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When Lincoln became President, the South viewed his election as a showdown move. Southerners believed that the U.S Federal Government no longer represented them.

South Carolina left the Union followed, soon after, by ten other states. The seceded states banded together to form a new country—the Confederate States of America—in which they could make their own laws and run their own affairs.

When the United States government sent new supplies to a fort in the South—Fort Sumter, in South Carolina—Confederate troops opened fire. With those shots, the American Civil War had begun.

At first, the United States government knew they had better trained troops, better seaports and better industry on their side. Northerners thought they would achieve an easy victory. The fight was anything but easy.

Lincoln was grieved that the country had fallen apart under his Presidency. He offered the South a compromise—that instead of abolishing slavery completely, it would be phased-out in such a way that the Southern economy would not collapse. The Confederacy, however, ignored his proposal.

Lincoln also had problems at home. Mary, who was thrilled to be living in the White House, ran up \$27,000 in debts—equivalent to \$749,940 in 2017 dollars—to remodel it. This caused tension between Mary and Abraham. Greatly adding to this emotional strain, the Lincolns lost their son Willie who died, after a brief illness, in February of 1862.

As the war lingered on, thousands of young men from both sides were killed. The country was in mourning and Lincoln was again filled with deep depression.

In 1862, the President realized that his troops were in poor spirits. Partly to give them new hope, he signed the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862. If the Southern states were still in rebellion by the first of the new year, the Proclamation would take effect—on January 1, 1863—and would free the slaves in every Confederate state.

The war was not over, by January of 1863, and the impact of a proclamation by a US president had no effect on Confederate states. The war carried on and on.

Lincoln became quite thin, had trouble sleeping and didn't eat much. He spent hours in the telegraph office waiting for news of the war.

People began to despise him—and the war. The President endured death threats. Abraham, however, still believed in providence—as his mother had long-ago told him—and he felt that if he were destined to die ... he would.

In the summer of 1863, when Lincoln's general told him the troops were readying for a huge battle—at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania—Lincoln believed that fight would likely be the turning point of the war. Whoever won this battle, he thought, would be the ultimate victor of the war between the states.

For three days, the President did not leave the telegraph office. Finally, word came. The Union had won.

Later in the year, Lincoln traveled to the Gettysburg battlefield to attend a ceremony commemorating the lives of so many men who had died there. Lincoln's remarks were brief but highly impactful. Widely hailed as his greatest speech, the Gettysburg Address ends with these words:

...we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.

Lincoln was right. Gettysburg became the turning-point of the war, and Union victories in the South soon followed. Hope was renewed that this long, bloody war—of Americans killing Americans—would soon be over, and Lincoln was reelected President on November 8, 1864.

In early April, of 1865, the Confederacy's leading General—Robert E. Lee—surrendered. The time of healing would now begin.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/The-Civil-War-Abraham-Lincoln>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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The Civil War

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