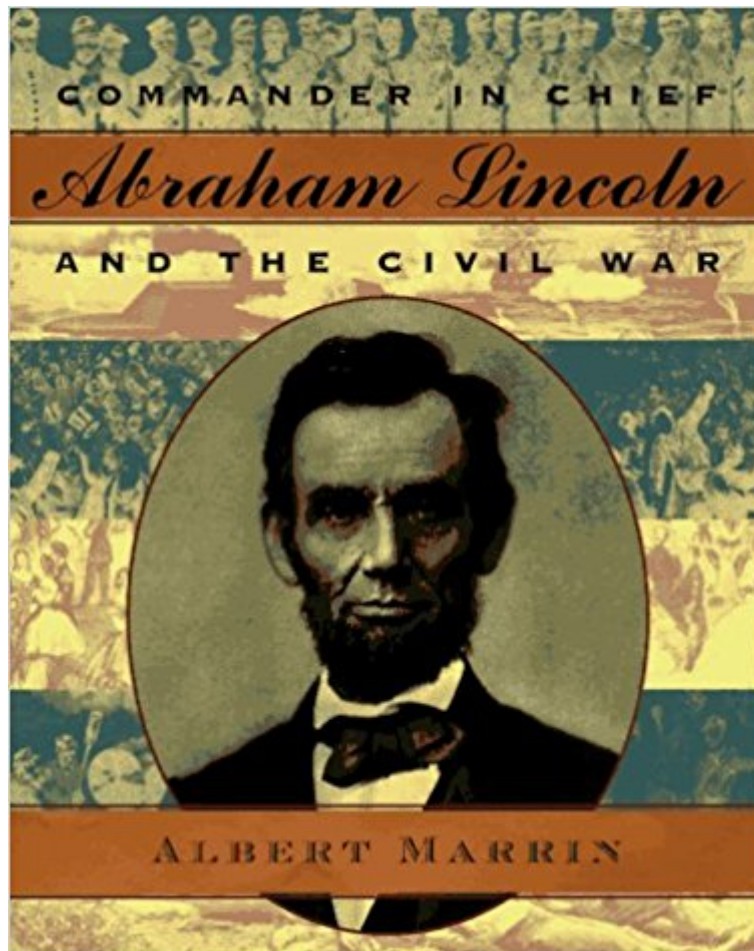




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Commander In Chief: Abraham Lincoln And The Civil War



Synopsis

Much more than a biography of Lincoln or a history of the Civil War, this portrait of Lincoln makes our sixteenth president accessible to young readers as a human being, rather than as a historic icon or paragon of virtue. The author, renowned for his award-winning books on great leaders, shows how a principled but imperfect man -- full of intelligence but also of sorrow, logical and determined but also cautious and prejudiced grew under the pressure of personal tragedy and national crisis to become our greatest president. The book is written in a quick-flowing, engaging style, detailed but easy to read. The author effortlessly uses eyewitness accounts -- letters, speeches, diaries, newspapers, poems, songs, memoirs -- to create setting, to show personality, political climate, to give voice to the attitudes and hopes of everyday Americans. The treatment of slavery is especially vivid. All the important events of the war are here, but the emphasis is on people, personalities, human feelings and behavior. As the historian Barbara Fields made clear in the Ken Burns documentary on the Civil War, the issues of that war are still with us. Perhaps never more than now do young people need to be exposed to the unfailing humanity, honesty, and political sagacity that allowed Lincoln to hold together a country racked by secession, racial hatred, and other divisions. Lincoln had that most precious of all human qualities -- the capacity for growth. His life reminds us that any person can learn from experience and rise above poverty, prejudice, and limitation; and that a political leader can and must embody a profound respect for the plain people and the democratic processes that elevate us all.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 6 Up?Marrin's study of Lincoln matches, if not surpasses, his outstanding *Unconditional Surrender: Ulysses S. Grant and the Civil War*. While staying close to his theme of Lincoln as war leader, the book covers its subject from birth to death, depicting him as very much a part of his era, a man who, the author believes, was "our greatest President" and "the one person without whom it is impossible to imagine those trying times." Enhanced throughout with period photographs, reproductions, and direct quotations, and with a fine layout and typography, the narrative is skillfully constructed and expressed in a strong, compelling style. The descriptions of Lincoln's gradual mastery of military strategy and tactics, and his often tense relations with his officers, are riveting, as is Marrin's careful foreshadowing of his subject's assassination. Readers will appreciate the frequent explanations of differences between mid-19th-century political and social mores and those of today. The extensive "Notes" and "More Books About Abraham Lincoln" sections will be useful for further research. *Commander in Chief* is more focused than Milton Melzer's *Lincoln, in His Own Words* (Harcourt, 1993) and far more comprehensive than Edward Lindop's summary in the "Presidents Who Dared" series (TFC Bks., 1995). It is the best book on Lincoln for young people since Russell Freedman's Newbery-winning *Lincoln* (Clarion, 1987).?Starr E. Smith, Marymount University Library, Arlington, VACopyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"One would have to look far and wide to find a better biography of [Lincoln]. . . . This book is a must. . . ." -- Voice of Youth Advocate --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Love this author, love this book.

A Marrin is a wonderful author. He makes history come alive. He writes in an interesting manner and doesn't have a lot of excess verbage. I have several of his books and have enjoyed each one of them.

For the first time, I came to know Lincoln not as an iconified hero, but as a funny, direct, engaging and committed human being as I read this book. The author has thorough notes of very detailed research and tells a story that others omitted or overlooked. It made me want to read much more about Lincoln, especially more of the piercing wit and emotional perseverance shared in this book.

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