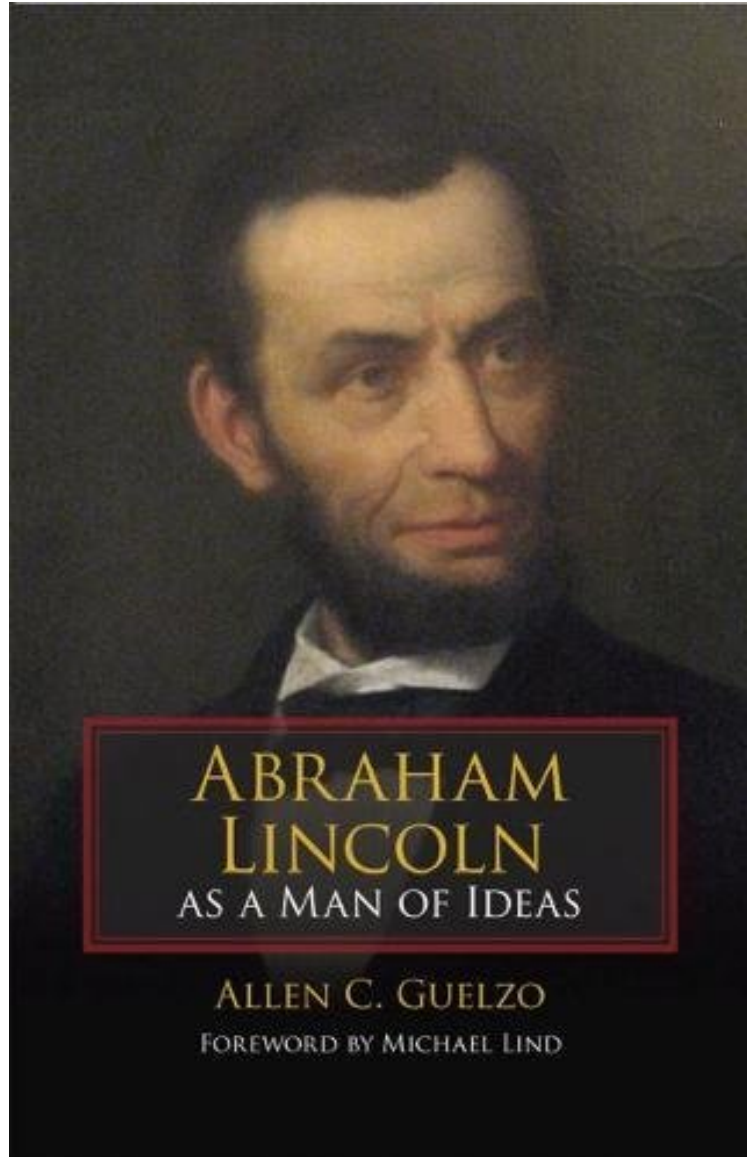


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## Abraham Lincoln as a Man of Ideas

*Allen C. Guelzo*

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**Allen C. Guelzo : Abraham Lincoln as a Man of Ideas** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Abraham Lincoln as a Man of Ideas:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Great book By Paul S. Andrews One of those small print (circulation) university press publications that by nature are expensive - a slender hardback volume costing \$29.95. In this case eminently worth it. Anyone else besides me who loves to understand something of the elements of thought and

discipline formative in Lincoln's rise to the Presidency and in the ideas behind the exercise of his Presidential powers but fatigued by the overflow of Lincoln material steadily coming to the market? Guelzo is the antidote to the Lincoln overkill. If I were to keep a half dozen Lincoln books on my library shelf Guelzo's intellectual biography, *Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President* and this present volume, *Lincoln As A Man of Ideas*, would be two of them. Steady yourself: this is not a biographical narrative that makes for quick reading but instead is a series of extended essays that fall into the category of intellectual history. Because each chapter is a thematic unit standing on its own, it makes for a well calibrated discussion that is extensive enough to cover significant ground yet relieves one of the burden of reading through a couple of hundred pages to achieve important understanding. What I appreciate so much in reading Guelzo's analysis of Lincoln distinctives is the easily attained sense that he is definitively unwrapping the man and his religious/philosophical/political/economic convictions in a manner that is true to Lincoln himself. This analysis is free of any effort to shove Lincoln into a "school" of interpretation or form of psychological analysis or to judge the man outside the standards of his own time and society. Instead, with good reason, you feel that you have come to understand Lincoln as he actually was. A very valuable little book. And rendered in a clearly written and argued prose style that makes Lincoln accessible to me. Put it on your short list of "must reads" if interest in the Lincoln presidency is part of your intellectual curiosity or especially if you find yourself employed in actually having to explain Lincoln to other people. Invaluable.

5 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Thoughts on Lincoln By Christian Schlect In this year of scores of new books on Abraham Lincoln, I think others are of better value and more informative for the common reader. (The first book of this year's crop I would recommend is a biography, "A. Lincoln" by White. If one is really interested in the Emancipation, then buy Professor Guelzo's excellent "Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation", 2004.) Professor Guelzo is an expert on this great man and some of these essays are very good (such as the ones on the war powers of a president and on the Emancipation Proclamation) but there are others that really are for a more specialized readership (such as the ones on prudence and the doctrine of necessity.) As an example from one essay on community-men: "But the jeremiads of Etzioni, Bellah, and other 'new communitarians' were not actually all that new. The nineteenth-century founders of scientific sociology--August Comte, Max Weber, Emil Durkheim, and especially Ferdinand Tonnies--all contrasted the new industrial nation-states of the late 1800s with their medieval and traditional predecessors, and usually to the disadvantage of the former." And this feeds directly into a short discussion of the German terms "Gemeinschaft" and "Gesellschaft." While this is not a bad book by any measure, I just have trouble recommending a collection of previously issued essays, in a book priced at about the same level as a new general biography or other original work. Especially in a publishing year flooded with material on Mr. Lincoln.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Outstanding By Robert T. Taylor A wonderful series of essays on important topics. Well written and researched, a pleasure to read. Guelzo again delivers an outstanding volume. Bravo!

Abraham Lincoln was a skilled politician, an inspirational leader, and a man of humor and pathos. What many may not realize is how much he was also a man of ideas. Despite the most meager of formal educations, Lincoln's tremendous intellectual curiosity drove him into the circle of Enlightenment philosophy and democratic political ideology. And from these, Lincoln developed a set of political convictions that guided him throughout his life and his presidency. *Abraham Lincoln as a Man of Ideas*, a compilation of ten essays from Lincoln scholar, Allen C. Guelzo, uncovers the hidden sources of Lincoln's ideas and examines the beliefs that directed his career and brought an end to slavery and the Civil War. These essays reveal Lincoln to be a man of impressive intellectual probity and depth as well as a man of great contradictions. He was an apostle of freedom who did not believe in human free will; a champion of the Constitution who had to step outside of it in order to save it; a man of many acquaintances and admirers, but few friends; a man who opposed slavery but also opposed the abolition of it; a man of prudence who took more political risks than any other president. Guelzo explores the many faces of Lincoln's ideas, and especially the influence of the Founding Fathers and the great European champions of democracy. And he links the 16th president's struggles with the issues of race, emancipation, religion, and civil liberties to the challenges these issues continue to offer to Americans today. Lincoln played many roles in his life: lawyer, politician, president but in each he was driven by a core of values, convictions, and beliefs about economics, society, and democracy. *Abraham Lincoln as a Man of Ideas* is a broad and exciting survey of the ideas that made Lincoln great, just as we celebrate the bicentennial of his birth.

Allen Guelzo is one of the finest Lincoln scholars of our generation, and this book of essays reveals once again a unique combination of impeccable scholarship with a wonderfully readable narrative style. Doris Kearns Goodwin, author of *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* Guelzo's contribution is countering the quest for simple answers in explaining Lincoln's actions, thoughts, and values, and challenging his familiar portrayal as a product of unalloyed American exceptionalism. Guelzo presents Lincoln as a self-taught, and therefore original, thinker in the best sense of the word, and concludes that we need to know that Lincoln thought and what he thought about. (24) In that effort, this book is a wonderful place to begin. Kenneth J. Winkle, *Journal of Historical Biographies* "Thoughtful and meticulously documented with a wealth of notes, *Abraham Lincoln as a Man of Ideas* is a welcome

contribution to public and college library American History collections. " James Cox, Midwest Book s