

Delightful Books about Abraham Lincoln as recommended by Judge Dennis Curran

“Lincoln as I Knew Him- Gossips, Tributes & Revelations from His Best Friends and Worst Enemies.” Harold Holzer, editor. (Paperback.) ISBN-13: 978-1-5612-681-7(PB)

“Did Lincoln Own Slaves? And Other Frequently Asked Questions about Abraham Lincoln.” Gerald J. Prokowitz. (available in hardcover and paperback.) ISBN 978-0-375-42541-7.

Conroy, James B. Lincoln’s White House: The People’s House in War Time. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017.

Current, Richard, N. The Lincoln Nobody Knows. New York: McGraw Hill, 1958.

Donald, David Herbert. Lincoln. New York: Simon & Shuster, 1995.

Fehrenbacher, Don, E. and Virginia Fehrenbacher, eds.

Recollected Words of Abraham Lincoln. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1996.

Goodwin, Doris Kearns. Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln. New York: Simon & Shuster, 2005.

Goodwin, Doris Kearns. Leadership in Turbulent Times. New York: Simon & Shuster, 2018.

Herndon, William H. and Jesse W. Weik. Herndon’s Lincoln, 1889. Reprint, edited by Douglas L. Wilson and Rodney O. Davis. Urbana, Illinois: Illinois Press, 2006.

Holzer, Harold. Lincoln at Cooper Union: The Speech that Made Abraham Lincoln President. New York: Simon & Shuster, 2004.

Holzer, Harold. Lincoln, President-Elect: Abraham Lincoln and the Great Secession Winter 1860-1861. New York: Simon & Shuster, 2008.

Oates, Stephen B. With Malice Toward None: The Life of Abraham Lincoln. New York: Harper & Row, 1977.

Pinsky, Matthew. Lincoln’s Sanctuary: Abraham Lincoln and the Soldiers’ Home. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Steers, Edward, Jr. Blood on the Moon: The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2001.

Tidwell, William A., James O. Hall, and David Winfred Gaddy. Come Retribution: The Confederate Secret Service and the Assassination of Lincoln. Jackson, Mississippi: University of Mississippi Press, 1988.

Williams, Frank and William D. Pederson. Lincoln Lessons: Reflections on America’s Greatest Leader. Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 2009.

Wilson, Douglas, L. and Rodney O. Davis, eds., Herndon’s Informants: Letters, Interviews and Statements about Abraham Lincoln. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois, 1998.

Excellent Reference Books.

Basler, Roy, P., ed. *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*. 8 vols. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1953.

Nicolay, John G. and John Hay. *Abraham Lincoln: A History*. 10 vols. New York, Century, 1890.

Four Books about Abraham Lincoln

1. For the one book that answers, in a Q & A format, every question about Lincoln to which you ever wanted an objective, honest and complete answer, my money would have to be on Gerald J. Prokopowicz's, *Did Lincoln Own Slaves and Other Frequently Asked Questions about Abraham Lincoln*. Gerry served for nine years as the Lincoln Scholar at the Lincoln Museum in Fort Wayne, Indiana, He is a member of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Advisory Committee. He currently chairs the history department at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina.

2. For a delightful, easy-to-read book containing anecdotes about Lincoln by those who knew him, I would recommend; *Lincoln as I Knew Him - Gossip, Tributes & Revelations from His Best Friends and Worst Enemies*" edited by Harold Holzer. Harold is the nation's most prolific living Lincoln scholar, having written 53 books about Lincoln.

3. For a book that follows neither of the above formats, but is still highly acclaimed among Lincoln scholars, I recommend "The Lincoln Nobody Knows" by Richard N. Current. This book brings Lincoln to life. By the way, Dick lived in Natick until his death six years ago.

4. And finally, I have been asked for a book written by someone who knew him personally. For that, you cannot beat "Herndon's Informants: Letters, Interviews and Statements about Abraham Lincoln" edited by Terry Wilson and Douglas L. Wilson. Herndon was Lincoln's law partner. As one editor has written, for its colorful and detailed depiction of the private and personal Lincoln before he became President, [the book] was, and remains, unrivaled. There can be little question that Herndon contributed more than any other individual to our knowledge of Lincoln's life and character".

Herndon's book has its detractors, but I am not one of them. Many historians challenge Herndon's telling the story of Lincoln's love for Ann Rutledge, who died at the tender age of 22. Lincoln was heartbroken. Mary Todd Lincoln went ballistic when she heard that Herndon's book (written after the President's death) contained references to Lincoln's love for Ann - even though he never even met Mary Todd until five years after Ann's death. That it was possible Lincoln loved another before he had ever met Mary, sent her on mission to destroy Herndon's character and his reputation.

As for me, whether the story is true or not, I am indifferent. The book is rich in so many other details of Lincoln's life as to overshadow 19th century petty romantic gossip.

Dennis J. Curran

Four More Books to Recommend about Lincoln

1. *Lincoln's White House: The People's House in Wartime*. James B. Conroy. I loved this book.

This is the first book I know of devoted to the look, feel, and smell of the executive mansion from Lincoln's inauguration until his assassination, four years later. The author brings the house to life along with the people who knew it. It lets the reader see how the Lincolns and their staffs worked, entertained, and conducted day-to-day business during four of the most tumultuous years in American

history. The book relies upon fresh research and previously untapped historical sources. This book was a co-winner of the prestigious 2017 Gilder Lehrman Prize for Lincoln scholarship. Its author? A respected, now semi-retired, Boston trial attorney who lives on the South Shore. I admired his research and work on the book so much that I hosted an luncheon in his honor and gifted each attendee with a copy of his book.

2. *Team of Rivals*. Doris Kearns Goodwin. What more can possibly be said about the one of the most famous – and nicest – historians of our time. I had the great fortune to have dinner with her with a small group of judges. She is an absolutely lovely person. Her research is impeccable. Can there be any doubt as to why her magnum opus received the Pulitzer Prize?

3. *Lincoln - President-Elect: Abraham Lincoln and the Great Secession Winter 1860-1861*. Harold Holzer. Harold is the most prolific author (over 45 books to date) in history of the United States on the life of Abraham Lincoln. He is the winner of the Lincoln Prize for his *Lincoln at Cooper Union*. A frequent guest frequent guest on television, Harold served for six years (2010–2016) as Chairman of The Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation. For the previous 10 years he co-chaired the U. S. Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission (ALBC), appointed by the President. President Bush awarded Holzer the National Humanities Medal in 2008. In addition to teaching lecturing, and writing, he now serves chairman of The Lincoln Forum. In this book, he examines the four months between Lincoln’s election and Inauguration when the president- elect made the most important decision of his coming presidency—there would be no compromise on slavery or secession of the slaveholding states even at the cost of an inevitable Civil War. *Lincoln President-Elect* is the first book to concentrate on his public stance during these months and the momentous consequences when Abraham Lincoln first demonstrated his determination and leadership. He rejected compromises urged on him that might have preserved the Union for a little while longer but enshrined slavery for generations.

4. *Lincoln in Private*. Ronald C. White. This book was just released, and I have not yet had a chance to read it. But White’s previous book, *A. Lincoln*, was described as “the best biography of Lincoln since David Donald’s *Lincoln*....and in many respects, better than Donald’s... because it has incorporated the scholarship of the past fourteen years and is written in a fluent style that will appeal to a large group of general readers as well as Lincoln aficionados.” Lincoln scholar Harold Holzer has stated of it: “Each generation requires – and seems to inspire – its own masterly one-volume Lincoln biography...” This is an instant classic for the twenty-first century.”