

and of businesses both long-gone and modern.

The book is not well organized. Topics appear out of chronological order, and photographs are sometimes from a century other than the one being discussed in the parallel text. Nevertheless, this is an important contribution to the history of late nineteenth- and early twenty-first-century transportation and of the

business model of the new regional railroad in America.

RICHARD SAUNDERS, JR. is professor of history at Clemson University, and author of *Merging Lines, the Decline of American Railroads, 1900-1970* (2001) and *Main Lines; the Rebirth of North American Railroads, 1970-2002* (2003).



Team of Rivals

The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln

By Doris Kearns Goodwin

(New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005. Pp. xix, 916. Maps, diagrams, illustrations, notes, index. Clothbound \$35.00; paperbound, \$19.95.)

In this engaging study of Abraham Lincoln and the principal men of his cabinet, Doris Kearns Goodwin argues that Lincoln's "political genius"—particularly his "extraordinary array of personal qualities" (p. xvii)—enabled him to harness the talents of a disparate group of men, including his political rivals, to provide the country with effective leadership during the Civil War. Whatever Lincoln's doubts and frustrations or his increasing fatalistic sense that "events have controlled me" (*Collected Works* 7:282), Goodwin emphasizes Lincoln's political wisdom, confidence, and sympathetic understanding of human behavior. He capably managed the conservative and radical wings of his party; he befriended rivals and acted magnan-

imously toward those who opposed him; and he was able to "gather the best men of the country around him" and "impress upon them his own purpose, perception, and resolution at every juncture."

This is not simply a biography of Lincoln. He shares the book with 1860 presidential election rivals and cabinet members William H. Seward, Salmon P. Chase, and Edward Bates and, to a lesser extent, with their political colleagues and families: Gideon Welles, Montgomery Blair, Edwin M. Stanton, Mary Todd Lincoln, Frances Seward, Kate Chase Sprague, and Francis and Frank Blair. Collective biography allows Goodwin to present a "clearer and more dimensional picture" of Lincoln's life (p. xv). Although Lincoln's upbringing was

more humble and rough-hewn than his political rivals', all represented a generation of "ambitious young men in the North" who pursued success in nineteenth-century America (p. xv). Following their life courses separately in the first part of the book, we see each man's different circumstances and temperament, the decisions each made, and the consequences of those decisions. Lincoln's character and experiences served him well. Lincoln learned in Illinois to be a "shrewd grassroots politician" (p. 89); his "sympathy," according to private secretary John G. Nicolay, enabled him "to forecast with uncanny accuracy what his opponents were likely to do" (p. 104); he gained devoted friends, even in defeat, as in his noble behavior toward Lyman Trumbull and Norman Judd at the time of his unsuccessful 1855 bid for the U.S. Senate (pp. 130, 172); and he was a "master of timing" in the 1860 presidential campaign and throughout his presidency (p. 212).

The second part of the book is a more straightforward narrative of the Lincoln administration. Much of the story is familiar: Seward's transformation from dismissive rival to admiring friend, Gen. George B. McClellan's frustrating reluctance to engage in battle, political reactions to the administration's decisions, the war's strain on the nation, Chase's political machinations, and Lincoln's firm commitment to Union victory. Goodwin tells the story well. She

explains that, "by widening the lens to include Lincoln's colleagues and their families," the study could "benefit from a treasure trove of primary sources that have not generally been used in Lincoln biographies" (p. xviii). Her skillful use of the correspondence and journals of the people surrounding Lincoln—and her presentation of their thoughts, actions, and relationships with each other generally—add considerable depth to her interpretation of Lincoln and his colleagues. We see their human qualities: Stanton's early personal tragedies, Chase's desire for the presidency and Lincoln's forbearance regarding it, or Seward's tearful reaction when, on seeing the War Department's flag at half-mast as he recovered from his wounds, he deduced that Lincoln was dead. Such stories turn insightful analysis into a compelling and even moving tale.

MATTHEW N. VOSMEIER, associate professor of history at Hanover College, Hanover, Indiana, teaches early American history, including a course on Abraham Lincoln.

