

The proven political genius of abraham lincoln



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The Lincoln prize winning book by Doris Kearns Goodwin *Team of Rivals* aims to prove the secondary title of the book. *The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*. Goodwin in her introduction opens the book showcasing the soon to be comrades who at the present time were rivals for the nomination for president in the brand new Republican party in the the election of 1860. Goodwin states that out of these team of rivals and future cabinet members in the Lincoln administration Lincoln would emerge the undisputed captain of the most unusual cabinet.

Goodwin, also dispels the myth that Lincoln had battles with depression. I had assumed that Lincoln suffered chronic depression. On the contrary even during the worst days of the war, he retained his ability to function at a very high level. However, while Goodwin explores and dispels multiple myths in the introduction she establishes her thesis This, then, is a story of Lincoln's political genius revealed through his extraordinary array of personal qualities that enable him to form a friendships with men who had previously opposed him; to repair injured feelings that, left untended, might have escalated into permanent hostility to assume responsibility for the failures of subordinates; to share credit with ease; and to learn from mistakes. Goodwin proves her case throughout the 754 page book and this is shown in three time periods of Lincoln's life Lincoln his strategy during the Republican Convention in Chicago, his campaign for president including the forming of his cabinet, and both his foreign and domestic relations during his presidency.

Goodwin weaves a thread of 249 pages of introduction to the cabinet members of the Lincoln administration who in 1860 were vying for the chance to be president. New York Senator William H. Seward, Ohio governor

Salmon P. Chase, and from Missouri Edward Bates who was a statesman and a judge. Goodwin establishes a lengthy case that these other gentlemen were made ready for the office of president in those 249 pages. But one fact is laid hidden in those pages about Lincoln and his way with people to make them smile, forget, and laugh. When Lincoln was a travelling attorney in Illinois travelling the circuit trying cases. When the day of trying cases was over No sooner had everyone settled in than the call would come for Lincoln to take center stage. He would start weave stories for the onlookers in attendance they were in full laugh till near daylight.

This characteristic would prove critical and win the nomination for Lincoln during the Republican convention in Chicago in 1860. Lincoln knew that the way to winning the nomination was to play it cool and keep a leveled head. He told those who were working to get him the nomination leave the delegates in the mood to come to us, if they shall be compelled to give up their first love. The other three nominees Bates, Seward, and Chase may have been better suited by others for the office of President. Each one had offended someone or not had enough votes to win the nomination from the Republicans for President. Only one man had thought through the long game of the convention and the subsequent path to nomination Abraham Lincoln the Republican nominee for president in 1860. Once the events at the Republican convention had occurred, Lincoln set about organizing his campaign to become the sixteenth president of the United States. A task which he knew was one that he could not accomplish on his own. He would need to the help of his former rivals Chase, Bates and especially Seward who would later become his right hand man Goodwin would observe. During, the

formation of his presidential campaign surrogates Lincoln would experience a foreshadowing of a political thorn in his side from the future Secretary of Treasury Salmon Chase.

Lincoln displayed his political prowess by not replying to letter from Chase asking him to feel sorry him for his home state did not vote for him at the convention. While Lincoln worked to enlist the cooperation of all his rivals he knew that the active support of William Henry Seward would be pivotal to the his campaign. Not only did Lincoln need his rivals for his political for his presidential campaign but also his cabinet. Goodwin displays Lincoln's genius when he was asked why he fought to get his rivals in his cabinet. We needed the strongest men of the (Republican) in the Cabinet. We needed to hold our own people together. I had looked the party over and concluded these were the very strongest men. Then I had no right to deprive the country of their services.

The diplomatic skills of Lincoln were on full display Goodwin states during the his presidency by his treatment of generals, his dealing with loss, and his political prowess to end slavery. Before Lincoln's first inaugural address, Seward looked it over and found it to be lacking in tact. Seward's revisions are evident in nearly every paragraph. He qualified some (statements) removed rough edges in others. Lincoln received his first lesson in diplomacy from his Secretary of State before his inauguration. Lincoln would quickly return the favor before Seward would send an incisory letter to the British in fear that they would back the Confederate States of America. The incisory letter had the potential to open the Civil War on two fronts. The quickly learned art of foreign relations of Lincoln avoided a war with France and <https://assignbuster.com/the-proven-political-genius-of-abraham-lincoln/>

Britain. Lincoln's unseen hand had shaped critical policy. Only three months earlier the frontier lawyer had confessed to Seward that he knew little of foreign affairs.

When dealing with his Generals was able to aptly manage the job of being both a diplomat and a Commander-in-Chief. During an interaction with General Butler, Lincoln requested, When you see me doing anything that for the good of the country ought not be done, come and tell me so and why you think so. The statement made to Butler was indicative of how he handled his Presidency. While Goodwin points out in the book that Lincoln was not without flaws for not firing the head of the War Department Simon Cameron until a year after his installation and place Edwin Stanton. A lawyer who humiliated him (Lincoln) in Cincinnati six years earlier. Despite the remarks Stanton made about Lincoln he was able to get past them for the good of the nation. After nearly a year of disappointment with Cameron, Lincoln had found in Stanton the leader the War Department needed.

According to Goodwin the lethal threat to his administration did not come from the Civil War but from within his cabinet. Salmon Chase proved to be a cruel thorn in the side of Lincoln since Chase who constantly was working to usurp the president in his own administration. While the Diplomat-In-Chief was aware of Chases' presidential desires he knew he needed him for the Secretary of Treasury. In two months since congress adjourned, Chase had sold more than \$45 million in bonds and the demand for the bonds was steadily increasing. However, Chases prowess in treasury could not overpower his desire to be president. When Chase submitted his resignation for a third time as an act of symbolism hoping Lincoln would refuse it. Lincoln <https://assignbuster.com/the-proven-political-genius-of-abraham-lincoln/>

accepted, and Goodwin points out Chases' flaws He thinks he has become indispensable to the country He also thinks that he ought to be president.

The Lincoln administration and life can be summed up by a conversation Lincoln had with a colleague Joshua Speed after the Executive Order of Emancipation Proclamation. During the conversation, the two discussed a dark depressing period in Lincoln's life just some 20 years prior and his thoughts of suicide and why he didn't. He had done nothing to make any human being remember that he had lived. Goodwin proves towards the end of her book after Lincoln's death as a result of an assassination by John Wilkes Booth Lincoln's place in history. The deathless name he sought from the start had from the start had grown far beyond Sangamon County and Illinois, reached across truly United States, until his legacy as Staton had surmised at the moment of his death, belonged not only to America but to the ages-to be revered and sung throughout all time. Despite Lincoln's lack of foreign and domestic policy experience, and military strategy and interaction with Generals. Goodwin proves Lincoln was a political genius who adapted to situations and brought rivals together who in return would hold a fractured Union together.