



CHAPTER 1

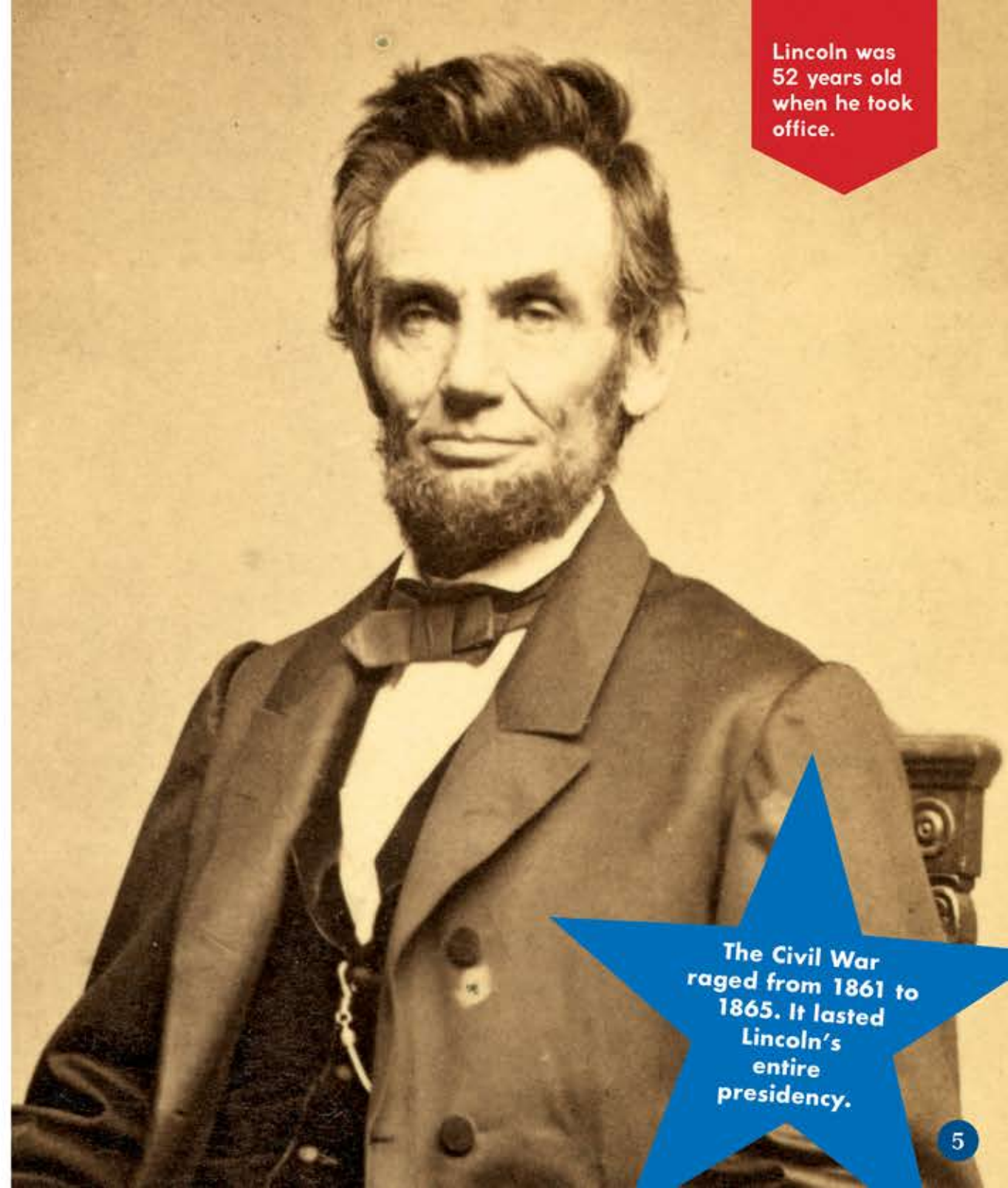
Meet Abe Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln was our 16th president. At the time of his presidency, the country was sharply divided.

Slavery was legal in the South, but not in the North. As the country grew, so did arguments about whether slavery should expand into new territories.

Soon this fight over slavery sparked the U.S. Civil War. The North (Union) battled the South (Confederates) for four bloody years. The conflict almost tore our country in half for good.

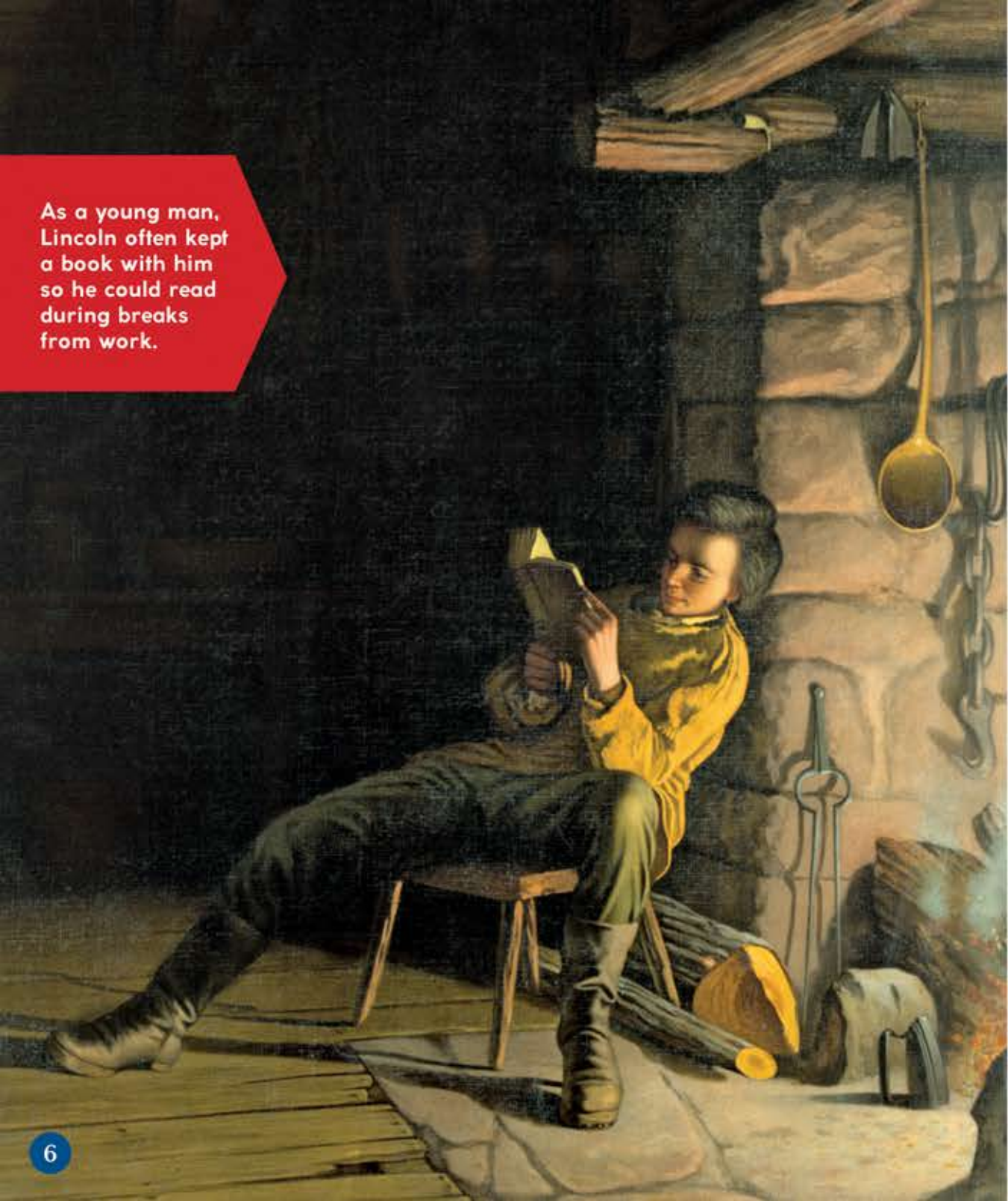
Lincoln will always be remembered for holding the nation together and for freeing millions of enslaved African Americans. In fact, many people say Abraham Lincoln was one of the greatest presidents in U.S. history.



Lincoln was 52 years old when he took office.

The Civil War raged from 1861 to 1865. It lasted Lincoln's entire presidency.

As a young man, Lincoln often kept a book with him so he could read during breaks from work.



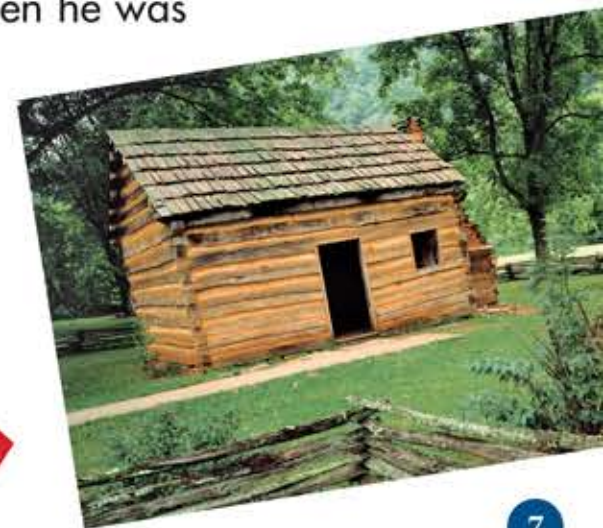
Humble Beginnings

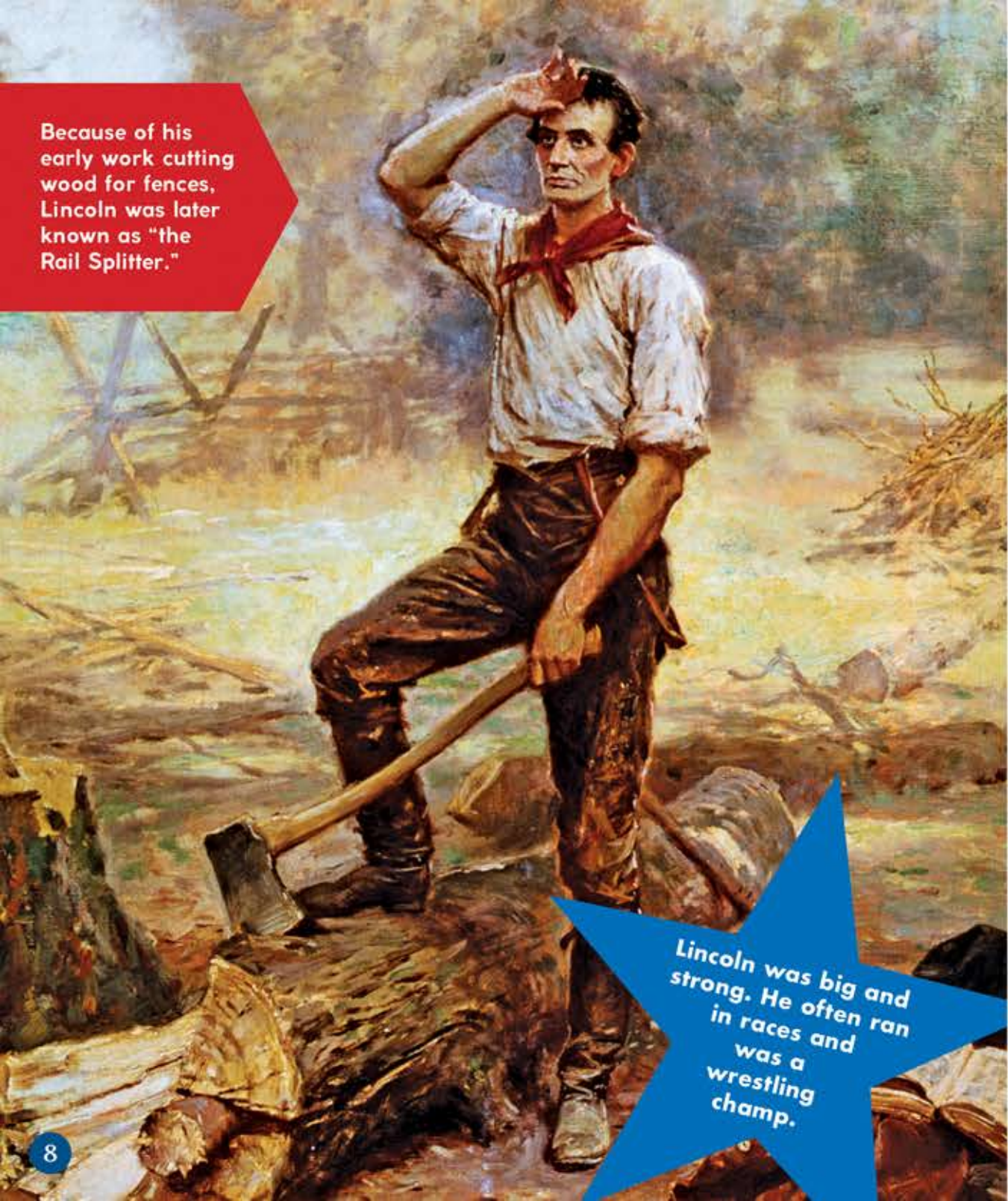
Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809, in Kentucky. His family lived in a tiny log cabin that had a dirt floor.

Lincoln's dad was a farmer. Abe helped plow fields and plant seeds. He split wood rails for fences. Because Lincoln was always helping at home, he could not attend school regularly. All together, he had only about one year of formal education. Still, Lincoln tried to learn as much as he could on his own.

Lincoln's mother died when he was nine, and his father soon remarried. Abe's stepmother, Sarah, encouraged his love of reading.

This is what Lincoln's childhood home looked like. ▶





Because of his early work cutting wood for fences, Lincoln was later known as "the Rail Splitter."

Young Mr. Lincoln

Lincoln worked at all sorts of jobs. When he wasn't working at home, his father hired him out to work for neighbors. Abe didn't keep the money he earned, though. That was used to help support the family.

Lincoln's family moved a lot in search of good farmland. They settled in Illinois when Abe was 21. That is when Lincoln finally left home. He had many jobs, including postmaster, and even managed a store.

Abe met a teacher who asked him to join a **debate** club. It was a good way to learn how to speak about important issues. Lincoln eventually gained fame as a great speaker.

Lincoln dedicated a lot of time to educating himself. He even taught himself enough to become a lawyer by the time he was 27.

Lincoln was big and strong. He often ran in races and was a wrestling champ.