

**BIOGRAPHIES - BOOK LOVERS UNITE**  
**AT THE GIVEN OUTPOST - MONDAY, AUGUST 8, 2016**  
**EDA'S PICKS**

**“TEAM OF RIVALS” - THE POLITICAL GENIUS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN –  
DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN**

While not strictly a biography, there are wonderful, short biographical portraits of William Henry Seward, Salmon P. Chase, Edward Bates and Lincoln. Each man was a rival of Lincoln's for the Republican Party nomination and beyond. Beautifully drawn!

**“DEAREST FRIEND”, A LIFE OF ABIGAIL ADAMS – LYNNE WETLEY**

My favorite first lady. This is first and foremost a love story and a political meeting of the minds. Abigail was a strong, intelligent woman. She had to be, because she spent many years alone, raising their children, managing John's farms, which freed him to immerse himself in declaring independence, helping to manage the revolutionary army and representing America in Europe. Without wifely support, I believe that the American revolution would have failed. Wives, the unsung heroes of the revolution!

**“BENEDICT ARNOLD” – PATRIOT AND TRAITOR – WILLIAM STERNE RANDALL**

Not everyone is a hero – all the time. Benedict Arnold's turn from a rabid patriot to an ardent traitor is one of the classic stories to come out of our revolution. A great story of what drove Arnold to forsake his role as General in the revolutionary army and turncoat to fight for England. I liked the book, because it fleshed out a very one dimensional character into a complex human being.

**“JOHN QUINCY ADAMS – AMERICAN VISIONARY” – FRED KAPLAN**

Our first polymath President, son of John and Abigail Adams. As a young boy he accompanied his father to the Netherlands as the first revolutionary ambassador.

John Quincy later served his country in Russia, in the House of Representatives and as a Senator and as a one term President. When defeated for a second term as President, he was re-elected to the House when he served for many years and famously died on the floor of the House. He pled the case of the Amistat crew at the Supreme Court and won their freedom.

**“WILSON” – A. SCOTT BERG**

Certainly a pivotal President, but not a likeable person. One of his former friends called him “a great hater”. Once he lost faith in a person, they ceased to exist. He felt the as a Presbyterian he was predestined in his decisions and that anyone who disagreed with him was wrong. He appeared cold and distant, but he was a passionate lover of two wives and a prolific and ardent writer of love letters” (Who knew??) His insistence that no changes, whatsoever, would be allowed to the Treaty of Versailles and America's joining the League of Nations proved his undoing. I still don't like him much.

**“ELEANOR ROOSEVELT” – VOLUME ONE – 1884-1933, VOLUME TWO 1933-1938. BLANCHE WIESEN  
COOK**

Eleanor Roosevelt-Roosevelt, daughter of an alcoholic father and a cold, distant mother. Orphan, neglected child, niece of President Theodore Roosevelt and wife and partner of FDR. This is a heroic story of growing past bitter disappointments and rejection. She became an educator, mother, wife, daughter-in-law to a managing mother-in-law who held the purse strings. She became a political force in her own right and an icon to women. Obviously a heroine of mine. I wish that the author would hurry up and publish the last volume.

**“WE TWO – VICTORIA AND ALBERT: RULERS, PARTNERS, RIVALS” – GILLIAN GILL**

The passionate and loving marriage of Victoria and her consort, Albert. After a very sheltered and unhappy childhood, Victoria's marriage to her first cousin, a serious and dedicated man, proved to be the happiest years of her life. They were parents to nine children and political partners, until childbirth allowed Albert to take control (sotto voce) of the monarchy. Their union was a grand partnership – although uneven, as she was Queen Regnant and he was a German Prince with no power, outside those ceded to him by his wife. Very unvictorian. When he died, she mourned him for the rest of her life. The Widow of Windsor.

**'LADY BIRD' – A BIOGRAPHY OF MRS. JOHNSON – JAN JARBOE RUSSELL**

Neck and neck for my favorite first lady. Claudia Alta Taylor – “Lady Bird” was the “poor little rich girl”. Her mother died when she was very young and her father had little time for or understanding of his daughter. She married Lyndon Johnson because she adored him, but also knew that he would her entrance into the much larger and more exciting world of politics. Lady Bird was Lyndon’s partner through multiple election cycles for the House, Senate, Vice President and the ultimate prize, the Presidency. He was difficult to live with and not a faithful husband, but she was his loyal champion during his life time and beyond. A steel magnolia.