

ABRAHAM LINCOLN TRANSFORMED

The Exhibition

Abraham Lincoln Transformed tells a dramatic yet unfamiliar story about Abraham Lincoln's transformation during the Civil War as he abandoned his moderate views on slavery and took radical steps to end it and extend equal citizenship rights to African Americans. Lincoln's personal transformation moved the entire country closer to the democratic ideals we value today; and his struggle over race and slavery will resonate with contemporary Americans. The exhibition features more than one hundred and fifty artifacts from the Museum's collection including original Lincoln manuscripts, slave artifacts, fan and hate mail sent to Lincoln during his time in office, a commemorative copy of the Thirteenth Amendment signed by Lincoln, and Lincoln's stove top hat.

The Story

Lincoln's life will be examined beginning in the 1850s when slavery was threatening to divide the nation. With moderate views on slavery, Lincoln gained the presidency in 1860, triggering an unprecedented crisis of Southern secession. The Civil War that followed became for Lincoln a struggle of military defeats, mounting casualties, personal losses, and a rising chorus of criticism. Together, these forces transformed Lincoln's views on slavery and race, prompting him to issue the Emancipation Proclamation declaring freedom for more than three million slaves. He was assassinated on April 14, 1865 by John Wilkes Booth at Ford's Theatre.

Lincoln Facts

- Lincoln was nicknamed the "rail splitter" during his election because he believed in hard work, emphasized by the fact that he split wooden logs into rails during his youth.
- Early in Lincoln's political career he endorsed a voluntary, gradual process of emancipation that would return freed slaves to Africa.
- John Wilkes Booth, a Confederate sympathizer and white supremacist, assassinated Lincoln because he promoted black citizenship.