

# APRIL 1776-2026 AMERICA 250

## THIS MONTH IN AMERICAN HISTORY

**April 18, 1775**  
Paul Revere rides to warn colonial militias about the British.

**April 19, 1775**  
The Battles of Lexington and Concord begin, the first battles of the American Revolutionary War.

**April 30, 1789**  
George Washington is inaugurated, establishing the U.S. presidency and federal government framework.

**April 17, 1790**  
Founding Father Benjamin Franklin dies.

**April 30, 1803**  
The Louisiana Purchase Treaty doubles the size of the U.S.

**April 12, 1861**  
Confederates attack the Union's Fort Sumter, starting the Civil War.

**April 9, 1865**  
Robert E. Lee surrenders to Ulysses S. Grant, effectively ending the Civil War.

**April 14-15, 1865**  
President Abraham Lincoln is assassinated, becoming the first U.S. president killed in office.

**April 18, 1906**  
A San Francisco Earthquake kills 4,000, destroying most of the city and leading to changes in urban planning and disaster response.

**April 6, 1917**  
The United States enters into World War I and emerges as a global military power.

**April 17, 1961**  
U.S.-Cuba relations are reshaped by the Bay of Pigs Invasion, a U.S. Cold War embarrassment.

**April 4, 1968**  
Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated. His death accelerates civil rights legislation and causes nationwide unrest.

**April 17, 1970**  
The Apollo 13 mission crisis ends with three astronauts returning home from space.

**April 12, 1981**  
First Space Shuttle Columbia launches.

**April 19, 1993**  
Branch Davidian compound burns in Waco, Texas. Approximately 75 people die during the final fire, including women and children. Twenty-five children were reported among the victims.

**April 20, 1999**  
Two 12th graders kill 12 students and one teacher at Columbine High School, Littleton, Colorado.

**April 16, 2007**  
Thirty-two people are killed and 17 more are hurt in a mass shooting at Virginia Tech.

**April 20, 2010**  
The Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill becomes the largest U.S. marine oil spill in history.

**April 15, 2013**  
Two bombs go off near the finish line of the Boston Marathon, killing three spectators and wounding more than 260.

## SURRENDER ENDS CIVIL WAR; U.S. PRESIDENT ASSASSINATED

### Relief, disaster for Americans in mid-April 1865

#### CNHI News

When the Confederate capital of Richmond fell on April 2, 1865, it was the first of a set of dominoes that led to the surrender at Appomattox Court House, Virginia.

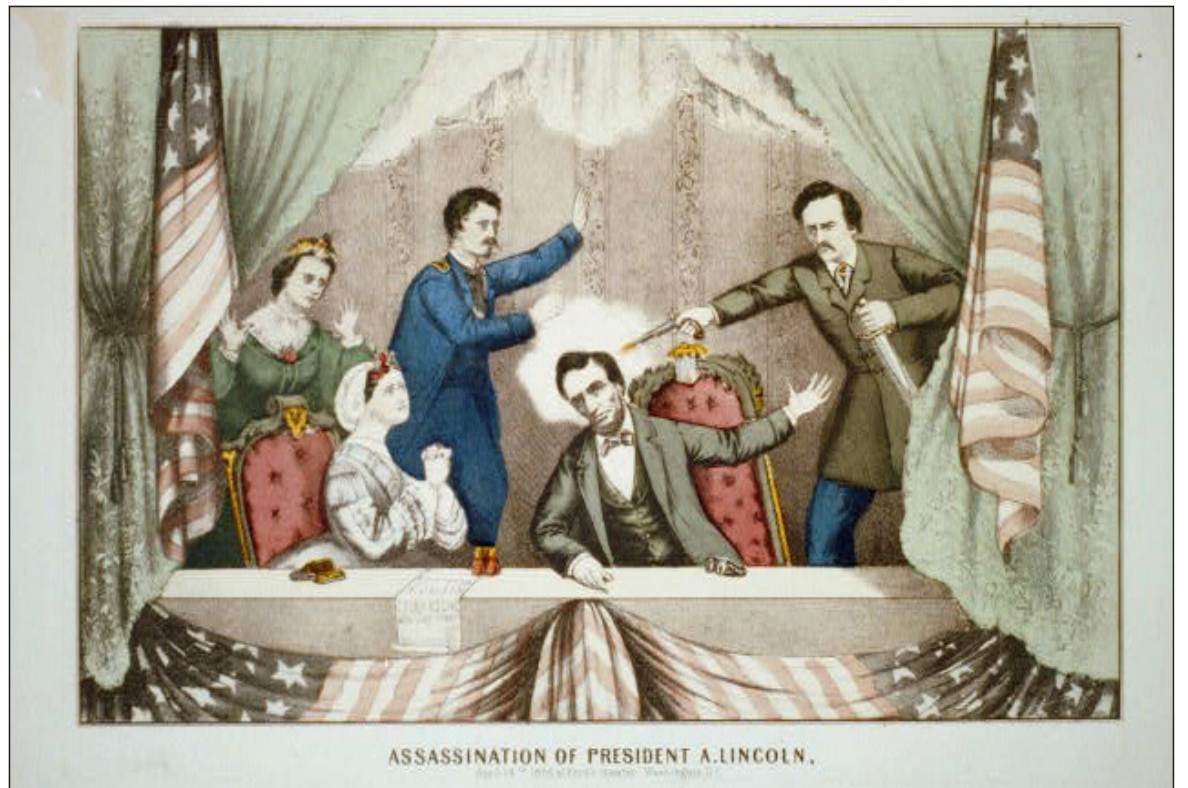
Generals Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee met April 9, 1865, and over four days hammered out terms of the surrender.

In a quiet, emotional ceremony on April 12, the infantry of Lee's army surrendered arms, folded battle flags and received parole papers, which allowed them safe passage home.

The surrender was only for Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Forces of various sizes remained loyal to the Confederate cause until word could be spread across the country.

By the time some found out, the relief of the end of the war was overshadowed by a dark moment in America's history, the first assassination of a sitting American president.

President Abraham Lincoln led the country through the Civil War, which remains the deadliest conflict in terms of American lives lost. Estimates put the casualties at 620,000 which is more than the U.S. lost in World Wars I and II combined (almost 522,000).



National Archives

This lithograph is titled "Assassination of President A. Lincoln, April 14th 1865 at Ford's Theatre, Washington, D.C." It was published by Gibson & Co., Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1870.

The first step of America's post-war reconstruction was forced to be taken by a new leader.

Lincoln was shot April 14, 1865, at approximately 10:20 p.m. by American actor John Wilkes Booth during a play at Ford's Theatre.

Booth snuck up on Lincoln while the president was watching the play and shot him in the back of the head at point blank range.

Six men carried Lincoln across

the street to a private home, where he was attended by 14 doctors, but he died the next morning.

Booth fled and was pursued by Union troops for 12 days through Maryland and Virginia.

He died April 26 from a gunshot wound after refusing to surrender.

Lincoln's murder was part of a larger conspiracy that included a simultaneous attack on Secretary of State William H. Seward and

possibly Vice President Andrew Johnson.

Johnson, who assumed the presidency considered the crime a military act and ordered the eight accused conspirators to be tried before a military commission. Four were hanged on July 7, 1865; the other four were sentenced to jail.

About 13 months later, in August 1866, Johnson formally declared an end to the war.

## THE SHOT HEARD 'ROUND THE WORLD



National Archives

"The Struggle on Concord Bridge," an engraving by W.J. Edwards, based on a painting by Alonzo Chappel, depicts the April 1775 shot heard 'round the world that launched the American Revolution.

#### CNHI News

With American colonists on the verge of rebellion in April 1775, Royal Governor of Massachusetts Thomas Gage ordered the seizure of weapons and gunpowder from Concord, Massachusetts.

Patriot spies were tipped off about the plan, prompting Paul Revere and William Dawes to ride out and spread the alarm to colonist militia men on April 18.

By the time British soldiers arrived in Lexington at 5 a.m. April 19, a company of more than 70 militia men, led by John Parker, had formed to face them.

When the British rushed the colonists across the town green, Parker ordered his troops to disperse. During the dispersal, a shot was fired.

Who shot first is disputed, but the British fired next. Their volley killed seven and mortally wounded one.

The British moved forward and arrived in Concord at 8 a.m. to find their

220 troops outnumbered nearly 2-to-1 by 400 militia from the town and surrounding areas.

The Minute Men marched down a hill in an orderly advance, intimidating the British soldiers and forcing them to retreat across the North Bridge in Concord.

As Capt. Isaac Davis's company came within range, the Redcoats fired, killing Davis and Abner Hosmer.

Maj. John Buttrick of Concord shouted, "For God's sake, fire!" and the Minute Men responded, killing three British soldiers and wounding nine.

A colonial officer had ordered his troops to fire on the British for the first time, a moment immortalized as "the shot heard 'round the world" by American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson in "Concord Hymn."

In the battles of Lexington and Concord, 3,960 colonial troops faced off against 1,500 British. It is estimated 300 British and 93 Americans died.

## BY THE NUMBERS : OKLAHOMA CITY BOMBING



The Associated Press

At 9:02 a.m. April 19, 1995, a bomb exploded at the **Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building** in Oklahoma City. Timothy McVeigh, Terry Nichols and Michael J. Fortier conspired to conduct the attack, the deadliest terror attack on American soil at the time.

Casualties	Damage	Homeless
165 dead 850 injured 30 children orphaned.	More than 300 buildings were damaged over 48 city blocks.	The explosion left 462 people without homes, 7,000 without workplaces.

## AMERICANS BORN THIS MONTH

Thomas Jefferson, April 13, 1743	Shirley Temple, April 23, 1928
James Monroe, April 28, 1758	John Madden, April 10, 1936
Washington Irving, April 3, 1783	Al Pacino, April 25, 1940
Ulysses S. Grant, April 27, 1822	David Letterman, April 12, 1947
JP Morgan, April 17, 1837	Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, April 16, 1947
Joseph Pulitzer, April 10, 1847	Eddie Murphy, April 3, 1961
Booker T. Washington, April 5, 1856	Robert Downey Jr., April 4, 1963
Wilbur Wright, April 16, 1867	Pharrell Williams, April 5, 1973
Ella Fitzgerald, April 25, 1917	Kelly Clarkson, April 24, 1982
Maya Angelou, April 4, 1928	Kristen Stewart, April 9, 1990