



Lincoln and McClellan: The Troubled Partnership between a President and His General

John C. Waugh

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There was no more remarkable pair in the Civil War than Abraham Lincoln and George McClellan. At only 35 years old, McClellan commanded the Ohio troops early in the war, and won skirmishes for the Union in western Virginia. After the disastrous Union defeat at Bull Run in the summer of 1861, Lincoln sent word for McClellan to come to Washington, and soon elevated him to commander-in-chief of the Union army. But in the late summer and fall of 1861, things took a turn for the worst. Meticulous in his planning and preparations, McClellan began to delay attacking the enemy and developed a penchant for vastly overestimating the Confederate forces he faced. All of this hampered his ability to lead an aggressive force in a fast-moving battlefield environment. Finally losing his patience, Lincoln was famously quoted as saying, "If General McClellan does not want to use the army, I would like to borrow it for a time."

Lincoln and McClellan takes an in-depth look at this fascinating relationship, from the early days of the Civil War to the 1864 presidential election when McClellan ran against Lincoln on an anti-war platform and lost. Here, award-winning author John C. Waugh weaves a tale of hubris, paranoia, failure, and triumph, illuminating as never before this unique and complicated alliance.

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