

America's Story

from America's Library



Meet Amazing Americans



Jump Back in Time



Explore the States



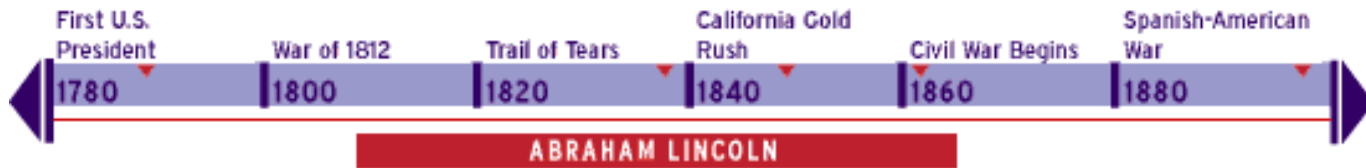
Join America at Play



See, Hear and Sing

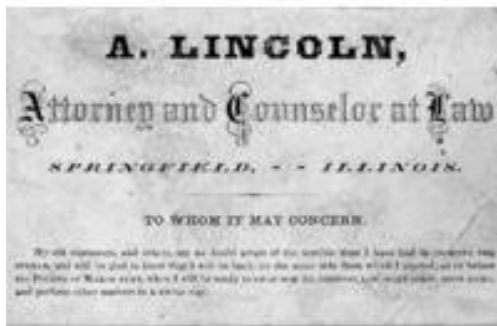
Meet Amazing Americans ▶

U.S. Presidents ▶ Abraham Lincoln



Lincoln's Sense of Humor

Lincoln is best known for his policies on abolishing slavery and his belief in self-government; he took his job as president very seriously. About the night he knew he'd won the election he later said, "I went home, but not to get much sleep, for I then felt as I never had before, the responsibility that was upon me."



Lincoln's "business card"

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Lincoln had another side to his personality; he had a good sense of humor and liked to make jokes. Here you can see Lincoln's "business card," a joke that the opposing Democratic party played on him during the 1864 presidential election. The card says that Lincoln will be returning to Springfield, Illinois, to his law practice, where he will be ready to "swap horses, dispense law, make jokes, split rails, and perform other matters." As it turned out, Lincoln and the Republicans had the last laugh on this joke because he won reelection as president in 1864. What other things do you think Lincoln joked about?





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Hey! Uncle Abe, are you Joking yet?

TUNE—"Joanny Cope."

Hey! Uncle Abe, are you joking yet,
Or have you taken a serious fit,
And wisely set to pack up your kit,
To be up and off in the morning?

Honest Old Abe was a queer old coon,
Joked with a nigger and play'd the buffoon,
But now he shakes from his head to his shoon,
All night unto the morning.

A voice has come from out of the west,
Which neither leaves him peace nor rest,
That Little Man has come out the best.

The words to the song, "Hey!
Uncle Abe, are you joking yet?"

Lincoln's Sense of Humor

Lincoln liked to tell tales about his experiences. After his time as a soldier in the Black Hawk War, Lincoln joked that he had seen no "live, fighting Indians" during the war but had "a good many bloody struggles with the mosquitoes." He knew that laughing with visitors helped break the ice and that he could tell a funny story to avoid a reporter's difficult question. His sense of humor was well-known. Here are the words to a song that was inspired by Lincoln, called "Hey! Uncle Abe, are you joking yet?" Keep in mind that it was written by members of the political party that opposed Lincoln's reelection.



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