

## Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln was born in 1809 in northern Kentucky. At the time of his birth, Kentucky was part of the western frontier of the U.S. His father was a farmer and at one point was relatively wealthy. However, when young Abraham was only 7 years old, his father lost his land. The family moved to Indiana, where his mother died when he was 9. When he was a young man, Abraham's family moved to Illinois.

Abraham had little formal education growing up. He loved to read, so he educated himself. In Illinois he studied law by reading law books. He became a lawyer in 1837 in Springfield, Illinois. Lincoln's political career began early, and he served in the state legislature and in the U.S. House of Representatives. Lincoln was a gifted speaker. He won national attention for his speeches against slavery during several debates. This led to his nomination for the presidency, which he won in 1860.

President Lincoln's election angered the Southern states and seven of them announced they would leave the U.S. and form their own government. In 1861, South Carolina troops fired artillery at Fort Sumter, a U.S. military fort. This began the Civil War. The war would be the central feature of Lincoln's presidency.

Lincoln's goal through the war was to reunite the North, known as the Union, with the South, known as the Confederacy. As commander in chief, he selected the Union generals to lead the Army. He issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, which signaled freedom for the slaves. Lincoln was reelected in 1864. After four long years, the Union won the Civil War in April 1865. Lincoln's goal to reunite the country had come true, but he would not live to see it.

Just six days after the end of the war, on April 15, 1865, President Lincoln was killed by John Wilkes Booth. He was the first American president to be assassinated.

Abraham Lincoln is considered one of the greatest American presidents. He calmly led the country through the most difficult time in its history, the Civil War. He is remembered today for his wisdom, his compassion and his patriotism.