

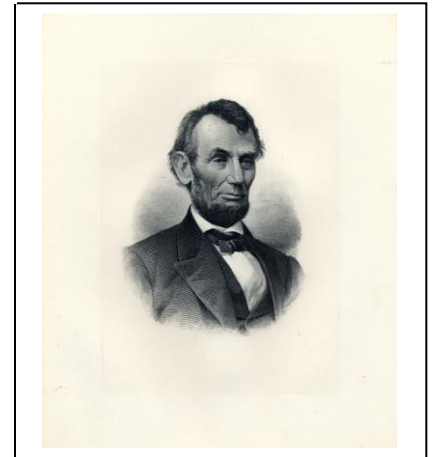
# IT HAPPENED HERE NEW JERSEY

## Abraham Lincoln in New Jersey

Target Age: High School  
Time Period: 19<sup>th</sup> Century  
Featured County: Mercer  
NJ 350<sup>th</sup> Theme: Liberty

### NJ Common Core Standards:

Social Studies: 6.1.12.A.4.a, 6.3.12.A.2  
Social Studies Skills: Critical Thinking  
Language Arts Literacy: 3.1 Reading, 3.2 Writing, 3.3 Speaking



Courtesy of New Jersey State Archives;  
Department of State

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** What were the attitudes of the residents of New Jersey towards Abraham Lincoln and the issue of liberty and freedom?

### **BACKGROUND:**

Abraham Lincoln's visit to New Jersey as President-elect began as many such visits do: traveling from Manhattan to Jersey City across the Hudson River on a route approximating that of the Lincoln Tunnel. On February 21, 1861, Lincoln was met by large crowds in Jersey City, Newark, and New Brunswick. He made brief remarks at each location before arriving in Trenton.

Yet the state's response to the President-elect was not universally welcoming. New Jersey is the only state that remained in the Union, but failed to cast a majority of its votes for Lincoln in either the election of 1860 or 1864. This strong Democratic influence should not be surprising. New Jersey was a state with a growing immigrant population, as well as large urban areas and important cultural and economic ties to the South.

Lincoln addressed the New Jersey Senate and the General Assembly in separate sessions that day in Trenton. The highlights of his speeches were references to George Washington and the Battle of Trenton during the Revolutionary War, as well as his own resolve to preserve the Union. Perhaps more important was Lincoln's acknowledgement that a majority of representatives from both houses of the New Jersey Legislature were Democrats. Despite party and political differences, Lincoln returned the warm reception of both houses. The symbolism was striking. While many in the audience and across the state had opposed him in the election, they still acknowledged and accepted him as their President. This attitude stood in stark contrast to the southern states which had seceded quickly after his election.

### **ACTIVITY:**

As a class, review the issues of the Election of 1860, the results of the election, and the movement towards secession by the southern states.

In small groups, the students will read Lincoln's speech to the New Jersey Senate and the *Daily True American* articles. After completing the readings, the students will discuss the central theme of each document, the purpose, and how each reflects the views of opposing political parties.

As a class, review the results of each group's findings. Continue the discussion by asking such questions as:

- How can groups with a common heritage, but with different political beliefs, work together?
- Why did Lincoln evoke the role of New Jersey during the Revolutionary War on the eve of the Civil War?
- What role does liberty play in the political motivations and objectives of both Lincoln and the New Jersey Democrats who opposed him?
- What conclusions can be drawn about the attitudes of the citizens of New Jersey toward southern slavery and secession?

#### **FOLLOW-UP:**

After four long years of fighting in the Civil War, over 600,000 deaths, and yet another Presidential election in which New Jersey did not support the incumbent, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in April of 1865. Regardless of political and philosophical differences, New Jersey still displayed a tremendous amount of admiration and respect for the recently fallen President.

Based upon the information, pictures, and primary documents below, hold a class discussion on how the voters of New Jersey viewed Lincoln considering recent events and political differences. For homework, the students will write a eulogy for Abraham Lincoln that might have appeared in a local New Jersey newspaper based upon the class activities and discussions.

#### **Assassination and Funeral**

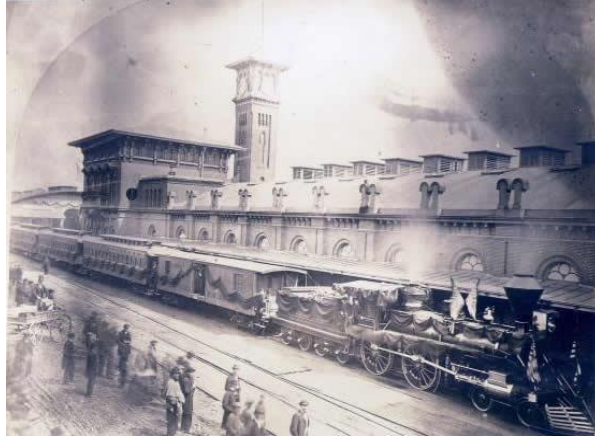
The following text is drawn from *Lincoln and New Jersey: A Bicentennial Tribute* by the New Jersey State Archives unless otherwise credited. Courtesy of New Jersey State Archives; Department of State.

"The train left Philadelphia at 4:00 a.m. People gathered at the station in their bed clothes to bid farewell. After passing through many New Jersey towns the train reached the Jersey City depot at 10:00 a.m. The station clock was stopped at 7:20 a.m., the time of the president's death. From Jersey City, the body was ferried across the Hudson River and taken to New York City Hall. There, 500,000 mourners came to view the remains."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *With Malice Towards None: The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Exhibition*. Special Presentation. From the Library of Congress. [http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/lincoln/interactives/long-journey-home/apr\\_24/index.html](http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/lincoln/interactives/long-journey-home/apr_24/index.html)

## The Funeral Train of Abraham Lincoln in New Jersey



Stereo Opticon Card from the personal collection of Anna Aschkenes

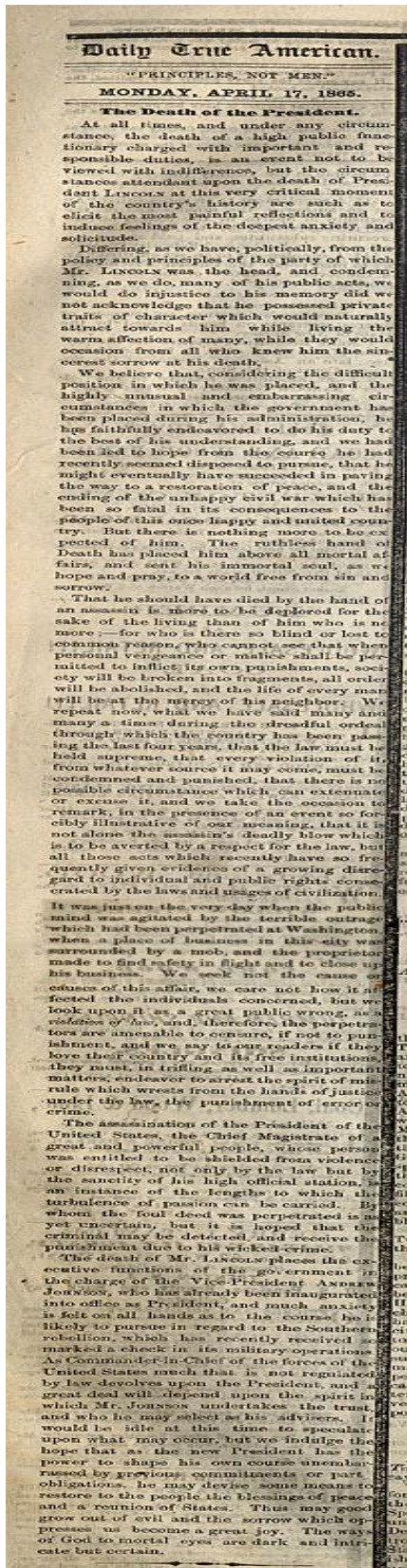
In the wake of Lincoln's assassination on Friday, April 14, 1865, the *Daily True American* expressed the same shock and outrage felt throughout the northern states. The *True American's* editions reported the passage of Lincoln's funeral train through Trenton on Monday, April 24, at 6:00 a.m.



### April 15, 1865

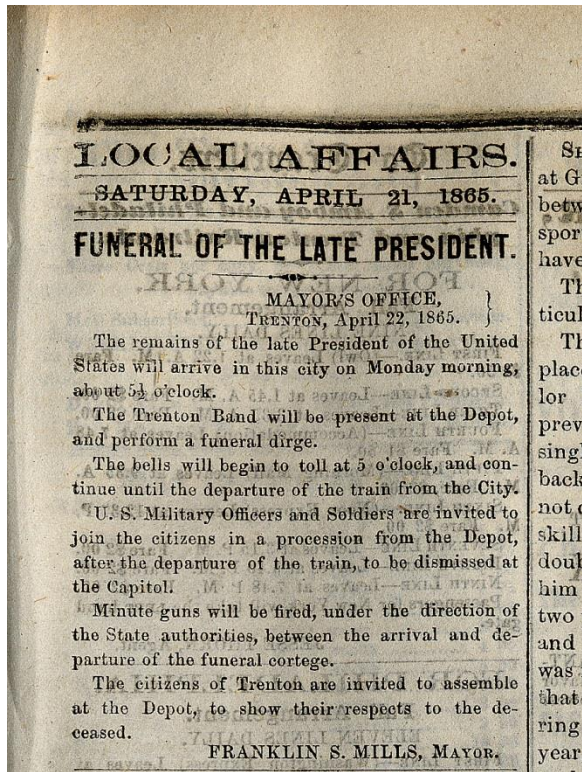
On the day after the President's assassination, the *True American's* editors wrote in disbelief: "At midnight last night the telegraph brought us the shocking and horrible report of the assassination of President Lincoln, which we print elsewhere. Although we publish this report, we do so in the hope that it may not be true. The late hour at which the report comes, prevents any comment other than the expression of this hope, and of horror at such a brutal, cowardly and detestable act."

Courtesy of Special Collections, New Jersey State Library



April 17, 1865

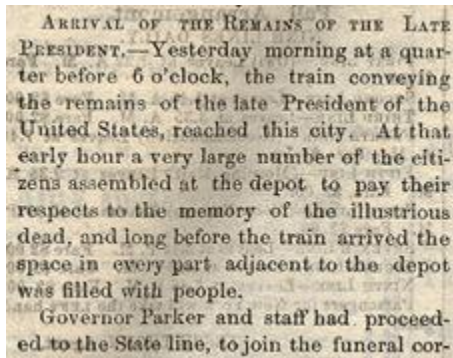
Two days later, the newspaper was filled with editorials and reports on the assassination. The editors acknowledge their political differences with Lincoln, but credited the slain President with "private traits of character which would naturally attract him while living the warm affection of many, while they would occasion from all who knew him the sincerest sorrow at his death."



**April 21, 1865**

Mayor Franklin S. Mills's proclamation announcing plans for the city's tribute to Lincoln as his funeral train passed through Trenton appeared in the April 21, 1865 edition of the *True American*.

Courtesy of Special Collections, New Jersey State Library



**April 25, 1865**

The newspaper included a detailed account of the Lincoln funeral train's slow procession through Trenton on Monday, April 24, 1865. The report mentions that "The pressure of the crowd ... was so excessive that those in the front part of the [train] depot found it difficult to keep their places, and many were deprived of the opportunity of seeing the [funeral] car." It concluded: "Considering the very early hour, the number of citizens present and participating in the obsequies, was remarkably large. No accident occurred, and the solemn affair passed off with great credit to the city."

Courtesy of Special Collections, New Jersey State Library

New Jersey State Archives; Department of State  
 Source: <http://www.nj.gov/state/archives/lincoln.html>

## **WANT TO LEARN MORE?**

### **Additional Teaching Resources**

Election of 1860

[http://condor.depaul.edu/tps/Abraham\\_Lincoln\\_Presidential/Lesson\\_3\\_Campaign\\_of\\_1860.pdf](http://condor.depaul.edu/tps/Abraham_Lincoln_Presidential/Lesson_3_Campaign_of_1860.pdf)

Designed for middle school, this lesson plan introduces the issues during the Election of 1860, the candidates, the positions of the political parties, and the results.

Inauguration of 1861-Defending the American Union

<http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/first-inaugural-address-1861mdashdefending-american-union#sect-introduction>

Designed for the high school setting, this lesson plan focuses on primary document analysis, as well as the message of Lincoln and the Republican Party after the Election of 1860 and prior to the start of the Civil War. There are three other era-related lesson plans available as well.

### **For More Information**

"Lincoln and New Jersey," New Jersey State Archives: <http://www.nj.gov/state/archives/lincoln.html>

Anthony Olszewski, "Abraham Lincoln Spoke in Jersey City," 2002.

<http://www.cityofjerseycity.org/lincoln/>

Lincoln's First Inaugural Address

[http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th\\_century/lincoln1.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/lincoln1.asp)

Holzer, Harold, Lincoln President-Elect Abraham Lincoln and the Great Secession Winter 1860-1861, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008)

### **Activity Resources**

#### **Address to the New Jersey State Senate**

**Trenton, New Jersey**

**February 21, 1861**

President-elect Abraham Lincoln spoke separately to each branch of the New Jersey legislature on his inaugural journey to Washington. In the Senate, he referred to Trenton's Revolutionary War heroics and spoke of himself as a "humble instrument in the hands of the Almighty, and of this, his almost chosen people, for perpetuating the object of that great struggle."

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Senate of the State of New-Jersey: I am very grateful to you for the honorable reception of which I have been the object. I cannot but remember the place that New-Jersey holds in our early history. In the early Revolutionary struggle, few of the States among the old Thirteen had more of the battle-fields of the country within their limits than old New-Jersey. May I be pardoned if, upon this occasion, I mention that away back in my childhood, the earliest days of my being able to read, I got hold of a small book, such a one as few of the younger members have ever seen, "Weem's

Life of Washington." I remember all the accounts there given of the battle fields and struggles for the liberties of the country, and none fixed themselves upon my imagination so deeply as the struggle here at Trenton, New-Jersey. The crossing of the river; the contest with the Hessians; the great hardships endured at that time, all fixed themselves on my memory more than any single revolutionary event; and you all know, for you have all been boys, how these early impressions last longer than any others. I recollect thinking then, boy even though I was, that there must have been something more than common that those men struggled for; that something even more than National Independence; that something that held out a great promise to all the people of the world to all time to come; I am exceedingly anxious that this Union, the Constitution, and the liberties of the people shall be perpetuated in accordance with the original idea for which that struggle was made, and I shall be most happy indeed if I shall be an humble instrument in the hands of the Almighty, and of this, his almost chosen people, for perpetuating the object of that great struggle. You give me this reception, as I understand, without distinction of party. I learn that this body is composed of a majority of gentlemen who, in the exercise of their best judgment in the choice of a Chief Magistrate, did not think I was the man. I understand, nevertheless, that they came forward here to greet me as the constitutional President of the United States -- as citizens of the United States, to meet the man who, for the time being, is the representative man of the nation, united by a purpose to perpetuate the Union and liberties of the people. As such, I accept this reception more gratefully than I could do did I believe it was tendered to me as an individual.

Source: <http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/trenton1.htm>

#### Election of 1860



##### Results of New Jersey's voters

	Presidential Candidate	Vice Presidential Candidate	Political Party	Popular Vote		Electoral Vote
	Abraham Lincoln	Hannibal Hamlin	Republican	58,346	48.13%	4
	Stephen Douglas	Herschel Johnson	Fusion	62,869	51.87%	3

Source: <http://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/state.php?year=1860&fips=34&f=0&off=0&elect=0>

#### Election of 1864

##### Results of New Jersey's voters

	Presidential Candidate	Vice Presidential Candidate	Political Party	Popular Vote		Electoral Vote
	George McClellan	George Pendleton	Democratic	68,024	52.84%	7
	Abraham Lincoln	Andrew Johnson	Union	60,723	47.16%	0

Source: <http://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/state.php?year=1864&fips=34&off=0&elect=0&f=0>

The contemporary *Daily True American* newspaper of Trenton leaned strongly toward the Democratic Party, and its reports reflected a clear bias against Abraham Lincoln in the 1860 presidential election.

In a post-election column, "All Hail New Jersey!" the newspaper's editors lauded New Jersey's electorate for casting the majority of the popular vote to Lincoln's opponents.

They wrote: *"It is with no small amount of pride and satisfaction that we record the facts to be found in our table of returns of the electoral vote [they meant the popular vote], which, although not complete, show conclusively that the Rail-Splitter has been defeated in the State by a majority of about five thousand..."*

Later in the same article they wrote: *"Whatever disasters may result to the country from the election of LINCOLN, which seems to be conceded on all hands, it will be a great consolation for the Democracy and Union men of this State to know, they are not responsible."*

New Jersey State Archives; Department of State  
Source: <http://www.nj.gov/state/archives/lincoln.html>



*Daily True American*  
November 8, 1860

Courtesy of Special Collections, New Jersey State Library



## **On the Eve of the Civil War, Lincoln Takes a Stand in Trenton**

By James M. McPherson

[www.officialnj350.com](http://www.officialnj350.com)

On February 11, 1861, President-elect Abraham Lincoln departed from his home in Springfield, Illinois to take up the burdens of the presidency of a country that was falling apart. Seven deep-South states had already seceded from the Union. Delegates from those states were meeting in Montgomery, Alabama to create the new nation of the Confederate States of America. The rest of the country anxiously awaited Lincoln's words as he made short speeches in cities and at whistle-stops on his way to Washington. Not wanting to tip his hand before the inaugural address on March 4, and concerned that a careless remark or slip of the tongue might inflame the crisis further, Lincoln confined himself mostly to platitudes and trivia in his attempts to say nothing controversial. The consequent censure of him as a lightweight unequal to the demands of the hour mounted as the trip continued. By the time Lincoln reached Trenton on February 21, he knew that he must say something of substance and importance to quiet the criticism. Invitations from both houses of the New Jersey legislature to address each of them gave him opportunities to do so.

In his speech to the state Senate, Lincoln referred to the battle of Trenton on December 26, 1776, where the American victory over Britain's mercenary Hessian troops saved the Revolution from collapse. He invoked that famous event as inspiration for efforts to preserve the nation that George Washington's soldiers had fought to create. "Of all the battle-fields and struggles for the liberty of the country" he had read about in his youth, Lincoln told the senators, "none fixed themselves upon my imagination so deeply as the struggle here at Trenton. . . . The crossing of the river; the contest with the Hessians; the great hardships endured at that time, all fixed themselves on my memory more than any single revolutionary event. . . . I recollect thinking then, boy though I was, that there must have been something more than common that those men struggled for." Applying the lessons of the Revolution to the crisis of 1861, Lincoln said that he was "exceedingly anxious" that what those men had fought for, "something even more than National Independence . . . something that held out a great promise to all the people of the world [for] all time to come; I am exceedingly anxious that this Union, the Constitution, and the liberties of the people shall be perpetuated in accordance with the original idea for which that struggle was made."

But how could this be done without war? Perhaps it could not. "I shall do all that may be in my power to promote a peaceful settlement of all our difficulties," Lincoln told members of the General Assembly later that day. "The man does not live who is more devoted to peace than I am." But, Lincoln added portentously, "It may be necessary to put the foot down firmly." The newspaper correspondent reporting the speech noted that at these words, "the audience broke out into cheers so loud and long that for some moments it was impossible to hear Mr. L's voice." When Lincoln was finally able to continue, he asked the Jersey lawmakers: "And if I do my duty, and do right, you will sustain me, will you not?" The audience erupted with "loud cheers, and cries of 'Yes, Yes, We will.'"

Two months later, after Confederate guns forced the surrender of Fort Sumter, Lincoln put his foot down firmly. And New Jerseyans sustained him as promised, sending more than 70,000 soldiers and sailors to fight for the Union, of whom nearly 6,000 gave their lives.

*James M. McPherson is the George Henry Davis 1886 Professor of American History, Emeritus and an American Civil War historian. He has written numerous works, including the book Battle Cry of Freedom for which he received the 1989 Pulitzer Prize.*

## CREDIT INFORMATION:

### In Classroom Activity:

Pg. 1: Lincoln Portrait, Abraham Lincoln Engraving. Courtesy New Jersey State Archives; Department of State.

Pg. 3: Funeral Train of Abraham Lincoln in New Jersey. Stereo Opticon Card from the personal collection of Anna Aschkenes.

Pg. 3: *Daily True American*, April 15, 1865. Courtesy of Special Collections, New Jersey State Library.

Pg. 4: *Daily True American*, April 17, 1865. Courtesy of Special Collections, New Jersey State Library.

Pg. 5: *Daily True American*, April 21, 1865. Courtesy of Special Collections, New Jersey State Library.

Pg. 5: *Daily True American*, April 25, 1865. Courtesy of Special Collections, New Jersey State Library.

Pg. 7: Election of 1860: Results of New Jersey's voters.

<http://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/state.php?year=1860&fips=34&f=0&off=0&elect=0>

Pg. 7: Election of 1864: Results of New Jersey's voters.

<http://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/state.php?year=1864&fips=34&off=0&elect=0&f=0>

Pg. 8: *Daily True American*, November 8, 1860. Courtesy of Special Collections, New Jersey State Library.

*It Happened Here: New Jersey* is a program of the New Jersey Historical Commission made possible by a grant from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, a state partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in the program do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities or the New Jersey Council for the Humanities. To access more teaching resources created for this program visit [www.officialnj350.com](http://www.officialnj350.com).