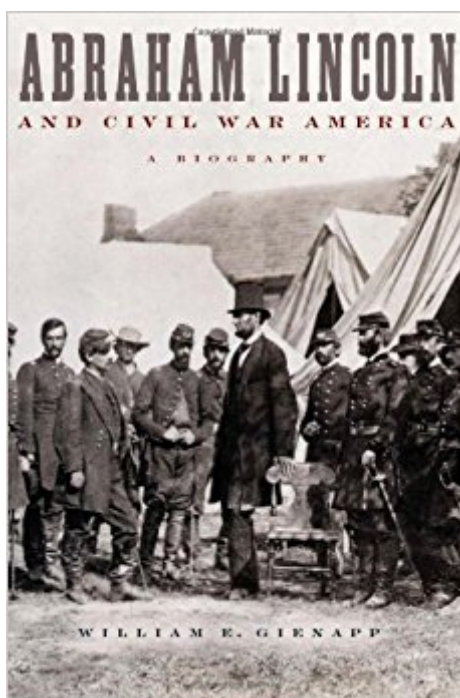


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# Abraham Lincoln And Civil War America: A Biography



## Synopsis

In *Abraham Lincoln and Civil War America*, historian William Gienapp provides a remarkably concise, up-to-date, and vibrant biography of the most revered figure in United States history. While the heart of the book focuses on the Civil War, Gienapp begins with a finely etched portrait of Lincoln's early life, from pioneer farm boy to politician and lawyer in Springfield, to his stunning election as sixteenth president of the United States. Students will see how Lincoln grew during his years in office, how he developed a keen aptitude for military strategy and displayed enormous skill in dealing with his generals, and how his war strategy evolved from a desire to preserve the Union to emancipation and total war. Gienapp shows how Lincoln's early years influenced his skills as commander-in-chief and demonstrates that, throughout the stresses of the war years, Lincoln's basic character shone through: his good will and fundamental decency, his remarkable self-confidence matched with genuine humility, his immunity to the passions and hatreds the war spawned, his extraordinary patience, and his timeless devotion. A former backwoodsman and country lawyer, Abraham Lincoln rose to become one of our greatest presidents. This biography offers a vivid account of Lincoln's dramatic ascension to the pinnacle of American history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Harvard history professor Gienapp (*The Origins of the Republican Party*) devotes a mere 70 pages of his brief new biography to Abraham Lincoln's prepresidential life; in a volume that "synthesizes modern scholarship about Lincoln" with the author's own studies, the Civil War years rightfully get

most of the attention. At 51, Lincoln was one of the youngest men to be elected president, and he was also the first Westerner. Something of an unknown to Republican Party power brokers back east, Lincoln didn't have time to prove himself viable before South Carolina seceded from the Union and the Civil War loomed. Gienapp's primary ambition is to show how the green, upstart president handled the four years of crisis that followed and how he became such an "extraordinary war leader." Throughout the book, he reveals Lincoln as a shrewd arbitrator of political factions, armies and perhaps most importantly rhetoric and propaganda. Likewise, Gienapp shows Lincoln the man: the father grieving over the death of a cherished son, the husband dealing with a moody, combustible wife. Gienapp seems to especially relish accounts of the harried Lincoln's savvy PR moves throughout the war, as when, in 1864, he threw a bone to Northern pacifists and expressed his willingness to engage in peace talks with the Confederacy. At the same time, Lincoln set out rigid preconditions for the talks that he knew Jefferson Davis never could accept. This is the Lincoln Gienapp gives us: astute, subtle, incisive and tragic. Illus. (Apr.) Forecast: This is a fine intro for new browsers through the Lincoln bookshelf, though David Herbert Donald's work remains the definitive bio to date. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Digital edition.

Not taking much stock in the genre, Lincoln tried to shield himself from biography by guarding his private self and carefully crafting his public words and image. Of course, so complex a man, who came to embody America in its ordeal by fire, has attracted scores of biographers hoping to solve the ultimate American enigma. Now Gienapp, author of the acclaimed *Origins of the Republican Party*, enters the crowded field. This biography neatly synthesizes much recent scholarship and makes Lincoln believable as a president struggling to defend the Union and define freedom. Rather than inventing a Lincoln psyche or persona, as some biographers have done, or trading in off-recycled Lincoln myths, Giennap goes back to the primary sources to discover a Lincoln who was simultaneously principled and practical, confident of his ability to persuade (though too much so in dealing with generals) and assured in making policy (he was a loner who relied on his own judgment). He does not find the source of Lincoln's enormous ambition, but he does show why Lincoln etched his thought and character into Americans' understanding of themselves. In the public speeches Gienapp gathers in *This Fiery Trail*, the clarity and cadences of Lincoln's language resound. It is a most apt collection, useful to teachers and anyone wanting to know why Lincoln was our herald. These books in tandem are an excellent way to get hold of Lincoln. Highly recommended. Randall M. Miller, Saint Joseph's Univ., Philadelphia Copyright 2002 Reed Business

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Very interesting book about Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War. Details of the man who reach presidency and how he learn to be president as he had to overcome the challenges he had to face.

For a short biography, Gienapp's work is insightful, thorough, and a great read. I've read a lot of Lincoln biographies, most of which are much longer, but I still learned a lot about Lincoln in this book. I believe Allen Guelzo's "Redeemer President" is the best of the longer biographies of Lincoln, but Gienapp's "Abraham Lincoln and Civil War America: A Biography" is the best that is under 300 pages. He provides the reader with a balanced picture of Lincoln and the times he lived in.

Very condensed version of the topic. Have read many books on Lincoln and the Civil War. Enjoyed this format. Learned one or two new tidbits of information. Recommended reading for new readers of life of Lincoln and the Civil War.

Excellent recap of Lincoln and the Civil War! Mr. Gienapp provides a brief "just enough" bio of Abe Lincoln's early years through adult life and political pursuits to president. He provides insight into the 16th president's jovial personality and home life challenges that explains to some extent his melancholy demeanor. In spite of the latter, he proved to be a diamond in the rough and a master of the game. Well written historical account.

I didn't realize at the time when I ordered the book that it was for a certain period of time in his presidency. I was looking for a book covering his life. Silly me!!!

Had to buy this book for my nursing program at Lincoln Memorial University. Not related to nursing but good history about Lincoln.

This was a well written, easy to follow and understand book for anyone beginning their journey through civil war history.

This book has enriched my understanding of Lincoln in many ways. The author's writing style is superb. He gives new life to this pivotal figure in American history to such a degree that enables the reader to have a clear and concise picture of the man who is often portrayed as a super hero,

neglecting to remind the reader how plain and ordinary he was throughout most of his life.

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