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Abraham Lincoln

TITLE: 16th President of the United States- WAR & AFFILIATION: Civil War/Union DATE OF BIRTH - DEATH: February 12, 1809 – April 15, 1865----Abraham Lincoln, sixteenth President of the United States, was born near Hodgenville, Kentucky on February 12, 1809. His family moved to Indiana when he was seven and he grew up on the edge of the frontier. He had very little formal education, but read voraciously when not working on his father's farm. A childhood friend later recalled Lincoln's "manic" intellect, and the sight of him red-eyed and tousle-haired as he pored over books late into the night. In 1828, at the age of nineteen, he accompanied a produce-laden flatboat down the Mississippi River to New Orleans, Louisiana—his first visit to a large city--and then walked back home. Two years later, trying to avoid health and finance troubles, Lincoln's father moved the family moved to Illinois.-----After moving away from home, Lincoln co-owned a general store for several years before selling his stake and enlisting as a militia captain defending Illinois in the Black Hawk War of 1832. Black Hawk, a Sauk chief, believed he had been swindled by a recent land deal and sought to resettle his old holdings. Lincoln did not see direct combat during the short conflict, but the sight of corpse-strewn battlefields at Stillman's Run and Kellogg's Grove deeply affected him. As a captain, he developed a reputation for pragmatism and integrity. Once, faced with a rail fence during practice maneuvers and forgetting the parade-ground instructions to direct his men over it, he simply ordered them to fall out and reassemble on the other side a minute later. Another time, he stopped his men before they executed a wandering Native American as a spy. Stepping in front of their raised muskets, Lincoln is said to have challenged his men to combat for the terrified native's life. His men stood down.

After the war, he studied law and campaigned for a seat on the Illinois State Legislature. Although not elected in his first attempt, Lincoln persevered and won the position in 1834, serving as a Whig.

Abraham Lincoln met Mary Todd in Springfield, Illinois where he was practicing as a lawyer. They were married in 1842 over her family's objections and had four sons. Only one lived to adulthood. The deep melancholy that pervaded the Lincoln family, with occasional detours into outright madness, is in some ways sourced in their close relationship with death.

Lincoln, a self-described "prairie lawyer," focused on his all-embracing law practice in the early 1850s after one term in Congress from 1847 to 1849. He joined the new Republican party—and the ongoing argument over sectionalism—in 1856. A series of **heated debates in 1858** with **Stephen A. Douglas**, the sponsor of the **1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act**, over slavery and its place in the United States forged Lincoln into a prominent figure in national politics. Lincoln's anti-slavery platform made him extremely unpopular with Southerners and his nomination for President in 1860 enraged them.

On November 6, 1860, Lincoln won the presidential election without the support of a single Southern state. Talk of secession, bandied about since the 1830s, took on a serious new tone. The Civil War was not entirely caused by Lincoln's election, but the election was one of the primary reasons the war broke out the following year.

Lincoln's decision to fight rather than to let the Southern states secede was not based on his feelings towards slavery. Rather, he felt it was his sacred duty as President of the United States to preserve the Union at all costs. His first inaugural address was an appeal to the rebellious states, seven of which

had already seceded, to rejoin the nation. His first draft of the speech ended with an ominous message: "Shall it be peace, or the sword?"

The Civil War with the opening bombardment of **Fort Sumter**, South Carolina, on April 12, 1861. Lincoln forced the Confederate hand with his decision to resupply the fort, which had suddenly become an outpost in a hostile nation. The Southern navy turned away the supply convoy and then fired the first shot of the war at Fort Sumter, forcing the Federal defenders to surrender after a 34-hour battle.

Throughout the war Lincoln struggled to find capable generals for his armies. As commander-in-chief, he legally held the highest rank in the United States armed forces, and he diligently exercised his authority through strategic planning, weapons testing, and the promotion and demotion of officers. **McDowell**, Fremont, **McClellan**, **Pope**, McClellan again, **Buell**, **Burnside**, **Rosecrans**--all of these men and more withered under Lincoln's watchful eye as they failed to bring him success on the battlefield.

He did not issue his famous **Emancipation Proclamation** until January 1, 1863 after the Union victory at the **Battle of Antietam**. The Emancipation Proclamation, which was legally based on the President's right to seize the property of those in rebellion against the State, only freed slaves in Southern states where Lincoln's forces had no control. Nevertheless, it changed the tenor of the war, making it, from the Northern point of view, a fight both to preserve the Union and to end slavery.

In 1864, Lincoln ran again for President. After years of war, he feared he would not win. Only in the final months of the campaign did the exertions of **Ulysses S. Grant**, the quiet general now in command of all of the Union armies, begin to bear fruit. A string of heartening victories buoyed Lincoln's ticket and contributed significantly to his re-election. In his **second inauguration speech**, March 4, 1865, he set the tone he intended to take when the war finally ended. His one goal, he said, was "lasting peace among ourselves." He called for "malice towards none" and "charity for all." The war ended only a month later.

The Lincoln administration did more than just manage the Civil War, although its reverberations could still be felt in a number of policies. The Revenue Act of 1862 established the United States' first income tax, largely to pay the costs of total war. The Morrill Act of 1862 established the basis of the state university system in this country, while the Homestead Act, also passed in 1862, encouraged settlement of the West by offering 160 acres of free land to settlers. Lincoln also created the Department of Agriculture and formally instituted the Thanksgiving holiday. Internationally, he navigated the "Trent Affair," a diplomatic crisis regarding the seizure of a British ship carrying Confederate envoys, in such a way as to quell the saber-rattling overtures coming from Britain as well as the United States. In another spill-over from the war, Lincoln restricted the civil liberties of due process and freedom of the press.

On April 14, 1865, while attending a play at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C., Abraham Lincoln was shot by Confederate sympathizer, John Wilkes Booth. The assassination was part of a larger plot to eliminate the Northern government that also left Secretary of State **William Seward** grievously injured. Lincoln died the following day, and with him the hope of reconstructing the nation without bitterness. <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/abraham-lincoln>

Abraham Lincoln in The Civil War

[Abraham Lincoln](#) (1809–1865) was the 16th President of the United States during one of the most consequential periods in American history, the Civil War. Before being elected president, Lincoln served in the Illinois legislature and lost an election for the U.S. Senate to [Stephen A. Douglas](#). Nevertheless, his fierce campaign earned him a nomination for the presidency. The first Republican president ever, Lincoln led the Union to victory in the Civil War and ended slavery in America.

With firm conviction, Lincoln declared South Carolina's secession illegal and pledged to go to war to protect the federal union in 1861. During the four years of the American Civil War, the president steered the North to victory and authored the Emancipation Proclamation, which dealt a severe blow to the institution of slavery in the U.S.

Lincoln was a thoughtful and soft-spoken man who used words sparingly but to great effect. His brilliance was captured in the Gettysburg Address, in which he movingly related the ongoing Civil War to the founding principles of America, all in less than two minutes. Lincoln's assassination on April 14th, 1865 removed his politically moderate influence from the national stage, giving way to a more radical form of [Reconstruction](#).

For more on Lincoln, we have entire learning guides devoted to his "[House Divided](#)" speech and the [Gettysburg Address](#).

<https://www.shmoop.com/civil-war/abraham-lincoln.html>

Abraham Lincoln became the United States' 16th President in 1861, issuing the Emancipation Proclamation that declared forever free those slaves within the Confederacy in 1863.

Lincoln warned the South in his Inaugural Address: “In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you.... You have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to preserve, protect and defend it.”

Lincoln thought secession illegal, and was willing to use force to defend Federal law and the Union. When Confederate batteries fired on Fort Sumter and forced its surrender, he called on the states for 75,000 volunteers. Four more slave states joined the Confederacy but four remained within the Union. The Civil War had begun.

The son of a Kentucky frontiersman, Lincoln had to struggle for a living and for learning. Five months before receiving his party's nomination for President, he sketched his life:

“I was born Feb. 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky. My parents were both born in Virginia, of undistinguished families—second families, perhaps I should say. My mother, who died in my tenth year, was of a family of the name of Hanks.... My father ... removed from Kentucky to ... Indiana, in my eighth year.... It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods. There I grew up.... Of course when I came of age I did not know much. Still somehow, I could read, write, and cipher ... but that was all.”

Lincoln made extraordinary efforts to attain knowledge while working on a farm, splitting rails for fences, and keeping store at New Salem, Illinois. He was a captain in the Black Hawk War, spent eight years in the Illinois legislature, and rode the circuit of courts for many years. His law partner said of him, “His ambition was a little engine that knew no rest.”

He married Mary Todd, and they had four boys, only one of whom lived to maturity. In 1858 Lincoln ran against Stephen A. Douglas for Senator. He lost the election, but in debating with Douglas he gained a national reputation that won him the Republican nomination for President in 1860.

As President, he built the Republican Party into a strong national organization. Further, he rallied most of the northern Democrats to the Union cause. On January 1, 1863, he issued the Emancipation Proclamation that declared forever free those slaves within the Confederacy.

Lincoln never let the world forget that the Civil War involved an even larger issue. This he stated most movingly in dedicating the military cemetery at Gettysburg: “that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

Lincoln won re-election in 1864, as Union military triumphs heralded an end to the war. In his planning for peace, the President was flexible and generous, encouraging Southerners to lay down their arms and join speedily in reunion.

The spirit that guided him was clearly that of his Second Inaugural Address, now inscribed on one wall of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D. C.: “With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation’s wounds....”

On Good Friday, April 14, 1865, Lincoln was assassinated at Ford’s Theatre in Washington by John Wilkes Booth, an actor, who somehow thought he was helping the South. The opposite was the result, for with Lincoln’s death, the possibility of peace with magnanimity died.

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<https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/abraham-lincoln/>

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

Abraham Lincoln was born on 12 February 1809 near Hodgenville, Kentucky. He was brought up in Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois. His parents were poor pioneers and Lincoln

was largely self-educated. In 1836, he qualified as a lawyer and went to work in a law practice in Springfield, Illinois. He sat in the state legislature from 1834 to 1842 and in 1846 was elected to Congress, representing the Whig Party for a term. In 1856, he joined the new Republican Party and in 1860 he was asked to run as their presidential candidate.

In the presidential campaign, Lincoln made his opposition to slavery very clear. His victory provoked a crisis, with many southerners fearing that he would attempt to abolish slavery in the South. Seven southern states left the Union to form the Confederate States of America, also known as the Confederacy. Four more joined later. Lincoln vowed to preserve the Union even if it meant war.

Fighting broke out in April 1861. Lincoln always defined the Civil War as a struggle to save the Union, but in January 1863 he nonetheless issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed all slaves in areas still under Confederate control. This was an important symbolic gesture that identified the Union's struggle as a war to end slavery.

In the effort to win the war, Lincoln assumed more power than any president before him, declaring martial law and suspending legal rights. He had difficulty finding effective generals to lead the Union armies until the appointment of Ulysses S Grant as overall commander in 1864.

On 19 November 1863, Lincoln delivered his famous Gettysburg Address at the dedication of a cemetery at the site of the Battle of Gettysburg, a decisive Union victory that had taken place earlier in the year.

In 1864, Lincoln stood for re-election and won. In his second inaugural address, he was conciliatory towards the southern states.

On 9 April 1865, the Confederate general Robert E Lee surrendered, effectively ending the war. It had lasted for more than four years and 600,000 Americans had died. Less than a week later, Lincoln was shot while attending a performance at Ford's Theatre in Washington DC and died the next morning, 15 April 1865. His assassin, John Wilkes Booth, was a strong supporter of the Confederacy.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/lincoln_abraham.shtml