**Santa Rosa Republican Women, Federated**

**Americanism**

February 2025

If any month on the calendar could be characterized as “historically Lincolnian,” February would be a good choice.

On 1 February 1865, President Lincoln signed the joint resolution of the Thirty-eighth Congress proposing the permanent “abandonment,” by law, of the institution of slavery throughout the United States.

After secession and the outbreak of war, Lincoln came to understand that the Republic’s cause in the Civil War was really two-fold: To restore the Union and the authority of the federal government, and to abolish slavery in the United States. He had eloquently alluded to this second objective (of a “new birth of freedom”) in the Gettysburg Address in November of 1863.

In seeking reëlection as president in 1864, Lincoln had the moral fortitude to insist that the passage of the XIIIth Amendment be a plank in the Republican Party platform. However, a successful bid for a second term was highly unlikely, and he predicted defeat at the polls. Strong opposition to the war and the administration came from the “Copperheads” (the so-called “peace-Democrats” in the North), and many other Americans who simply wanted the carnage of the Civil War to end--with or without slavery continuing its toxic contamination of American society, politics, culture, government, and economy.

The XIIIth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified in December of 1865—eighty-nine years after Jefferson wrote that “all men are created equal.”

--P. Casey

