

# Lincoln's Mentors

by GERHARDT, MICHAEL

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In 1849, when Abraham Lincoln returned to Springfield, Illinois, after two seemingly uninspiring years in the U.S. House of Representatives, his political career appeared all but finished.

His sense of failure was so great that friends worried about his

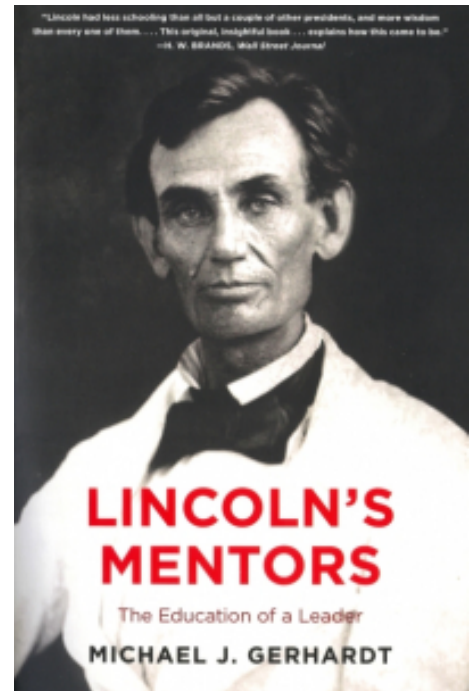
sanity. Yet within a decade, Lincoln would reenter politics, become a leader of the Republican Party, win the 1860 presidential election, and keep America together during its most

perilous period. What accounted for the turnaround.

As Michael J. Gerhardt reveals, Lincoln's reemergence followed the same path he had taken before, in which he read voraciously and learned from the successes, failures, oratory, and political

maneuvering of a surprisingly diverse handful of men, some of whom he had never met but others of whom he knew intimately? Henry

Clay, Andrew Jackson, Zachary Taylor, John Todd Stuart, and Orville Browning.



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