

american history abraham lincoln

American History Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States, stands as one of the most revered and influential figures in American history. His leadership during a turbulent era marked by civil war, his unwavering commitment to ending slavery, and his enduring legacy of unity and equality have cemented his place as a pivotal figure in shaping the nation. Understanding Abraham Lincoln's life, presidency, and lasting impact offers valuable insights into the foundational values of America and the struggles that shaped its evolution.

Early Life and Background of Abraham Lincoln

Born into Poverty and Self-Education

Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809, in a log cabin in Hardin County (now LaRue County), Kentucky. His humble beginnings in a frontier family laid the groundwork for his resilient character and relentless pursuit of knowledge. Despite limited formal schooling, Lincoln was largely self-educated, devouring books and developing a keen interest in law, politics, and literature.

Family and Early Career

Lincoln's family moved several times during his childhood, eventually settling in Indiana and later Illinois. He worked various jobs, including rail-splitter, store clerk, and surveyor, before finding his calling in law and politics. His dedication to self-improvement and his innate sense of justice propelled him into public service.

Political Rise and Path to the Presidency

Entry into Law and Politics

Lincoln's legal career began in Springfield, Illinois, where he gained recognition for his skill as a lawyer. His reputation as an honest and competent attorney earned him the nickname "Honest Abe." He also became active in politics, serving in the Illinois State Legislature and later in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Emergence as a National Leader

As tensions over slavery and states' rights intensified, Lincoln emerged as a leading voice of the anti-slavery movement. His debates with Senator Stephen A. Douglas, particularly the Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858, showcased his eloquence and moral conviction. Although he lost the Senate race, these

debates elevated his national profile and set the stage for his presidential bid.

Presidency and Leading the Nation Through Crisis

Elected as the 16th President

Lincoln was elected president in 1860 as the Republican candidate, primarily on a platform opposing the expansion of slavery into new territories. His election prompted several Southern states to secede from the Union, leading to the outbreak of the Civil War.

Challenges During the Civil War

Lincoln faced immense challenges as he sought to preserve the Union amid internal conflict. Key aspects of his leadership include:

- Strategic Military Decisions: Overseeing Union armies and making critical military appointments.
- Emancipation Proclamation: Issued on January 1, 1863, this executive order declared all slaves in Confederate-held territory to be free, redefining the purpose of the war and paving the way for the abolition of slavery nationwide.
- Political Leadership: Navigating the complexities of wartime politics, maintaining public support, and managing opposition.

Passage of the 13th Amendment

Lincoln championed the passage of the 13th Amendment, ratified in December 1865, which abolished slavery entirely in the United States. This legislative achievement was a cornerstone of his legacy, reflecting his commitment to human rights and equality.

Assassination and Legacy

The Tragic End

On April 14, 1865, just days after the surrender of Confederate forces, Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. His death shocked the nation and marked the loss of a leader dedicated to reconciliation and progress.

Enduring Impact and Legacy

Lincoln's influence extends far beyond his lifetime, shaping America's core values and political landscape. His leadership during the Civil War and his efforts to end slavery continue to inspire movements for justice and equality worldwide. Key aspects of his legacy include:

- Emancipation and Civil Rights: Pioneering the path toward racial equality and civil rights legislation.
- Preservation of the Union: Demonstrating the importance of unity and national integrity.
- Moral Leadership: Embodying integrity, humility, and a steadfast commitment to moral principles.

Key Achievements and Contributions of Abraham Lincoln

- Leadership During the Civil War: Preserving the United States as a single, united nation.
- The Emancipation Proclamation: Transforming the Civil War into a fight against slavery.
- The 13th Amendment: Officially abolishing slavery in the United States.
- Gettysburg Address: A short, powerful speech emphasizing national unity, liberty, and democracy.
- Modernization of the Presidency: Strengthening executive power and setting precedents for future leadership.

Conclusion: Abraham Lincoln's Enduring Significance

Abraham Lincoln's life story is a testament to the transformative power of perseverance, moral conviction, and leadership in times of crisis. From his humble beginnings to his rise as a national hero, his unwavering dedication to ending slavery and maintaining the Union has left an indelible mark on American history. As a symbol of justice, equality, and resilience, Lincoln's legacy continues to influence the United States and the world, inspiring generations to strive for a more perfect union.

Understanding Lincoln's contributions provides valuable lessons in leadership, morality, and the importance of standing firm in one's principles. His life remains a shining example of how individual determination and moral clarity can shape the course of history and foster lasting change.

Frequently Asked Questions

What were Abraham Lincoln's main goals during the Civil War?

Abraham Lincoln's primary goals during the Civil War were to preserve the Union, abolish slavery, and restore the United States as a unified nation.

How did Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation impact the course of American history?

The Emancipation Proclamation, issued in 1863, declared all slaves in

Confederate states to be free, shifting the war's focus to ending slavery and paving the way for the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery nationwide.

What is the significance of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address?

Delivered in 1863, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address emphasized the principles of equality and liberty, reaffirmed the nation's dedication to ending slavery, and redefined the purpose of the Civil War.

How did Abraham Lincoln's assassination affect the United States?

Lincoln's assassination in 1865 by John Wilkes Booth shocked the nation, leading to a period of national mourning and impacting the course of Reconstruction efforts during the post-war era.

What lasting contributions did Abraham Lincoln make to American society?

Lincoln's enduring contributions include his leadership during the Civil War, the abolition of slavery, and setting the foundation for civil rights and equality in the United States.

Additional Resources

American History Abraham Lincoln: A Deep Dive into the Life and Legacy of the 16th President

The life and presidency of Abraham Lincoln stand as one of the most pivotal chapters in American history. His leadership during one of the nation's most turbulent periods—namely the Civil War—shaped the trajectory of the United States and cemented his legacy as a symbol of perseverance, liberty, and unity. This comprehensive exploration delves into Lincoln's early life, political ascent, leadership during the Civil War, and enduring legacy, providing a detailed analysis suitable for scholarly review and historical reflection.

Early Life and Formative Years

Origins and Childhood

Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809, in a log cabin in Hardin County (later LaRue County), Kentucky. His humble beginnings in a frontier environment fostered a self-reliant spirit and a keen desire for self-education. His family, of modest means, frequently moved across the frontier regions of Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois, seeking better opportunities.

Key points about Lincoln's early years:

- **Limited Formal Education:** Lincoln's formal schooling totaled less than a year, but he was an avid reader, often borrowing books from neighbors.

- Self-Education: He mastered reading, writing, and basic arithmetic largely through self-study, with influences from the Bible, Shakespeare, and classical literature.
- Work and Hardship: As a young man, Lincoln worked as a farm laborer, rail-splitter, store clerk, and surveyor, which fostered resilience and practical skills.

Entry into Politics and Law

Lincoln's interest in law and politics grew during his early adulthood:

- Legal Career: He was largely self-taught in law, passing the Illinois State Bar Examination in 1836. His skills as a lawyer earned him respect and recognition.
- Political Beginnings: Lincoln served four terms in the Illinois State Legislature and briefly in the U.S. House of Representatives (1847-1849). His opposition to the Mexican-American War and slavery became defining features of his political stance.

Path to the Presidency

Emergence as a Leader of the Anti-Slavery Movement

Lincoln's political career gained momentum with his vocal opposition to the expansion of slavery. His debates with Stephen A. Douglas, particularly during the Illinois Senate race of 1858, elevated his national profile.

Key elements of his rise:

- The Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854): Lincoln opposed this legislation that repealed the Missouri Compromise, intensifying sectional tensions.
- The Lincoln-Douglas Debates (1858): A series of seven debates that addressed slavery, democracy, and sectionalism, showcasing Lincoln's eloquence and moral clarity.
- Republican Nomination (1860): His reputation as an anti-slavery moderate helped him secure the Republican Party's nomination.

Election of 1860 and Secession Crisis

Lincoln was elected President in 1860 amid a fractured Democratic Party and rising sectional tensions. His victory, perceived by the South as a threat to slavery, led to a cascade of secessions:

- Southern States' Secession: South Carolina led the withdrawal, followed by others, forming the Confederate States of America.
- Fort Sumter (April 1861): The attack on a federal fort in Charleston marked the beginning of armed conflict.

Presidency and Civil War Leadership

Challenges of Leadership During Civil War

Lincoln faced unprecedented challenges:

- Preserving the Union: His primary goal was to reunify the nation, often balancing military strategy with political diplomacy.
- Managing Diverse Opinions: He navigated complex political landscapes, including dissent within his own party and military disagreements.

Key Policies and Actions

Lincoln's presidency was marked by significant policies:

- Emancipation Proclamation (1863): Declared all slaves in Confederate-held territory to be free, transforming the Civil War into a fight against slavery.
- Suspension of Habeas Corpus: He authorized detention of suspected Confederate sympathizers, raising constitutional questions.
- Union Military Strategy: Lincoln appointed capable generals, including Ulysses S. Grant, and prioritized total victory.

Major Battles and Turning Points

Critical battles and campaigns under Lincoln's leadership:

- Battle of Gettysburg (1863): A turning point that ended Confederate invasion of the North.
- Siege of Vicksburg (1863): Gave control of the Mississippi River to the Union.
- Sherman's March to the Sea (1864): Demonstrated total war and shattered Confederate resources.

Assassination and Immediate Aftermath

The Tragic End

On April 14, 1865, Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C., just days after Confederate General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House. His death shocked the nation and marked the end of an era.

Impact and Mourning

- Lincoln's death plunged the nation into mourning.
- His leadership during the Civil War and commitment to ending slavery solidified his historical stature.
- The assassination also marked the beginning of a complex Reconstruction era.

Legacy and Historical Significance

Enduring Contributions

Lincoln's legacy persists through various facets:

- Abolition of Slavery: His efforts culminated in the 13th Amendment, permanently outlawing slavery.
- Preservation of the Union: His steadfast leadership prevented the country's disintegration.
- Symbol of Equality and Justice: Lincoln's speeches, especially the Gettysburg Address, articulate ideals that continue to inspire.

Controversies and Criticisms

Despite admiration, Lincoln's presidency has been scrutinized:

- Civil Liberties: His suspension of habeas corpus and wartime measures are debated for their constitutional implications.
- Race and Equality: While he advocated for ending slavery, his views on racial equality were complex and evolved over time.

Historical Assessments

Scholars generally regard Lincoln as:

- One of America's greatest presidents.
- A shrewd politician capable of navigating a fractured nation.
- A moral leader whose vision shaped the modern United States.

Conclusion: Lincoln's Enduring Influence

The investigation into Abraham Lincoln's life reveals a figure whose resilience, moral clarity, and leadership transformed a nation on the brink of collapse. His legacy as the Great Emancipator and unifier endures not only through the legal and societal changes he championed but also through his enduring symbolism as a champion of human rights and national unity. As American society continues to grapple with issues of justice, equality, and liberty, Lincoln's life remains a beacon illuminating the ongoing pursuit of these ideals.

His story exemplifies how steadfast leadership, moral conviction, and resilience can steer a nation through its darkest hours toward the promise of a more perfect union.

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american history abraham lincoln: *Abraham Lincoln* James M. McPherson, 2009 Pulitzer Prize-winning author James M. McPherson provides a compact biography of Lincoln -- a man of humble origins who preserved our nation during its greatest catastrophe and ended the scourge of slavery.

american history abraham lincoln: Abraham Lincoln George S. McGovern, 2008-12-23 America's greatest president, who rose to power in the country's greatest hour of need and whose vision saw the United States through the Civil War Abraham Lincoln towers above the others who have held the office of president—the icon of greatness, the pillar of strength whose words bound up the nation's wounds. His presidency is the hinge on which American history pivots, the time when

the young republic collapsed of its own contradictions and a new birth of freedom, sanctified by blood, created the United States we know today. His story has been told many times, but never by a man who himself sought the office of president and contemplated the awesome responsibilities that come with it. George S. McGovern—a Midwesterner, former U.S. senator, presidential candidate, veteran, and historian by training—offers his unique insight into our sixteenth president. He shows how Lincoln sometimes went astray, particularly in his restrictions on civil liberties, but also how he adjusted his sights and transformed the Civil War from a political dispute to a moral crusade. McGovern's account reminds us why we hold Lincoln in such esteem and why he remains the standard by which all of his successors are measured.

american history abraham lincoln: On Hallowed Ground John P. Diggins, 2000-01-01
Contests the validity of Marxist and poststructuralist theory in a review of the life and legacy of Abraham Lincoln.

american history abraham lincoln: Abraham Lincoln and His Times Thomas J. Ebert, Allen Carden, 2023-08-03
Lincoln's significance in the history of slavery and emancipation, the Union's preservation and the formation of a new national vision is crucial to comprehending the antebellum and Civil War periods in American history. This is a one-of-a-kind hybrid reference work that combines chronology with almost 400 primary source papers to contextualize Lincoln's life within his historical era. These written materials serve as the foundation upon which historians can construct a picture of Lincoln's America. In addition to important chronology and documents, this work includes introductory essays that summarize the topics of each chapter, brief biographies of those referenced in the book, and a source bibliography. Historical records are the heart of this work. Documents illustrate different viewpoints, to provide a full grasp of the time and place, as well as Lincoln's significance during this era.

american history abraham lincoln: Abraham Lincoln and Civil War America William E. Gienapp, 2002-04-08
In *Abraham Lincoln and Civil War America*, historian William Gienapp provides a remarkably concise, up-to-date, and vibrant biography of the most revered figure in United States history. While the heart of the book focuses on the Civil War, Gienapp begins with a finely etched portrait of Lincoln's early life, from pioneer farm boy to politician and lawyer in Springfield, to his stunning election as sixteenth president of the United States. Students will see how Lincoln grew during his years in office, how he developed a keen aptitude for military strategy and displayed enormous skill in dealing with his generals, and how his war strategy evolved from a desire to preserve the Union to emancipation and total war.

american history abraham lincoln: Abraham Lincoln Stephen B. Oates, 2009-10-13
A biographical study of the 16th U.S. president, and an essential book for any student of Lincoln and American history. In this multifaceted portrait, Oates, "the most popular historical interpreter of Lincoln" (Gabor S. Boritt, *New York Times Book Review*), exposes the human side of the great and tragic president—including his depression, his difficulties with love, and his troubled and troubling attitudes about slavery—while also confronting the many legends that have arisen around "Honest Abe." Oates throughout raises timely questions about what the Lincoln mythos reveals about the American people. Praise for *Abraham Lincoln* "There is no better introduction to current thinking about Lincoln and his place in history. . . . Oates, author of the best one-volume biography of Lincoln of our time, scales Lincoln down to human size yet solidifies his reputation as one of our greatest presidents. . . . Oates' Lincoln fascinates. He is both flawed human being and genuine hero." —*Newsday* "Oates re-creates the life and world of Abraham Lincoln with the skill of a master painter. He succeeds in portraying both the facts and myths of history as essential to our understanding it." —*Christian Science Monitor*

american history abraham lincoln: Abraham Lincoln in the Post-Heroic Era Barry Schwartz, 2008-11-15
By the 1920s, Abraham Lincoln had transcended the lingering controversies of the Civil War to become a secular saint, honored in North and South alike for his steadfast leadership in crisis. Throughout the Great Depression and World War II, Lincoln was invoked countless times as a reminder of America's strength and wisdom, a commanding ideal against which weary citizens could

see their own hardships in perspective. But as Barry Schwartz reveals in *Abraham Lincoln in the Post-Heroic Era*, those years represent the apogee of Lincoln's prestige. The decades following World War II brought radical changes to American culture, changes that led to the diminishing of all heroes—Lincoln not least among them. As Schwartz explains, growing sympathy for the plight of racial minorities, disenchantment with the American state, the lessening of patriotism in the wake of the Vietnam War, and an intensifying celebration of diversity, all contributed to a culture in which neither Lincoln nor any single person could be a heroic symbol for all Americans. Paradoxically, however, the very culture that made Lincoln an object of indifference, questioning, criticism, and even ridicule was a culture of unprecedented beneficence and inclusion, where racial, ethnic, and religious groups treated one another more fairly and justly than ever before. Thus, as the prestige of the Great Emancipator shrank, his legacy of equality continued to flourish. Drawing on a stunning range of sources—including films, cartoons, advertisements, surveys, shrine visitations, public commemorations, and more—Schwartz documents the decline of Lincoln's public standing, asking throughout whether there is any path back from this post-heroic era. Can a new generation of Americans embrace again their epic past, including great leaders whom they know to be flawed? As the 2009 Lincoln Bicentennial approaches, readers will discover here a stirring reminder that Lincoln, as a man, still has much to say to us—about our past, our present, and our possible futures.

american history abraham lincoln: Abraham Lincoln, a History John G (John George) Nicolay, John Hay, 2025-03-28 Delve into the heart of 19th-century American history with Volume 2 of *Abraham Lincoln, A History* by John George Nicolay and John Hay. This meticulously researched work offers a comprehensive account of Abraham Lincoln's life and times during the tumultuous years of the American Civil War. Explore the political landscape and significant events that shaped the United States during this pivotal period. Nicolay and Hay, drawing upon their extensive knowledge and historical records, present a detailed narrative of Lincoln's presidency and the challenges he faced. A crucial resource for anyone interested in United States History, the American Civil War, or political history. *Abraham Lincoln, A History* provides invaluable insights into one of the most transformative eras in American history and the legacy of a remarkable leader. This work has been selected by scholars as being culturally important, and is part of the knowledge base of civilization as we know it. This work is in the public domain in the United States of America, and possibly other nations. Within the United States, you may freely copy and distribute this work, as no entity (individual or corporate) has a copyright on the body of the work. Scholars believe, and we concur, that this work is important enough to be preserved, reproduced, and made generally available to the public. We appreciate your support of the preservation process, and thank you for being an important part of keeping this knowledge alive and relevant.

american history abraham lincoln: Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution James M. McPherson, 1992-06-04 James McPherson has emerged as one of America's finest historians. *Battle Cry of Freedom*, his Pulitzer Prize-winning account of the Civil War, was a national bestseller that Hugh Brogan, in *The New York Times Book Review*, called history writing of the highest order. In that volume, McPherson gathered in the broad sweep of events, the political, social, and cultural forces at work during the Civil War era. Now, in *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution*, he offers a series of thoughtful and engaging essays on aspects of Lincoln and the war that have rarely been discussed in depth. McPherson again displays his keen insight and sterling prose as he examines several critical themes in American history. He looks closely at the President's role as Commander-in-Chief of the Union forces, showing how Lincoln forged a national military strategy for victory. He explores the importance of Lincoln's great rhetorical skills, uncovering how--through parables and figurative language--he was uniquely able to communicate both the purpose of the war and a new meaning of liberty to the people of the North. In another section, McPherson examines the Civil War as a Second American Revolution, describing how the Republican Congress elected in 1860 passed an astonishing blitz of new laws (rivaling the first hundred days of the New Deal), and how the war not only destroyed the social structure of the old South, but radically altered the balance of power in America, ending 70 years of Southern power

in the national government. The Civil War was the single most transforming and defining experience in American history, and Abraham Lincoln remains the most important figure in the pantheon of our mythology. These graceful essays, written by one of America's leading historians, offer fresh and unusual perspectives on both.

american history abraham lincoln: Abraham Lincoln Harry Rubenstein, 2008

Commemorating the 200th anniversary of Lincoln's birth, here is his extraordinary story as only the Smithsonian could tell it, featuring the unpublished Lincoln collections at the National Museum of American History. Full-color photos throughout.

american history abraham lincoln: The Every-day Life of Abraham Lincoln Francis F. Browne, 2019-11-20 In *The Every-day Life of Abraham Lincoln*, Francis F. Browne presents a nuanced portrait of one of America's most revered figures, capturing the quotidian experiences that shaped Lincoln's character and leadership. The text employs a vivid yet accessible narrative style, rich with anecdotal evidence and personal insights, helping to contextualize the complexities of Lincoln's life amidst the socio-political landscape of 19th-century America. Browne's attention to the day-to-day interactions and humble decisions of Lincoln reveals a deep understanding of his moral compass, highlighting how these mundane moments laid the groundwork for his monumental impact on the nation. Francis F. Browne, a contemporary of Lincoln who later became a distinguished journalist and historian, draws from extensive research and interviews with those who knew Lincoln personally. His keen interests in American history and the mechanics of societal change are evident throughout the text, positioning Browne as a reliable narrator who offers an insider's view to Lincoln's inner life. His dedication to documenting the everyday experiences of historic figures underscores a belief in the power of individual narratives to illuminate broader societal truths. For readers interested in American history, political leadership, or the personal dimensions of prominent historical figures, Browne's work is an indispensable resource. *The Every-day Life of Abraham Lincoln* not only serves as a valuable historical account but also invites readers to delve into the character and resilience of a man who navigated immense challenges during a pivotal time in American history.

american history abraham lincoln: *Abraham Lincoln and Joseph Smith: How Two*

Contemporaries Changed the Face of American History Ron L. Andersen, 2023-02-02 One led our country through the Civil War and out of slavery. The other founded a religious movement that is today the nation's fastest-growing Christian denomination. So what could Abraham Lincoln and Joseph Smith possibly have in common? According to Lincoln Leadership Society president Ron Andersen, more than you would think. Besides both being hardworking and hardly educated, Lincoln and Smith also held surprisingly comparable and unpopular views on slavery and the nature of God. But the most striking similarities between the two men are uncovered in historical records in Illinois, where each was living and gaining critical momentum in the 1840s. You'll see new sides to these important historical figures as you discover Smith's stance on the abolition movement or Lincoln's vouch for the Mormon vote. Find out how two young backwoods boys crossed paths and led parallel lives before each was martyred for his cause in this exhaustively researched dual biography.

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american history abraham lincoln: *Abraham Lincoln* Hourly History, 2016-06-12 Abraham Lincoln's determination to hold the North and South together would ultimately lead to the bloodiest war in American history, the abolition of slavery, and his own untimely death from an assassin's bullet. But to see Lincoln solely as a tragic figure consumed with the strife of mid-nineteenth century America is to miss meeting him as a man who never allowed himself to be defeated by adversity or grief or turmoil. From his earliest days on the frontier, he endured the loss of his beloved mother and the demanding physical challenges of a rough-and-ready land where death came easily and education was rare; where ambition was rewarded if a man proved himself willing to work hard; where love was attainable, even for a man whose physical appearance was most charitably described as homely. Inside you will read about... □ Born on the Frontier □ Lincoln's Life in New Salem □ The Election of 1860 □ The House Divides □ The Tide Turns □ The End □ The Legacy of Lincoln Lincoln arose from poverty and ignorance to become a man of influence and eloquence whose speeches continue to resonate with a nation that aspires to meet his ideals. Lincoln had his detractors and enemies but throughout his years, he had a remarkable ability to remain unpoisoned by his foes and to retain compassion for those who opposed him. Meet Abraham Lincoln, the frontier president whose death made him a martyr but whose life made him a hero.

american history abraham lincoln: *Lincoln at Home* David Herbert Donald, 2001-01-25 As Lincoln led the nation into the Civil War, managing the Union was effort, issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, winning reelection in 1864, and planning the Reconstruction of the South, he also led a private life, defined by his close relationship with his wife and by his devotion to his children. *Lincoln at Home* offers a view into the life of family through their written correspondence. With a brief account of their first years in the White House and the complete collection of all the known letters exchanged by Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln, this elegant portrait defines the sixteenth president as a dedicated -- though often a desperately busy and distracted -- family man. *Lincoln at Home* is an intimate and rare glimpse of the president as husband and father, a cheerful man pinned

to the floor while playing with his children, and a desolate man struck down with grief at the death of his son. Beyond this, we are shown a personal side of the man who managed one of the most difficult periods in American history.

american history abraham lincoln: Lincoln and the American Founding Lucas E. Morel, 2020-06-22 In this persuasive work of intellectual history, Lucas E. Morel argues that the most important influence on Abraham Lincoln's political thought and practice was what he learned from the leading figures of and documents from the birth of the United States. In this systematic account of those principles, Morel compellingly demonstrates that to know Lincoln well is to understand thoroughly the founding of America. With each chapter describing a particular influence, Morel leads readers from the Founding Father, George Washington; to the founding documents, the Declaration of Independence and Constitution; to the founding compromise over slavery; and finally to a consideration of how the original intentions of the Founding Fathers should be respected in light of experience, progress, and improvements over time. Within these key discussions, Morel shows that without the ideals of the American Revolution, Lincoln's most famous speeches would be unrecognizable, and the character of the nation would have lost its foundation on the universal principles of human equality, individual liberty, and government by the consent of the governed. Lincoln thought that the principles of human equality and individual rights could provide common ground for a diverse people to live as one nation and that some old things, such as the political ideals of the American founding, were worth preserving. He urged Americans to be vigilant in maintaining the institutions of self-government and to exercise and safeguard the benefits of freedom for future generations. Morel posits that adopting the way of thinking and speaking Lincoln advocated, based on the country's founding, could help mend our current polarized discourse and direct the American people to employ their common government on behalf of a truly common good.

american history abraham lincoln: The Best American History Essays on Lincoln Organization of American Historians, 2009-02-13 This new volume in the Best American History Essays series brings together classic writing from top American historians on one of our greatest presidents. Ranging from incisive assessments of his political leadership, to explorations of his enigmatic character, to reflections on the mythos that has become inseparable from the man, each of these contributions expands our understanding of Abraham Lincoln and shows why he has been such an object of enduring fascination. Contributors include:* James McPherson* Richard Hofstadter* Edmund Wilson* David Donald* John Hope Franklin* James Horton* David M. Potter* Richard Current* Mark Neely* Gabor S. Borritt* Jean Baker* Don Fehrenbacher* Merrill Peterson

american history abraham lincoln: The President and the Freedom Fighter Brian Kilmeade, 2021-11-02 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER The New York Times bestselling author of George Washington's Secret Six and Thomas Jefferson and the Tripoli Pirates turns to two other heroes of the nation: Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. In *The President and the Freedom Fighter*, Brian Kilmeade tells the little-known story of how two American heroes moved from strong disagreement to friendship, and in the process changed the entire course of history. Abraham Lincoln was White, born impoverished on a frontier farm. Frederick Douglass was Black, a child of slavery who had risked his life escaping to freedom in the North. Neither man had a formal education, and neither had had an easy path to influence. No one would have expected them to become friends—or to transform the country. But Lincoln and Douglass believed in their nation's greatness. They were determined to make the grand democratic experiment live up to its ideals. Lincoln's problem: he knew it was time for slavery to go, but how fast could the country change without being torn apart? And would it be possible to get rid of slavery while keeping America's Constitution intact? Douglass said no, that the Constitution was irredeemably corrupted by slavery—and he wanted Lincoln to move quickly. Sharing little more than the conviction that slavery was wrong, the two men's paths eventually converged. Over the course of the Civil War, they'd endure bloodthirsty mobs, feverish conspiracies, devastating losses on the battlefield, and a growing firestorm of unrest that would culminate on the fields of Gettysburg. As he did in *George Washington's Secret Six*, Kilmeade has transformed this nearly forgotten slice of history into a

dramatic story that will keep you turning the pages to find out how these two heroes, through their principles and patience, not only changed each other, but made America truly free for all.

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