

Lincoln: the movie

[History](#), [African American](#)



The movie Lincoln, was more accurate than previous portrayals of Abraham Lincoln. However, the movie did fail to include important facts, such as Lincoln's belief that African Americans were unequal to whites and some details of the passing of the 13th Amendment. All in all though, the movie portrayed the Civil war and presidency with considerable accuracy. Lincoln focuses mainly on the passage of the 13th amendment and the trials Lincoln and his supporters went through. The film insinuates that Lincoln "bought votes" by bribing some members of the House of Representatives with jobs. However, while there is some evidence to suggest this, it is unclear how it was executed. The film also delves into the Lincoln's family life. The viewer sees how the death of his son Willie and his oldest son's desire to enter the war affected Lincoln. Also how it affected the people around him, mainly his wife Mary. Although Robert Lincoln, his oldest son did end up joining the army he was simply used as a messenger, generally away from the fighting. The film also depicts the struggles of Thaddeus Stevens, who actually was an avid supporter of racial equality and black suffrage, and aided in the passage of the 13th amendment. The final part of the movie is, of course, the tragic assassination of Lincoln. The viewer sees Lincoln's youngest son Tad at another theater. Then the stage manager runs on stage saying, "The president has been shot!". The film Lincoln is relatively accurate. No film is bound to be completely and utterly factual. One fact the filmmakers did get correct was Lincoln did indeed pardon a lot of people after they attempted to desert. Another correct detail was the issue of the peace talks with the South. Some of the representatives wished to delay the vote on the amendment until after Lincoln had discussed peace with the negotiators.

However, this could have impeded the passage of the amendment. So, Lincoln wrote a note saying, “ So far as I know, there are no peace commissioners in the city or likely to be in it”. Which was true, the commissioners were on their way to a fort. When the actual vote occurred, it happened almost exactly as the movie portrayed it. As in the movie, Schuyler Colfax, the speaker, did cast his vote, even though it was quite unusual. One liberty the filmmakers did take was in the dramatic appearance of a group of African Americans. While they were allowed to view the voting process most likely there were only a few who were present. After the vote Stevens is seen taking the amendment home, highly unlikely. Also he appears to have an African American wife. This is somewhat true. He had a common law marriage with Lydia Hamilton Smith, who was half-Irish and half- African American. Then at the surrender of Robert E. Lee at the Appomattox Court House, Robert Lincoln really was present and actually waited on the front porch. Although some liberties were taken to provide extra drama to the scene, it is a generally accurate portrayal. Finally, when the assassination of Lincoln occurs, the youngest, Tad is shown at another theater. This detail is also based in fact. Although there are some unimportant details that were incorrect, a majority of the information was quite factual and accurate. The film portrays Lincoln as a father figure, an avid abolitionist, but also as a relatively normal person. In the film, Lincoln is made to seem as a comforting and fathering figure to all people. In the opening scene, he talks with some soldiers and he seems very loving and fatherly. This scene also seems to insinuate that Lincoln feels that African Americans are indeed equal but Lincoln does seem to subtly dismiss the idea

that they could one day lead. Lincoln is also depicted as a man with an utter hatred for slavery. Although he never directly states this loathing. In reality, Lincoln disliked the institution of slavery but only sought to impede its expansion, not to get rid of it where it already was. Yet, he did fully believe that the passage of the 13th amendment was necessary. Finally, the audience is able to see the more family oriented side of Lincoln and all the stress he had to endure. In the movie, there is a visible deep love Lincoln feels for his sons and his wife. In one touching scene Lincoln finds a sound asleep Tad and carries him to bed. Lincoln has always been placed on a pedestal as a fearless leader. While he was a great leader, he was also a father and a husband, two roles that he cherished dearly, as seen in the movie. The film is a biased because it is made to be viewed primarily by Americans and of course, Americans tend to look fondly upon Lincoln. For example, the audience was unable to witness the depression he suffered. At the same time though he was known as being very upbeat around people and always telling anecdotes and stories. The movie captured this aspect of his personality quite nicely. Still, the film tends to mask the deeper depression Lincoln was hiding. Possibly, hiding his depression allows people to remember him as a fearless leader. Lincoln, a movie directed by Steven Spielberg, is quite accurate and only missed some important details. Lincoln's belief in African American equality was slightly skewed. As well as some scenes of the passage of the 13th amendment, Lincoln's role as an abolitionist, and some depictions of him. As a whole film though, the filmmakers were able to achieve a rather historically accurate movie.