



Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt



The 16th and 26th Presidents

Two of the four faces carved into South Dakota's Mount Rushmore are the 16th President of the United States: Abraham Lincoln, and the 26th President: Theodore Roosevelt. Though Roosevelt was only two years old when Lincoln was elected President in 1860, he shared many of Lincoln's same political philosophies. These two men came from different backgrounds, but their lives shared several interesting parallels. Both Lincoln and Roosevelt endured great personal loss, both were familiar with the tragedy of war, and both left lasting impressions on the face of their country.

Lincoln Funeral Train

After Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in April 1865, the country mourned his death as his body made its way back to Springfield, Illinois during a 13-day, 1,654-mile train journey through seven states. In several cities, including New York City, public funeral services were held.

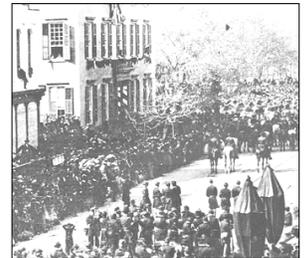
Six and a half year old Teddy Roosevelt witnessed, from the window of his grandfather's home, the somber funeral procession making its way through the streets of New York City on April 25, 1865.

Roosevelt Assassination Attempt

Lesser-known than the Lincoln assassination is the attempted assassination of Theodore Roosevelt. While campaigning in

Milwaukee, Wisconsin on October 14, 1912, Roosevelt was shot by John Schrank. Roosevelt said to the crowd, "I have just been shot; but it takes more than that to kill a Bull Moose." The non-fatal bullet, lodged in Roosevelt's chest, was never removed.

As the Lincoln funeral procession made its way through New York City, young Theodore Roosevelt watched from the window of his grandfather's home



Honoring Lincoln

Theodore Roosevelt was President of the United States during the 1909 Abraham Lincoln Centennial celebrations. On February 12, 1909, President Roosevelt spoke at the Lincoln Birthplace cornerstone ceremony in Hodgenville, Kentucky. He declared: "As the years roll by, and as all of us, wherever we dwell, grow to feel . . . a peculiar sense of pride in the mightiest of the mighty men . . . the man whose blood was shed for the union of his people and for the freedom of a race, Abraham Lincoln."

On June 4, 1903, Roosevelt visited the Lincoln Tomb in Springfield, Illinois. Several years later he paid another visit to Lincoln's hometown. The *New York Times* reported that, on April 7, 1912, Roosevelt "sat in Abraham Lincoln's old pew" at the First Presbyterian Church before placing a wreath at the Lincoln Tomb in Oak Ridge Cemetery. He then "went to the old frame house which was Lincoln's home for many years."



Theodore Roosevelt wore this ring, containing pieces of Abraham Lincoln's hair, on March 4, 1905, during his second inauguration

Roosevelt's North Star

Theodore Roosevelt admired Abraham Lincoln as a man and a politician. Shortly after being elected President, Roosevelt ignited racial tension throughout the country by inviting African American author and educator Booker T. Washington to the White House. Roosevelt defended his actions by saying, "If I have erred, I err in company with Abraham Lincoln." Roosevelt was also known to frequently refer to Lincoln when he addressed the public.

Speech at Lincoln Tomb, June 4, 1903

"It is a good thing for us, by speech, to pay homage to the memory of Abraham Lincoln, but it is an infinitely better thing for us in our lives to pay homage to his memory in the only way in which that homage can be effectively paid, by seeing to it that this republic's life, social and political, civic and industrial, is shaped now in accordance with the ideals which Lincoln preached."

Speech in New York City, February 13, 1905

"Lincoln, himself a man of Southern birth, did not hesitate to appeal to the sword when he became satisfied that in no other way could the Union be saved, for high though he put peace he put righteousness still higher. He warred for the Union; he warred to free the slave and when he warred he warred in earnest."

Journalist Alfred Henry Lewis, who compiled a volume of President Roosevelt's speeches, remarked:

"More than any other book or books, President Roosevelt has read and re-read the Life of Lincoln. Lincoln is his North Star; he steers by him. In those tangles which beset a president, his first silent inquiry is, 'What would Lincoln have done?'"



Roosevelt and the National Parks

Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt both have six national parks dedicated to their memory. The Lincoln parks include: Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site (Kentucky); Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial (Indiana); Lincoln Home National Historic Site (Illinois); Mount Rushmore National Memorial (South Dakota); Ford's Theatre National Historic Site (Washington, D.C.); and the Lincoln Memorial (Washington, D.C.).



During a 1903 visit to Yellowstone, President Roosevelt said, "The Yellowstone Park is something absolutely unique in the world. . . . This Park was created and is now administered for the benefit and enjoyment of the people."

Roosevelt's parks include: Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace National Historic Site (New York); Sagamore Hill National Historic Site (New York); Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site (New York); Theodore Roosevelt National Park (North Dakota); Theodore Roosevelt Island (Washington, D.C.); and Mount Rushmore National Memorial (South Dakota).

Though the National Park Service was not officially founded until after President Roosevelt's administration, he was instrumental in laying the groundwork for such an organization. Roosevelt signed the Antiquities Act of June 8, 1906, which allowed the President to designate historic landmarks, structures, or other objects of historic, scientific, or natural importance as national monuments.

While President from 1901-1909, Roosevelt signed legislation creating five national parks and four national monuments. He also had a large portion of the Grand Canyon declared a national monument in 1908. Of the Grand Canyon he said, "Keep it for your children and your children's children, and for all who come after you, as one of the great sights which every American . . . must see."