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**ABRAHAM LINCOLN A AMERICKÁ OBČANSKÁ
VÁLKA**

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

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ABSTRACT

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This undergraduate thesis focuses on Abraham Lincoln and American Civil War. The main aim of the thesis is to confirm the Abraham Lincoln's important role in the American history.

The work is divided into five main parts. The first two chapters are theoretical and contain the historical overview of Lincoln's life before and during American Civil War. The third chapter analyses the causes of Lincoln's election as the President with the emphasis on Lincoln's personality. The next part deals with consequences of his victory and events which followed. The turning point was the beginning of the war. The last chapter describes the depiction of the President in the culture and art. The conclusion of the paper summarises the knowledge and findings.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
1. ABRAHAM LINCOLN 'S LIFE BEFORE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR	2
1.1. Personal life	2
1.1.1. Childhood and youth	2
1.1.2. Marriage and children	3
1.2. Military service and early legal carrier	4
1.3. Early political carrier and The Congressman Lincoln	5
1.4. The road to presidency	6
1.5. Presidency and the secession	8
2. LINCOLN 'S LIFE DURING AMERICAN CIVIL WAR	10
2.1. Beginning of American Civil War	10
2.2. Course of the war and its end	12
3. CAUSES OF LINCOLN 'S ELECTION AS THE PRESIDENT	15
3.1 Non-political and political career	15
3.2 Personal life	17
3.3 Abraham Lincoln 's personality	18
3.3.1 Physical appearance	18
3.3.2 Character traits	19
4. CONSEQUENCES OF LINCOLN 'S ELECTION AND FOLLOWING EVENTS	23
4.1. Disintegration of the Union	23
4.2. Opposition of Southern states	24
4.3. Beginning of American Civil War	25
5. DEPICTING OF LINCOLN IN CULTURE AND ART	26
5.1. Lincoln in the literature	26
5.2. Lincoln in the film	28
CONCLUSION	30
REFERENCES	32
SUMMARY IN CZECH	35

INTRODUCTION

The American Civil War was the most serious internal political conflict in the United States history. It is also called the war of North against South and it was the result of long-time different economic and political development of the society in the south and the north of the USA. The main (but not the only) difference represented slavery. The agricultural society predominated in the south where the aristocracy owned plantations with working black slaves. The industrial type of society with a strong emphasis for democratic principles appeared in the north. The growing abolitionism in the northern part of the Union was considered as an effort to destroy the economics of Southern society and an effort to disrupt the traditional ordering. Efforts to reach a compromise solution of conflicts prevailed in both parts of the country until the middle of the 19th century. However, the problem escalated into a critical form in the 50s. The North felt threatened by the southern expansion and the South's necessity of new land for the plantation economy. The South turned down North's requests for the abolition of slavery and its help to the runaway slaves. When presidential elections in 1860 won the Republican Party's candidate, Abraham Lincoln, the southerners considered it as the sufficient reason for the secession despite the fact that Lincoln had a very restrained opinions about slavery and his main ambition was to preserve the Union.

However, who was Abraham Lincoln? It is well known he was the sixteenth President of the United States. His opinions and decisions influenced the course of the war and further development of the country. I would like to describe his character, talent and abilities and explain what kind of the leader he was. Was Lincoln "good" or "bad" President? How much was his leadership during the American Civil War significant for the country? Moreover, I would like to analyse the causes and consequences of Lincoln's election as the President and events which followed after his election. How big was the role of his personality in the election? Was the beginning of the war the result of his victory? The main purpose of the thesis is to confirm the important role of Abraham Lincoln in the American history and introduce Abraham Lincoln as a human being who became an American icon.

1. ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S LIFE BEFORE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

1.1 Personal life

1.1.1 Childhood and youth

We know about Abraham Lincoln's childhood relatively little information. Lincoln's ancestor came from England to Massachusetts in 1637. His father Thomas Lincoln came from Virginia and was a migratory farmer and carpenter. He married with Nancy Hanks and the couple moved to the one-room log cabin on the farm in Hardin County, Kentucky. They had three children and their second child, Abraham Lincoln, was born on the 12th February 1809. Thomas Lincoln was a pioneer farmer and later became one of the richest men from the country but he lost his property in 1816. Abraham spent the childhood and youth in poor conditions.

The Lincoln's family moved several times. They changed their place of residence again to the farm on Knob Creek when Abraham was two years old. When he was seven, his family moved once more to Indiana. His father built there a permanent cabin and later he bought a piece of land. Abraham helped his father with the work on the farm but he did not like it (Current, 2014). Two years later his mother died of milk sickness and his father soon afterwards married Sarah Bush Johnston. She was a kind widow with three children and Abraham had a very close relationship with her. He thought of her as his "angel mother" (Donald, 1996, pp. 26-27) and thanks to her he discovered the "beauty" of reading (Heideking, 1999, p. 209).

Lincoln's parents were almost illiterate and he had only a little formal education. He taught himself to read and write and he borrowed books from neighbours in the village, for example Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, *Aesop's Fables* etc. Heideking (1999) mentions the only book in the house was *The Bible* and therefore Lincoln studied this book very properly. Current (2014) presents that Lincoln knew Shakespeare's works very well, he used many quotations from them and he "liked the works of John Stuart Mill, particularly *On Liberty*, but disliked heavy or metaphysical works" (p. 3). Later he studied law himself and proved his own rhetorical talent. He obtained a reputation of being an intelligent and well-educated person.

Lincoln earned money for a living very soon. The tradesman James Gentry employed him for a voyage on a flatboat down the Mississippi River in 1828. Lincoln got to know the horribleness of slavery through this new job in New Orleans. He remembered forever the impressions from a visit to slave auction with groups of slaves in chains. He considered the slave trade as an important problem. He stayed in small village Salem after he returned back from the voyage. Lincoln worked there as a postmaster, a storekeeper in shop and a surveyor. He had no desire to be a farmer so he did many various jobs during his life. He was a woodcutter, a ship captain, a rail-splitter, a hunter, a surveyor, a soldier, a postmaster and a storekeeper. In 1830 his family relocated west to Macon County in Illinois and in 1831 they moved to Coles County.

1.1.2 Marriage and children

While he was in New Salem, Lincoln became acquainted with Ann Rutledge. Unfortunately, she died when she was twenty-two years old: “Afterward, stories were told of a grand romance between Lincoln and Rutledge, but these stories are not supported by sound historical evidence” (Current, 2014, p.3). After Ann’s death, he had a courtship with Mary Owens.

Donald (1996, pp. 86-87) mentions that in December 1839 Lincoln met Mary Todd in Springfield and they were engaged in 1840. She was his first real love. Mary was well-educated and originated from wealthy family which owned slaves and traded with slaves. The first term of the wedding was cancelled but they met again and married in November 1842.

The couple had four children, all sons: Robert Todd (born in 1843), Edward Baker (1846 - 1850), William Wallace (1850 - 1862) and Thomas (1853 - 1871). Three of their sons died in childhood due to diseases. Only Robert grew to adulthood and had later his own family. White (2009, pp. 179-181) states Abraham Lincoln's bloodline ended in 1985. Of course, both parents suffered due to deaths of their sons. Finally, as Steers (2010, p. 341) concludes, was Mary affirmed insane and was temporarily situated to a mental health asylum.

In Springfield and Washington, Lincolns took part in Presbyterian services but they never joined any church. Abraham Lincoln explained:

When any church will inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification for membership, the Saviour’s condensed statement of the substance of both Law and Gospel, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and

with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor, as thyself,” that church will I join with all my heart and all my soul. (Current, 2014, p.3)

Nevertheless, he was well acquainted with *The Bible* and he believed in an almighty God.

1.2 Military service and early legal carrier

Lincoln signed on as a volunteer in the Black Hawk War in 1832 and he was chosen captain of a volunteer company. His militia service did not last a long time and the company fortunately did not participate in battles. Afterward he joked that he had seen no “live, fighting Indians” during the war but had had “a good many bloody struggles with the mosquitoes” (Current, 2014, p.1).

Lincoln’s self-confidence increased when he held the function as captain so he attempted to acquire the seat in Illinois General Assembly. Heideking (1999, p. 209) describes that in elections he promoted the improvements of infrastructure and building-up the foundation of the central bank and the implementation of customs duty. His opinions denoted that he tended to Whigs. This first attempt resulted in failure but in 1834 he was successful and won the election. He was elected three times more.

Lincoln finally decided to study law. He travelled a lot to obtain the experiences. He began teaching himself basic general knowledge from various areas and then he read law books. Lincoln said about his learning method: “I studied with nobody” (Donald, 1996, p. 55). He successfully passed the bar examination in 1836 (Current, 2014). White (2009, pp. 71, 79) mentions after that he moved to Springfield, Illinois, because there were many opportunities for his work and started to practice law with his first layer partner John T. Stuart, his wife’s Mary cousin, in their private legal company. Later Lincoln had other two partners, Stephen T. Logan and William H. Herndon.

He worked really hard and consecutively became one of the most successful lawyers with more interesting earnings. He defended the interests of big companies such as railroads, banks, insurance companies etc. in trials but he dealt with the patents and criminal cases too. Current (2014) states that Lincoln was reputable especially for his practical intelligence, uprightness and honesty.

1.3 Early political carrier and The Congressman Lincoln

Heideking (1999) presents that Lincoln agreed with Andrew Jackson, the contemporary president, in his sympathies for the common man but “he disagreed with the Jacksonian view that the government should be divorced from economic enterprise” (p. 209). Lincoln later said: “The legitimate object of government is to do for a community of people whatever they need to have done, but cannot do at all, or cannot do so well, for themselves, in their separate and individual capacities” (Current, 2014, p. 4)

Heideking (1999, p. 210) mentions Lincoln’s political idols Daniel Webster and Henry Clay. They propagandized the economic consolidation of Union with the help of Congress and federal government. Under the slogan “American System” they required unification of banking and currency structure, the improvement of infrastructure and support of American industry with customs.

Lincoln as well as the most of Whigs politics kept a low profile in issue of slavery. He refused slavery from the moral point of view but he did not want to belong to abolitionists, radical sympathizers of abolition of slavery.

The lynching and the murder of abolitionist editor of newspaper Elijah Lovejoy in 1837 led in Lincoln’s first fundamental speech in The Young Men’s Lyceum of Springfield in Illinois in January 1838. Lincoln affirmed that slavery was “founded on both injustice and bad policy” and, on the other hand, that “the promulgation of abolition doctrines tends rather to increase than to abate its evils” (Current, 2014, p. 4). In his speech emphasized the motives and elements of romanticism and the basic values of American democracy:

Let every American, every lover of liberty, every well-wisher to his posterity swear by the blood of the Revolution never to violate in the least particular the laws of the country, and never to tolerate their violation by others. As the patriots of seventy-six did to the support of the Declaration of Independence, so to the support of the Constitution and laws let every American pledge his life, his property, and his sacred honor—let every man remember that to violate the law is to trample on the blood of his father, and to tear the charter of his own and his children's liberty. Let reverence for the laws be breathed by every American mother to the lisping babe that prattles on her lap; let it be taught in schools, in seminaries, and in colleges; let it be written in primers, spelling-books, and in almanacs; let it be preached from

the pulpit, proclaimed in legislative halls, and enforced in courts of justice. And, in short, let it become the political religion of the nation; and let the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the grave and the gay of all sexes and tongues and colors and conditions, sacrifice unceasingly upon its altars. While ever a state of feeling such as this shall universally or even very generally prevail throughout the nation, vain will be every effort, and fruitless every attempt, to subvert our national freedom. (Current, 2014)

Lincoln devoted oneself to his law carrier and to political activities in the Whig party after the end of his mandate in Illinois General Assembly. He gloriously supported the candidate Henry Clay and the Whigs nominated him as a candidate to the Congress in 1847 (Heideking, 1999, p. 211). He won with preponderance but his functioning there was featureless and he served here only one two-year term (1847-1849). He agreed with so called *Wilmot Proviso* which should have to prohibit slavery in new acquired territories but it was not approved.

Donald (1996, p. 140) explains that Lincoln supported the nomination of General Zachary Taylor in the presidential election in 1848 and after his successfully election Lincoln was disappointed that he did not be appointed as Commissioner of the General Land Office as a reward for his campaign. The Lincoln's refusing of Mexican War and its criticism brought him the enemies and the loss of voters because people endorsed this war, asserts Heideking (1999, p. 211). Lincoln said about The Mexican War in the speech opposing this war in the United States House of Representatives on the 12th January 1848: "Military glory - that attractive rainbow that rises in showers of blood." Afterwards he hung back in politics and concentrated on his prosperous lawyer practise in Springfield. Current (2014) writes that it seems to be the end of his political career.

1.4 The road to presidency

The Kansas-Nebraska Act from 1854 caused the political crisis and the foundation of new political parties. The Whig party came apart because it ambiguously refused slavery. The new founded Republican Party organized the opposition against the *Kansas-Nebraska Act*. Heideking (1999, p. 211) explains in his book: This act allowed to the settlers of these territories to decide whether to permit or not the slavery there. This situation awoke Lincoln's interest about politics and motivated him to come in again. Many former Whigs gave him a chance and Lincoln became a Republican leader in Illinois

very soon (Current, 2014). The Republican program represents the slogan: “*Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Speech, Free Men*” (Heideking, 1999, p. 212).

Lincoln was a Republican candidate against the democratic senator Stephen A. Douglas who had the general responsibility for the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Their rhetorical battles between “Little Giant” Douglas (1,62m) and “Tall Sucker” Lincoln (1,92m) arranged in seven towns of state Illinois admired many people (Heideking, 1999, p. 211). Current (2014) presents that Lincoln’s and Douglas’ public debates “were published in 1860, together with a biography of Lincoln, in a best-selling book that Lincoln himself compiled and marketed as part of his campaign” (p. 5). Although Lincoln lost the election, his public speeches engaged the national attention. In especially famous speech which motto came from New Testament recorded in Matthew 12:25, Lincoln said:

A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand. I believe this government cannot endure; permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved — I do not expect the house to fall — but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. (Speech at the Republican State Convention, Springfield, Illinois, accepting the Republican nomination for US Senate (on the 16th June 1858).

Heideking (1999, p. 212) argues Lincoln knew that in the U.S. could not be both for slavery and a free liberal society together and that the American must decide for the only one system. Lincoln declared that “the civil liberties of every U.S. citizen, white as well as black, were at stake. The territories must be kept free, he further said, because “new free states” were “places for poor people to go and better their condition” (Current, 2014, p. 5). The electoral program of the Republicans promised the end of the expansion of slavery, protective customs duty and the rapid conferment of American citizenship to immigrants who were still the requested workforce.

Lincoln was nominated as the presidential candidate on the third vote of election at the Republican National Convention in Chicago in May 1860. For citizens Lincoln was the epitome of the hard work and the humility. He spared all the time to preparation of his campaign. Heideking (1999, p. 214) highlights that the election turnout was first climbed to 80 percent and Lincoln owed for his election especially to voices of heavily populated states in the North. Abraham Lincoln won the election on the 6th November 1860 and became the 16th president of the United States and the first president from the Republican

Party. He defeated his opponents Stephan A. Douglas, John C. Breckenridge, and John C. Bell (Current, 2014).

1.5 Presidency and the secession

Heideking (1999, p. 214) states that Lincoln after his election divided authorities consistently but diplomatically. In the spring of 1861 it was occupied by the Republicans 80 percent of the offices, which were previously managed by the Democrats. The most important authorities such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Justice and Finance, confided his current Republican rivals William Seward, Edward Bates and Salmon Chase.

Lincoln's election triggered the dismay among residents of the South. Time left to his taking office in March was not easy for him personally or for the whole nation. Lincoln's victory deepened the crisis in the relationship between the free and the slavery supporting states. Although Lincoln appeared very moderately and repeatedly emphasized the importance of the Union's idea, he failed to prevent the secession of the South and the Confederacy. Previously, in the event of a Republican victory, some slave states threatened secession. This is what happened already before Christmas. Donald (1996, p. 267) presents that South Carolina was the first state to leave the union. It was followed by the secession of Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas before February 1861. The seceded Southern States took over the federal property on their territories, such as the fortresses and armoury. In early February 1861 the seceded States declared "Confederate States of America". Former Senator and Secretary of War Jefferson Davis was the president (Heideking, 1999, p. 214).

Lincoln showed an effort to rebuild the country in his inaugural speech on the 4th March 1861. He knew that the states of the "top" South still behave loyally. The desire for the secession he built to the level of anarchy, but he again emphasized that slavery does not intend to question where it already exists. The president made it clear that in any case does not seek military confrontation. He said in his inaugural speech on the 4th March 1861:

Apprehension seems to exist among the people of the Southern States that by the accession of a Republican Administration their property and their peace and personal security are to be endangered. There has never been any reasonable cause for such apprehension. Indeed, the most ample evidence to the contrary has all the while existed and been open to their inspection. It is found in nearly all the published speeches of him who now addresses you. I

do but quote from one of those speeches when I declare that "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so.

The President proclaimed at the end of his address to the Southerners: "We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies..." (Donald, 1996, pp. 283 – 284).

Confederate States has paid no attention of Lincoln's appeal. The president did not want to give up the Fort Sumter (fortress on a Southern territory in federal ownership). The troops of South Carolina began shelling the fort on the 12th April. The American Civil War began.

2. LINCOLN'S LIFE DURING AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

2.1 Beginning of American Civil War

Four other states, Tennessee, Arkansas, North Carolina and Virginia, joined immediately the separated states. The capital city of Virginia, Richmond, became the capital city of the Confederation. The border slave states, Kentucky, Missouri, Delaware and Maryland, were hesitant at first, but they finally stayed in the Union. Reportedly Lincoln commented: "I hope to have God on my side, but I must have Kentucky" (*New world encyclopaedia*).

Heideking (1999, p. 215) presents that 11 states of the Confederacy, in which lived 5.5 million white inhabitants and 3.5 million slaves, were now against the 23 states of the Union with approximately 22 million inhabitants. Because Lincoln was commander-in-chief of the armed forces, took these duties the greatest part of his time and energy. He had no military experience except the short captain services in Black Hawk War. Despite this he acquired increasingly smarter and more reliable sense for the strategic situations during the war. Lincoln first called to mobilize 75,000 volunteers of the Union to protect Washington. He wanted to repress this "revolt". The population of the North responded to this challenge with great enthusiasm. Lincoln ordered the blockade of all shipping ports on the 19th of April that paralyzed the business activities of the Confederacy and stopped the import of weapons from Europe (Donald, 1996, pp. 303-304). The troops of South were better trained and led. Lincoln asked for an increasing of the army to 500,000 men. A long and brutal war followed. Lincoln called General McClellan to Washington to carry out the reorganization of the army and gave him the command. People wanted to see the final victory.

According to Heideking (1999, p. 215) Lincoln tried to find a political concept that would put the sense to fight. The southern States fought for its independence, the maintaining their social system based on slavery and the retention of their territory. The North struggled rather for the principle - the unity of the nation - and later for the abolishment of the slavery. Lincoln had to convey a political idea for people for whom it is worth to bring the great sacrifice. The radical Republicans campaigned for the abolition of slavery after the beginning of the war and urged the President to determine the liberation of blacks as the primary war aim. In contrast, the most of the political party including Lincoln himself wanted the gradual equality of slaves associated with the financial compensation to their owners and overstressed the struggle for the unity of the nation.

Douglas became a supporter of Lincoln and supported the recruiting of the volunteers. After his death, the Democrats supported the Lincoln's submitted draft of laws, which was required. The president defended the principle of loyalty in time of war and managed to get to his side part of the Democratic Party.

According to Heideking (1999, p. 217) the only one peaceful solution for Lincoln was if the Southern states revoked their declaration of independence and returned to the Union. This would allow negotiations on the issue of slavery. He wanted the retention of the nation although he felt the honest resistance to south social order. Lincoln replied on the 22nd August 1862 in letter to *New York Tribune* editor, Horace Greeley, to his question why Lincoln hesitates to free slaves:

My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union... (Basler, 1953, Volume 5, pp. 388 – 389).

The troops of South had to withdraw from Maryland on the 22nd September 1862. Lincoln considered that it was the opportune moment to notice his decision which came long before – he issued a preliminary *Emancipation Proclamation* on the 22nd September 1862 and put it into effect on the 1st January 1863, which were declared free all slaves living in the "rebel" states. In the *Emancipation Proclamation* is mentioned:

...all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

The geographical restrictions should ensure the loyalty of the population in the border states and in the already occupied areas and equally it was the concession to some

voters in the North. This declaration was criticized by many politicians. It had a symbolic power and directly or indirectly brought freedom to nearly 3 million slaves. The Emancipation Proclamation has fundamentally changed the character of the war. It was now become a fight for the abolition of slavery and for full restructuring of the southern social system. The declaration allowed the recruitment of blacks into the military of northern states. 180,000 African-Americans entered Union troops till the end of the war. Heideking (1999, p. 219) explains that only a legitimately approved amendment to the Constitution could ensure the abolition of slavery after the end of the war. Lincoln pursued about the soonest approval of the *Thirteenth Amendment* to the Constitution with the final abolition of slavery.

2.2 Course of the war and its end

Initially Northerners supported the war but scepticism began to grow slowly. At the end of year 1862, when the elections to Congress approached, Lincoln understood that at this moment must intensify the loyalty of the population and the faith in victory. He cancelled the entitlement of arrested people for hearing before the court and so he allowed imprisoning of deserters, collaborators, etc. This step was marked as dictatorial, but the Supreme Court confirmed the right to arrest civilians for military reasons. American Civil War strengthened the executive. Heideking (1999, p. 219) means that Lincoln gave an example to later presidents how they can take full advantage of the political and military powers of the Authority and equally not to exceed the possibilities of the Constitution.

The political attacks on Lincoln and his way of leadership of the war were escalated and were requested peace negotiations with the Confederacy. Another reason of conflicts was the compulsory military service, which was first introduced in the USA on the 3rd March 1863. Mainly the statute allowed wealthy Americans to send "replacements". The tension grew and in July 1863 broke out street fights that managed to suppress the army.

The North was able to use its material and numerical advantage in the summer of 1863. The turning point came at the Battle of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania in July 1863, where the two armies encountered with in total 160 thousand soldiers. The Union dominated the battlefield, while the Confederacy had to pull back to Virginia. The whole Mississippi basin was already in the hands of the North and the Confederacy was divided into two parts.

On the 9th November 1863 Lincoln said in Gettysburg at the consecration of a large military cemetery his probably most famous speech called *The Gettysburg Address*, which according to Heideking (1999, p. 221) became an important part of world literature. This address became the most quoted speech in American history. The president used this sad occasion to express ideas about the meaning and significance of the Civil War. He returned in a speech to the nation founder period and to the American democratic values: the equality of all people, the right for liberty and the government of the people (Donald, 1996, pp. 460 – 466). He stressed that victims are shared for North and South and he closed with the promise: "...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" (From *Gettysburg Address*).

The presidential elections in 1864 were among the most important in American history. The people had to decide whether the war will continue or not. Lincoln was chosen as the candidate in June but he doubted about his election. The troops of Union conquest Atlanta in Georgia and it changed the public's attitude. Heideking (1999, p. 222) mentions that Lincoln's victory can be seen as a signal for the continuation of the war and the full emancipation of the slaves.

The war was already almost won when the president took office for the second time. Lincoln returned to the themes from Gettysburg in his second inaugural address on the 4th March 1864. Lincoln began to look to the future. The post-conflict phase should be accompanied by patience and forgiveness rather than punishment. He said in his second inaugural address:

With malice toward none, with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan — to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.

The defeat of the Confederacy started the attack of army to Richmond and the infamous Sherman's "march to the sea" which has caused extensive losses. General Lee surrendered with his army at Appomattox in Virginia on the 9th April 1865. Few weeks later surrendered the remaining Southern troops. The war was by its end.

In his last speech Lincoln urgently called for the reintegration of the Southern States (Reconstruction). This included the abolition of slavery and in addition also the

beginning of dealing with the status of freed slaves in the American Society. Lincoln did not know how to practically perform it because the racist temper predominated in the South and the North. The right to vote for a black man in the South could push only by repressive means which contrary to Lincoln's beliefs. Lincoln's attitude to black slaves illustrates his statement that he said to a group of freed slaves in Richmond in Virginia on the 4th April 1865:

My poor friends, you are free, free as air. You can cast off the name of slave and trample upon it; it will come to you no more. Liberty is your birthright. God gave it to you as He gave it to others, and it is a sin that you have been deprived of it for so many years. (Porter, 1885, pp. 297 – 298).

Lincoln did not have enough time for the fulfilment of all his objectives. The assassin shot him in his head just five days after the end of the war on the 14th April 1865 when the president and his wife visited a performance in the theatre. The president remained nine hours in a coma. Despite all of the medical care Lincoln died due to his injuries during the night. This led to the first assassination of an American president. The perpetrator was a fanatical and possibly mentally ill Southerner, actor John Wilkes Booth, who wanted along with other nine conspirators to kill all leaders of the Union policy such as General Grant, Vice President Andrew Johnson and Secretary of State William H. Seward. Lincoln's body was transported to the White House by funeral train where he was buried.

3. CAUSES OF LINCOLN'S ELECTION AS THE PRESIDENT

Abraham Lincoln is written in American and world history forever as a statesman, a politician and a fighter for the Union. Especially after being elected the president he became the leader who determined the social and political direction of the country.

His life is a fascinating story of a man who, with his friends and political colleagues and thanks his self-discipline, became the most powerful man in America. But he was not only a man who fought for the abolition of slavery and retention of the Union. Initially, few expected that Abraham Lincoln could win the presidential election. There were many events, circumstances and personalities who have played a significant role in both Lincoln nominations for the Republican Party, and later in his candidacy and election.

The political scene was unquiet already before the Civil War. The question of slavery was the source of controversy between the North and the South since the beginning of the state. Several factors contributed to the election of Abraham Lincoln as the President. These were the current political situation in the country, the founding of a new Republican party, to which Lincoln joined and a support of other members of the party. His career outside politics and his personal life played an important role too. He was one of Members of the House of Representatives and twice failed in elections to the Senate. His contemporaries found his surprising nomination in the chance and in his restrained opinions about slavery. In the background of Lincoln's triumph was a political force which he received through his suffering and defeats.

3.1 Non-political and political career

Lincoln had several jobs during his life and he constantly evolved his knowledge. He read many books and was popular among the people. Unfortunately he missed connections and money so his career progressed slowly. In 1836 he moved to Springfield, Illinois, where he began with his law practice and later political career too. Lincoln became a successful lawyer with a good reputation. There he had very loyal friends. These friends created a work group which significantly helped him with the success in the presidential election. One of them was a partner in the layer company, William H. Herndon, who became his biographer and accompanied him in political career (Fornieri & Gabbard, 2008, pp. 115-135).

Oates (1977, pp. 75-80) presents that for everyone Lincoln asserted rights for own land. From the beginning he was against slavery but also against the abolitionists. Lincoln

took part in politics as a Whig representative since the thirties. This party was the base for Lincoln and it put the emphasis on economic modernization of the financial sector, protective customs duties, urbanization and railways extension. In 1846 he was elected to the House Representatives for two years. He was the only Whig representative for Illinois and he was loyal and active in many public speeches and in voting. During the collapse of the Whig party Lincoln held back and still hoped that contradictions in the party calmed down. Finally Lincoln joined into the newly formed Republican Party that played an important role in his candidacy. The Republican Party acquired gradually an increasing support and Lincoln with it. Lincoln obtained continuously more devoted followers and these friendships gave him strength and courage later in the campaign. These members of the party worked for Lincoln and partly secured his nomination.

The chances for his candidacy rose rapidly in 1858 after the great campaign in dramatic Senate elections in the state Illinois. His opponent was the Democratic leader Stephen Douglas. Although Douglas narrowly won, Lincoln was able to lead the Republican Party in which were former Whigs, antislavery Democrats, foreigners, radicals and conservatives together at that time. Lincoln's reputation spread and from all sides came more and more invitations to give public speeches. The year before the Republican Congress Lincoln came forward in front of the listeners in states Ohio, Iowa, Indiana, Wisconsin, Kentucky, New York and New England. High success was his appearance at the private university Cooper Union in New York. Lincoln expressed his opinions about the Union, the South, and slavery but also about its base, the Republican Party, in this speech:

... The sum of the whole is, that of our twenty-nine fathers who framed the original Constitution, twenty-one – a clear majority of the whole – certainly understood that no proper division of local from federal territories, nor any part of the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control slavery in the federal territories. ... Wrong as we think slavery is, we can yet afford to let it alone where it is, because that much is due to the necessity arising from its actual presence In the nation; but can we, while our votes will prevent it, allow it to spread into the National Territories, and to overrun us here in these Free States? If our sense of duty forbids this, then let us stand by our duty, fearlessly and effectively... (Lincoln, 1989, pp. 117, 129)

3.2 Personal life

Lincoln considered the slavery as a significant issue. Heideking (1999, p. 209) mentions that Lincoln's uncle and great-uncle owned slaves. On the contrary, his father refused the slavery. Abraham Lincoln spent his childhood in several states. All these states were free and without slavery. This fact influenced his later approaches in politics. He received education in the Baptist Church which had high moral demands and which was also against slavery.

Lincoln's father married again after his wife's dead. He claimed that the man should work manually from a childhood but his new wife Sarah Bush Johnston led Abraham to education. The importance of education was highlighted to him even in his childhood. The ability to the self-education and reading of large amounts of literature remained him throughout his life. He was an excellent rhetorician and a successful presidential candidate thanks to effort to acquire so much knowledge. Heideking (1999, p. 209) writes that Lincoln's later speeches confirmed a detailed knowledge of the Bible. It was not so unusual at his time but Lincoln's ability to find the advisable biblical quote for actual events was astounding.

Lincoln's wife Mary Todd played the important role in his life. Goodwin (2013, p. 15) explains in her book that Mary came from a significant slave family from Lexington in Kentucky. She received the education which far exceeds the education of most girls her age. She has studied languages and literature for four years and spent the next two years in college. According to Fornieri and Gabbard (2008, pp. 94-110) his wife was accustomed to live in a family with slaves and this fact partly influenced Lincoln's political career. Initially he did not want to abolish the slavery but only to prevent its spreading.

Goodwin (2013, p. 73) confirms Mary's importance, because she took the care about the household carefully and she took the care about the good manners of her husband. Lincoln was known for his sometimes scraggly appearance. Mary tried to eliminate or at least mitigated all husband's disadvantages. We can ascribe to part of the good public meanings about Lincoln to her. These also contributed to his election. Journalists were surprised with the contrast between the educated woman from the polite family and between Lincoln who grew with his own efforts and diligence.

They based family immediately after marriage but the destiny of their children was mostly tragic. The death of sons went through Lincoln's lifetime. This tragedy also formed Lincoln's diligence and conscientiousness which he wholly directed to its political career.

Goodwin (2013, p.63) expresses Mary's support when Mary resolutely claimed that her husband deserved the nomination for president and she believed into this honour.

3.3 Abraham Lincoln's personality

3.3.1 Physical appearance

A lot has already been written about Abraham Lincoln's personality. He was one of the most famous presidents of the United States. The President evoked the respect through his personality traits but also through its physical appearance because they were a little bit different. He looked sternly and sorely at first glance, although its true nature was very kind.

"If any personal description of me is thought desirable," wrote Lincoln in 1860, "it may be said I am, in height, 6'4", nearly; lean in flesh, weighing on an average 180 lbs.; dark complexion, with coarse black hair and grey eyes" (Wallechinski & Wallace, 1975 - 1981). Physically, the height of his stature was remarkable. He began to grow rapidly in his 11 years and in 17 years he was considerably taller than most of the men of contemporary time. Sources mention that he was the tallest President of the United States. People described him as a very strong man until the end of his life: "He was powerful enough to lift a long-handled axe with one hand and hold it straight out in front of him at the level of his shoulders" (Wallechinski & Wallace, 1975 – 1981).

Lincoln's face is one of the most recognizable faces in American history and is known around the world as an icon. Even it is depicted on the coins and on the stamps. His face was interesting and certainly not overlooking. Lincoln's head was long and he had dark bristly hair and deep grey eyes with heavy eyebrows, a close-set mouth with large teeth, extremely large ears, and black beard without a moustache and shrivelled wrinkled skin. He had so deep wrinkles that he looked much older than he actually was. *The London Times* correspondent describes Lincoln's appearance: "It would not be possible for the most indifferent observer to pass him in the street without notice" (Wallechinski & Wallace, 1975 - 1981).

Lots of photos and drawings depicting Lincoln were preserved. Mr. Lincoln was ugly. His expression of face seemed earnestly, hardly, and sadly. Lincoln's scholar Roy P. Basler wrote: "One who is acquainted with any of the collections of Lincoln photographs realizes very likely that Lincoln was an uncommonly ugly man" (Behn, par. 4). Although he was not a pretty man he impressed people who knew him or who met him for the first

time as an honest man. Indeed, it was one of his nicknames – The Honest Abe. On the first blush he did not dazzle with his beauty but with his sincerity and kind smile. When he spoke then the President's face shone friendly personality and suddenly was not unhandsome but it looked intelligent and understanding. In Lincoln's face was showing sorrow and struggle of his life but during the conversation or when he solved the problem successfully his face lighted up with enthusiasm and true friendship.

3.3.2 Character traits

President Lincoln had not only an interesting look but also many exceptional character traits. They were so exceptional that also helped him to achieve such an important position in society. Few expected that Lincoln could be elected as a president. He had to oppose to various obstacles on his way to success. His education and background was very different from his competitors in the presidential struggle. Lincoln was undoubtedly an exemplary and significant leader. It's not just about its general character traits. It is important to remember that Lincoln was a political leader in time when the country went through a serious crisis.

Moreton (2008) mentions in her article that Doris Kearns Goodwin, the author of the original biography *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, listed at Society for Human Resources Management's 2008 Annual Conference in Chicago the key characteristics that lead to Lincoln's great success. They are "the capacity to listen to different points of view", "the ability to learn on the job", "the ready willingness to share credit for success", "the ready willingness to share blame for failure", "the awareness of own weaknesses", "the ability to control emotions", "the know how to relax and replenish", "go out into the field and manage directly", "the strength to adhere to fundamental goals" and "the ability to communicate goals and vision". All these features are common to almost every successful man or woman but the President Lincoln had something unique moreover.

Historians agree that Abraham Lincoln was an exceptional leader. It is remarkable that even though Lincoln had his own personal ambitions, he showed his generosity toward those who were against him. As Goodwin (2013, p. 87) perfectly describes in her book Lincoln appointed for key positions into his Cabinet three men who were his political competitors and defeated him in a political struggle, Seward, Chase and Bates. He created a great "team of rivals". He surrounded himself with his opponents, because he valued

them for their experiences and capabilities. He was sufficiently self-confident and was not afraid to learn from others, listen to their advices and different points of view.

Goodwin (2013, pp. 9 - 11) emphasizes that each of his opponents was convinced that it was chosen the wrong man for presidential post. Finally, William H. Seward became the Secretary of State; Salmon P. Chase held the position of the Minister of Finance and Edward Bates was the Minister of Justice. The remaining important positions Lincoln offered to three former Democrats. Each member of his Cabinet was publicly more known, more educated and more experienced than Lincoln. At first, they did not respect him for his inexperience, but finally they became workmates who helped him lead the country in its critical days. His political opponents left a large number of written records in which they described their memories and common events and which portrayed Lincoln as an extraordinary human being. Likewise, the wives and daughters of these politicians had their important role. Whether Mary Todd Lincoln or even other women showed us in their letters, diaries and other writings the Lincoln's personality and the characters of their men and how these women influenced their husbands.

Furthermore, Lincoln was a very empathetic person. He worked not only with the head but with the heart too. He assured people around him that he appreciated them very much. Lincoln believed that: "In order to win a man to your cause, you must first reach his heart, the great high road to his reason" Kumar (2014, I. section, the 3rd chapter). He could be able to relax and managed his emotions, because he held a challenging position. However, he was sometimes angry at someone and then, according to Goodwin (2013), he wrote the angry letters to these people but he never sent the inscribed letters to them. Lincoln had undoubtedly a kind heart and a human sensitivity.

As Goodwin (2013) mentions he visited the battlefield and the hospitals during the Civil War and morally supported the members of the troops. Kumar (2014, I. section, the 3rd chapter) gives an example in his book when he quotes from a letter which one soldier sent home: "Lincoln's warm smile was a reflection of his honest, kindly heart; but deeper, under the surface of that...were the unmistakable signs of care."

People appreciated him for his character traits very much too. He treated them honestly and warmly according to the proverb "Love thy neighbour" as evidenced also from the paragraph above. Davenport (2012, section Strong Character) concludes in his article how a businessman G.S. Hubbard remembered on the friendship between him and Lincoln:

We were thrown much together, our intimacy increasing. I never had a friend to whom I was more warmly attached. His character was almost faultless. Possessing a warm and generous heart, genial, affable, honest, courteous to his opponents, persevering, industrious in research; never losing sight of the principal point under discussion.

In addition this, Lincoln's good sense of humour and story-telling were well-known. He taught himself, because he valued knowledge. He read a big amount of books and so was able to quote from lots of them from memory. Herbold (2014) mentions in his article that Lincoln read for example military literature about history and strategy before and during the Civil War to help him make the important decisions. His rhetorical skills were famous. He was great writer and speaker what he proved in his speeches many times. Horace White, the reporter of *The Chicago Daily Journal*, wrote: "His speaking went to the heart because it came from the heart. I have heard celebrated orators who could start thunders of applause without changing a man's opinion. Mr. Lincoln's eloquence...produced conviction in others because of the conviction of the speaker himself" (Nichols, 2011, p. 86). He liked to tell funny stories too. His law partner William H. Herndon beautifully describes in his book:

In the role of a story-teller I am prone to regard Mr. Lincoln as without an equal... His power of mimicry, ... , and his manner of recital, were in many respects unique, if not remarkable. His countenance and all his features seemed to take part in the performance. As he neared the pith or point of the joke or story every vestige of seriousness disappeared from his face. His little gray eyes sparkled; a smile seemed to gather up, curtain-like, the corners of his mouth; his frame quivered with suppressed excitement; and when the point – or “nub” of the story – as he called it – came, no one's laugh was heartier than his. (Herndon & Weik, 2009, p. 310)

A lot has already been written about Lincoln's character. Usually we can read about the good qualities of the president although he had also some negative character traits. As Moreton (2008) mentions in her article: “Doris K. Goodwin noted that one of the weaknesses acknowledged by Lincoln was his tendency to give people too many chances and because he was aware, he was able to compensate for that weakness.”

Abraham Lincoln led the country in a time when the war destroys the state and thus he took his presidential duties very seriously. He considered very well all decisions which he made. Lincoln was able to influence a lot of people of his time through his legendary tenacity; scrupulousness etc. and obtained the respect. Abraham Lincoln, nicknamed Honest Abe, could be regarded as the imagination of the American dream.

4. CONSEQUENCES OF LINCOLN'S ELECTION AND FOLLOWING EVENTS

After his election as President, Lincoln spent all the time by forming a new government but the country disintegrated into pieces. Lincoln did not expect that Southerners will be able to divide the Union so fast. His main goal was to keep the Union together, as it is known from his inaugural speech to, but the disagreement with his election grew. Donald (1996, p. 267 - 270) mentions that shortly after the Republican victory in the end of 1860, was held the congress in South Carolina which approved the secession from the Union. The vote was unanimous. Six other states - Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida, Alabama, Georgia and Texas – came off from the Union during the next six weeks.

4.1 Disintegration of the Union

Although Southern newspapers have written long before about the fact that after Lincoln's victory will follow the secession of the South, many Northerners were surprised by the speed of this movement. It was the distressing time for Lincoln who ought to take office on the 4th March 1861. He was firmly persuaded that the new formed government has sufficient authority to maintain the unity. Unfortunately he could do nothing before the inauguration. He tried to do the best to manage this issue. It was certainly hard to stand aside when his country was divided into parts (Lincoln, 1989, pp. 215-224). The following events showed soon that time did not bring peaceful solution of this regional crisis.

The Lincoln's inauguration speech was the long-awaited speech. It should be the president's first major public speech since his election and meant a double challenge for him. Lincoln had to exhibit his determination to protect the Union and act as the president. He also wanted to assuage fears of southern states. It was not easy to find a balance between the strength and the reconciliation. According to Jaffa (2000, pp. 237 – 285) the biggest influence on the final version of Lincoln's inaugural address had Secretary of State William Seward. He thought that sharp tone of speech destroys all the hard work of previous weeks with the aim to prevent secession other territories. His proposed changes mitigated the overall tone of the speech and it sounded more conciliatory toward the South. However, neither Lincoln's ability to write factual speech was not enough to calm the situation in the South.

Jaffa (2000) mentions that Lincoln initially becalmed the crowds of people from the South when he promised that he did not intend to disrupt directly or indirectly the

institution of slavery in those states where it already existed. Then he gave strong arguments for advantages of continuous federal administration over the Union and for keeping the law. He said that the State cannot be divided. At the same time, however, he pledged that the federal government will use force only if it becomes the target of attack (Tindall, 1994, p. 318). At the end of the speech approached the Chief Justice Taney who opened *The Bible* and Lincoln folded his oath of the sixteenth President of the United States.

The reaction to Lincoln's speech differed according to political beliefs. As expected, Lincoln did not meet with a positive response in Southern states. That's why Seward advised to Lincoln to use softer tone of the speech. Perhaps the most blustering reaction to the inaugural speech appeared within the Republican Party itself. The radicals and abolitionists were disappointed due to conciliatory tone.

Initially, the announcement about Lincoln's election brought the hope for the black population. Some people were convinced that the election of Republican president is the beginning of the slavers' end. Lincoln mentioned in his inaugural speech equally that he has not the legal right to abolish the slavery in the states where it already existed. The enthusiasm of black population subsided.

Maybe it was Lincoln's conciliatory approach in the issue of slavery which gave Southerners determination to move his revolution continue to secession and civil war because Lincoln's efforts to calm the situation and keep the Union together was a challenge for the "South revolutionaries".

4.2 Opposition of Southern states

One of the most important consequences of Lincoln's inauguration was the escalation of the situation and ending of negotiation process with the states that separated from the Union. Immediately after the inauguration Lincoln received alarming reports from General Robert Anderson about Fort Sumter, about lack of supplies and about potential necessity to give up. This crisis caused considerable difficulties to Lincoln. His inaugural speech did not promise to regain lost state property but promised to maintain and operate with the property owned by the federal government. None of the symbols of the federal government was more important than Fort Sumter.

The president thought that it is necessary to supply and defend the fort. The Secretary of State Seward put an effort to mitigate slave states that remained in the Union.

He considered unacceptable the newly created plans to supply the fort and send troops into South Carolina. He warned the president that other states were ready to leave the Union and join the Confederacy and that effort to defend the fort would incense slave states to start a civil war.

4.3 Beginning of American Civil War

The news about the conquest of Fort Sumter quickly spread throughout the North. Lincoln decided to convoke a government and make a statement in which he called members of the militia and the next session of Congress.

...Now therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, in virtue of power in me vested by the Constitution, and the laws, have thought fit to call forth, and hereby do call forth, the militia of several States of the Union, to the aggregate number of seventy-five thousand, in order to suppress said combinations, and to cause the laws to be duly executed...
(Lincoln, 1989, p. 232)

All appeared initially that the South is not strong enough to wage the war. Lincoln tried to stabilize the Union. Every day brought new conflicts and the necessary decisions. The government could not agree together on all issues of procedure at the beginning of the war.

The war started when Confederate forces opened fire on Fort Sumter. At the beginning nobody assumed that this war will take longer than four years and will require more than six hundred thousand human lives. According to Lincoln's opinion the fight to save the Union was more important target than the abolition of slavery. The slavery moreover recognized the *Constitution* to whose he swore.

5. DEPICTING OF LINCOLN IN CULTURE AND ART

Abraham Lincoln is undoubtedly a great personality of American history and therefore after his death he was depicted in different art forms for many times so he became a symbol of America. The artists tried to portray the personality of President Lincoln. They wanted to introduce the historical period in which he lived or they wanted to describe the frightfulness of the American Civil War.

The American President appears in the movie but also in comedies and TV series the most frequently. Other art works about him are different kinds of books (novels, stories, comic books and poetry books), songs, classical music compositions and even modern video games. Lincoln is often portrayed in paintings, drawings, engravings, caricatures and in the form of sculptures such as busts or statues etc. Very famous is especially Lincoln's sculpture on the Mount Rushmore National Memorial. His portrait appears also on money and on postage stamps.

5.1 Lincoln in the literature

Lots of authors wanted to give up honour to the President in their literary works. The prose works were mostly bibliographies mapping Lincoln life. Some of them are *Lincoln the Unknown* (1932) by Dale Carnegie, critical *The Real Lincoln: A New Look at Abraham Lincoln, His Agenda, and an Unnecessary War* (2002) by Thomas DiLorenzo. Famous *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (2005) by Doris Kearns Goodwin is very successful. On *The Official Doris Kearns Goodwin Website* is presented that it received several literary awards and it was sold over a million copies of this book. The book describes successful career and tragic end of US President. The author deals especially with key moments in his political career. She used Lincoln's letters, diary entries and testimonies of friends and contemporaries for writing.

Walt Whitman is one of the poets who are professed with Lincoln's person. His collection of poems *Leaves of Grass* (1891-2) contains some lyrics in the part *Memories of President Lincoln* which are dedicated to the President. The poet wrote famous poem *O Captain! My Captain!* (1865) after Lincoln's assassination. Whitman admired Lincoln very much and his death caused him the grief. According to *The Walt Whitman Archive* the poem presents Lincoln as a captain and the ship represents the United States. The ship must overcome difficulties such as civil war. At the beginning of the poem there is the description of the return of the ship to a safe harbour. The captain, however, died at sea.

The author expresses his happiness due to the end of the Civil War but also his distress from the Lincoln's death in the first verse:

O Captain my Captain! our fearful trip is done;
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won;
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring:
 But O heart! heart! heart!
 O the bleeding drops of red,
 Where on the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead....

(Whitman, 1865, p. 262)

Writings inscribed by Lincoln personally are a separate part. The team of authors from *Abraham Lincoln Association* tried to collect a set of all writings by Abraham Lincoln. *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* consists of several volumes and contains his speeches, writings, letters, proclamations, notes and correspondence etc. This work demonstrates how Lincoln was an excellent writer and orator. He met with the good literature and carefully studied the grammar to improve his writing.

Lincoln read a large amount of literature throughout his life and he adored poetry. His favourite authors were William Shakespeare and Robert Burns. It is not surprise that he became a poet already before he was elected as a President. He wrote satirical verses and less well-known poems even when he was young. His poetry provides an interesting picture of his state of mind. Basler (1953, Volume 1) presents that Abraham Lincoln wrote two complete longer poems *My Childhood-Home I See Again* and *The Bear Hunt* and one soliloquy titled *The Suicide's Soliloquy*. They are the most well-known from his works. Although *The Suicide's Soliloquy* was without a signature, it was really written by him. Experts agree that Lincoln could write such poem, even though he had no thoughts of his own suicide. He wrote *My Childhood-Home I See Again* after visiting the place where he lived in his youth. This place evokes the memories of beloved family members and friends:

....Now twenty years have passed away,
Since here I bid farewell
To woods, and fields, and scenes of play
And school-mates loved so well--
Where many were, how few remain

Of old familiar things!
But seeing these to mind again
The lost and absent brings--
The friends I left that parting day --
How changed as time has sped!
Young child hood grown, strong manhood grey,
And half of all are dead--.....

(Lincoln, 1846)

Historian William E. Gienapp nicely summarized: “Lincoln’s gift for language was marvelous, even poetic, so much so that he is the only American president other than Thomas Jefferson whose writings can be considered literature” (McPherson, 2001, p.83).

5.2 Lincoln in the film

Movies about Abraham Lincoln have appeared almost continuously. He is usually portrayed as a hero in documentary or historical films but there are also motion pictures with a fantasy theme etc. Some films were based on literary works too. The first known film about this topic was directed already in 1908.

One of the films of present time is *Lincoln*. This film is based on the book called *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* by Doris Kearns Goodwin. Mrs Goodwin created a remarkable biography in which she described American President and his lifetime in details. This historical drama was directed by Steven Spielberg in 2012 and deals with the last four months of President’s life especially with the approving of the *Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution*. The work was nominated for many film awards such as Golden Globe Awards etc. and some of them it won (*Česko – Slovenská filmová databáze*). A strong human drama shows the bravest decision of the American leader at a time when the war destroys the country and he decides to abolish the slavery. At that moment he must use all his talent, courage and moral strength. The story depicts him as a man who is full of paradoxes: a serious man, a good storyteller, a politics, a visionary leader and also father. According to *Česko – Slovenská filmová databáze* the director and producer Steven Spielberg said that he has always wanted to tell the Lincoln’s story. Spielberg thinks that Lincoln is one of the most exciting figures in the history and he admires his exceptional personality.

Some films have focused only on the key events of the Lincoln's life. The dramatic story about the brutal assassination of the sixteenth president of the United States in 1865 is the film *Killing Lincoln* (2013). This historical and biographical document describes the preparation and progress of the assassination and also capture of the killer J. W. Booth. At the same time it provides interesting information about the last weeks of Lincoln's life and next events after his assassination (*Česko – Slovenská filmová databáze*).

The combination of real facts and the imagination is an American fantasy horror film *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter* which was filmed in 2012. *Česko – Slovenská filmová databáze* mentions that the filmmakers reveal the two faces of one of the greatest figures of American history, Abraham Lincoln. They present him as an honoured president and also as the greatest vampire hunter. His driving force is the revenge for the death of a loving mother who was attacked by a vampire. Abraham Lincoln is becoming not only an avenger but also a politician fighting against the South which is supported by powerful vampire leaders. Everything leads to the great conflict between of the South and the North.

CONCLUSION

The American Civil War lasted from 1861 to 1865 and started from many reasons. It was the bloodiest war in the history of the United States. At the end of the war there were many dead soldiers, the country was destroyed, the Confederacy collapsed and slavery was abolished and the reconstruction had to follow. During the war led the country Abraham Lincoln who won in the presidential election in 1860 as the first Republican president. Firstly, nobody expected that he will be elected and finally, he played such a big role in the struggle for the unity of the nation. Leo Tolstoj in 1909 beautifully described Lincoln's greatness:

The greatness of Napoleon, Caesar or Washington is only moonlight to the sun of Lincoln. His example is universal and will last thousands of years... Lincoln was a humanitarian as broad as the world. He was bigger than his country – bigger than all the Presidents together...and as a great character, he will live as long as the world lives. (Burlingame, 2007, p. 138)

The major purpose of this thesis was to confirm the importance of Abraham Lincoln in the American history and introduce Abraham Lincoln as a human being who became an American icon. I deal with the causes of Lincoln's election as the President. The big role played Lincoln's personal life - especially difficult childhood and youth, diligent self-education and a great wife. Very important was the development of his non-political and political career too but the thesis showed that the significant was Abraham Lincoln's personality. His character traits, talent and abilities were unique and they fundamentally influenced his opinions and decisions during the American Civil War and thereby further development of the country. Furthermore, I also aim at the consequences of Lincoln's election and which events followed after his election. His election caused an extensive opposition. Initially, he focused on the formation of a new government in which he invited his opponents. The serious problems grew and the Union disintegrated. The turning point for the country was the beginning of the American Civil War which was the outcome of the result of the long-term conflicts between The North and the South. Nevertheless, it is interesting how Lincoln is depicted in culture and art in different ways. He is often described as an honoured president and a significant personality of the country, but some authors portray him as unusual when they connect the real facts and their own imagination.

Finally, I realized that Abraham Lincoln was especially a remarkable human and then politician. I came to the conclusion that he is rightly considered as one of the most important men in American and even world history. Nowadays his birthday is celebrated as a national holiday to remind the President who is written forever in the memory of his nation as a big icon. He was not only a civil man but he became a peacemaker and even saint for the American people.

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SUMMARY IN CZECH

Předmětem bakalářské práce je osobnost Abrahama Lincolna ve spojitosti s Americkou občanskou válkou. Hlavním cílem této práce je potvrdit, že Abraham Lincoln sehrál důležitou roli v americké historii.

Práce je rozdělena do pěti hlavních částí. První dvě kapitoly jsou teoretické a obsahují historický přehled Lincolnova života před Americkou občanskou válkou a během ní. Třetí kapitola analyzuje příčiny Lincolnova zvolení prezidentem. Zaměřuje se na jeho osobní život, průběh kariéry, ale největší důraz klade na Lincolnovu osobnost. Další část se zabývá důsledky jeho vítězství a událostmi, které následovaly. Zlomem v historii země byl začátek války. Poslední kapitola popisuje vyobrazení prezidenta v kultuře a umění, ale i jeho ztvárnění na mincích apod. Na závěr práce jsou shrnuty zjištěné poznatky.