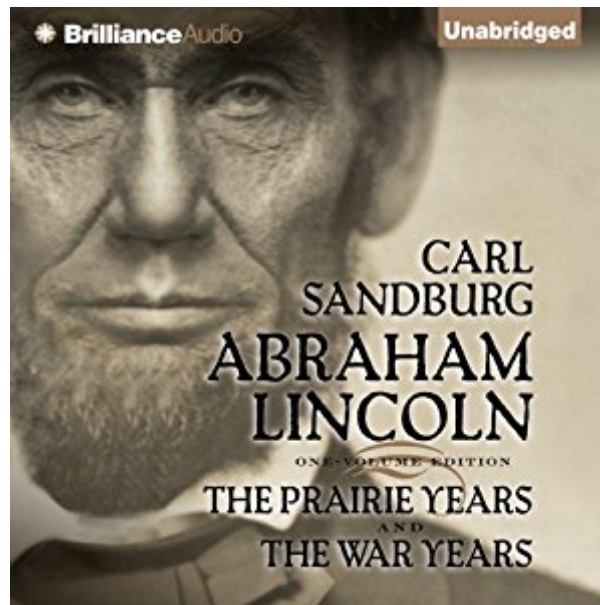


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# Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years And The War Years



## Synopsis

Originally published in six volumes, which sold more than one million copies, Carl Sandburg's Abraham Lincoln was praised as the most noteworthy historical biography of Sandburg's generation. He later distilled this monumental work into one volume that critics and readers alike consider his greatest work of nonfiction, as well as the most distinguished, authoritative biography of Lincoln ever published. Growing up in an Illinois prairie town, Sandburg listened to stories of old-timers who had known Lincoln. By the time this single-volume edition was completed, he had spent a lifetime studying, researching, and writing about our 16th president. His extraordinary portrait brings fully to life the country lawyer who would become one of the most influential and beloved presidents of the American republic. Additional information about the author can be found at: <http://www.nps.gov/carl>.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Thousands upon thousands of Civil War books are available, as American readers seem to have a limitless appetite for that era. If you are looking for the best, read Sandburg on Lincoln. A major American poet takes on one of the best-known, best-loved, most tragic of American historical figures. When I was a freshman in high school, our English teacher offered us a deal: Anyone who read Sandburg's biography (then in six rather daunting volumes) would not have to attend class for a semester. I took him up on that offer, and was blessed to find my way through Sandburg's gift to the American people. Here is the highly detailed, thoroughly researched, and articulately written story of Abe Lincoln's years among us. If you have time to read only one of the Civil War books from

that burgeoning genre, read this one. You will come to know, from the inside out, this prairie boy who became a towering figure in American history.

I believe Sandburg is the only author to win the Pulitzer for both poetry and history. Originally a multi volume history taking decades to complete, this single volume work is an appetizer. I read it in the 1960's and went on with relish to the full multi volume work. This single volume is insightful, laser like in it's detail yet painting the times of Lincoln in a broad and beautiful brush. Did you know that in 1860 tools could be honed to within one ten thousandth of an inch of accuracy? That magazines and newspapers said the world would change for-ever because of the new "instant" communication nation wide? This is more than biography. It is a woven fabric depicting the times and life of Abraham Lincoln.

I collect old and rare books. My mother bought me a copy of Sandburg's one-volume edition published in 1954. Honestly, it was slow to start, but once it got to the 1850's, I couldn't put it down. Lincoln's deeds are so often trivialized in our history books. But Sandburg meticulously builds up the background in a way that forces his reader to appreciate the magnitude of the moment, and the importance of each decision--whether right or wrong--that President Lincoln made. It easily took three full weeks to read, but it was more than worth it. I closed the book thinking, "I can't believe it's over!" My advice: Read this book right away, and make someone else read it too. You'll need someone to talk to when you're through!

More books are published about Lincoln than any other public figure and Carl Sandburg's take on America's 16th president is a good place to start your learning on this extraordinary individual. Sandburg's style shows his roots as a poet; the writing is lyrical and captivating. Though it leans towards myth-making, Sandburg doesn't leave out Lincoln's flaws. Other biographies go deeper into Lincoln's psyche or touch on specific chapters from Lincoln's life; however this book is a good start to begin your education on Abraham Lincoln. Find the complete six-volume set if you can. It does a much better job of putting Lincoln's life into the historical context of the 1800s than this abridged volume does.

If you are a student of Abraham Lincoln your education is not complete without having read Sandburg's Lincoln. Yes, it is poetic. Yes, he strays into myth making and telling. Even so, it is a masterpiece.

I read this book in 1995 and even today think of it as political and social changes unfold. The civil war and Lincoln's leadership during it impacts us in ways we take for granted. Sandburg captures these events and this man in a way which gives us the detail and facts to bring them to life. The writing is a blend of the Doris Kearns Goodwin and the William Manchester styles. Sandburg demonstrates the craft that made him poet laureate. He will dedicate pages, chapters to the social context and events of the times, and then place the players in that context to show the reasons decisions were made as they were. It should be said that this work is actually a distillation of a multi-volume work that Sandburg wrote earlier. It keeps that historical accuracy, and yet is very readable for the non-historian. As good as Sandburg is, the story is of Lincoln, and it is a story worth reading (maybe more than once). I have bought extra copies and given them out to friends. You will come to know greatness in a flawed and sometimes crude man. You will take new found reverence in the monuments and symbols we have created to him. There is a quote in the preface that best sums this up: "There is no new thing to be said about Lincoln. There is no new thing to be said of the mountains, or of the sea, or of the stars. The years go their way, but the same old mountains lift their granite shoulders above the drifting clouds; the same mysterious sea beats upon the shore; the same silent stars keep holy vigil above a tired world. But to the mountains and sea and stars men turn forever in unwearied homage. And thus with Lincoln. For he was a mountain in grandeur of soul. He was a sea in deep undertone of mystic loneliness. He was a star in steadfast purity of purpose and service. And he abides." Read this book, and you will soon find the poetry in these words too.

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