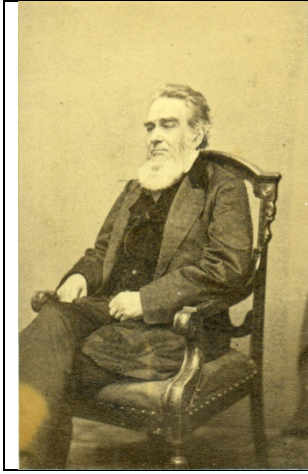


## Chapter 315 – Lincoln Names His Cabinet



**Dates:**  
March 5, 1860

**Sections:**  
• Lincoln Announces His Cabinet

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Date: March 5, 1861

### Lincoln Announces His Cabinet



Edward Bates (1793-1869)

It is not until the day after his swearing-in that Lincoln finalizes his cabinet.

The task has been difficult, given his wish to engage men known for holding very different opinions on matters of state, and expressing them with vigor. The result of these characteristics is a history of personal animosity between several of his choices. Henry Seward and Salmon Chase are sworn enemies – Chase finding Seward too soft on ending slavery and Seward regarding Chase as a radical abolitionist who will provoke the South into a civil war. Both men tell Lincoln that he must make a choice, one or the other.

None of the candidates seem to respect Simon Cameron, who is convinced he is owed a top job because of the president's victory in Pennsylvania.

Seward, Chase, Cameron and a fourth choice, Edward Bates, have also competed against Lincoln at the 1860 Republican nominating convention. But instead of animosity, he holds them all in high stead, as evident in comments to Thurlow Weed:

*Their long experience in public affairs and their eminent fitness (give them) higher claims than his own for the place he was to occupy.*

Like Cameron, Edward Bates is formerly a member of the controversial Know-Nothing (American) Party. He hails from the critical border state of Missouri, was once a slave-holder, and becomes the first man west of the Mississippi to hold a cabinet post.

Montgomery Blair is another border state representative and the son of Francis P. Blair, Sr., member of Jackson's "kitchen cabinet," and solid Democrat before his role in founding the Republican Party. Of all the cabinet members, the younger Blair will be the only one with military credentials, having graduated from West Point and serving in the Second Seminole War.

Gideon Welles of Connecticut is a former Free Soiler, and chosen to capture the opinions in the New England region. Caleb Smith is from the swing state of Indiana, and, like Seward and Lincoln, is an old-time Whigs.

From the beginning, Lincoln wants Seward for the State Department, but he initially refuses to serve with Chase. When Lincoln hints that he may default to the esteemed New Jersey native, William Dayton, Seward comes on board. Cameron demands the Treasury job; Lincoln gives it to Chase; Cameron settles for the War Department. Chase is perpetually certain that he deserves more than offered, and is the last hold-out before his acceptance.

In the end, Lincoln has assembled the diverse and outspoken cabinet he desires.

Along the way, he has also exhibited the political savvy and firm backbone that will prove so essential to his presidency.

#### Abraham Lincoln's Opening Cabinet

<b>Position</b>	<b>(Total *)</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Home State</b>	<b>Prior Party</b>	<b>Age</b>
Vice-President	(1)	Hannibal Hamlin	Maine	Democrat	51
Secretary of State	(1)	Henry Seward	New York	Whig	59
Secretary of Treasury	(2)	Salmon P. Chase	Ohio	Free Soil	53
Secretary of War	(2)	Simon Cameron	Pennsylvania	Know Nothing	61
Attorney General	(2)	Edward Bates	Missouri	Know Nothing	67
Secretary of Navy	(1)	Gideon Welles	Maine	Free Soil	58
Postmaster General	(2)	Montgomery Blair	Maryland	Democrat	47
Secretary of Interior	(2)	Caleb Smith	Indiana	Whig	52

\* Total # who will serve in the position over the course of Lincoln's first term.