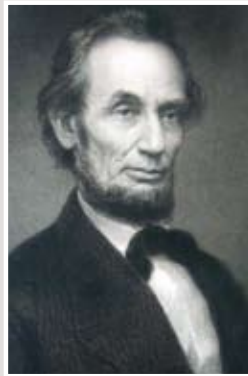


The American Civil War and Lancashire cotton workers



Figure of 'Blind Joe',
Gallery Oldham



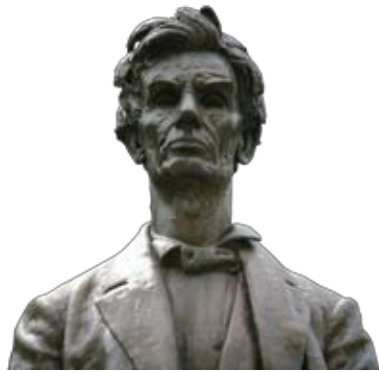
Abraham Lincoln by William E
Marshall, *Touchstones Rochdale*



Bust of Richard Cobden,
Touchstones Rochdale



A handkerchief in
memory of John Bright,
Touchstones Rochdale



Statue of Abraham Lincoln, 1917
by George Grey Barnard © Paul Cliff

Statue of Abraham Lincoln, 1917 by George Grey Barnard

This bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln was sent from the USA to Britain to mark 100 years of peace between the two countries. It was intended to stand outside the Houses of Parliament in London.

The statue shows Lincoln as an ordinary man of the people rather than as a **statesman**, which was **controversial**, so a different statue was sent to London. Manchester took this one because of its connections with Lincoln during the American Civil War.

Abraham Lincoln was **elected** president of the USA in 1860. One of his main **policies** was to stop the spread of slavery. The pro-slavery southern states which used enslaved labour to grow cotton feared his **election** would destroy their way of life. Seven southern states, then four more, split from the northern anti-slavery **Union** states.

The American Civil War, between the **Union** north and the **Confederate** 'rebel' south, began on 12 April 1861. It led to a cotton famine in Lancashire when the **export** of raw cotton from the USA dried up. Many cotton workers in the north west of England were unemployed and starving as a result, but they still showed widespread support for Abraham Lincoln and **abolition**.

The statue of Abraham Lincoln can be seen in Lincoln Square on Brazenose Street in Manchester. It says: 'This statue commemorates the support that the working people of Manchester gave in the fight for the **abolition** of slavery during the American Civil War'.



Cotton famine flour barrel, 1862,
© Touchstones Rochdale

Cotton famine flour barrel, 1862 *Touchstones Rochdale*

The north west of England was directly affected by the American Civil War. The region needed raw slave-grown cotton from the southern states of the USA to supply its cotton mills. Abraham Lincoln **blockaded** southern ports in the USA to prevent the **export** of cotton and to protest against slavery.

This meant that no raw cotton came into Britain and led to the Lancashire cotton famine of 1862-63. It cost Lancashire mill owners about £30m. It was a time of great hardship and many cotton workers were unemployed and starving. Despite this, many people in the north west of England still supported the **abolition** of slavery.

On 9 February 1863, the **relief** ship George Griswold, **docked** at Liverpool, carrying food sent by Abraham Lincoln and the people of New York and Philadelphia to thank the starving people of Lancashire for their support of the northern anti-slavery states in the USA. The ship was greeted on the dockside by a crowd of nearly 4,000 people. The **cargo** included boxes of bacon and bread, bags of rice and corn, and 15,000 barrels of flour.

The barrel shown in the picture is the only one remaining from that **cargo** and is on display at Touchstones Rochdale.



Captain's sword, CSS Alabama, 1864
© Touchstones Rochdale

Captain's sword, CSS Alabama, 1864

Touchstones Rochdale

One side of this sword says 'Capt Raphael Semmes' and the other 'Steamer Alabama CSN, 1864'.

The southern **Confederate** states in the USA needed ships to attack northern **Union merchant** ships but they had no ship building industry. There was a secret mission to Liverpool to buy arms and build ships. It was illegal for the British to provide weapons and support foreign wars. The steamer ship the Alabama was built disguised as a **merchant** ship and left Birkenhead with a British captain and crew. She was then fitted out as a warship away from the eyes of the British government and North American spies.

Captain Raphael Semmes took command of the Alabama. She sailed all over the world, putting out of action a total of 69 anti-slavery **Union** ships, at a cost to the

northern states of \$6m. A young man named Bell from Rochdale was on board the Alabama, when she sank some northern **Union** ships. He wrote in a letter to his cousin:

'We have taken about 35 **vessels**. We fired a shot from the gun that I was at and it nearly knocked her **foremast** down... A man of war steamer which we had to take by force we sunk in 17 minutes... we escaped with one man wounded in the mouth. He is now alright. I must conclude as there is a full rigged **brig** in sight... we can't say exactly what she is but if she be a **Yankee** she will be on fire directly.'

The CSS Alabama was finally sunk in June 1864, outside the French port of Cherbourg. The sword may have been presented to Captain Semmes during his stay in Europe following the loss of the Alabama.

Questions

- 1 Who was Abraham Lincoln and why was he important?
- 2 What caused the American Civil War?
- 3 Who in the USA wanted slavery to continue and who wanted it to end?
- 4 What linked the American Civil War to the north west of England?
- 5 What was the Lancashire cotton famine and how did it affect cotton industries in Britain?
- 6 Were people in the north west of England pro or anti-slavery?