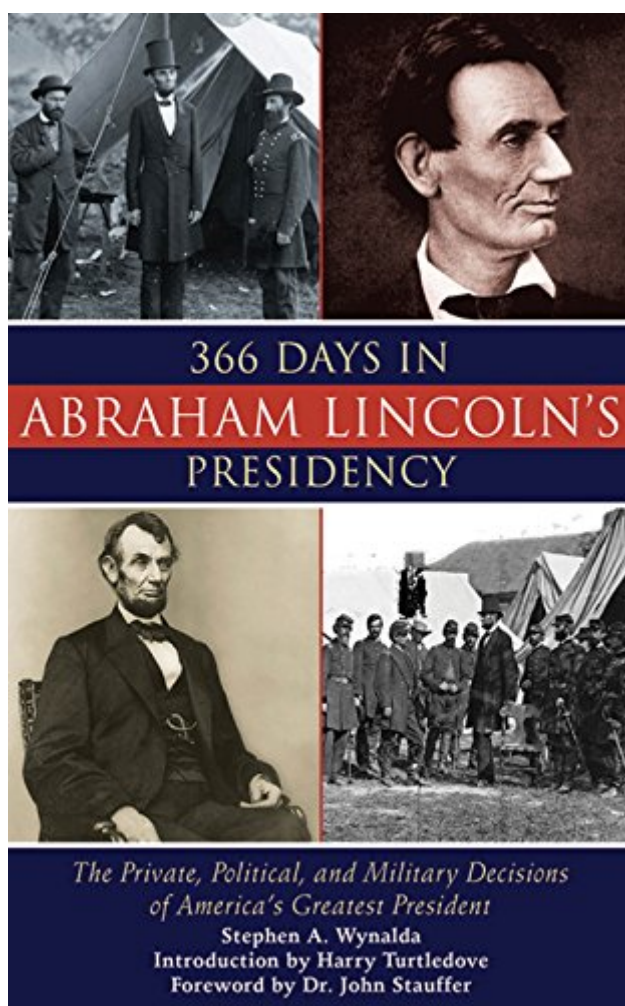


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# 366 Days In Abraham Lincoln's Presidency: The Private, Political, And Military Decisions Of America's Greatest President



## Synopsis

In a startlingly innovative format, journalist Stephen A. Wrynalda has constructed a painstakingly detailed day-by-day breakdown of president Abraham Lincoln's decisions in office—including his signing of the Homestead Act on May 20, 1862; his signing of the legislation enacting the first federal income tax on August 5, 1861; and more personal incidents like the day his eleven-year-old son, Willie, died. Revealed are Lincoln's private frustrations on September 28, 1862, as he wrote to vice president Hannibal Hamlin, "The North responds to the [Emancipation] proclamation sufficiently with breath; but breath alone kills no rebels." 366 Days in Abraham Lincoln's Presidency includes fascinating facts like how Lincoln hated to hunt but loved to fire guns near the unfinished Washington monument, how he was the only president to own a patent, and how he recited Scottish poetry to relieve stress. As Scottish historian Hugh Blair said, "It is from private life, from familiar, domestic, and seemingly trivial occurrences, that we most often receive light into the real character." Covering 366 nonconsecutive days (including a leap day) of Lincoln's presidency, this is a rich, exciting new perspective of our most famous president. This is a must-have edition for any historian, military history or civil war buff, or reader of biographies.

## Book Information

File Size: 1513 KB

Print Length: 625 pages

Publisher: Skyhorse Publishing (May 18, 2010)

Publication Date: May 18, 2010

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B005UNVIJ4

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #95,769 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #104

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > United States >

Presidents #145 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Americas > United States > 19th Century #145 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Americas > United States > Civil War

## Customer Reviews

What the author does is select special days out of Lincoln's presidency and describes them succinctly. I've read volumes of material on Lincoln over the years but this book highlighted facets of people surrounding Lincoln and pivotal events many of which added to my understanding of the man and his life. One thing I took away was this gentleman had the patience of Job particularly when dealing with non-hackers or political enemies some of whom he brought into his cabinet. Seward, for example, thought he was going to be the nominee when Lincoln prevailed, acted independently as though he HAD been the nominee--and winner, and subsequently ran the State Department like his own fiefdom; Chase thought Lincoln was a rube and treated him thusly. Lincoln obviously subscribed to the idea that you should keep enemies closer. As he did McClellan who subsequently ran against Lincoln for his second term. Had I been Lincoln, (as a career military officer myself) after tolerating about 1/4 of the insolence he tolerated from McC, I would have reduced McC to second lieutenant and put him in charge of issuing jock straps and tennis racquets at Washington Hq Special Services! These were also the days when common passersby and politicians from every state seeking patronage favors could stroll into the White House virtually unimpeded and line up to talk with the Chief Executive, whether or not artillery rounds happened to be raining down on Ft. Sumter or Johnny Reb was kicking Union butt at Manassas. Here's an example of new knowledge - the famous Bixby letter written in response to a plea from the Mass. governor after he learned from Lydia Bixby that she had lost five sons in the war. Lincoln (or perhaps John Hay with Lincoln's signature) wrote the letter. But it seems after a thorough review of the record that Lydia may have been seeking sympathy AND money since three of her sons were still alive long after the war was over. I had never heard that before. In fact, I didn't realize that there was even a controversy about the author. All in all, this book is a page turner.

This is a book that for me had its moments, but didn't satisfy me as much as it might have. I loved the idea behind it: take 366 of the most significant days in Abraham Lincoln's life, from his election as president through to his assassination (after all, 1864 was a leap year), write about them and put them in chronological order. However, in practice, the book was disappointing at times. Frankly, I loved the fact that not all the events the author chose were political and military. The death of

Lincoln's son, Willie, and the visit of his wife's half-sister, the widow of a Confederate general no less, had to be as stressful and as emotionally demanding as anything going on outside the White House. However, because they are naturally less written about than the more public events, they left me wanting to read more, despite Wynalda's extensive use of sidebars to add more depth and background to the topics on which he was writing. And, as other reviewers have noted, it's a book rich in details on Lincoln's life that often aren't touched on by others, from his love for Shakespeare (I didn't know his favorite play was "MacBeth") to the emotional responses his generals' ineptitude touched off. It's easy to get a sense of his frustration and how difficult it must have been to have to lead them from afar. On the other hand, having been reading about Lincoln since childhood, I did question the author's selections on more than one occasion. And, while I'm sure it was difficult to write, too many entries begin "On this day in...." I'm also a person who always reads the foot/endnotes, and I wasn't too crazy about their brevity. However, the extensive bibliography did leave me with the anticipation of more (and possibly better) books on some of the topics.

This book is beautifully researched, and the writing is direct and accessible without ever talking down to the reader. It's the kind of book you can read straight through or you can pick up and enjoy in small bites. I expected to learn about Lincoln, which I did. What surprised me, though, was the vivid portrait of both Lincoln-the-man, and Lincoln-the-President, that coalesced as the entries built on one another, and how deeply moved I was by these incidents from his life. I've never seen Lincoln as quite so human, and quite so real. I considered offering my copy to my great-nephew, but I'm not ready to part with it. So . . . I'm giving him his own copy for high school graduation. Some related books I've enjoyed: *Gloryland: A Novel*; *From Midnight to Dawn: The Last Tracks of the Underground Railroad*; *The Abolitionist Decade, 1829-1838: A Year-by-Year History of Early Events in the Antislavery Movement*; *Fanny Kemble's Civil Wars*; *Coal Black Horse*; *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans*

This book is formatted to read like a daily diary of Abraham Lincoln's life and presidency during the Civil War years. It provides an excellent insiders view into the daily experiences and struggles of Lincoln, on both the personal and the presidential level, during those years. The book really brings Abe and the times to life in a way that no history of the Civil War or biography of Lincoln has done for me. I especially recommend opting for it on Audible.

A successful attempt personify A Lincoln. It also gives knights to the civil war for those who re not

buffs.

Good historical data and anecdotes. Chapters were sometimes unorganized. Other than Lincoln himself, the other figures seemed shallow; not defined enough to help explain why Lincoln acted or made decisions as he did.

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