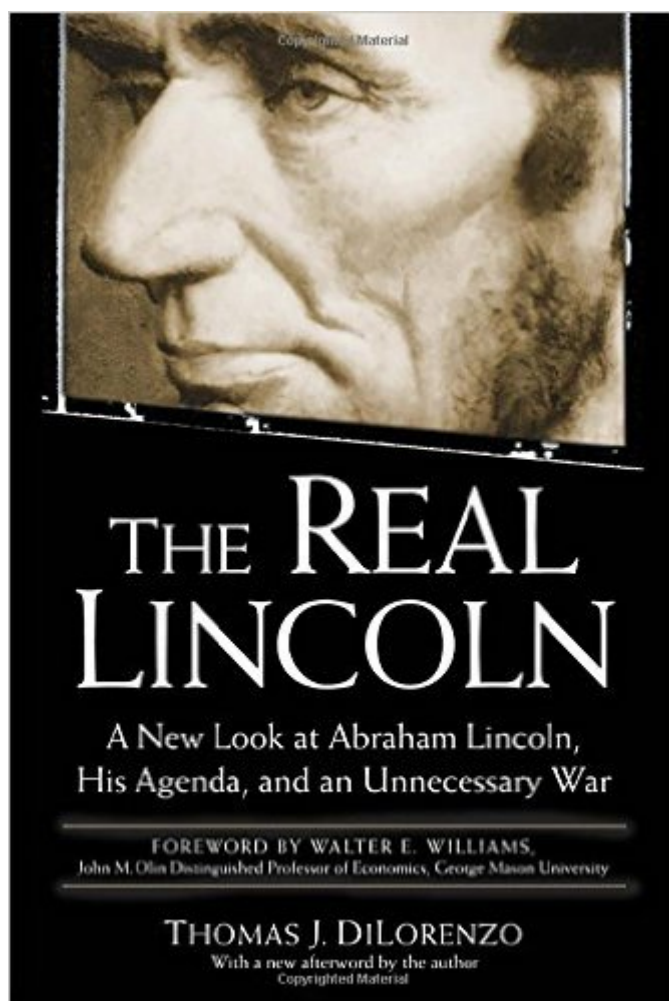


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# The Real Lincoln: A New Look At Abraham Lincoln, His Agenda, And An Unnecessary War



## Synopsis

A New Look at Abraham Lincoln, His Agenda, and an Unnecessary War Most Americans consider Abraham Lincoln to be the greatest president in history. His legend as the Great Emancipator has grown to mythic proportions as hundreds of books, a national holiday, and a monument in Washington, D.C., extol his heroism and martyrdom. But what if most everything you knew about Lincoln were false? What if, instead of an American hero who sought to free the slaves, Lincoln were in fact a calculating politician who waged the bloodiest war in American history in order to build an empire that rivaled Great Britain's? In *The Real Lincoln*, author Thomas J. DiLorenzo uncovers a side of Lincoln not told in many history books and overshadowed by the immense Lincoln legend. Through extensive research and meticulous documentation, DiLorenzo portrays the sixteenth president as a man who devoted his political career to revolutionizing the American form of government from one that was very limited in scope and highly decentralized—as the Founding Fathers intended—to a highly centralized, activist state. Standing in his way, however, was the South, with its independent states, its resistance to the national government, and its reliance on unfettered free trade. To accomplish his goals, Lincoln subverted the Constitution, trampled states' rights, and launched a devastating Civil War, whose wounds haunt us still. According to this provocative book, 600,000 American soldiers did not die for the honorable cause of ending slavery but for the dubious agenda of sacrificing the independence of the states to the supremacy of the federal government, which has been tightening its vise grip on our republic to this very day. You will discover a side of Lincoln that you were probably never taught in school—a side that calls into question the very myths that surround him and helps explain the true origins of a bloody, and perhaps, unnecessary war. "A devastating critique of America's most famous president."—Joseph Sobran, commentator and nationally syndicated columnist "Today's federal government is considerably at odds with that envisioned by the framers of the Constitution. Thomas J. DiLorenzo gives an account of how this came about in *The Real Lincoln*."—Walter E. Williams, from the foreword "A peacefully negotiated secession was the best way to handle all the problems facing Americans in 1860. A war of coercion was Lincoln's creation. It sometimes takes a century or more to bring an important historical event into perspective. This study does just that and leaves the reader asking, 'Why didn't we know this before?'"—Donald Livingston, professor of philosophy, Emory University "Professor DiLorenzo has penetrated to the very heart and core of American history with a laser beam of fact and analysis."—Clyde Wilson, professor of history, University of South Carolina, and editor, *The John C. Calhoun Papers* From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I grew up literally in view of the Jefferson Davis Memorial Monument in western Kentucky and less than a hundred miles from Abraham Lincoln's birthplace, also in western Kentucky. Even as a young child, I had a keen awareness of sharing a native state with the presidents of both sides in the Civil War. Yet, I always had greater interest, greater admiration and greater appreciation for Abraham Lincoln. Other than Jesus Christ himself, there was no historical figure I admired more. That continued throughout my growing up, my teaching career and earning my PhD at Ohio State University. One book has changed that. I still regard Lincoln as a man of great courage and determination. But Prof. DiLorenzo's abundant use of historical documents, rhetorical analysis and clear presentation of rational persuasion provides something way beyond southern resentment in this review of the actual actions in a historical context often ignored. He provides copious documentation of the racism of the northern states, the extensive support of the right of secession, also in the north, and probes the rejected alternatives open to Lincoln and the Union forces, both in regard to the issue of emancipation and of the way in which the war was conducted in violation of long accepted principles of "civilized warfare," an oxymoron if ever there was one. Having seen first hand how assassination completely altered the perception and analysis of John F. Kennedy, I should have been suspicious that some of that same phenomenon had colored historical treatment of Mr. Lincoln. Conspicuously absent from the history books of my public schooling, even throughout college, are any mentions of the sixteenth president's suspension of civil liberty, imprisonments without habeus corpus, suppression of dissenting views and measured contradiction of nearly a

century of constitutional interpretation. DiLorenzo points out that slavery was ended peacefully in nearly every other nation on the face of the planet and that the war was not about slavery, anyway. This, I already knew. I already knew about the increasing economic disadvantage various tariffs had worked against the South and to the advantage of the North. I knew that Lincoln by his own very clear statements subjected emancipation to the greater goal of federal supremacy, "If freeing the slaves would preserve the Union, I would free every one of them. If keeping them slaves would preserve the Union, I would not free a one of them." In fact, one of his own powerful allies stated, regarding the Emancipation Proclamation, "We have declared the slaves free in the areas where we have no capacity to make them free and have kept them slaves in every place where we have the power to make them free." I did not know about several of the other key points, and strangely, knowing that Lincoln maintained very close management of the war effort, I had never connected his obvious approval for Sherman's approach to war nor how Lincoln must have also condoned the same barbaric management of the extermination of the Plains Indians. I highly recommend this book for anyone having the courage to look beneath the burial shroud of perhaps the most revered individual in the history of our nation. If we believe that "the truth shall make you free," perhaps it is time that our nation began to emancipate itself from one of the strongest and most persistent delusions of interpreting its own past.

If there are any sacred cows in America, the one at the head of the herd has got to be Abraham Lincoln. Our culture gleefully villifies almost everyone. Psycho-biographies, in which the darkest interior rooms of the subject are exposed to light, are the rage these days. But somehow Lincoln for the most part has managed to escape all this. He's still the great American hero, venerated by layperson and scholar alike, sometimes to the point of embarrassing hagiography. (I once knew a history professor, for example, who insisted that students refer to Lincoln, both in class discussions and in term papers, as "MR. Lincoln." His class could just as well have been offered by the theology department.) Thomas DiLorenzo refuses to genuflect before Lincoln's altar. In *\*The Real Lincoln\**, a book that's guaranteed to infuriate a wide audience, ranging from Civil War buffs to Lincoln scholars to African-Americans to political liberals to history traditionalists, DiLorenzo claims that Lincoln's real historical legacy is the strong centralized state that characterizes the American political system today. From first to last, claims DiLorenzo, Lincoln's political vision was the creation of a Whiggish empire of protectionist tariffs, government subsidized railroads, and nationalization of the money supply. In the first year and a half of his administration, he pushed through much of this agenda. The average tariff rate tripled, railroads began raking in government money (a "war necessity"), and

the National Currency Acts monopolized the money supply. So far none of this is terribly alarming. Even admirers of Lincoln will admit much of what DiLorenzo says about Lincoln's economic dream and Whig leanings. But where DiLorenzo begins to stir up a storm is when he claims (1) that Lincoln basically allowed an unnecessary and horribly bloody war to occur in order to further his political vision of a strong state; (2) Lincoln was a "constitutional dictator"; and (3) Lincoln was never terribly concerned with slavery as a moral injustice. In reference to the first point, DiLorenzo points out that the right to secession was simply taken for granted by most Americans prior to Lincoln's administration because they saw the country as a voluntary association of states. Lincoln didn't "save" the Union so much as he destroyed it as a voluntary association. In reference to the second point, DiLorenzo provides example after example of Lincoln's disregard--supposedly in the interests of the state--for the Constitution: launching a military invasion without Congressional consent; suspension of habeas corpus; censorship of newspapers; meddling with elections; confiscating private property; and so on. Finally, in reference to the last point--which is probably the book's most inflammatory one--DiLorenzo argues that Lincoln rarely mentioned the issue of slavery in political speeches until it became politically expedient to begin doing so. His opposition to slavery was always based on what he feared was its economic dangers, not on moral principle. As his contemporaries accurately noted, Lincoln the "Great Emancipator" was never an abolitionist. Even after the Emancipation Proclamation, he was willing to tolerate slaveholding in nonsecessionist states. His ultimate solution--one that infuriated abolitionists such as Horace Greeley--was to colonize American blacks "back" to Africa or the Caribbean. Much of DiLorenzo's claims about Lincoln's activities will be familiar. What's new about the book is the overall unfavorable portrait of Lincoln that emerges as DiLorenzo discusses them. It may be the case that DiLorenzo has swung too far in the opposite direction from conventional Lincoln hagiography. But it may also be the case that his book will encourage more moderate and accurate portrayals of Lincoln in the future. One can admire Lincoln without worshipping him.

This book exposes all the truth about how Lincoln ruled America during the civil war. I say ruled, because he tossed out the Constitution, and the bill of right. He order the arrest of anyone that disagreed with his agenda. Newspapermen, senators, congressmen, judges, citizens. He ordered the suspension of Habus corpus. He had federal troops confiscate citizens guns, violating the 2nd. amendment. There is also many of his statements on how he really thought about the black race, he hated them. This is a book every kid in school should actually be reading about the so called "Great Emancipator", he really was the "Great Traitor".

If you were brought up in public schools, especially north of the Mason Dixon line, as I was, you need to read this to disabuse you of the myths, propaganda and fiction we were taught, even in children's books (at least one of which won a Caldecott award) not to mention US history. This book appears to be very well researched, and assuming DiLorenzo got it right, Abraham Lincoln could legitimately be called the true father of big government in the USA, with all its abuses.

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