NOVEMBER 6, 1860
As the nation, divided over slavery, is threatened with impending civil war, Abraham Lincoln, a relative newcomer to national politics, wins the Presidential election.

APRIL 12, 1861
With Confederate cannons firing on Union forces at Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, the Civil War begins. Eleven southern states secede from the Union and form the Confederate States Of America, with their capitol in Richmond, Virginia.

In the North, those rebelling against the US were popularly called “secesh,” short for "secessionist."

FEBRUARY 20, 1862
The Lincolns’ son, Willie, age 11, dies of Typhoid fever in the White House.

JANUARY 1, 1863
Lincoln signs the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring all slaves in rebel territories “henceforth and forever free.”

JULY 4, 1863
The siege of Vicksburg ends, placing the Mississippi River completely in Union control. The architect of the victory, Major General Ulysses S. Grant, is elevated to national prominence.

MARCH 9, 1864
Lincoln appoints Ulysses S. Grant Lieutenant General and Commander of the United States Armies.

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2, 1864
Major General William Tecumseh Sherman leads Union forces to take Atlanta, Georgia, at which point it is clear to both the North and the South that the Confederacy will be defeated. The Confederacy, however, doesn’t surrender.

MARCH 4, 1861
Lincoln is inaugurated as the 16th President of the United States.

JULY 21, 1861
The Battle of Bull Run, the first major engagement of the war, is a loss for Union forces. During the next fourteen months of fighting, Confederate forces, commanded by Robert E. Lee, win significant victories.

SEPTEMBER 17, 1862
The Battle of Antietam, a Union victory, is the bloodiest one-day battle in US History, with approximately 23,000 casualties. Following the victory at Antietam, Lincoln announces his intention to sign, on January 1, 1863, a proclamation emancipating all slaves in territories still in rebellion against the United States.

JULY 1-3, 1863
At Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Union forces decisively stop Lee’s northward advance. The Confederate armies retreat south and the tide of the War irrevocably turns in the Union’s favor.

NOVEMBER 19, 1863
Lincoln dedicates the national cemetery at Gettysburg with a two-minute speech.

MAY - JUNE, 1864
Lincoln and the determination to defeat the Confederacy results in the bloodiest months of the Civil War. At the conclusion of his Wilderness Campaign, Grant’s Army of the Potomac faces Lee’s Army of Virginia in a deadlock at Petersburg, Virginia. Grant’s siege at Petersburg will last 10 months.

NOVEMBER 8, 1864
Abraham Lincoln is re-elected, the first two-term American President in 32 years.

TIME
JANUARY 1865. CIVIL WAR HAS BEEN RAGING FOR FOUR BLOODY YEARS. ABRAHAM LINCOLN HAS JUST BEEN RE-ELECTED TO THE PRESIDENCY. THE 38TH CONGRESS IS ABOUT TO BEGIN ITS FINAL WEEKS OF LEGISLATING.

SETTING
THE WHITE HOUSE, THE HALLS OF CONGRESS, AND VARIOUS PLACES IN AND AROUND WASHINGTON, D.C.

Later:
HAMPTON ROADS, CITY POINT AND PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA.
In early 1865, as the Civil War, the bloodiest conflict in American history, neared its conclusion, a newly re-elected President Lincoln drove a fractious and disunited Congress to cast its most significant vote — the passage of a constitutional amendment — the thirteenth — abolishing slavery in the United States.

Facing fierce pro-slavery opposition, President Lincoln waged a battle of strategy, persuasion, and political muscle to build a coalition out of his mistrustful and quarrelsome allies. Every day and every vote counted, since a swift and decisive victory in Congress had to come before the impending Confederate surrender, or the opportunity to end slavery might have been lost.

The battle for the Thirteenth Amendment was a defining moment for America’s greatest President. All of his extraordinary powers — his moral vision, his unparalleled skill and determination as a politician and as a leader — were summoned to their fullest extent for this campaign. The result of which Lincoln himself considered among the most important moments in American history.

A political tactician without peer, the civilian Commander in Chief of the armed forces at the country’s gravest moment of crisis, a husband and a father, struggling with his brilliant, mercurial and devoted wife over their mutual fear of losing their own son to the war — Abraham Lincoln fought to bring the country through its darkest hour to “a new birth of freedom” — in what were to be the last months of his life.

At the time of the Civil War, the respective political platforms of the Democratic and Republican Parties were a virtual mirror-image of what they are today. The Republican Party during the Civil War was a center-left coalition dedicated to the preservation of the Union. Republicans favored a strong Federal government and were opposed to slavery, with Radical members of the Party supporting full racial equality. Focused on the growth and development of the Union as a whole, Republicans regarded slavery as a moral and economic blight upon the nation and followed Lincoln in arguing that slavery was in direct opposition to the values of justice, democracy and freedom on which the country had been founded.

The Democratic Party, by the mid-19th century, had been all but entirely converted to the politics of its right wing, insisting that the principles of Jeffersonian democracy — local government and agrarian economies of small farms owned by citizen-farmers — were realized in the plantation South. They opposed any expansion of the power of the Federal government and championed the sovereign authority of the states.

With its pre-war power base located in the South, the Democratic Party of the North found itself, after secession, in the political minority. Most Northern Democrats were loyal to the Union, despite their fierce opposition to any move to emancipate slaves. The party’s extreme right, the “Copperhead” Democrats, opposed the war and a few openly supported Southern secession. They frequently strayed across the line from loyal opposition to sedition and even treason.

In the November 1860 elections, with secession-fever Southern Democrats refusing to vote, and with anti-secession, anti-slavery passion aroused in the North, Republicans took control of the incoming 38th Congress, while the Republican presidential candidate, Abraham Lincoln, won the White House. Although Republicans maintained their majorities in the House and the Senate throughout the Civil War, by the mid-term elections in the Fall of 1862, Northern voters had grown discouraged by numerous Union losses and the War’s staggeringly high death toll. Seizing on popular discontent, Democrats argued that Lincoln and his party were fighting not to preserve the Union but to emancipate slaves. With their anti-slavery enthusiasms of the previous year fading, Northern voters went to the polls and handed Republicans a string of defeats that diminished the size of the Party’s majority in the House of Representatives.

In April 1864, the Thirteenth Amendment, abolishing slavery in the US, was approved in the Senate. But in the House, where Republican supporters lacked the two-thirds majority required to pass an amendment, the amendment failed.
Republican political fortunes soared again in early August 1864, just as the Democrats were holding their national convention, when Sherman's Union army captured Atlanta and began its march through the South. A certainty that the War would soon end with the South's defeat, Lincoln and his Party attained unprecedented heights of popularity. This was manifest in the November 1864 presidential and congressional elections. Lincoln was re-elected, and in the incoming 39th Congress, which would be seated in the Fall of the following year, Republicans would command a two-thirds majority in the House as well as the Senate.

During the long period between the elections and the seating of the new Congress, 64 Democratic members of the House were “lame ducks,” Congressmen who had been voted out of office but still had three months of their term to serve.

In January 1865, Lincoln chose to press the Republicans in the House of Representatives, during its lame duck session, to try once more to pass the Thirteenth Amendment.

Apart from the Abolitionist left, the Northern population of the United States mostly opposed slavery because of its destructive effect on competition on small farms and businesses which couldn't afford slaves or compete with the unpaid labor of slave plantations. There was widespread repugnance at the idea of slavery, to be sure, but equally a widespread fear and hatred of the men and women who were enslaved — a fear based on anticipation of economic competition when freed slaves entered the labor marketplace, and grounded in racism, which in the mid-19th Century was considered by the vast majority of US, North and South, a legitimate, rational doctrine with enthusiastic champions. Race hatred, it was claimed, was grounded in scientific "proof," justified by interpretation of Holy Scripture, and promulgated by artists, philosophers and political leaders. Arguably, economic concerns drove the ideology of racism, but xenophobia, terror of the unknown other, can't be discounted.

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**SLAVERY AND THE CIVIL WAR**

Historical events never have single causes, but often there’s a central cause — and the central cause of the Civil War was slavery, as Lincoln always maintained. Since the founding of this country, the argument over slavery, on moral, political, scientific, religious and economic grounds, had threatened to tear the United States apart many times before the Civil War. Slave labor economically benefited less than 5% of Southern society, and in fact accrued to the disadvantage of economically-straitened Southern whites. But not for the first time in history, people were willing to fight ferociously and bravely for a dreadful cause against their own best interests and for the very things which most oppressed them.

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**THE HUMAN COST OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR**

“And the war came.”

With that devastatingly simple sentence mid-way through his Second Inaugural Address, President Lincoln invoked for his audience an appalling reality: To settle the question of slavery, once and for all, the Civil War, which ended a month after Lincoln’s Second Inauguration, had summoned into military service more than three million men — one-tenth of the total American population at the time. The War took more than an estimated 750,000 soldiers’ lives. The number of civilian deaths, from violence, from exposure and starvation, from despair, as is often the case in war, can’t be counted. More American soldiers perished in the Civil War than in the Revolutionary War, both World Wars, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and both Gulf Wars combined.
The Lincolns’ second child, Eddie, died of a consumptive fever at the age of four in 1850. Their third and, according to many intimates, most beloved son, Willie, died at the age of eleven of Typhoid fever in the White House in February 1862.
Former Senator and Governor of New York, a brilliant politician and an elder statesman of the Republican Party, Seward was one of Lincoln's first mentors who then ran against him for the Republican nomination in 1860. After Lincoln asked Seward to join his administration as Secretary of State, Seward's admiration for Lincoln steadily grew, eventually becoming virtually unqualified. A close friendship formed, although shadowed on occasion by their former rivalry.

By the end of 1864, two of Lincoln's famous three-man "team of rivals" – the Cabinet Secretaries who had opposed him for the 1860 Republican nomination – had left his Cabinet. Treasury Secretary Salmon Chase had resigned and was now Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, while Attorney General Edward Bates, the oldest of the rivals, retired after Lincoln's re-election.
The Radical faction of the Republican Party, fierce abolitionists, champions of the immediate emancipation of slaves, were bitter critics and at times political adversaries of Lincoln and his administration. The Radicals regarded Lincoln’s Southern roots and Southern wife with suspicion, believing him to be uninterested in ending slavery. Lincoln’s generous interpretation of the war powers of the presidency seemed to them a serious threat to Congressional control over post-war reconstruction of the defeated South, which the Radicals considered a Legislative rather than Executive Branch concern.
A wealthy and powerful Maryland family with national influence, the Blairs, though slave-owning Southerners, were staunch Union loyalists. Preston Blair had organized and sponsored the first meetings that resulted in the founding of the Republican Party. The Lincolns and the Blairs enjoyed a warm personal relationship, undamaged by Montgomery Blair's resignation from the Cabinet as a means of assuaging Radical Republican criticism of the administration.

The Blairs held sway over the powerful faction of conservative Republicans who opposed slavery – the Blairs freed their slaves when slavery was abolished by Presidential decree in the city of Washington in April 1862 – but who favored gradual emancipation, the compensation of slaveowners for their “property” loss. They were also mostly in favor of sending freed slaves to US colonies abroad.

The Blairs had close family and personal ties as well to the Confederacy: among other connections, Elizabeth Blair Lee was married to US Admiral Phil Lee, Robert E. Lee’s first cousin. While steadfast in their loyalty to the Union and their abhorrence of secession, by early 1865, the Blairs, along with most conservative Republicans, were eager for the War to conclude with the South’s negotiated surrender, even if that meant leaving the issue of slavery unresolved.

The South fought on past hope of victory. Many in the North believed they did so to wear out Union resolve, which would enable the Confederacy to dictate the terms of its own surrender, including preserving slavery. Conservative Republicans were willing to support an amendment to abolish slavery if, as Lincoln insisted it would, it served a military purpose, namely robbing the South of their last motive for fighting and hastening an end to the War.

Offering positions in the administration to those who had supported a presidential campaign was considered acceptable practice, and it still is. Offering jobs to lame duck Congressmen in exchange for votes crosses over into a greyer area, ethically if not legally. Seward’s days in New York politics introduced him to men who were expert in finessing deals for public figures who couldn’t be seen engaging in such practices.
Lincoln made Grant his top military commander in March of 1864, promoting him to Lieutenant General, the first man to hold that rank since George Washington. "Unconditional Surrender" Grant was the kind of soldier Lincoln had been looking for since the Civil War began. A quietly brilliant, decent man, Grant was nevertheless a fearless and aggressive campaigner who shared with Lincoln the conviction that the War would end with the military defeat of the South. But after years of brutality and a miserable ten-month standoff with Lee's armies, Grant startled Lincoln in January of 1865 by urging him to meet with a recently arrived commission of Confederate officials delegated to seek a conditional surrender.

Two new infantry recruits from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

In January 1865, the Union Army and Navy undertook a joint assault on the heavily-fortified city of Wilmington, North Carolina. The last seaport remaining in Confederate control, Wilmington was the last line of food and supplies for the Confederate capitol in Richmond and more importantly for the Confederate troops defending Richmond from Grant's armies. Expectations that Wilmington would fall swiftly under massive Union bombardment were immediately dashed. Its Confederate defenders refused to surrender, and six more weeks would pass before Union forces finally secured the area.
THE CONFEDERATE PEACE COMMISSION

ALEXANDER STEPHENS
VICE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA
JACKIE EARLE HALEY

JOHN A. CAMPBELL
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA
GREGORY ITZIN

R.M.T. HUNTER
SENATOR FROM VIRGINIA IN THE CONFEDERATE CONGRESS
MICHAEL SHIFLETT
STEVEN SPIELBERG
[Director/Producer]
Films include Schindler’s List (Academy Award® Winner, Best Picture and Best Director) and Saving Private Ryan (Academy Award® Winner, Best Director). Spielberg also received Academy Award® nominations for Best Director for Munich, E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial, Raiders of the Lost Ark and Close Encounters of the Third Kind. Additionally, he earned DGA Award nominations for those films, as well as Jaws, The Color Purple, Empire of the Sun and Amistad. Most recently, he directed War Horse (Academy Award® nominee, Best Picture) and the 3D animated film The Adventures of Tintin (Golden Globe® winner, Best Animated Feature Film).

TONY KUSHNER
[Screenwriter]
Kushner received an Academy Award® nomination for Best Adapted Screenplay for Steven Spielberg’s Munich. He is the recipient of a Pulitzer Prize for Best Drama and a Tony® Award for Best Play for Angels in America: Millennium Approaches and an Emmy® Award for his miniseries adaptation. He received his second Tony® Award for Best Play for Angels in America: Perestroika.

KATHLEEN KENNEDY
[Producer]
Seven-time Academy Award®-nominee for War Horse, The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, Munich, Schindler’s List, The Color Purple, and E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial. Previous collaborations with Steven Spielberg include The Adventures of Tintin, War of the Worlds, A.I. Artificial Intelligence, the Indiana Jones series and the Jurassic Park series.

JANUSZ KAMINSKI
[Director of Photography]
Previous collaborations with Steven Spielberg include Schindler’s List and Saving Private Ryan for which Kaminski won the Academy Award® for Best Cinematography. Kaminski also received Academy Award® nominations for Spielberg’s War Horse and Amistad as well as The Diving Bell and the Butterfly.

RICK CARTER
[Production Designer]
Academy Award®-winner for Best Art Direction on Avatar, Carter has received Academy Award® nominations for his work on War Horse and Forrest Gump. Other collaborations with Spielberg include Munich, War of the Worlds, Amistad and The Lost World: Jurassic Park.

JOANNA JOHNSTON
[Costume Designer]
Films include collaborations with Steven Spielberg on War Horse, War of the Worlds, Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, Munich and Saving Private Ryan. Other films include Catch Me If You Can, A.I. Artificial Intelligence, Saving Private Ryan, Amistad, Schindler’s List, Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, Empire of the Sun, Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom, Raiders of the Lost Ark and Close Encounters of the Third Kind.

JOHN WILLIAMS
[Composer]
The composer of scores for more than one hundred films, Williams’ 40-year partnership with Steven Spielberg includes his Academy Award®-winning scores for Schindler’s List, E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial and Jaws and the Academy Award®-nominated scores for War Horse, The Adventures of Tintin, Munich, Catch Me If You Can, A.I. Artificial Intelligence, Saving Private Ryan, Amistad, Schindler’s List, Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, Empire of the Sun, Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom, Raiders of the Lost Ark and Close Encounters of the Third Kind.

MICHAEL KAHN, A.C.E.
[Film Editor]
Kahn has won three Academy Awards® for Best Editing for his collaborations with Steven Spielberg on Saving Private Ryan, Schindler’s List and Raiders of the Lost Ark. He was nominated for an Academy Award® for War Horse, Munich, Empire of the Sun, Close Encounters of the Third Kind and Fatal Attraction. He most recently collaborated with Spielberg on The Adventures of Tintin.

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“Now he belongs to the ages.”

~ Edwin M. Stanton