



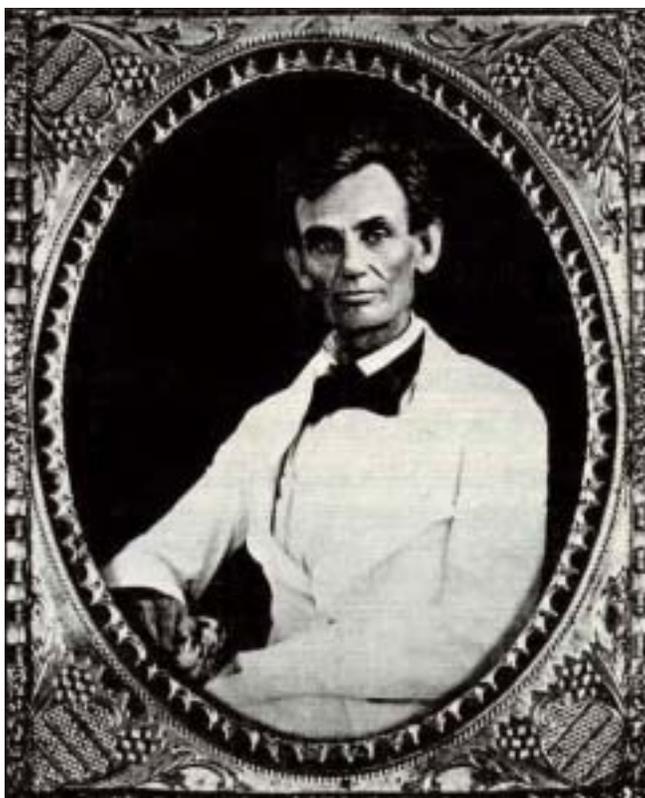
Prairie Pages

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Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

Abraham Lincoln



Lincoln was a lawyer when this photo was taken in Beardstown in 1858.

Abraham Lincoln is one of the most famous and popular presidents the United State has ever had. He was born on February 12, 1809, in the backwoods of Kentucky. His family lived in a one-room log cabin. His father, Thomas, was a poor farmer. His mother, Nancy, died when Abraham was just eight years old. His father married Sarah Bush Johnson the next year.

When Abraham was a young boy he worked for \$.25 a day chopping trees and digging wells. Like most children of his time, he did not attend school on a regular basis. He was self-educated.

He taught himself by reading and by studying borrowed books.

Lincoln briefly left home when he was seventeen. He worked as a ferryman's helper on the Ohio River. Later he traveled to New Orleans on a flatboat to sell produce for a friend. The 2,200-mile journey took three months. Lincoln earned \$24. He gave the money to his father, which was the law and custom of the time.

When Lincoln was twenty-two he moved to New Salem, Illinois. He became a shopkeeper. He enlisted in the militia during the Black Hawk War. He delivered mail. He became a surveyor. He entered politics and ran for the state legislature. He served as a state representative from 1834 - 1842. Like most men of this period he became a "jack-of-all-trades." Eventually he decided to become a lawyer. He received his license after studying just three years. Lincoln moved to Springfield in 1837 where he became a partner in a law firm with John T. Stuart.

In Springfield he met Mary Ann Todd. Her family was well-to-do and disapproved of Lincoln. They thought he was a country bumpkin. Even so the two married. For several years the Lincolns lived at the Globe Tavern. Room and board at the hotel cost \$4 a month. Later they bought a house close to Springfield's business district. Located at Eighth and Jackson Streets, it cost \$1,200.



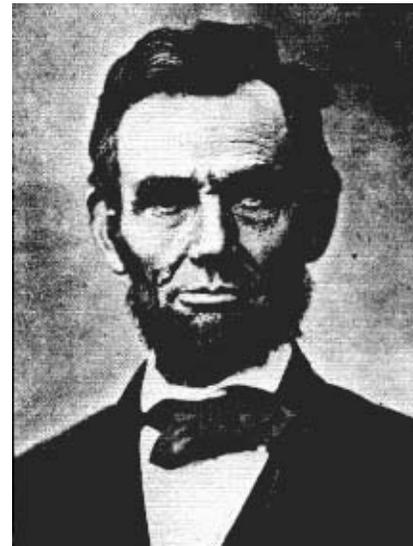
Mary Lincoln holds the hand of her son Tad, while Willie stands on the left. Taken in 1860 after Lincoln was elected President, the photo satisfied people's curiosity about his family.

In 1846 Lincoln was elected to the United State House of Representatives. He spent two years in Washington then returned to Springfield.

Back in Springfield he practiced law with William Herndon. He became very successful. Every spring and fall he traveled throughout central Illinois as a lawyer on the Eighth Judicial Circuit.

He represented people at trials. He met many people and argued many cases in county courthouses.

This portrait was made eleven days before Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address in November, 1863. Lincoln's speech lasted about two minutes.



Abraham and Mary became the parents of four boys. The eldest, Robert, was born at the Globe Tavern. Eddie, Willie, and Tad were born in their parents' home. The only son who lived to adulthood was Robert. Edward was not yet four years old when he died in 1850. William, who lived for two years in the White House with his parents, was eleven when he died in 1862. His parents were grief stricken. Tad lived to the age of 18. He died in 1871.

Lincoln reentered politics to run for the United State Senate in 1858. He was disturbed by the spread of slavery outside the South. He believed the Declaration of Independence applied to blacks as well as whites. He believed that black people should have the same rights as white people.

Lincoln and the other candidate, Stephen A. Douglas, debated seven times across Illinois. Lincoln lost the Senate race, but the exposure made him known across the country. Two years later, in 1860, Lincoln was elected president of the United States.

After Lincoln was elected president the southern states seceded from the Union to form the Confederacy. They prepared for war. The Civil War started in April, 1861. Slavery divided the nation. Most people thought the Civil War would be over quickly. It lasted four years. Over 600,000 people were killed.

During the war Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. It freed slaves in the Confederate states. After Lincoln was reelected president in 1864 he pressed congressmen to pass the Thirteenth Amendment. This amendment to the Constitution prohibited slavery everywhere in the United States.

Lincoln was assassinated in April, 1865.

Abraham Lincoln knew he was unpopular with many people. During the war he was protected by bodyguards. They watched over him after the war also. Five days after the Civil War ended he and Mary went to a play. The play, *Our American Cousin*, was being performed at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. During the play, John Wilkes Booth entered Lincoln's private box and shot the president. The next morning, April 15, 1865, Abraham Lincoln died.



Abraham Lincoln was a loving and indulgent father. He is shown here with his son Tad in 1864.

The body of Abraham Lincoln was brought back to Illinois on a special funeral train. The train passed through many cities before it reached Springfield. Lincoln was buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery in a special vault. In 1871 Lincoln's body was moved to the tomb in which it now rests. Inside the Lincoln Tomb are his wife and their three younger sons. Many people visit to pay their respects each year.

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