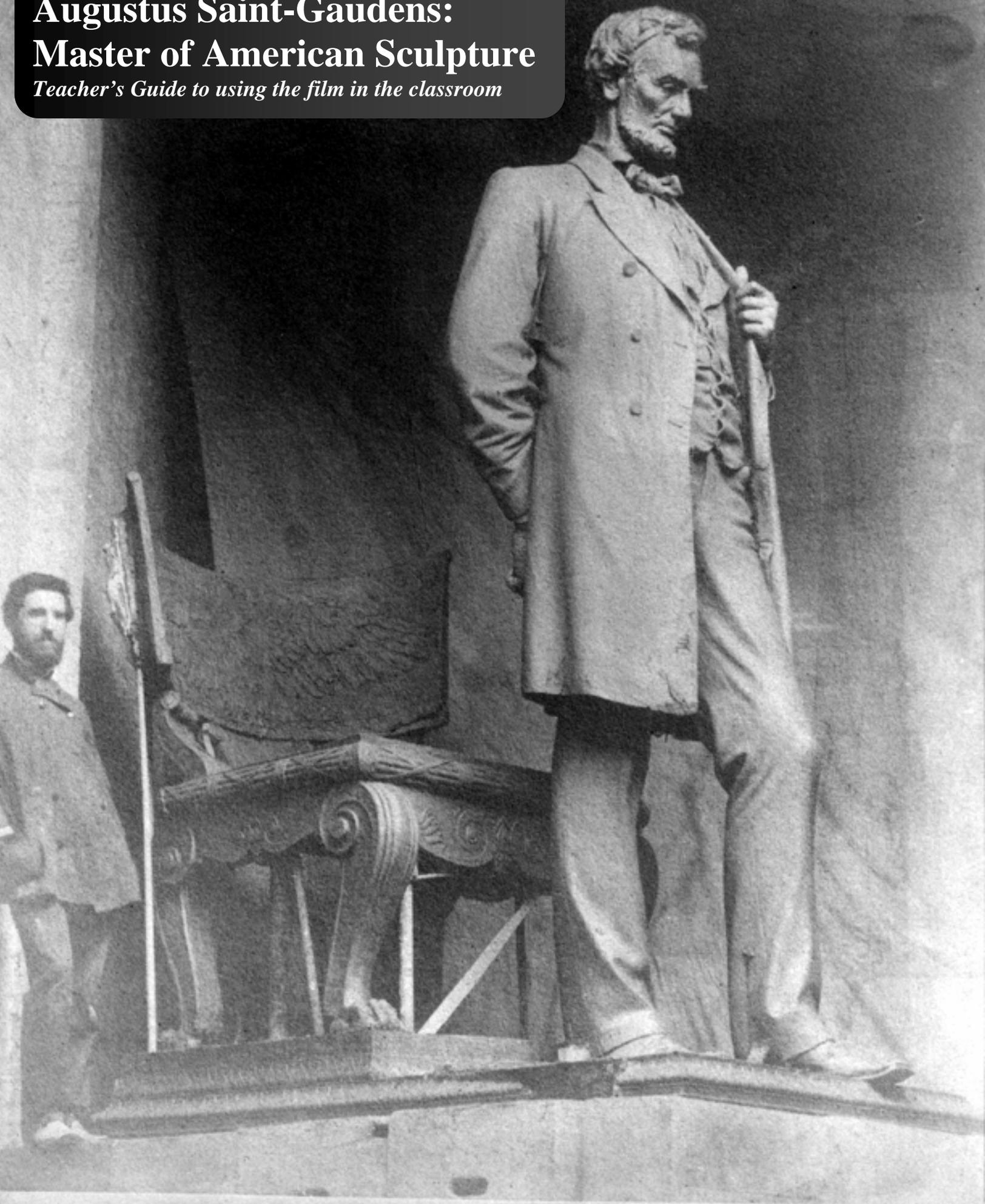


Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Master of American Sculpture

Teacher's Guide to using the film in the classroom



Augustus Saint-Gaudens Master of American Sculpture

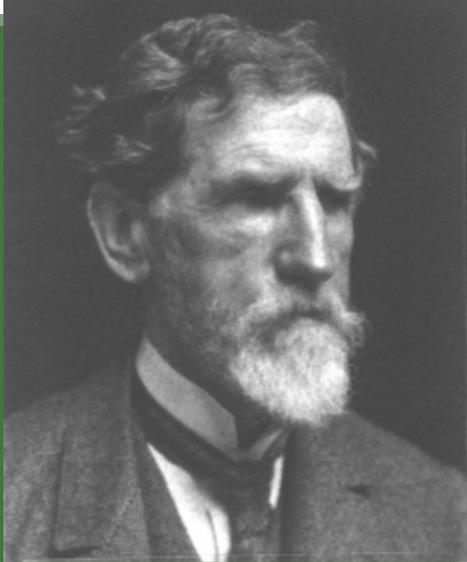
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site



This guide accompanies the NHPTV film, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Master of American Sculpture*. The film introduces new audiences to this artist and his work and shows how he influenced American cultural life through the art of sculpture and as a teacher and supporter of the arts. Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907) created over 150 works of art, from exquisitely carved cameos to heroic-size public monuments. Works such as the *Shaw Memorial*, continue to inspire people today and his design for the 1907 Twenty Dollar Gold Piece, is considered America's most beautiful coin. The goal of this guide is to enable teachers to help each student create an understanding of the artist and his work.

Included in this lesson are several pages of supporting material. To help navigate use the following icon  link on the page to the document.



[Saint-Gaudens Historic Site](#) in Cornish, New Hampshire, was the home and studio of Augustus Saint-Gaudens, one of the most important American sculptors of the late 19th century. From his modest beginnings as an immigrant child growing up in a working class family in colorful 1800s New York City, his talents and ambitions took him to Europe in search of his artistic identity. There, as he learned his craft, he discovered the richness and variety of both the established and the evolving schools of Western art and sculpture. He used these experiences to forge his own distinctively American style of sculpture, a style of realism that was capable of expressing with equal eloquence the grittiness of human conflict, the depth of human grief, the grace of the human form, and the strength of the human spirit.

This guide accompanies the NHPTV film, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Master of American Sculpture*. The film covers the entire period of Saint-Gaudens' life and many of his works and is packed with information and imagery. In order to enable students to comprehend the nature of Saint-Gaudens' work and its significance more clearly, this guide focuses on three of his most important pieces showcased in the film: the Standing Lincoln, the *Shaw Memorial*, and the *Adams Memorial*. These pieces demonstrate how concepts can be transmitted from the artist to the viewer. They illustrate the power of Saint-Gaudens' style and enduring legacy. The goal of this guide is to enable teachers to help each student create an understanding of the artist and his work.

Objectives

After viewing the film and completing the assessment activities, the students will be able to:

- Explain some of the reasons why, and the ways in which, human societies create memorials to the people and events of the past.
- Describe some of Saint-Gaudens' attitudes towards his subjects and the times and events which influenced his work,
- Discuss how Saint-Gaudens worked to engage the viewer, to encourage him/her to connect to the work, and to convey important concepts in ways characteristic of his unique style.

Number of Days: approximately 2 class periods

Intended Grade/Range: 7-12th

Resources/MaterialsWebsite:

Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site at www.nps.gov/saga

Saint-Gaudens Memorial and friends of Saint-Gaudens www.sgnhs.org

Teaching/Learning Sequence**Launch:****Reasons for Remembering.***Why and how do human beings create memorials?*

Human beings have long collective memories. In nearly every culture, past and present, people, places and events are memorialized. One of the ways this is accomplished is through art forms. History is filled with artists and the works they have created to remember people and events that are considered important, even long after those people are dead or those events have occurred.

On a personal scale, the dead are often memorialized in poetry, portraits, or the simple sculpture of tombstones. On a public scale, those whose contributions or actions we value as a society or a nation are often memorialized by large public works of art, literature, sculpture, architecture or other art form. These public works of tribute fulfill a basic need for the collective consciousness of a nation.

Bringing out students' memories: Ask students to name some memorials, either local or national, that they have seen. They should explain the context in which they saw it, what or who it was meant to memorialize, how it was executed (painting, sculpture, building, etc.) and what thoughts and feelings it evoked.
Ask:

- If your parents or teachers brought you to see the monument, why do you think these adults considered it important that you see this work?
- Would you bring your children to see it some day in the future? Why?
- What societal purposes does the making of such monuments serve? Record some of these purposes on the board.

Exploration:

Transition to the film: In the United States, the second half of the 19th century was a time for, among other things, remembering. The grand events and horrific wars that the country had been through during its first century were looked at retrospectively through the eyes of the aging generations who had lived through some of these events. The younger generation studied them and was coming to understand them as defining

moments in the country's struggle to get to its feet. In an effort to foster patriotism and the national pride that would help heal and hold the nation together, grand monuments (such as the Washington Monument and the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C.) were planned and executed to commemorate some of the people and events that were foundational to the nation's sense of its history.

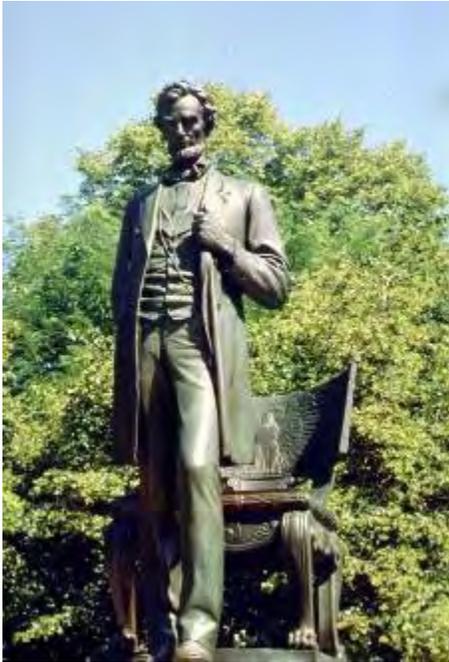
Explain: Augustus Saint-Gaudens was one of the foremost sculptors of the time. He created numerous works of art, including many memorials designed to honor people who had achieved fame in some area of American society and were deemed worthy of public remembrance. In creating these works, he developed a style of sculpture that was considered both new and uniquely American. The class will study three of his works, as presented in the documentary film, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Master of American Sculpture*, to see what these works reveal about the artist, his style, and the people he chose to memorialize.

During Viewing: A “Jigsaw” Approach for the First Two Sections of the Film.

Each of the first two sections of the film has four question sets that accompany it. These questions are designed to allow for a variety of responses from students and for the expression of multiple points of view. Divide the class up into groups of four students. As you begin each of the first two sections of the film, assign one of the question sets for that section to each member of the group. After watching the film section, leave the DVD paused on a view of the work. Re-form the groups so that all students with the same question set are grouped together. Then have the groups:

- Share answers to their question set.
- After they have had time to formulate responses, return to their original groups as “experts” on their question set.
- Exchange information with the other students who have been working on the other questions.

At the conclusion, elicit and record responses from the groups. By sharing in this way, students will be exposed to a wide variety of responses from their classmates, and they can use these responses along with their own ideas to fashion understanding about the artist and his work.



Section I: The Standing Lincoln.

Historical context: Civil War, the post-war healing of the nation, Lincoln's importance to the country as the national hero or iconic figure. Reference the *Timeline of the Life of Abraham Lincoln* included at the end of this guide.

Lesson Document

1. Examining the work.

No one currently living actually knew Lincoln during his lifetime, but in the words of one of the film's speakers, "...the man from Illinois has been resurrected!" by Saint-Gaudens' statue.

- What can you tell about the man, Lincoln, (thoughts, actions, emotions, personality) just by looking at the statue?
- Why was it important for the American people that the statue of Lincoln be created, that the "man from Illinois" be "resurrected"?

2. Participating in the work.

One point made about the Lincoln and its setting is that the work invites the viewer to "participate in" and "become part of" the monument.

- What are ways in which the viewer might "participate" in the work, even if the viewer is not physically at the site of the work?
- Imagine that you were able to interview Lincoln. Compose a list of questions you would ask him about his life, the things he did, and the things that happened to him.

3. Saint-Gaudens' goals for the work.

According to the film, Saint-Gaudens' early memories of Lincoln stayed with him into adulthood and influenced his creation of the statue.

- What about the design of the statue helps convey Saint-Gaudens' own attitude towards his subject? What do you think he wants the viewer to remember about the man Lincoln?
- If a foreign visitor unfamiliar with Lincoln saw the statue, what impressions do you think he/she might come away with, that is, how might he or she "read" the statue?

4. The significance of the work today.

We have discussed the motivations for creating memorials to people and events we think merit them.

- What is the significance of the statue for the American people today?
- What do you think makes a person or event deserving of this kind of public remembrance?



Section II: The Shaw Memorial

Historical context: Civil War, the African American soldier, the condition of African Americans at this time in history, the 54th regiment, the mystique and reality of war. Reference the *Timeline of African American History* included at the end of this guide.

Lesson Document

1. Examining the work.

The men of the Massachusetts 54th regiment depicted in the Shaw Memorial are marching to war, in the words of one speaker, into “their destiny.”

- Fear and determination are two emotions that people often feel when they are going to war. How does the statue convey these emotions? What other thoughts and emotions might the men be experiencing?
- What does the statue tell the viewer about the relationship between the men and their leader?

2. The family’s request.

The family of Colonel Shaw insisted that Saint-Gaudens include the African American soldiers who were under his command rather than just the Colonel, as Saint-Gaudens had originally planned.

- What reasons might the Shaw family have had for wanting the soldiers included in the memorial? Why might this have been an extraordinary request for this memorial during this time period?
- When the memorial was unveiled more than 30 years after the event, what might have been the thoughts and emotions of the surviving members of the 54th as they viewed it?

3. Saint-Gaudens’ process of creation.

It took Saint-Gaudens 13-14 years to complete the *Shaw Memorial*, longer than any other of his works.

- What things about the subject of this work and/or Saint-Gaudens’ own personality might have made it such a struggle to finish?
- According to one speaker, Saint-Gaudens’ use of the allegorical figure of the angel takes the event “out of the

moment, and puts it into the ethereal.” What is meant by this statement and how does the inclusion of the figure achieve this?

4. Reactions to the work.

One of the film’s speakers describes his own reactions to the work as follows: “The Shaw [Memorial] frightens me, and moves me.”

- Think about what the speaker means by this statement. What experiences in your own life have caused you to feel moved in a similar way?
- What reactions from the viewer do you think Saint-Gaudens is trying for in this monument? How do these reactions compare with your reactions to the work?



Section III: The Adams Memorial

Historical context: Henry and Clover Adams, views of suicide in western society, psychological/religious implications, emotional impact.

For this work, a different approach is suggested. Viewing the Adams Memorial is an intensely personal experience. Instead of having students interact immediately, give them the focus questions below and allow them to watch the film segment and respond privately. Repeat the showing if you have time. Pause the film on a shot of the memorial itself and give students time to record their impressions.

Focus on the Work:

- In what major ways does this work differ from the previous two?
- Upon seeing this work, what are your reactions to it?
- What do YOU think the figure represents and why?
- In creating the work, Saint-Gaudens “wanted something that was itself, but nothing else.” What do you think Saint-Gaudens was striving for?
- How does the work “connect the viewer” to Clover Adams and her fate?

Have students share some of their written impressions with the class. If desired, have students construct a Haiku (reflecting the eastern philosophy in the work’s origins) or other poetic form using these reactions, and share these with the class.

Assessments of Student Understanding

A. Communing with the artist: this activity links the themes of the launch activity with what the students have learned from the works of Saint-Gaudens together in a culminating exercise.

Good News! The “National Art Committee” (a fictitious organization) has offered you the chance to commission Augustus Saint-Gaudens to create a piece of sculpture memorializing a person or group of people, a place, or an event in American history. All expenses will be paid. The only condition is that the Committee APPROVES your choice of subject. Write a proposal to the committee that addresses the following issues:

- Identify the subject for your piece and explain the rationale behind your choice. Be persuasive.
- Recommend a location for the piece, and explain your choice.
- Identify ideas and concepts that the piece should convey.
- List any specific objects or props to be included.
- Describe the emotional responses you hope to elicit from the viewer of the work.
- Discuss the desired long-term impact of the work, that is, its effectiveness as a memorial both now and in the future.

B. Suggested class discussion questions: The artist’s way of seeing.

Saint-Gaudens said, “It’s the way a thing is done that makes it right or wrong. That’s the only creed I have in art.”

- Discuss this statement in terms of what you have learned about Saint-Gaudens. How did he develop his own, unique style of “how a thing should be done”? What was innovative, and particularly American, about his style?
- Discuss this statement in terms of other areas of life. Can you think of situations in your own life where this statement does or does not apply?
- One of the film’s speakers said that Saint-Gaudens’ sculptures “set up a relationship with the viewer.” How does the artist achieve this relationship with the viewer? Consider which of the works made the greatest impression on you. Describe your own “relationship” with that work.
- How would you characterize Saint-Gaudens’ legacy to the nation?



The Power of Place

Site Visit:

Have you ever stood on the spot where some historical event occurred and felt a sense of awe and inspiration? This is the power of place you can experience when you visit a National Park. Historic places provide us with opportunities to connect with the lives of the generations before us. The power of place is that it gives history immediacy and relevance. As historian David McCullough* states, "When you stand there, in that very real, authentic place, you feel the presence of that other time. . . ."*

The effectiveness of this film and guide can be enhanced by a trip to Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in Cornish, New Hampshire, the last permanent home of Saint-Gaudens (see the websites below). The site, authorized by Congress in 1964, has a mission to preserve and celebrate the memory of Saint-Gaudens and the colony of artists he established in Cornish in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Bringing students to the place where Saint-Gaudens lived and worked allows them to experience the sense of awe and inspiration, the power of place that visiting a historic site can create. It provides students the opportunity to connect with the lives of generations before them, allowing them to hear the echoing voices of the past and giving history immediacy and relevance.

*From "History Lost and Found," Journal of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Winter 2002.

Timeline of the life of Abraham Lincoln, 1809 – 1865

- 1809 Abraham Lincoln is born on February 12 to Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln, near Hodgenville, Kentucky.
- 1816 The Lincoln family moves to Indiana.
- 1818 Nancy Hanks Lincoln dies. Two months later, Thomas Hanks marries Sarah Bush Johnston.
- 1830 The Lincoln Family moves to Illinois.
- 1832 Lincoln becomes a candidate for the Illinois legislature but is defeated.
- 1833 With a business partner, Lincoln purchases a store in New Salem, Illinois. He also becomes Postmaster of the town, and does surveying.
- 1834 Lincoln is elected to the Illinois House of Representatives as the representative from Sangamon County, Illinois.
- 1839 Lincoln begins his law practice.
- 1842 After an uneasy courtship, Lincoln marries Mary Todd.
- 1846 Lincoln is elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, taking office the following year.
- 1858 Lincoln begins a bid for election to the U.S. Senate from the state of Illinois. In a series of seven debates, he spars with incumbent Stephen Douglas, mostly over issues involving slavery. Douglas, a democrat, holds that states and territories should decide for themselves whether to be slave or free. He also accuses Lincoln of being abolitionist and a “black Republican”. Lincoln expounds against the spread of slavery and opposes the Dred Scot decision, saying that the “Negro” has the same rights under the Constitution as the white man. Lincoln narrowly loses the election.
- 1860 Lincoln wins the presidency in a contentious election that angers the South.
- 1861 In March, Lincoln takes office. In April, the Civil War begins with the firing upon Fort Sumter.
- 1863 On January 1, Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing all slaves in the rebellious territories. In November, he delivers the Gettysburg Address, dedicating the National Cemetery at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.
- 1864 Lincoln is re-elected president.
- 1865 In March the Civil War ends.
On April 14 Lincoln is shot at Ford’s Theatre. The next morning, he dies.
- 1887 Augustus Saint-Gaudens’ statue of Lincoln is unveiled in Chicago’s Lincoln Park.

Timeline of the Reconstruction Era (1865 – 77) and the beginning of legalized segregation

- 1865 The Civil War ends. Lincoln is assassinated. The 13th Amendment is ratified, prohibiting slavery.
- 1866 The “Black Codes” are passed by all white legislators of the former Confederate States. Congress passes the Civil Rights Act, conferring citizenship on African Americans and granting them equal rights to whites.
The Ku Klux Klan is formed in Tennessee.
- 1868 The 14th Amendment is ratified, defining citizenship. Overturns the *Dred Scot* decision.
- 1870 The 15th Amendment is ratified giving African Americans the right to vote.
- 1877 A deal is made with southern democratic leaders which made Rutherford B. Hayes president in exchange for the withdrawal of federal troops from the South, and put an end to federal efforts to protect the civil rights of African Americans.
- 1879 Thousands of African Americans migrate from the South to the West to escape oppression.
- 1881 Tennessee passes the first of the “Jim Crow” segregation laws, segregating state railroads. Similar laws are passed over the next 15 years throughout the Southern states.
- 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* case. The U.S. Supreme Court rules that “separate but equal” public facilities for whites and African Americans are legal.

Timeline of African American History: 1619 - 2008

- 1619** The first African American indentured servants arrive in the American Colonies. Less than a decade later, the first slaves are brought into New Amsterdam (later, New York City). By 1690, every colony has slaves.
- 1739** The Stono Rebellion, one of the earliest slave revolts, occurs in Stono, South Carolina.
- 1793** Eli Whitney's (1765 – 1825) cotton gin increases the need for slaves.
- 1808** Congress bans further importation of slaves.
- 1831** In Boston, William Lloyd Garrison (1805 – 1879) begins publication of the anti-slavery newspaper the *Liberator* and becomes a leading voice in the Abolitionist movement.
- 1831 – 1861** Approximately 75,000 slaves escape to the North using the Underground Railroad.
- 1846** Ex-slave Frederick Douglass (1818 – 1895) publishes the anti-slavery *North Star* newspaper.
- 1849** Harriet Tubman (c. 1820 – 1913) escapes from slavery and becomes an instrumental leader of the Underground Railroad.
- 1850** Congress passes another Fugitive Slave Act, which mandates government participation in the capture of escaped slaves.
Boston citizens, including some of the wealthiest, storm a federal courthouse in an attempt to free escaped Virginia slave Anthony Burns (1834 – 1862).
- 1857** The *Dred Scot v. Sanford* case: Congress does not have the right to ban slavery in the states; slaves are not citizens.
- 1860** Abraham Lincoln (1809 – 1865) is elected president, angering the southern states.
- 1861** The Civil War begins.
- 1863** Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation proclaims that all slaves in rebellious territories are forever free.
- 1863** Massachusetts 54th regiment of African American troops led by Colonel Robert Gould Shaw (1837 – 1863) marches out of Boston on May 28th, heading into combat.
- 1865** The Civil War ends. Lincoln is assassinated.
The 13th Amendment to the Constitution, prohibiting slavery, is ratified.
The era of Reconstruction begins.

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- 1881 Tennessee passes the first of the “Jim Crow” segregation laws, segregating state railroads. Similar laws are passed over the next 15 years throughout the Southern states.
- 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson case: racial segregation is ruled constitutional by the Supreme Court. The “Jim Crow” (“separate but equal”) laws begin, barring African Americans from equal access to public facilities.
- 1897 Augustus Saint-Gaudens unveils the *Shaw Memorial* in Boston Common.
- 1954 Brown v. Board of Education case: strikes down segregation as unconstitutional.
- 1955 In Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks (1913 – 2005) is arrested for breaking a city ordinance by refusing to give up her seat on a public bus to a white man. This defiant act gives initial momentum to the Civil Rights Movement.
- 1957 Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929 – 1968) and others set up the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a leading engine of the Civil Rights Movement.
- 1964 The Civil Rights Act is signed, prohibiting discrimination of all kinds.
- 1965 The Voting Rights Act is passed, outlawing the practices used in the South to disenfranchise African American voters.
- 1967 Edward W. Brooke (1919 -) becomes the first African American U.S. Senator since Reconstruction. He serves two terms as a Senator from Massachusetts.
- 1968 Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.
- 2008 Barack Obama (1961 -) mounts a strong campaign, captures the democratic nomination, and becomes the first African-American President of the United States.

