

Abraham Lincoln and the Upper Mississippi Valley¹

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Timeline

Lecture 2: Lincoln and the Black Hawk War

- 1787 Northwest Ordinance Article VI bans institution of slavery in present-day Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, and parts of Minnesota
- U.S. Constitution does not mention "slavery" but does include protections for the institution including fugitive slave clause and three-fifths clause
- 1803 March 1: Ohio becomes the nation's seventeenth state and imposes harsh "Black Laws"
- Louisiana Purchase
- 1808 January: Congress prohibits the importation of slaves into the United States
- 1809 February 9: Abraham Lincoln born, Hardin County, Kentucky
- 1816 December: Lincoln family moves to southwestern Indiana
- December 11: Indiana becomes the nineteenth state and also imposes "Black Laws"
- American Colonization Society Forms
- 1818 December 3: Illinois becomes nation's twenty-first state
- 1820 Missouri Compromise prohibits slavery in LA purchase territories north of 36° 30'
- 1828, 1831 Lincoln's flatboat journeys to Saint Louis, New Orleans
- 1830 March: Lincoln family moves to Macon County, Illinois
- 1831 July: Abraham Lincoln settles at New Salem, Illinois
- 1832 April to August: Black Hawk "War" rages in Illinois, present-day Wisconsin
- April 21: Abraham Lincoln enlists in Illinois militia and is soon elected captain
- July: Lincoln is mustered out of service and soon heads back to Illinois
- August 1-2: Battle of Bad Axe ends the "war"

¹ This timeline reproduces much of the "Chronology of Lincoln, Slavery, and Emancipation" in Eric Foner, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010), but adds a few dates of specific relevance to our course. This is meant to help with the teaching of my class, and is not meant to be an authoritative source. All errors remain my own.

Fall: Lincoln loses in his first electoral bid

1833-1838 Great Britain abolishes slavery throughout its empire

1833 December: American Antislavery Society Forms

1834 Lincoln is elected to first of four terms in Illinois House of Representatives

1837 January: Lincoln votes against proslavery legislature resolutions
April: Lincoln moves to Springfield, Illinois

Lecture 3: Abraham Lincoln as a Republican Party Rising Star

1837 January 26: Michigan becomes the nation's twenty-sixth state

November 7: Anti-slavery editor Elijah P. Lovejoy is killed by a mob in Alton, Illinois

1838 January 27: Lincoln gives his speech, "The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions" at the Young Men's Lyceum, Springfield

1841 September: Encounters twelve chained slaves during a boat trip on the Ohio River

1842 November 4: Marries Mary Todd

1844 Lincoln family settles into new home at Springfield, Illinois

1846 August 3: Lincoln (Whig) elected to the U.S. House of Representatives

December 28: Iowa becomes the nation's twenty-ninth state

1847 December: Introduces resolution to House of Representatives asking President James K. Polk to identify "spot" of American soil where Mexico launched war against U.S.; earns nickname "Spotty" Lincoln

1848 July: Lincoln downplays importance of Black Hawk War in speech to U.S. House; jokes that defining experience a bent musket, many "bloody struggles with mosquitoes," and hunger.

Lincoln campaigns for Whig candidate Zachary Taylor

1853 Illinois enacts a ban to prohibit African Americans from entering state

1854 January: Illinois Senator Stephen A. Douglas introduces a bill to organize the Kansas and Nebraska territories; when passed in May, this so-called "Kansas Nebraska Act" overturns the Missouri Compromise and extends "popular sovereignty" to territories. Nation sees widespread political protests.

Spring and Summer: Early meetings in Ripon, Wisconsin, and Jackson, Michigan signal rise of new Republican Party

October 16: In an influential speech, Lincoln speaks out against the Kansas-Nebraska Act

- for one of the first times publicly at Peoria, Illinois
- 1855 Lincoln fails to win election to the U.S. Senate
- Salmon P. Chase becomes governor of Ohio representing new "fusion" movement
- 1856 February 22: Republican Party organizes nationally in Pittsburgh, PA
- May 29: Illinois launches a Republican Party organization at Bloomington; Lincoln delivers "Lost Speech"
- September-October: Lincoln vigorously campaigns for John C. Frémont
- 1857 November: Frémont is defeated in Presidential election; also loses Illinois and Indiana
U.S. Supreme Court announces *Dred Scott* decision
- June 26: Lincoln speaks out in Springfield against Dred Scott decision
- 1858 May 11: Minnesota becomes the nation's thirty-second state
- June 16: Lincoln delivers "House Divided" speech at Springfield launching 1858 Senate Campaign
- August to October: Lincoln and Douglas engage in debates; attracts national prominence
- November: Lincoln loses to Stephen A. Douglas in Illinois Senate race
- 1859 Lincoln begins to prep Presidential run; visits Kansas, Iowa, and Wisconsin
- September to October: Lincoln visits Beloit, Janesville, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- 1860 February 27: "Cooper Union Address" at Cooper Institute, New York City indicates Lincoln's new national prominence
- May 18: In a surprise development, Lincoln wins the Republican Party nomination for President at the Convention in Chicago over rivals William H. Seward, Salmon P. Chase, Edward Bates, more.
- November 6: Lincoln is elected the 16th President of the United States

Lecture 4: Lincoln as Commander-in-Chief

- 1860 December 20: South Carolina secedes from the Union; six other southern states follow in rapid succession by late January, 1861.
- 1861 February 4: Convention of southern states meets in Montgomery, Alabama to form Confederate States of America (CSA) and elect Jefferson Davis President
- March 4: Lincoln inaugurated in Washington, DC
- April 12: CSA attacks Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor

1862

May 24: General Benjamin F. Butler declares that fugitive slaves at Fortress Monroe (Virginia) are "contraband" of war

August 6: First Confiscation Act signed by Abraham Lincoln

September 11: Lincoln orders John C. Frémont to rescind Missouri emancipation

December 3: Lincoln proposes compensated emancipation and colonization to Congress

April 16: Slavery abolished in Washington, D.C.

May 20: Lincoln signs the Homestead Act

June 19: Lincoln signs bill for immediate, uncompensated emancipation in federal territories

July 13: Lincoln mentions plan for emancipation to cabinet members Seward and Welles

July 17: Lincoln signs second confiscation act

Signs an additional militia act authorizing use of black soldiers

July 22: Lincoln reads a version of an Emancipation order to Cabinet; Cabinet members supportive, but urge delay in issuing

August 14: Lincoln meets at White House with a black delegation and urges support of Colonization

August 17: Dakota hunting party kills 5 white settlers in Minnesota, touching off violence throughout region—"Dakota War" or "Sioux Uprising" begins

August 29-30: Union defeated at Second Manassas; Confederate Robert E. Lee decides on an invasion of the North

September 14: Union victory at South Mountain helps pin Lee against banks of Potomac

September 17: Battle of Antietam results in marginal Union victory; Lee retreats to Virginia

September 22: Five days after clash at Antietam, Lincoln issues preliminary Emancipation Proclamation

September 26: Large surrender of Minnesota-based Native Americans at Camp Release

October to November: Republicans suffer significant reversals during 1862 elections

December 26: Largest execution in U.S. history occurs when U.S. authorities hang 38 Dakota warriors implicated in violence of previous summer throughout Minnesota

- December 31: West Virginia added to the Union; will officially become 35th state in June '63
- 1863
- January 1: The Emancipation Proclamation is issued at the White House. Frees all slaves in the Confederacy except those in exempted areas (beyond Union control) and authorizes the enlistment of black soldiers into the nation's armed forces
- May-July: Black troops begin to take the field en masse, at places like Port Hudson, Milliken's Bend, Fort Wagner
- July 1-4: Major Union victories at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and Vicksburg, Mississippi
- November 19: Lincoln delivers "Gettysburg Address" during visit to Gettysburg, PA
- December 8: Lincoln outlines "Ten Percent Plan of Reconstruction"
- 1864
- April 8: U.S. Senate approves Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery
- September 2: General William Tecumseh Sherman captures Atlanta, Georgia
- November 8: Lincoln wins re-election in 1864 Presidential Election
- 1865
- January 13: U.S. House approves 13th Amendment
- February: Illinois Black Laws are repealed
- March 4: Lincoln delivers Second Inaugural Address
- April 9: General Robert E. Lee surrenders Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House
- April 11: In his last public address, Lincoln signals potential support for black suffrage
- April 14: Lincoln is shot at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C.
- April 15: (Morning) Lincoln dies from wounds
- April 21: Abraham Lincoln funeral procession (by rail) begins at Washington
- May: Funeral procession concludes as Lincoln's body is delivered for burial at Springfield
- December 18: 13th Amendment Abolishing Slavery is ratified by the states

