



Herndon's Lincoln

William Henry Herndon , Douglas L. Wilson (Editor) , Rodney O. Davis (Editor)

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William H. Herndon aspired to write a faithful portrait of his friend and law partner, Abraham Lincoln, based on his own observations and on hundreds of letters and interviews he had compiled for the purpose. Even more importantly, he was determined to present Lincoln as a man, rather than a saint, and to reveal things that the prevailing Victorian conventions said should be left out of the biography of a great national hero. A variety of obstacles kept Herndon from writing his book, however, and not until he found a collaborator in Jesse W. Weik did the biography begin to take shape. It finally appeared in 1889, to decidedly mixed reviews. Though controversial from the outset, "Herndon's Lincoln" nonetheless established itself as a classic, and remains, as Don E. Fehrenbacher declared, "the most influential biography of Lincoln ever published." This new edition restores the original text, includes two chapters added in the revised (1892) edition, and traces the story of how this landmark biography got written. Extensive annotation affords the reader a detailed look at the biography's sources.

Herndon's Lincoln Details

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From Reader Review Herndon's Lincoln for online ebook

Don says

Herndon's general tone is suspect. Either he or a ghost writer added some controversy to boost sales. But at heart, the book is has more than its share of personal anecdotes that only Herndon could share. He spent as much time with Abe as anybody except Mary, and his admiration and respect can't be obscured.

Patricia says

This book took me a long time to get through it. It gave a personal opinion by Herndon, who was Lincoln's friend and law partner, of who the real Lincoln was.

BJ Rose says

A very interesting book about Abraham Lincoln written by his law partner. I enjoyed hearing directly from one of Lincoln's contemporaries, and further enjoyed reading the letters written to and by Lincoln.

Chuck says

Facts not seen in other Lincoln biographies.

Tracie says

I alternated between really enjoying this book to feeling bogged down in some of the minute detail....especially that which related to court cases. fun to read some of the behind the scenes scoop on Abe and Mary though. overall I'd say if you are a Lincoln buff it's a must read to help you fill in the gaps.

Brad Baker says

Caste Lincoln in a new light.

Abraham Lincoln has long been one of my greatest heroes. I suppose that I, like so many others, had come to place him on a sort of pedestal. As I began to read this very candid review of Lincoln's life, written by his friend and partner, Herndon, I confess to being uncomfortable and wary. My hero seemed to teeter a little, on his lofty pedestal, and I feared he might fall. However, as I read on, I found that I loved the man even more with his warts and foibles than I had before. That one with faults and weaknesses like myself should rise above them to such great heights of valor, and strike such a blow for freedom was very inspiring to me.

Susan Jordan says

Every Abraham Lincoln admirer should read this. It tells the good and the bad, and he still comes out as a great man. Written by the person closest to him for most of his adult life aside from his wife.

Krish says

good

David Kent says

This is an extraordinary book, for several reasons. First, William H. Herndon was Abraham Lincoln's law partner for sixteen years prior to Lincoln becoming President. Second, because Herndon spent several years after Lincoln's assassination writing to and interviewing scores of people that knew Lincoln during his life and career up to the presidency. Third, because editors Douglas L. Wilson and Rodney O. Davis have done an extraordinary job digging into Herndon and Weik's original letters and notes to discern between actual reporting and embellishment. There have been many versions of Herndon's Lincoln produced in the years since its 1889 release, but Wilson and Davis' voluminous and informative endnotes make this edition superior.

Herndon has been accused of being too biased in discussing Lincoln's relationship with his father and with Mary Lincoln, and of seriously embellishing the story of Ann Rutledge. Nevertheless, he tirelessly undertook an effort to document Lincoln's history through his interviews of those who knew him best. Herndon's efforts at collecting this information, along with Weik's effort to get the book written, have provided an invaluable service to everyone who wants to better understand our sixteenth President. Wilson and Davis complete the picture by helping us sift through what is supported, what is embellishment, and what is still a mystery. Herndon's Informants, another volume edited by Wilson and Davis, is a must-have corollary to Herndon's Lincoln as it contains the full text of each letter and interview conducted by Herndon. I highly recommend both.

D says

The best Lincoln I've read to date.

David Buhler says

The most impressive biography I've read! Of course most of the is due to the qualities of old Honest Abe. Written and compiled by Lincoln's law partner of many years, Wm. H. Herndon it includes many great stories, letters by various people, humor. Most amazing ...the description of Lincoln the man. I've never

heard or conceived of such a character. John Hay his personal secretary in the White House say he was the greatest man after Jesus Christ and now after reading this book I don't doubt it.

Georgia Butler says

Herndon's biography of Lincoln is a personal tribute to his friend and law partner. Herndon creates a living person, someone we learn to know and deeply respect. Though I've read other biographies of our 16th president, I've never known Abraham Lincoln as I do now--as a man above men, a man larger than life and the society within which he lived. Herndon portrays Lincoln both as a legendary and human figure, but I now perceive him as one of greatest leaders in human history.

The author's intimate look into Lincoln's thoughts and actions is laudatory; however, at times, he too diligently pursues topics to the point of distraction--as in his day by day, almost hour by hour, account of Lincoln's would-be saber duel with an aggrieved state official. I got so lost in the minutia that I did a quick web search to learn the story. The the biography does bog down at times but never when the spotlight is on Lincoln--the man is simply mesmerizing.

Matt says

I can't stop thinkin' about Lincoln.

The old-timey high falutin language and style is alternately hilarious and annoying, but any aspiring Lincoln buff should read this sucker.
