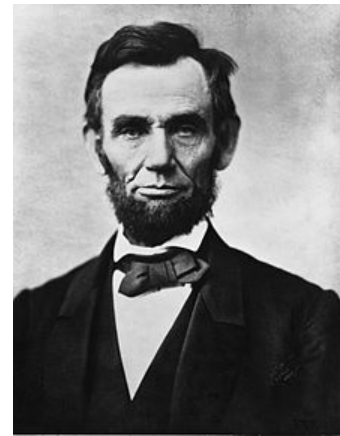


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|-------------------------|---|
| President | Abraham Lincoln |
| Chronological Order | 16 |
| Life Span | 1809-1865 |
| Home State | Illinois |
| Elected | 1860, 1864 |
| Political Party | Republican |
| Vice President | Hannibal Hamlin (first term), Andrew Johnson (second term) |
| First Lady | Mary Todd Lincoln |
| Children | 4 sons |
| Physical Attributes | 6'4" tall, lanky, strong, bearded, black hair, gray eyes |
| Undergraduate Education | None |
| Military Service | Captain in the Illinois Militia during the Black Hawk War |
| Profession | Attorney |
| Other Political Offices | House of Representatives |
| Nickname | Honest Abe |
| Family Lineage | English |
| Religious Affiliation | None |
| Biographical Notes | <p>1. Lincoln was the greatest president in American history because he did two transcendent things. First, he led the country, sometimes almost single-handedly, through its greatest crisis – the Civil War – and, in doing so, preserved the Union. Second, through his authorship Emancipation Proclamation and his leadership in gaining passage for the Thirteenth Amendment, he helped eliminate slavery in the United States. The difficulty of achieving both those things – virtually simultaneously – was best described by abolitionist Frederick Douglass in 1876 when he said of Lincoln:</p> |



His great mission was to accomplish two things: first to save his country from dismemberment and ruin; and, second, to free his country from the great crime of slavery. To do one or the other, or both, he must have the earnest sympathy and the powerful cooperation of his loyal fellow-countrymen. ... Had he put the abolition of slavery before the salvation of the Union, he would have inevitably driven from him a powerful class of the American people and rendered resistance to rebellion impossible. Viewed from the genuine abolition ground, Mr. Lincoln seemed tardy, cold, dull and indifferent; but measuring him by the sentiment of his country, a sentiment he was bound as a statesman to consult, he was swift, zealous, radical, and determined.

The trust that Abraham Lincoln had in himself and in the people was surprising and grand, but it was also enlightened and well-founded. He knew the American people better than they knew themselves, and his truth was based upon this knowledge.

Lincoln was an extremely talented politician and a strong wartime commander in chief, and with no more than two years of formal education, his persistent self-education enabled him to craft the most inspired presidential messages in American history.

2. Abraham Lincoln was born in 1809, the second child and first son of Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln, on an isolated farm near Hodgenville, Kentucky, fifty miles south of Louisville. Thomas Lincoln's ancestors came from England and first settled in Massachusetts in 1637. As a six-year-old boy, Thomas had watched when a

Shawnee raiding party murdered his father. Fatherless, he grew up “a wandering labor boy,” according to Lincoln, “literally without education.” He never learned to read and could only write enough to sign his name. Nancy Lincoln was intelligent, and Abe was convinced that he got his sharp mind from her and said, “All that I am or hope ever to be I get from my mother.” At the time of Abe’s birth, the family lived in a windowless log cabin with a dirt floor on a three-hundred-acre farm. The family moved to Indiana when Abe was seven years old.

Abe attended an “ABC” school for a year or two around the age of seven. But he was always big for his age and very strong, so from the age of eight on, he worked with his father in the fields and did not attend school. When Abe was nine, his mother died of milk sickness, a frontier disease caused by cows eating poisonous plants. Thomas left Abe and his sister Sarah at their remote farm and went back to civilization to find a new wife.

Thomas married a widow, Sarah Bush Johnston. Sarah became very close to Abe and had a significant impact on his life. She arrived with furniture, which made their house feel like a home, and books, which thrilled Abe. Sarah recognized how eager he was to learn and soon understood that he had little use for farm life. She encouraged him to develop his intellect by borrowing books from whomever he could. Abe blossomed under her care and later said that “She had been his best friend in the world, and no Son could love a Mother more than he loved her.”

3. Abe took the initiative to educate himself. He secured the books, decided what to study, and became his own teacher. Gaining access to reading material proved a nearly insurmountable obstacle where he lived. Relatives and neighbors recalled that Lincoln scoured the countryside to borrow books and read every volume “he could lay his hands on.” Every respite from the daily manual labor in the fields was a chance to read a page or two from *Pilgrim’s Progress* or *Aesop’s Fables*. He often read while resting his horse at the end of a long row of plowing.

This behavior did not endear him to his father. Thomas wanted Abe to concentrate on his work in the fields, and he also hired Abe out to work for other farmers. Thomas believed that his son was lazy, and he became so frustrated with Abe’s attitude that he was sometimes physically abusive towards him. Abe left home for good at the age of twenty-one.

4. Abe did learn one thing from his father: how to tell a story. The farm where Lincoln lived from ages two to seven stood along the old Cumberland Trail from Louisville to Nashville, and, in the evenings, Thomas would often swap tales with visitors and neighbors. He was a great storyteller and a gifted mimic. Abe would sit in the corner, listening and memorizing the stories. The next day, he would stand on a tree stump or a log and tell the stories to the other children, putting them into a language the children could understand. Repeating this process over and over, at such a young age, helped him develop the storytelling talent and oratorical skills that were the trademarks of his legal and political careers. According to his biographer Doris Kearns Goodwin, this “passion for rendering experience into powerful language remained with Lincoln throughout his life.”

5. Lincoln loved to tell stories, and one of his favorites described a visit to England by General Ethan Allen, a hero of the American Revolutionary War, shortly after the war. Allen’s hosts during the visit liked to tease him about being American and about the great American hero George Washington. So, one day, they put a portrait of Washington inside the outhouse, in a spot where Allen was bound to see it. When Allen came out of the outhouse and said nothing, they asked him if he had seen it. He said yes and commented that it was in a very appropriate place. His hosts asked why, and Allen explained, “There is nothing that will make an Englishman shit so quick as the sight of General Washington.”

6. Abraham Lincoln grew up in an antislavery Baptist family. Thomas Lincoln belonged to the South Fork Baptist Church and later to the Little Mount Separate Baptist Church in Kentucky. In Indiana, he was an active member of the Little Pigeon Creek Baptist Church. Opposition to slavery was a common theme in these congregations. In Kentucky, the Lincolns were part of the Baptist Licking-Locust Association Friends of Humanity, known as an “emancipation association.”

Young Abraham grew up in a family and among neighboring churchgoers who listened to antislavery preachers and subscribed to antislavery theology. Abraham would recite the sermons he had heard to his friends and served as a sexton in the Little Pigeon Creek Baptist Church. When Lincoln, later in life, said that he was “naturally antislavery,” he was not manufacturing a useful story for political purposes. He was reporting the facts of the matter.

When Lincoln was a young boy living in Kentucky near the Louisville-to-Nashville road, it is almost certain that he saw slaves being driven along the route. A contemporary told the writer Louis A. Warren: "I remember when I was a boy, one night a gang of slaves was driven up to my father's farm at dusk. The slave driver wanted to put them in the barn for the night, but my father was afraid of fire and would not allow it. We had a big haystack outdoors, and all the slaves, men, women, and children, were chained together and slept on the haystack that night. Some of the women had babies in their arms. I have never forgotten that sight." Discussing slavery with a young office boy in the 1850s, Lincoln remarked: "I saw it all myself when only a little older than you are now, and the horrid pictures are in my mind yet."

In his early twenties, Lincoln encountered slavery during a trip to New Orleans. According to his law partner, William Herndon:

One morning in ... the city [Lincoln] passed a slave auction. A vigorous and comely mulatto girl was being sold. She underwent a thorough examination at the hands of the bidders, they pinched her flesh and made her trot up and down the room like a horse, to show how she moved, and, in order as the auctioneer said, 'that the bidders might satisfy themselves' whether the article they were offering to buy was sound or not. The whole thing was so revolting that Lincoln moved away from the scene with a deep feeling of 'unconquerable hate.' Bidding his companions to follow him, he said, 'By God, boys, let's get away from this.'

7. In 1831, at the age of twenty-two, Lincoln moved to the village of New Salem, Illinois, where he had been promised a job as a clerk and bookkeeper at a general store. Working as a clerk in a general store provided Lincoln with an ideal foundation upon which to build his political career. The general store filled a unique role on the frontier. Beyond the sale of groceries, hardware, cloth, and bonnets, the store was an intellectual and social center, a place where the villagers gathered to read the newspaper, discuss local sporting events, and argue about politics. For farmers, who might ride fifty miles to grind grain into flour at the village gristmill, the store offered a common meeting place to unwind, exchange opinions, and share stories.

Within a few weeks of his arrival, Lincoln's gregarious nature and treasure trove of funny stories made him the center of attention at the store. At the same time, his unabashed eagerness to learn deeply impressed the people of New Salem. A book of some sort was always kept behind the counter so he could read during lulls in the general store's business. He once walked six miles to procure the leading grammar textbook of the time, which helped him develop a simple, compact style of speaking and writing, with short, clear sentences that could be "understood by all classes" of people.

The people of New Salem took Lincoln to heart – they loved his affable, easygoing ways. His honesty was a character trait that particularly stood out. "Honest Abe" was almost always the one chosen to judge horse races and athletic contests.

8. In 1832, Lincoln ran for a seat in the Illinois State Assembly as a member of the Whig Party, but his campaign was interrupted when he volunteered to join the Illinois State Militia to fight against the Sac and Fox Indians in what became known as the Black Hawk War. To his surprise, his company elected him captain. He served for three months, then returned to New Salem, where he not only served as the town's postmaster but also as the county's deputy surveyor. He lost the election, but ran again in 1834 and won easily. He was re-elected three times.

9. Between legislative sessions, Lincoln began to read law books, knowing that a legal education would likely help his political career. An autodidact by necessity, he studied "with nobody," he later said, pouring over cases and precedents late into the night after working long days as a postmaster and surveyor. Lincoln borrowed books, one at a time, from John Todd Stuart, a fellow legislator who had a law practice in Springfield. After finishing each book, he would ride a horse or hike the twenty miles from New Salem to Springfield to secure another loaner. Lincoln was admitted to the bar in 1836 and took a position as a junior partner in Stuart's firm.

Lincoln began to assert himself during his second legislative session. First, he mastered the legalese required for writing legislation so thoroughly that his colleagues called on him to draft bills and amendments. Second, when he spoke on the Assembly floor, his colleagues witnessed what the people of New Salem had already seen – a young man with a remarkable array of oratorical gifts. Lincoln told a friend: "They say I tell a great many stories. I reckon I do, but I have learned from experience that plain people ... are more easily influenced through the medium of a broad and humorous illustration than any other way."

Lincoln, the second youngest member of the Assembly, was selected by the Whig caucus as their minority leader. Their choice was based on his ability to intuit the feelings and intentions of his fellow Whigs and the

opposing Democrats as well. "We followed his lead," one Whig colleague recalled, "but he followed nobody's lead; he hewed the way for us to follow, and we gladly did so. He could grasp and concentrate the matters under discussion, and his clear statement of an intricate or obscure subject was better than an ordinary argument."

10. When Lincoln was in the Illinois State Assembly, politics was a rough-and-tumble business, and politicians often attacked their opponents verbally. Lincoln's counterattacks were so memorable that Illinoisans could recite them afterward almost word-for-word. The "lightning rod" episode is an example. George Forquer was a prominent Whig who had recently shifted to the Democratic Party after receiving a lucrative appointment as land register. He had also recently built a new house protected by a lightning rod. After Lincoln gave a speech, Forquer attacked him verbally, saying that it was time someone took Abe down. Lincoln remained quiet until Forquer had finished and then said, "The gentleman commenced by saying the young man would have to be taken down. I desire to live, and I desire place and distinction; but I would rather die now than, like the gentleman, live to see the day I would change my politics for an office worth three thousand dollars a year, and then feel compelled to erect a lightning rod to protect a guilty conscience from an offended God."

11. After joining John Todd Stuart's law firm, Lincoln began practicing law in the Eighth Judicial Circuit, a seventeen-county region in the center of the state. Twice each year for several years, Lincoln joined a traveling caravan of lawyers and judges, stopping for a few days at each county seat in the circuit, "bringing justice to the people." He loved riding the circuit and gained a reputation as an honest, conscientious attorney in courtrooms and communities across the state.

12. Lincoln was a political man. Today we picture him as a sober, serious-minded statesman, but, according to his biographer George McGovern, he was "a shrewd, masterful politician who knew and appreciated the tactical and strategic demands of down-to-earth politics." He was a devoted member of the Whig Party, which had been formed in 1833 to oppose the policies of Andrew Jackson. According to McGovern, Lincoln "became the party's workhorse in Illinois, relentlessly organizing, strategizing, and campaigning. ... Lincoln constructed a plan that organized Whigs down to the precinct level and established a state convention system that nominated candidates for state and national offices. He acted as the party's point man at rallies, fairs, and festivals," promoting the Whig agenda of federally sponsored internal improvements, a protective tariff, and a national bank.

13. In 1842, the Whigs in Lincoln's congressional district decided to rotate the nomination for the U.S. House of Representatives among Lincoln and two other men. Lincoln was elected in 1846 and served one term in the House.

While a congressman, he lived at Mrs. Sprigg's boarding house (a.k.a. the Abolition House) with several other Whig antislavery congressmen, including the abolitionist Joshua R. Giddings of Ohio. Lincoln voted for the Wilmot Proviso each time it was offered. He also proposed a very reasonable bill for the elimination of slavery in the District of Columbia, which included financial compensation to slave owners who freed their slaves and allowed Southern legislators to bring their slaves into the District. Southern congressmen defeated the measure. (N.B. The Wilmot Proviso prohibited slavery in the territories acquired from Mexico. It was attached to several bills but was voted down each time.)

Congressman Lincoln sharply criticized President Polk for, in his opinion, instigating the Mexican-American War as a means of obtaining Mexican land. The people of Illinois disagreed with him, and the Whig candidate for his seat was defeated in the 1848 election.

14. After serving in Congress, Lincoln returned home to his two-man law practice in Springfield, which he shared with his partner William Herndon. Herndon specialized in doing the legal research and the administration of the firm; Lincoln argued the cases in court. Mainly on the strength of Lincoln's reputation and skill, the firm built a strong base across Illinois and the Midwest with such notable clients as the Illinois Central Railroad and the Rock Island & Pacific Railroad. He was active in state and federal courts, arguing before the U.S. Supreme Court three times. By the mid-1850s, Lincoln was perhaps the most respected attorney in Illinois.

15. Lincoln was "thunderstruck" when the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 was enacted because he believed that the Missouri Compromise had "settled the slavery question forever." Now, he feared that slavery would

spread, and he could no longer stand by. "Aroused as never before," he traveled the state and argued against the law, quickly becoming the leader of the state's antislavery faction. During the next six years, he gave one hundred seventy-five speeches whose central theme was the necessity to exclude slavery from the territories as a step toward its eventual end everywhere. In his acceptance speech for the 1858 Republican nomination for the Senate, he said,

A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved — I do not expect the house to fall — but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other.

The Whig Party split along sectional lines over the Kansas-Nebraska Act and eventually disappeared. Lincoln helped found the Illinois branch of the Republican Party in 1856.

16. In 1858, Lincoln was the Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate, and his Democratic opponent was Stephen A. Douglas, the author of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. The "Little Giant" and "Honest Abe" engaged in a historic series of seven face-to-face debates in different Illinois congressional districts. Each debate lasted three hours. In the debates, Lincoln highlighted the fundamental difference between himself and Douglas: that Lincoln opposed the spread of slavery and Douglas did not.

The two men were a contrast in styles as well as political ideologies. Douglas was short (5'4"), sophisticated, and supremely confident. He traveled in high style by private rail car, surrounded by advisors and his beautiful young wife. Lincoln was tall (6'4"), gawky, and unassuming. He traveled alone in a regular passenger car.

Lincoln did well in the debates and established himself as a national figure. However, the Illinois legislative districts were drawn to favor the Democrats, and they won the state House of Representatives (40 to 35) and the state Senate (14 to 11), despite Republican candidates for the state legislature receiving 24,094 more votes than their Democratic counterparts. As a result, Douglas was re-elected by the legislature 54–46.

The debates significantly impacted the 1860 presidential election. During the debates, Lincoln baited Douglas into making statements about slavery that Southern Democrats deemed unacceptable. At the 1860 Democratic National Convention, the southerners remembered these statements, and the party split in two. The Northern Democrats nominated Douglas, and the Southern Democrats nominated John C. Breckinridge, which helped Lincoln win the general election.

17. Almost immediately after losing the 1858 Senate race, Lincoln began collecting newspaper transcriptions of his debates with Douglas. He gave the clippings to the influential Republican operative Oran Follett, whose publishing firm released them as a book, *The Political Debates Between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas in the 1858 Senatorial Campaign in Illinois*. The book came out in 1860 — right in time for Lincoln's presidential campaign. It proved to be a blockbuster success, selling out in a few months and helped convince the Republican party to nominate Lincoln for president at its 1860 national convention in Chicago.

18. In February 1860, after Lincoln decided to run for president, he delivered a compelling speech to a packed crowd at the Cooper Union in New York City, explaining his position on slavery. Namely, that it should be left alone in the current slave states, but should not be allowed to spread to the territories.

He explained that the nation lived under a Constitution framed by men who intended for the federal government to prevent the spread of slavery. Those same framers had prohibited the institution in the Northwest Territory (the region north of the Ohio River, east of the Mississippi River, and west of Pennsylvania) by passing the Northwest Ordinance. He said:

This is all Republicans ask — all Republicans desire — in relation to slavery. As those fathers marked it, so let it again be marked, as an evil not to be extended but to be tolerated and protected only because of and so far as its actual presence among us makes that toleration and protection a necessity.

He closed with:

Wrong as we think slavery is, we can yet afford to leave it alone where it is ... but can we, while our votes prevent it, allow it to spread to the National Territories, and to overrun us here in the Free States? If our sense of duty forbids this, then let us stand by our duty, fearlessly and effectively. ... LET US HAVE THE FAITH THAT RIGHT MAKES MIGHT, AND IN THAT FAITH, LET US, TO THE END, DARE TO DO OUR DUTY AS

WE UNDERSTAND IT.

Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune* reported, "since the days of Clay and Webster, no man has spoken to a larger assemblage of the intellect and mental culture of our city. No man has ever before made such an impression on his first appeal to a New York audience." Lincoln then continued eastward and gave similar speeches in eleven New England towns and cities, which provided him with invaluable national exposure for his 1860 presidential run.

19. Lincoln had three major rivals for the 1860 GOP presidential nomination: William H. Seward of New York, Salmon P. Chase of Ohio, and Edward Bates of Missouri. All three men were better known than Lincoln. Seward was a two-term U.S. senator and former governor. Chase was the governor of Ohio, a former U.S. senator, and a founder of the Ohio Republican Party. Bates was a former congressman who was very popular in the West.

The key policy differences between Lincoln and the others were their views on slavery. Lincoln's views were mainstream Republican: he was against the extension of slavery into the territories, but for leaving it alone in the states where it already existed. Seward's position was more "radical," i.e., more antislavery than Lincoln's. Chase's stance was even more radical than Seward's. Bates' beliefs were more "conservative," i.e., less antislavery than Lincoln's.

One other issue came into play. Some members of the new Republican Party were former members of the anti-immigrant Know-Nothing Party (a.k.a. the American Party). Bates had endorsed a Know-Nothing ticket in the St. Louis municipal elections and had presided over the 1856 Whig National Convention, which nominated Know-Nothing Millard Fillmore. These two acts made Bates persona non grata with the large German contingent of the Republican Party. In contrast, Seward had been very sympathetic to immigrants, which made him persona non grata with the Republican Party members who were former Know-Nothings. Lincoln disapproved of the anti-immigrant stand of the Know-Nothings but had not made his opinion public, so he had not offended anyone.

20. The Republican Party was a regional party in 1860; in the South, it existed only in Virginia and Texas. Therefore, to win the presidential election, the GOP had to win almost all the northern states. In particular, it needed to carry three of the four conservative northern states it had lost in 1856: Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. Each of these states was bordered on the south by a slave state. Consequently, voters in the southern parts of each state felt that Seward and Chase were too radical, and they were looking for an alternative candidate.

At the 1860 Republican National Convention (RNC), delegates from these four states formed the so-called Committee of Twelve to discuss who that candidate would be. The Illinois delegates were unanimous in their support for Lincoln, so his political operatives focused their attention on the neighboring state of Indiana. That state's gubernatorial candidate was strongly anti-Seward, and the chairman of the Indiana delegation, Caleb B. Smith, was strongly pro-Lincoln because Lincoln's team had promised him a cabinet post. Consequently, when the Committee of Twelve met, the Illinois and Indiana members supported Lincoln. Pennsylvania and New Jersey each had a "favorite son" candidate, Simon Cameron and William L. Dayton, respectively. Since Illinois and Indiana supported Lincoln, New Jersey was willing to switch from its favorite son candidate to Lincoln on the second ballot if Pennsylvania would agree to do the same. The Pennsylvania members tentatively agreed to switch from Cameron to Lincoln on the second ballot, subject to confirmation from the majority of their delegation.

Another convention detail played a role in Lincoln getting the nomination: the location of the RNC. In late 1859, an organizational meeting was held to select the convention site. The supporters of Seward, Chase, and Bates argued for New York, Ohio, and Missouri, respectively. At this point, Lincoln had not yet announced his candidacy, but he had a representative at this meeting. The representative shrewdly suggested Chicago as a "good neutral ground where everyone would have an even chance." Although Lincoln was known to everyone at the meeting, none of them considered him a serious candidate, and they agreed to hold the convention in Chicago. At the convention, Lincoln's team packed the hall with his boisterous supporters.

At the RNC, the tally at the end of the first ballot stood: Seward 173.5; Lincoln 102; Cameron 50.5; Chase 49; and Bates 48. Chase knew he was in trouble when he failed to get all of Ohio's votes. Bates sensed trouble when he did not carry Indiana. Seward's convention manager, the politically savvy New Yorker Thurlow Weed, was surprised by Lincoln's strength but was not overly concerned because he expected 48 votes from Pennsylvania on the second ballot, which would put Seward within striking distance of the victory number of 233.

To prevent that from happening, David Davis, Lincoln's convention manager, needed to make a deal with the Pennsylvanians. But Lincoln, who, like all the presidential candidates, did not attend the convention, had explicitly instructed Davis to make no deals that would "bind" him later. Davis ignored Lincoln's instructions and promised a cabinet position for Cameron in exchange for the votes of the Pennsylvania delegation. When the other members of Lincoln's team pointed out to Davis that he was going against the candidate's wishes, Davis replied, "Lincoln ain't here and don't know what we have to meet."

The second ballot revealed crucial shifts in Lincoln's favor. He picked up seventeen votes in New England, six votes in Delaware, four votes in New Jersey, and six votes in Ohio. Then came the biggest surprise of all. Forty-four votes in Pennsylvania flipped from Cameron to Lincoln. The tally at the end of the second ballot stood: Seward 184.5; Lincoln 181; Cameron 2; Chase 42.5; and Bates 35. On the third ballot, many of the Chase and Bates voters, seeing that their candidate could not win, switched to Lincoln, and he won the nomination.

21. In the election of 1860, the Democratic Party split: the Northern Democrats nominated Stephen A. Douglas, and the Southern Democrats nominated John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky. Also, a group of conservative former Whigs, mainly from the South, formed the Constitutional Union Party and nominated John Bell of Tennessee.

Lincoln swept all the free states, except for three of New Jersey's seven electoral votes, for a total of 180 electoral votes. Douglas won only Missouri and three of New Jersey's electoral votes, for a total of 12 electoral votes. Breckinridge won all the cotton states, plus Maryland and Delaware, for a total of 72 electoral votes. Bell won Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee for a total of 39 electoral votes. Lincoln received 39.8 percent of the popular vote.

22. After Lincoln's election, there was significant pressure on him – even from prominent Republicans like Thurlow Weed and William Seward – to compromise his stance on the extension of slavery to avoid the secession of southern states. After all, the Missouri Compromise (1820) and the Compromise of 1850 had made compromises to the slave states to avoid disunion.

One proposal was the Crittenden Compromise, a set of six proposed constitutional amendments designed to appease the South. The centerpiece of the package was the extension of the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific Ocean. Slavery would be prohibited north of the line and allowed and protected south of it, including territory "hereafter acquired," which made Cuba, Mexico, and the rest of Central America possible locations for future slave states.

Despite the political pressure, Lincoln remained adamantly opposed to any compromise that extended slavery to places where it did not already exist. In December 1860, he wrote to his good friend Elihu Washburne, "Prevent, as far as possible, any of our friends from demoralizing themselves, and our cause, by entertaining propositions for compromise of any sort on 'slavery extension.' There is no possible compromise on it, but which puts us under again and leaves all our work to do over again."

In January 1861, Lincoln expressed his frustration with the threats of secession and the proposals to extend the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific Ocean:

We have just carried out an election on principles fairly stated to the people. We are now told in advance, the government shall be broken up, unless we surrender to those we have beaten, before we take the offices. In this, they are either attempting to play upon us, or they are in dead earnest. Either way, if we surrender, it is the end of us, and of the government. They will repeat the experiment upon us *ad libitum*. A year will not pass, till we shall have to take Cuba as a condition upon which they will stay in the Union.

In other words, Lincoln refused to appease the South with further concessions, just as Churchill refused to appease the Germans before World War II.

23. After Lincoln's election in November 1860, but before his inauguration in March 1861, the seven "Deep South" states seceded from the Union: South Carolina (December 20), Mississippi (January 9), Florida (January 10), Alabama (January 11), Georgia (January 19), Louisiana (January 26), and Texas (February 1). They did this because they believed Lincoln's election was a harbinger for the ultimate extinction of slavery. The seven states formed the Confederate States of America (CSA) on February 8, 1861. After Lincoln tried to resupply Fort Sumter, four "Upper South" states seceded and joined the CSA: Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas.

The four Upper South states were key to the viability of the CSA because of their industrial capabilities and the strong military leaders who hailed from those states: Robert E. Lee, “Stonewall” Jackson, Joe Johnston, J.E.B. Stuart, and A.P. Hill of Virginia; D.H. Hill of North Carolina; and Nathan Bedford Forrest of Tennessee. Virginia’s industrial capacity was nearly as great as the capacities of the seven Deep South states combined. The Trafalgar Iron Works in Richmond was the only plant in the Confederacy capable of manufacturing heavy ordinance.

24. When the first seven states seceded, the last two – Louisiana and Texas – were crucial. Had secession been limited to states east of the Mississippi River, many northerners would have been tempted to let them go. A country formed by those states would never be more than a rump, agrarian nation on the wrong side of history, weighed down by slavery, while the rest of the U.S. flourished with its ever-expanding system of railroads and burgeoning industrialization.

But when secession jumped the Mississippi River, it was completely unacceptable because the new country would control New Orleans, a vital port for exporting products from the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys. In 1860, the total value of trade through New Orleans, including imports and exports, was \$324 million (\$12.3 billion in 2025 dollars).

25. Lincoln selected a diverse cabinet that, with two exceptions, served him well. He chose: for State, William H. Seward (R-NY); for Treasury, Salmon P. Chase (R-OH); for Attorney General, Edward Bates (R-MO); for War, Simon Cameron (R-PA); for Navy, Gideon Welles (R-CT); for Postmaster General, Montgomery Blair (D-MD); for Interior, Caleb B. Smith (R-IN). (N.B. Lincoln chose his four main rivals for the 1860 Republican presidential nomination to be members of his cabinet: Seward, Cameron, Chase, and Bates.)

Seward was an excellent secretary of state and became Lincoln's closest confidant and most trusted advisor. He deftly used diplomacy to prevent Great Britain from joining the Civil War on the side of the Confederates in the RMS *Trent* Affair. He also made sure that neither Great Britain nor France recognized the Confederate States of America as a nation. Chase did an admirable job financing the Civil War, but was a headache politically, because he coveted the 1864 Republican presidential nomination. Bates was level-headed and provided Lincoln with savvy legal advice. Cameron was very disorganized and allegedly corrupt. Lincoln replaced him after less than a year with Edwin M. Stanton (D-OH). Stanton became a great secretary of war. He worked tirelessly to oversee the complicated multifront logistics of the war, always kept the soldiers in mind, and was someone Lincoln could always count on. Stanton had a telegraph in his office, and he and Lincoln bonded during the long nights they sat in Stanton’s office awaiting news of the latest battle. Welles was an excellent secretary of the navy. He supervised the blockade of southern ports, effectively sealing off the Confederate coastline and preventing the exchange of cotton for war supplies. The blockade contributed significantly to the Union victory in the Civil War. He also increased the number of ships in the Navy from 45 to 671. Blair was an effective postmaster general. He modernized the postal service and made sure that the soldiers in the field could send and receive mail in a timely fashion. Smith opposed the Emancipation Proclamation and resigned for medical reasons in December 1862.

26. Lincoln believed that the Union was indivisible and hence that the southern states never really left the Union; they were just in a temporary state of rebellion against it. Consequently, he never acknowledged the existence of the Confederate States of America. At his first inauguration, he made a strong plea for unity:

We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of mutual affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

27. Lincoln’s term began with the question of what to do about Fort Sumter, a Union military installation on an island in Charleston Harbor near the city of Charleston, South Carolina. South Carolina had already seceded from the Union, and the Confederates demanded the evacuation of the fort so that they could take it over; Lincoln was under enormous pressure to give it up to preserve peace. He decided not to do so because he felt that that action would constitute a de facto recognition of the Confederate States of America.

Instead, he decided to resupply the fort, but in a way that would put the onus of starting the war on the other side. Instead of sending reinforcements, he sent ships with just food and notified the South of his peaceful intentions. Confederate President Jefferson Davis ordered the Confederate artillery to bombard the fort before the vessels arrived, thus starting the Civil War.

28. Because of the war, Lincoln's constitutional duties as commander in chief superseded normal presidential activities. He devoted most of his efforts to shaping the Union war aims, devising strategy, goading commanders, and holding together a fractious coalition of Radical Republicans, moderates, War Democrats, and border-state Unionists who supported the war. During the war, he often worked eighteen hours a day, seven days a week.

29. The Union forces commanded by General Irvin McDowell lost the first significant engagement of the war, the Battle of Bull Run, near Washington, D.C., in July of 1861. Lincoln then replaced him with General George McClellan. McClellan was very reticent to use the army to attack the Confederates, and when he did, he was defeated by General Robert E. Lee during the Peninsula Campaign in the spring of 1862.

In the West, the news was better. In February of 1862, General Ulysses S. Grant captured Fort Henry on the Tennessee River and Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River. At the latter, the Confederate commander, an old friend of Grant's from West Point, sent a formal request to Grant for a truce to negotiate the terms of the Confederate surrender. Grant replied, "No terms except complete and unconditional surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works." Fourteen thousand Confederate soldiers surrendered, and the episode earned Grant a nickname: Unconditional Surrender. In the spring of 1862, Admiral Farragut captured New Orleans for the Union.

30. By late 1862, the war in the East was not going well, and Lincoln felt that extraordinary measures were necessary to save the Union. It became evident from battlefield reports that the Confederates were using their slaves to great advantage. According to Lincoln biographer Doris Kearns Goodwin, the slaves "dug trenches and built fortifications for the army. They were brought into camps to serve as teamsters, cooks, and hospital attendants so that the Confederate soldiers were free to fight. They labored on the home front, tilling fields, raising crops, and picking cotton so that their masters could go to war without fearing their families would go hungry." Lincoln realized that if the rebels could be divested of their slaves – who would then be free to join Union forces – the North could gain a decided military advantage.

Seen in this light, the emancipation of those slaves could be considered a military necessity and, hence, a legitimate exercise of the president's constitutional war powers. Thus, the constitutional protection of slavery in those states could and would be overridden by the constitutionally sanctioned war powers of the president. Lincoln announced the Emancipation Proclamation that freed the slaves in the Confederacy in late 1862, and it went into effect on January 1, 1863. The proclamation did not affect the status of slaves in the four slave states that did not secede from the Union (Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, and Delaware). But it changed the relationship of the national government to slavery forever.

Approximately 179,000 Black men served in the Union Army during the Civil War. Many of these individuals were formerly enslaved in Confederate states, while others were free Black men from the North and loyal border states. Approximately 19,000 Black men served in the Union Navy.

31. In July of 1863, Grant captured the Confederate fortress at Vicksburg on the Mississippi River, with 30,000 Confederate soldiers surrendering. Shortly after, the rebels at Port Hudson, Louisiana, surrendered, giving the Union total control of the Mississippi River. This isolated Texas, Arkansas, and the western part of Louisiana from the rest of the Confederacy.

During the same month, General Robert E. Lee drove his army into Union territory, all the way to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, where he met the Union army commanded by General George Meade. A fierce battle ensued, which Meade won. The casualties were high on both sides: 28,000 for Lee and 23,000 for Meade. In November, Lincoln traveled to Gettysburg to dedicate the battlefield cemetery, and he gave his famous Gettysburg Address, a two-minute-long speech in which he explained that the Civil War was not only being fought for the preservation of the Union but also for the freedom promised to all Americans in the Declaration of Independence. The full text of the address is:

Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as the final resting place for those who here gave their lives, that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate – we can not consecrate – we can not hallow – this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to

add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here, have, thus far, so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us – that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion – 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.

Grant won a series of engagements near Chattanooga in November of 1863 that gave the Union total control of Tennessee, which set the stage for Sherman's invasion of Georgia.

32. Throughout Lincoln's life, he often used an anecdote or humor to make his point in a conversation. During the early part of the Civil War, one Union general after another disappointed him, either by losing or by failing to engage the enemy. But General Grant was different – he won battle after battle in the West, relentlessly pursuing the Confederates. One day a delegation came to Lincoln with a serious allegation against Grant: he was too fond of liquor and was often drunk. Lincoln listened to them, then turned to an aide and said, "Find out what he is drinking and order it for my other generals."

He also used humor to disarm his critics. During the Lincoln-Douglas debates, Douglas accused Lincoln of being two-faced. Lincoln replied calmly, "I leave it to my audience. If I had two faces, would I be wearing this one?"

33. The Lincoln administration enacted three landmark agricultural pieces of legislation: the Homestead Act (1862), which gave land to farmers; the Morrill Land Grant College Act (1862), which funded the establishment of agricultural and mechanical arts colleges; and the creation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (1862). According to Lincoln biographer George McGovern, these three things "formed a tripod on which much of America's great agricultural success has rested from that day to the present."

Lincoln strongly supported the construction of a transcontinental railroad. He viewed it as vital for uniting the nation, stimulating trade and travel, and fostering economic growth. Congress passed the Pacific Railway Acts of 1862, which facilitated the construction of a railroad and telegraph line from Omaha, Nebraska, to San Francisco, California, to complete the transcontinental railroad. The acts authorized the issuance of government bonds to finance the project and granted federally owned land directly to railroad companies. The transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869.

34. In the run-up to the 1864 presidential election, Lincoln's re-election prospects did not look good, primarily because the war in the East was still not going well. To help his re-election prospects, the Republican Party joined with the War Democrats to form the National Union Party. The two major planks in the party platform were unconditional Confederate surrender and a constitutional amendment to abolish slavery.

After the National Union Party nominated Lincoln for president, there was pressure to choose a War Democrat for vice president, even though the Republican incumbent, Hannibal Hamlin, was available. Lincoln declined to express his preference and allowed the convention to make the choice. (N.B. Presidential nominees did not choose the vice-presidential nominee until well into the twentieth century.) Eventually, the choice came down to two War Democrats: Daniel Dickinson of New York and Andrew Johnson of Tennessee. At this point, an unwritten political rule came in to play: two highly significant federal posts (e.g., president, vice president, secretary of state, and secretary of the treasury) were generally not allotted to a single state. Consequently, William Seward's friends knew that if Dickinson became vice president, then Seward could not continue to be secretary of state. So, they helped Johnson get the nomination.

Johnson's nomination had devastating consequences for the nation because he was uneducated, a racist, and temperamentally ill-suited to be president. It is understandable that the convention wanted a War Democrat, but it is surprising that Lincoln acquiesced to such a flawed running mate. Perhaps the president – who had lost elections – felt that Johnson gave him the best chance to win.

As Election Day drew closer, three significant military victories increased Lincoln's re-election prospects. First, in early August, Admiral David Farragut won the Battle of Mobile Bay by attacking the Confederate fleet, giving the command: "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!" Second, on September 3, General Sherman wired to Washington: "Atlanta is ours, and fairly won." Third, on September 19, General Philip Sheridan defeated General Jubal Early in the Shenandoah Valley, destroying one-third of the opposing army. Lincoln was re-elected in an electoral landslide, 212 to 21. The Republicans ran up huge majorities in both the House

and the Senate.

35. For all the slaves to be free forever, the abolition of slavery would have to be made part of the Constitution. Lincoln won re-election on a platform pledging to do this, and in January 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution was proposed in Congress. The measure passed easily in the Senate, but the House was problematic.

Lincoln worked tirelessly to gain the necessary votes in the House. He met with and appealed to Democratic and border state House members whose votes were in doubt, emphasizing the moral imperative and strategic necessity of abolishing slavery to ensure the stability of the Union after the Civil War. Lincoln's team, led by Secretary of State Seward, used federal appointments, legislative favors, and campaign contributions as inducements to win the vote. The bill received three votes more than the two-thirds needed for passage in the House, and it was widely acknowledged that it would never have passed without Lincoln's skillful guidance. Within a year, the required three-fourths of the states had ratified the amendment, ending slavery in America forever.

36. Throughout Lincoln's life, he displayed uncommon magnanimity toward those who opposed him. This was evident in his second inaugural address, which was given as the war was winding down. In it he made the following request:

With malice towards none; with charity toward all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive 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.

37. Throughout the war, General Robert E. Lee had remarkable success against a variety of Union generals in battles fought in the Virginia/Maryland/Pennsylvania region, and Lincoln came to realize that, to defeat Lee – and end the war – he needed his best general: Grant. Grant came to Washington in March of 1864 to do two things: take over command of the entire Union army, as General in Chief, and pursue Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.

In the summer of 1864, Grant, with 118,000 men, engaged Lee, with 64,000 men, in a series of furious battles, known as the Wilderness Campaign. Grant suffered 17,500 casualties and Lee between 7,500 and 11,000. Public opinion in the North was appalled by this type of "blood and guts" fighting. But Grant's basic strategy worked; he could trade two men for one and still win. Grant wrote, "I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer." It did – and then some.

The end came on April 9, 1865 when Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Court House in Virginia. Grant did not humiliate Lee by demanding his sword, and he offered generous terms of surrender: parole for Lee and his 28,000 men, the Confederate soldiers were allowed to keep their horses and mules (so that they could go home and plow their fields), and rations for Lee's starving army. (Lincoln had suggested to Grant that he offer favorable terms.) Lee was truly moved and never forgot Grant's graciousness. Grant told his troops, "The war is over, the Rebels are our countrymen again."

38. On April 14, 1865, John Wilkes Booth and three other southern sympathizers set into motion a plan to simultaneously assassinate President Lincoln, Secretary of State Seward, and Vice President Johnson. The triple homicide was scheduled for 10:15 p.m. Booth was assigned to shoot Lincoln at Ford's Theatre. Lewis Powell was supposed to kill Seward at his Lafayette Square home. George Atzerodt was designated to murder Johnson in his suite at the Kirkwood House hotel.

Booth, an actor, was familiar with the layout at Ford's; he also attended a dress rehearsal the day before to rehearse his scheme for shooting Lincoln in the presidential box and then escaping into the alley behind the theatre. At 10:12 p.m., an impeccably dressed John Wilkes Booth walked upstairs to the presidential box. The Metropolitan policeman assigned to protect the president had stepped away, and Booth presented his calling card to the White House footman and entered the box. Once inside, he raised his pistol, pointed it at the back of the president's head, and fired the fatal shot. He then jumped out of the box, down to the stage twelve feet below, and escaped.

Seward was in bed, wearing a neck brace to help him recover from a carriage accident. Shortly after 10 p.m., Powell gained access to the secretary of state's home by posing as a messenger carrying a prescription from a pharmacy. Once inside, Seward's son Fred tried to deny the "messenger" access to his father. Powell pulled out a gun, which misfired, and then knocked Fred unconscious with the gun butt. Powell then entered Seward's bedroom, stabbed him multiple times in the face and neck with a large Bowie knife, and then fled.

Seward's wounds were not fatal because the neck brace protected his carotid artery.

At 10 p.m., Atzerodt was seated at the bar of the Kirkwood House when he suddenly changed his mind about assassinating Johnson. He left the hotel and never returned.

39. If Lincoln had not been assassinated, Reconstruction in the South would have been very different. Lincoln wanted to offer good terms to the rebellious states and get them back into the Union quickly (provided they fulfilled reasonable stipulations); the Radical Republicans in Congress wanted to punish the South. Lincoln wanted to protect the newly freed slaves; his successor, Andrew Johnson, did not consider this a priority. Only Lincoln would have had the skill and political capital to overcome the Radical Republicans in Congress and pull these two things off.

Lincoln's plans for Reconstruction were simple. First, before the president would pardon a rebel, he must not only swear allegiance to the Union and the Constitution but also accept the emancipation of the slaves. Lincoln planned to offer full pardons to those who took the oath, except for those who had served at the highest levels of the Confederate government or military. Second, when the number of men taking the oath reached ten percent of the votes cast in the 1860 election, they could "re-establish a State government" recognized by the United States. The names and boundaries of the states would remain as they were before. Unfortunately, Lincoln's plans were not implemented.

40. Mary Todd Lincoln was very intelligent and exceptionally well-educated; she studied languages and literature for four years at an exclusive boarding school and then spent two more years at an academy for "advanced studies." She was also fascinated by politics because she came from a political family. Her father, Robert Todd, a Whig who served in the Kentucky House and Senate, loved to hold dinner parties at their Lexington, Kentucky, home. Henry Clay was a frequent guest, along with members of Congress, cabinet members, governors, and foreign diplomats. Mary was a feisty partisan Whig, and her sisters joked that she was "destined to be the wife of some future president." In her late teens, Mary had a falling out with her stepmother and went to live with her married sister, Elizabeth Todd Edwards, in Springfield, Illinois, where she met Lincoln.

The members of the Todd family were slave owners and – except for Mary and one brother – committed Confederates during the Civil War. Her brother George was a surgeon in the Confederate army. Three of her half-brothers were Confederate soldiers. David Todd was wounded at Vicksburg and served, for a time, as the commandant of the infamous Libby Prison. Confederate President Jefferson Davis removed him from this post for his extreme cruelty directed toward Union prisoners. Samuel Todd was killed at the Battle of Shiloh. Alexander Todd was killed at the Battle of Baton Rouge. Her sister Emilie's husband, Confederate General Benjamin Hardin Helms, was killed at the Battle of Chickamauga.

As First Lady, Mary made it her mission to refurbish the White House. Peeling walls were stripped and covered with elegant Parisian wallpaper. New sets of china adorned the tables. Magnificent new rugs replaced their threadbare predecessors. According to Lincoln biographer Doris Kearns Goodwin, "As the bills came in, however, Mary discovered that she had overspent her \$20,000 allowance by more than \$6,800." Afraid to tell her husband, she convinced the White House groundskeeper to inflate his expense accounts and funnel the extra money to her. Mary also used her patronage influence to reduce bills and accepted gifts from wealthy donors. At one point, she asked Lincoln's secretary, John Hay, to turn over the White House stationery account for her personal use, and she later asked him to pay her as the White House steward. Hay refused both requests, and Mary Todd was furious. She tried to have him fired, and he gave her the nickname the "Hell Cat." When Lincoln found out about her actions, he was mortified that she had spent so much money "for flub dubs" for the White House.

The White House years were not happy ones for Mary. In 1862, two of her sons, eleven-year-old Willie and nine-year-old Tad, contracted typhoid fever caused by the contaminated White House water system. Tad survived, but Willie, whose immune system had been weakened by a previous illness, died. Mary went into a deep depression. Her grief over Willie's death was so devastating that she took to her bed for three weeks, so desolated that she could not attend his funeral or look after Tad. She was distraught for several months. After Lincoln was assassinated, she was never the same again.

41. Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln had four sons: Robert, Eddie, Willie, and Tad. Eddie died of thyroid cancer in 1850, one month shy of his fourth birthday. Willie died of typhoid fever at age eleven in 1862. Tad – who became particularly close to his mother after his father's assassination – died in 1871 at the age of eighteen of a heart problem. Robert went on to have a full life. He graduated from Harvard; served as a captain under Grant in the final months of the Civil War; served as secretary of war under James Garfield and

Chester Arthur; served as U.S. Minister to the United Kingdom under Benjamin Harrison and Grover Cleveland.

42. In the Gettysburg Address, Lincoln declared that the United States is a country “dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” The men who founded the Confederate States of America did not believe in this principle; they were white supremacists. Alexander Stephens, the Vice President of the Confederacy, stated: “Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea” to “all men are created equal.” Stephens explained that the Confederacy’s “foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery subordination to the superior race is his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based on this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth.”

See the next page for a list of references.

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