all". Thanks to DKG for inspiring me to write this love letter to Abe Lincoln, whom I now know so much better. At 6' 4", athletic, with long arms and big hands, he could easily dunk a basketball. Imagining a modern youthful Abe, he would be termed "at risk", underprivileged kid, so probably in one or more minority groups. Today the "backwoods" is either the inner city or maybe an Indian reservation. Today's Abe would probably get a scholarship to an elite college. But no Harvard Porcellian Club or Yale Skull and Bones, no spring breaks on exotic beaches. Probably a volunteer at the Boys Club instead. After he dunks on an opponent, he often offers to pick the guy up. When he finally runs for president, he respects his opponent and the intelligence of the voters, but his stories enable him to convey complex political and economic lessons. Whether he wins or not, the nation is educated and improved. Go Abe!

This is a great book if you want to understand the America of the mid 19th century, the issues behind the Civil War, western expansion of America, Lincoln's life and the politics of those times. But it is a bit too long. It would have been equally effective even if about 150 pages were edited out. Some things did not deserve the kind of repetition that they were given. For example, the discussions about Kate Chase's personal life go on and on and on. General McClellan's story was stretched beyond what is necessary to convey the point and the whole story. Because of these I lost interest in the second half of the book. I would have liked to see more about the 13th Amendment, General Sherman's march, surrender of the Southern Army and other much more important parts of the story. Also the book is a bit biased towards Lincoln and may not be the most objective book.

I loved this book. It was a pleasure to spend some time with Abraham Lincoln. So much has been written about Abraham Lincoln, that you would think that there is nothing more to be said. With her usual talent, Doris Goodwin found a wonderful new angle to illuminate a great man. This book launched the concept, team of rivals, which has become part of our current political vocabulary. It is

well worth reading this book to grasp the concept in all of its fantastic detail.

This an absolutely great book. It's really interesting study on Lincoln's leadership team & how he was able to build them into an effective team.

How many political leaders would select some of those who had been competitors for power to serve with them? This book explores just that question--with Abraham Lincoln as the leader who seated some of his top opponents for the Republican nomination for President in 1860 in his Cabinet. This is a multiple biography, demanding a well organized volume to keep the five key characters' lives and actions in focus. The key players who served on Lincoln's Cabinet whom Goodwin examines include Edwin Stanton, Salmon Chase, William Seward, and Edward Bates--as well as Lincoln himself. The chemistry among these players was sometimes problematic. Chase's ambitions sometimes drove him to near mutiny against Lincoln. Seward began by thinking that Lincoln should, in essence, defer to him. Bates was an elder statesman who had some presidential ambitions in 1860. And, of course, the workaholic Edwin Stanton. The book revolves around the interaction of these characters in what is akin to a fine drama. It also displays Lincoln's ability to get the most out of this set of powerful political actors, to keep them moving forward as a team (even when there were clear differences and tensions). It made good political sense for Lincoln to reach out to this disparate group of people--but it also brought some of the most capable leaders into his Cabinet. In short, an illuminating volume that informs the reader in some detail about the unique set of characters who had to work together to maintain the Union.

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