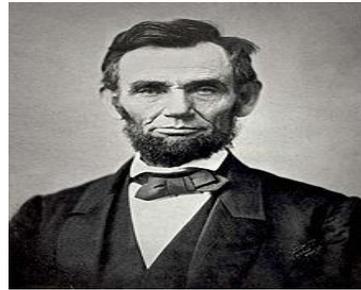


# ABRAHAM LINCOLN



Abraham Lincoln is regarded as one of America's greatest heroes due to both his incredible impact on the nation and his unique appeal. Abraham Lincoln, a self-taught Illinois lawyer and legislator with a reputation as an eloquent opponent of slavery, shocked many when he overcame several more prominent contenders to win the Republican Party's nomination for president in 1860. His election that November pushed several Southern states to secede by the time of his inauguration in March 1861, and the Civil War began barely a month later. Contrary to expectations, Lincoln proved to be a shrewd military strategist and a savvy leader during what became the costliest conflict ever fought on American soil. His Emancipation Proclamation, issued in 1863, freed all slaves in the rebellious states and paved the way for slavery's eventual abolition, while his Gettysburg Address later that year stands as one of the most famous and influential pieces of oratory in American history. In April 1865, with the Union on the brink of victory, Abraham Lincoln was shot and killed by the Confederate sympathizer John Wilkes Booth; his untimely death made him a martyr to the cause of liberty and Union. Over the years Lincoln's mythic stature has only grown, and he is widely regarded as one of the greatest presidents in the nation's history.

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN



### **Where & when born`**

Abraham Lincoln was born on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1809, as the second child to Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln, in a one-room log cabin on the Sinking Spring Farm at Hardin County, Kentucky (now LaRue County).

### **Brief history of the Abraham Lincoln**

Abraham Lincoln is a descendant of Samuel Lincoln, who migrated from Norfolk, England to Hingham, Massachusetts, in 1638. Abraham Lincoln's father Thomas was a strong and determined pioneer who found a moderate level of prosperity and was well respected in the community. The couple had two other children: Abraham's older sister Sarah and younger brother Thomas, who died in infancy. Due to a land dispute, the Lincolns were forced to move from Kentucky to Perry County, Indiana in 1817, where the family "squatted" on public land to scrap out a living in a crude shelter, hunting game and farming a small plot.

When young Abraham was 9 years old, his mother died of tremetol (milk sickness) at age of 34. The event was devastating on him and young Abraham grew more alienated from his father and quietly resented the hard work placed on him at an early age. A few months after Nancy's death, Thomas married Sarah Bush Johnston, a Kentucky widow with three children of her own. She was a strong and affectionate woman with whom Abraham quickly bonded. Though both his parents were most likely illiterate, Sarah encouraged Abraham to read. It was while growing into manhood that he received his formal education—an estimated total of 18 months—a few days or weeks at a time. Reading material was in short supply in the Indiana wilderness. Neighbors recalled how Abraham would walk for miles to borrow a book. He undoubtedly read the family Bible and probably other popular books at that time such as Robinson Crusoe, Pilgrims Progress and Aesop's Fables

In March, 1830, the family again migrated, this time to Macon County, Illinois. He was known for his skill in wielding an ax and early on made a living splitting wood for fire and rail fencing. Young Lincoln eventually migrated to the small community of New Salem, Illinois, where over a period of years he worked as a shopkeeper, postmaster, and eventually general store owner. It was here that Lincoln, working with the public, acquired social skills and honed story-telling talent that made him popular with the locals. When the Black Hawk War broke out in 1832 between the United States and Native Americans, the volunteers in the area elected Lincoln to be their captain. He saw no combat during this time, save for "a good many bloody struggles with the mosquitoes," but was able to make several important political connections.



## ABRAHAM LINCOLN

After the Black Hawk War, Abraham Lincoln was serving a member of the Whig Party, at that time he decided to become a lawyer, teaching himself the law by reading William Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England. After being admitted to the bar in 1837, he moved to Springfield, Illinois, and began to practice in the John T. Stuart law firm

In 1840, Lincoln became engaged to Mary Todd, a high spirited, well-educated woman from a distinguished Kentucky family. They eventually married on November 4, 1842. The couple had four children, of which only one, Robert, survived to adulthood. In 1844, Abraham Lincoln partnered with William Herndon in the practice of law. Though the two had different jurisprudential styles, they developed a close professional and personal relationship. Lincoln made a good living in his early years as a lawyer, but found that Springfield alone didn't offer enough work, so to supplement his income, he followed the court as it made its rounds on the circuit to the various county seats in Illinois

After a small stint in politics (1847-1849), he decided not to run for second term, but instead returned Springfield to practice law. By 1850s, Abraham Lincoln served as a lobbyist for the Illinois Central Railroad as its company attorney. Success in several court cases brought other business clients as well banks, insurance companies and manufacturing firms. Lincoln also did some criminal trials.

Lincoln re-entered politics by joining the Republican Party in 1856. From this period he actively participated in politics and within few years he became a national figure in US politics. On 6<sup>th</sup> November 1860, Lincoln received 180 of 303 Electoral votes to become 16<sup>th</sup> President of United States of America.

During his period in Presidency terms, he faced Civil War, withdrawal of many states from Union and formation of Eleven State Confederacy. In 1863 - The President issued a final Emancipation Proclamation freeing all slaves in territories held by Confederates. 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1863 marked the turning point to Union, by defeating Confederates at Gettysburg. Later Abraham Lincoln was re-elected as President of United States on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1864. The Civil War concluded in 9<sup>th</sup> Apr 1865, as General Robert E. Lee surrendered his Confederate Army to General Ulysses S. Grant at the village of Appomattox Court House in Virginia.

Abraham Lincoln was shot in head by John Wilkes Booth while he & his wife Mary were watching the play "Our American Cousin" at Ford's Theater at about 10:13 pm on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1865 and President Abraham Lincoln died at 7:22 am next day morning.

### **Career in Political**

After the Black Hawk War, Abraham Lincoln began his political career and was elected to the Illinois state legislature, in 1834, as a member of the Whig Party. Abraham Lincoln served a single term in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1847 to 1849. This political understanding led him to formulate his early views on slavery, not so much as a moral wrong, but as an impediment to economic development. He was the lone Whig from the state of Illinois, showing party loyalty, but finding few political allies. He used his term in office to speak out against the Mexican-American War and supported Zachary Taylor for president



## ABRAHAM LINCOLN

in 1848. His criticism of the war made him unpopular back home and he decided not to run for second term, but instead returned Springfield to practice law

In 1857, the Supreme Court issued its controversial decision *Scott v. Sanford*, declaring African Americans were not citizens and had no inherent rights. Though Abraham Lincoln felt African Americans were not equal to whites, he believed the America's founders intended that all men were created with certain inalienable rights. Lincoln decided to challenge sitting U.S. Senator Stephen Douglas for his seat. In his nomination acceptance speech, he criticized Douglas, the Supreme Court, and President Buchanan for promoting slavery and declared "a house divided cannot stand." The 1858 Senate campaign featured seven debates held in different cities across Illinois. The two candidates didn't disappoint the public, giving stirring debates on issues ranging from states' rights to western expansion, but the central issue was slavery. In the end, the state legislature elected Douglas, but the exposure vaulted Lincoln into national politics.

In 1860, political operatives in Illinois organized a campaign to support Abraham Lincoln for the presidency. On May 18, at the Republican National Convention in Chicago, Lincoln surpassed better known candidates such as William Seward of New York and Salmon P. Chase of Ohio. Lincoln's nomination was due in part to his moderate views on slavery, his support for improving the national infrastructure, and the protective tariff. In the Presidential election, Lincoln faced his friend and rival, Stephen Douglas, this time besting him in a four-way race that included John C. Breckinridge of the Northern Democrats and John Bell of the Constitution Party. Lincoln received not quite 40 percent of the popular vote, but carried 180 of 303 Electoral votes and became 16<sup>th</sup> President of United States of America in 6<sup>th</sup> November 1860.

Abraham Lincoln selected a strong cabinet composed of many of his political rival. Formed out the adage "Hold your friends close and your enemies closer," Lincoln's Cabinet became one of his strongest assets in his first term in office. Before his inauguration in March, 1861, seven Southern states had seceded from the Union and by April the U.S. military installation Fort Sumter was under siege in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. In the early morning hours of April 12, 1861, the guns stationed to protect the harbor blazed toward the fort signaling the start of America's costliest and most deadly war. Abraham Lincoln responded to the crisis wielding powers as no other president before him.

He issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, which stated that all individuals who were held as slaves in rebellious state "henceforward shall be free." During this time, George B. McClellan, the former commander of the Army of the Potomac, challenged him for the presidency, and Lincoln received 55 percent of the popular vote and 212 of 243 Electoral votes.

On April 9, 1865, General Robert E. Lee, commander of the Army of Virginia, surrendered his forces to Union General Ulysses S. Grant and the war for all intents and purposes was over. Reconstruction began during the war as early as 1863 in areas firmly under Union military control. Abraham Lincoln favored a policy of quick reunification with a minimum of retribution. In his planning for peace, the President was

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN

flexible and generous, encouraging Southerners to lay down their arms and join speedily in reunion.

But he was confronted by a radical group of Republicans in the Senate and House that wanted complete allegiance and repentance from former Confederates. Before a political battle had a chance to firmly develop, Lincoln was assassinated on April 14, 1865.

### **Leadership qualities / Principles and Practices**

#### **1. Capacity to Listen to Different Points of View**

Lincoln had the capacity to listen to different points of view. He created a climate where Cabinet members were free to disagree without fear of retaliation. At the same time, he knew when to stop the discussion and after listening to the various opinions, make a final decision.

#### **2. Ability to Learn on the Job**

Lincoln was able to acknowledge errors, learn from them, and then move. In this way, he established a culture of learning in his administration, said Kearns Goodwin.

#### **3. Ready Willingness to Share Credit for Success**

In response to concerns expressed by friends about the actions of some of his Cabinet members, Lincoln stated that the "path to success and ambition is broad enough for two". When there was success, Lincoln shared the credit with all of those involved.

#### **4. Ready Willingness to Share Blame for Failure**

When mistakes were made by members of his Cabinet, Lincoln stood up for them. When contracts related to the war effort raised serious questions about a member of his administration, Lincoln spoke up and indicated that he and his entire Cabinet were to blame.

#### **5. Awareness of Own Weaknesses**

One of the weaknesses acknowledged by Lincoln was his tendency to give people too many chances and because he was aware, he was able to compensate for that weakness. As an example, George McClellan, Commander in Chief of the Union Army, refused to follow directives about the war effort. Lincoln eventually set a deadline and eventually removed McClellan from the position.

#### **6. Ability to Control Emotions**

Lincoln treated those he worked with well. However, he did get angry and frustrated, so he found a way to channel those emotions. He was known to sit down and write what he referred to as a "hot letter" to the individual he was angry with and then he would set the letter aside and not send it. If he did lose his temper, Lincoln would follow up with a kind gesture or letter to let the individual know he was not holding a grudge.

#### **7. Know How to Relax and Replenish**

Lincoln understood the importance of relaxation and humor to shake off the stress of the day and to replenish himself for the challenges of the next day. According to Kearns Goodwin, Lincoln had a wonderful sense of humor and loved to tell funny stories. He encouraged a healthy atmosphere of laughter and fun in his administration. He also enjoyed going to the theater and spending time with friends.

#### **8. Go Out into the Field and Manage Directly**



## ABRAHAM LINCOLN

During the Civil War, many soldiers died and there were many ups and downs. Lincoln established lasting connections with the troops by visiting the battlefield and hospitals, which also helped bolster morale. Lincoln also spent time talking with members of the public, taking 'public opinion baths'. He held public receptions and made a point of shaking everyone's hand and speaking to each individual.

### 9. Strength to Adhere to Fundamental Goals

In the summer of 1864, the war was not going well for the North. Members of his political party came to Lincoln and said that there was no way to win the war and he might need to compromise on slavery. Lincoln held firm on the issue of slavery and turned away from this advice.

### 10. Ability to Communicate Goals and Vision

Lincoln had a "remarkable ability to communicate his goals to his countrymen." He made concepts simple and communicated with an understanding of the concerns of the citizens. When the war ended and he won reelection, Lincoln did not focus on his achievements. Rather, in his second inaugural speech, Lincoln focused on bringing the country together as expressed in the following excerpt. "With malice toward none, with charity for all, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

### Critical moments of struggle, Civil War etc.

- During the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln responded to the crisis wielding powers as no other president before him. He distributed \$2 million from the Treasury for war material without an appropriation from Congress; he called for 75,000 volunteers into military service without a declaration of war; and he suspended the writ of habeas corpus, arresting and imprisoning suspected Confederate sympathizers without a warrant.
- Crushing the rebellion would be difficult under any circumstances, but the Civil War, with its preceding decades of white-hot partisan politics, was especially onerous. From all directions, Lincoln faced disparagement and defiance. He was often at odds with his generals, his Cabinet, his party and a majority of the American people.
- The Union Army's first year and a half of battlefield defeats made it especially difficult to keep morale up and support strong for a reunification the nation. With the hopeful, but by no means conclusive Union victory at Antietam on September 22, 1862, Lincoln felt confident enough to reshape the cause of the war from saving the union to abolishing slavery.
- He issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, which stated that all individuals who were held as slaves in rebellious states "henceforward shall be free." The action was more symbolic than effective because the North didn't control any states in rebellion and the proclamation didn't apply to Border States.
- Gradually, the war effort improved for the North, though more by attrition than by brilliant military victories. But by 1864, the Confederate armies had eluded major defeat and Lincoln was convinced he'd be a one-term president. When General Robert E. Lee, commander of the Army of Virginia, surrendered his forces to Union General Ulysses S. Grant and the war was concluded in 1865.



## ABRAHAM LINCOLN

### **Awards and achievements**

- With his strong will and own efforts, Lincoln became a lawyer
- With his oratory skill he arose as a national figure in Main Stream Politics
- Elected as 16<sup>th</sup> President of United States of America
- With his military strategies coupled with political faculties the Civil War was won during his Presidential term.
- Re-elected for the second time as US President with leading votes
- Post his death, the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, passed by Congress on January 31, 1865, was finally ratified and Slavery was abolished.

### **Literary Works**

- The Literary Works of Abraham Lincoln
- Abraham Lincoln and Literature by **David James Harkness and R. Gerald McMurtry**, *Lincoln's Favorite Poets* (<http://abrahamlincolnsclassroom.org/abraham-lincoln-in-depth/abraham-lincoln-and-literature/>)

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