

Abraham Lincoln 1806 - 1864

In This Temple,

As In the Hearts of the People,
For Whom He Saved the Union,
the Memory of Abraham Lincoln

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on 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 battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a 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 cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot 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 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.

Abraham Lincoln, November 19, 1863

The Gettysburg Address

Lincoln endured a life of hardships and challenges that began early. At age nine he lost his mother and left school to help support his family. Having less than a year of school, Lincoln was a self taught man.

To sustain, the family moved from Kentucky to Illinois. There Lincoln lost his first job as a clerk when Offutt's business collapsed. In 1833, Lincoln and Berry, a successor store, failed. Lincoln spent the next seventeen years of his life paying off the money he borrowed from friends to start his business.

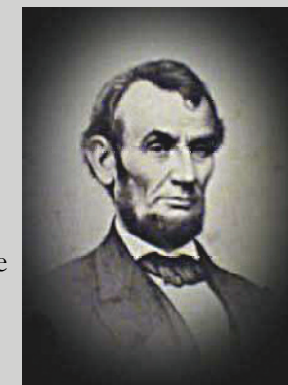
In 1832, he lost his campaign for the state legislature. In 1835 Lincoln lost his fiancée to fever. In 1836, he suffered a nervous breakdown.

After a rocky courtship and bouts of depression, Lincoln married Mary Todd in 1842. Three of their four children died in childhood.

In 1858 Lincoln ran against Stephen A. Douglas for Senator of Illinois. He lost the election, but gained a national reputation that won him the Republican nomination for President in 1860.

Throughout the 1850's there was a growing political, social, and economic rift between the values of Americans in the north and the south; slavery is one of the primary objections.

Lincoln, who had declared "Government cannot endure permanently half slave, half free..." was elected president on November 6, 1860.



He was the first Republican president. Having received 180 of 303 electoral votes and 40 percent of the popular vote, the South had voted decisively against him. Lincoln had inherited a country on the verge of civil war.

Secession from the Union began first with South Carolina on December 20, 1860. Within two months Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas followed. On April 12, 1861 Confederate batteries fired on Fort Sumter in South Carolina; the Civil War had begun.

Almost two years later, losing almost every major battle, many northern supporters questioned their cause. To save the Union, Lincoln galvanized the fight as a revolutionary struggle for the abolition of slavery and on January 1, 1863, he issued the "Emancipation Proclamation" freeing all slaves in territories held by the Confederates and emphasized the enlisting of black soldiers in the Union Army.

Lincoln never let the world forget that the Civil War involved an even larger issue. 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.

On April 14, 1865, Lincoln was assassinated at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. by John Wilkes Booth, an actor, who thought he was helping the South.

In saving the Union, Lincoln transformed the American peoples' pre-civil war concept of a union of many states to a single Nation of the United States.

The 16th United States President