



# Ag in the Classroom

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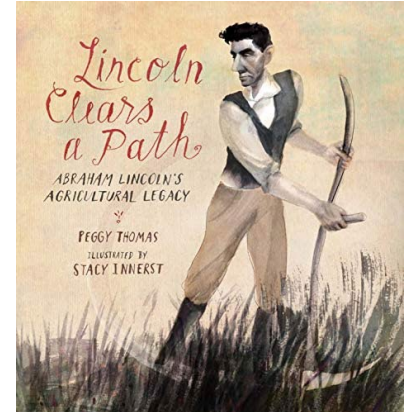
## February 2023 Book of the Month

### *Lincoln Clears a Path: Abraham Lincoln's Agricultural Legacy*

Written by: Peggy Thomas

Illustrated by: Stacy Innerst

As a boy Abraham Lincoln helped his family break through the wilderness on a frontier farm. When Lincoln was a young man, friends made it easier for him to get a better education and become a lawyer, so as a politician he paved the way for better schools and roads. President Lincoln cleared a path for all Americans to a brighter future—better farming, improved transportation, accessible educations, and most importantly, freedom.

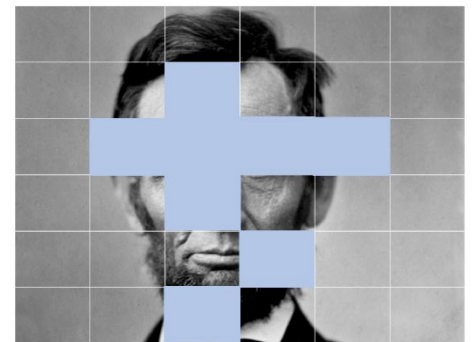


### Did You Know?<sup>1</sup>

- During the Civil War, Lincoln asked farmers to cultivate all the land they had in order to feed and supply the Union Army. Every month of the war, farmers provided 48,750 bushels of beans and 8.5 million pounds of potatoes to feed 600,000 military men.
- Abraham Lincoln established the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 1862.
- Abraham Lincoln signed various Acts that impacted the United States in 1862:
  - The Homestead Act – provided public land to people during the western expansion
  - The Pacific Railway – helped fund the railway construction
  - The Morrill Act – started as a proposal from Justin Morrill, this act established the land-grant colleges in each state

### Engage<sup>1</sup>

1. Show slide 1 from the [Who am I? PowerPoint Slides](#) (see **Links**)
2. Explain to the students that you will read various **clues** as the blue squares disappear on the photo.
3. Read a clue every 2-3 slides.
4. Allow the students to make guesses between each clue. Write the students' guesses on the board.
5. Continue reading clues as squares disappear.
6. Once students have figured out that the clues are referring to Abraham Lincoln, ask if they know any other facts about Lincoln.
7. Explain to the students that they are going to learn more about the 16<sup>th</sup> president, including his childhood, presidency, role during the Civil War, and influence on agriculture.



### Activity 1: Lincoln Clears a Path<sup>1</sup>

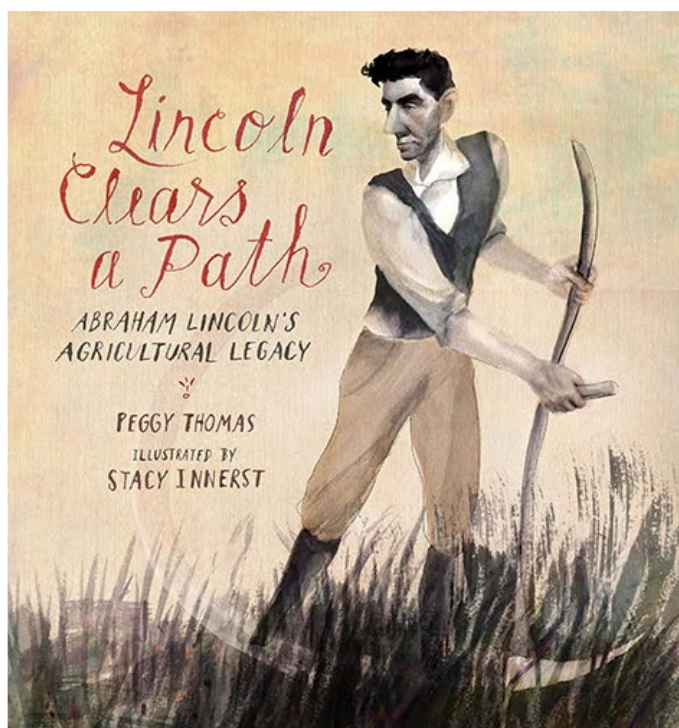
[ncagintheclassroom.com](http://ncagintheclassroom.com)

NC Farm Bureau Ag in the Classroom

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1. Explain to the students that Abraham Lincoln often used the phrase, "clearing a path" in his writing. Ask the students, "What does it mean to clear a path?" (*Someone can literally clear a path by removing trees, bushes, or stumps. Someone can figuratively clear a path by making changes that positively affect others, creating new laws, or leading the way to a new way of life.*)
2. Ask the students to create a T-chart on a piece of paper and title it, "Lincoln Clears a Path."
3. Instruct the students to label one side of the chart "Literally" and the other side "Figuratively." Explain the difference between literal and figurative phrases.
4. Literal phrases mean exactly what they say.
5. Figurative phrases use similes, metaphors, hyperbole, and personification to describe something often through comparison with something different.
6. As you read *Lincoln Clears a Path* by Peggy Thomas, ask the students to write down each time Lincoln "clears a path" in the correct column of the T-chart.



Lincoln Clears a Path

Literally	Figuratively
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abe helped his father fell trees</li> <li>• Abe helped cleared brush</li> <li>• Abe plowed fields</li> <li>• Abe pulled stumps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abe cleared a path for better schools</li> <li>• Lincoln cleared a path for agriculture</li> <li>• Established the USDA</li> <li>• Signed the Homestead Act</li> <li>• Signed the Pacific Railway Act</li> <li>• Created land-grant colleges</li> <li>• Cleared a path to freedom by signing the Emancipation Proclamation</li> </ul>

## Activity 2: A Path for Lincoln<sup>1</sup>

1. Pass out a [Hexagon Tile \(Links\)](#) to each student. Explain that each tile represents an important part of Lincoln's life, the Civil War, or agriculture.
2. Instruct the students to illustrate their tile according to the caption.
3. When each student has finished their illustration, ask students to hang each of their tiles on the wall, connected to each other creating a "path." Allow the students to decide how to connect each of the hexagon tiles for the path. There is no one correct way to connect all the tiles. Allow the students to create their path as a class.

### Activity 3: Lincoln’s Agricultural Legacy<sup>1</sup>

1. Use the information from *Lincoln Clears a Path* by Peggy Thomas and the hexagon path from Activity 2 to lead a classroom discussion about Lincoln's impact on the United States and agriculture. Consider asking the following questions:
  - What parts of Lincoln's childhood and young adult life prepared him to become President of the United States?
  - What role did agriculture play during the Civil War?
  - Is agriculture still important today? Why?
  - How did Lincoln impact agriculture today?
  - What is the purpose of the USDA today?
  - What are land-grant universities?
  - Does our state have a land-grant university? What is it called?
  - How did the Pacific Railway Act benefit farmers and citizens?
  - How did the Homestead Act benefit farmers, citizens, and immigrants?
2. Reinforce the idea that Lincoln made changes in the 1800s that still impact us today.
3. Ask students to consider how they are personally impacted by any of the acts that Lincoln signed in 1862. (*Students might know someone who attended a land grant university; the USDA regulates programs like the school lunch program and MyPlate; students might have had ancestors who homesteaded in the western United States; etc.*)

### Links

- *Who Am I? PowerPoint Slides (Engage)*  
[https://cdn.agclassroom.org/media/uploads/lp794/Who\\_am\\_I\\_AL.pptx](https://cdn.agclassroom.org/media/uploads/lp794/Who_am_I_AL.pptx)
- *Who Am I? Clues (Engage)*  
[https://cdn.agclassroom.org/media/uploads/lp794/Who\\_Am\\_I\\_clues\\_2.pdf](https://cdn.agclassroom.org/media/uploads/lp794/Who_Am_I_clues_2.pdf)
- Hexagon Tile (Activity 2)  
[https://cdn.agclassroom.org/media/uploads/lp794/Hexagons\\_for\\_Lincoln\[2\].pdf](https://cdn.agclassroom.org/media/uploads/lp794/Hexagons_for_Lincoln[2].pdf)

### Sources

1. <https://northcarolinamatrix.agclassroom.org/matrix/lesson/794/>

### K-5 Subject Areas: Reading, Social Studies

### Reading

- **RL.K.1** With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- **RL.K.10** Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.
- **RL.1.1** Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- **RL.1.3** Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.
- **RL.1.4** Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.
- **RL.1.7** Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.
- **RL.2.10** Actively engage in group reading for the purpose of connecting prior knowledge and experiences to text.
- **RL.4.2** Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

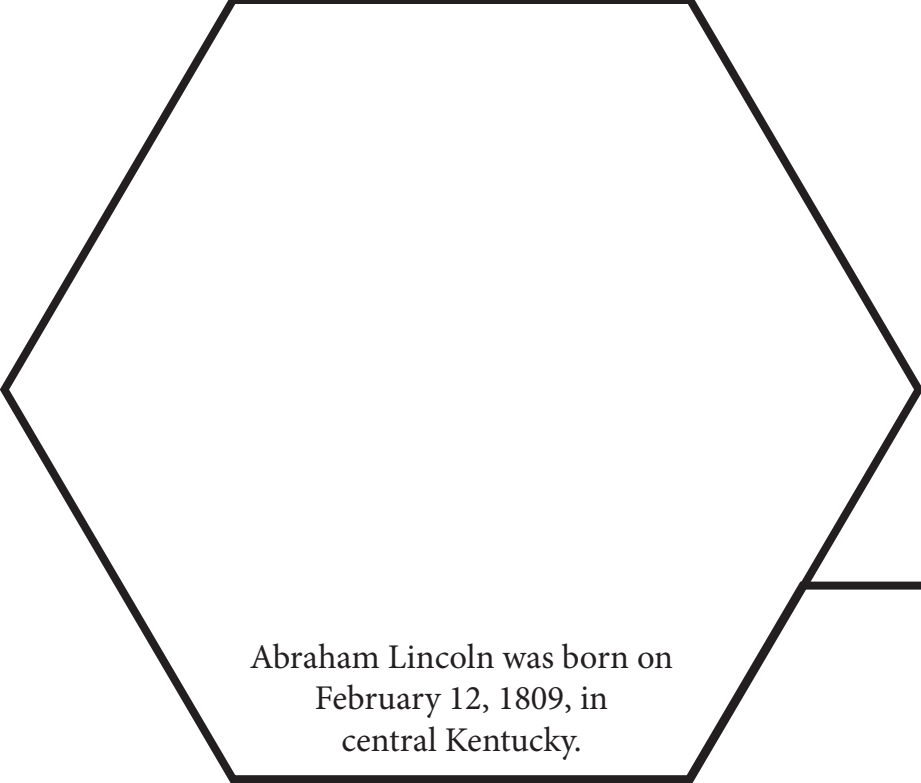
- **RL.4.5** Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems and drama when writing or speaking about a text.
- **RI.K.1** With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- **RI.K.2** With prompting and support, identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.
- **RI.K.7** With prompting and support, describe how the words and illustrations work together to provide information.
- **RI.1.1** Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- **RI.1.2** Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.
- **RI.1.6** Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.
- **RI.1.7** Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.
- **RI.1.8** With guidance and support, identify the reasons an author gives to support ideas in a text.
- **RI.2.1** Answer who and what, where questions to demonstrate understanding of details in a familiar text.
- **RI.2.2** Identify the main topic of text.
- **RI.2.5** Locate key facts or information in a familiar text.
- **RI.2.10** Actively engage in group reading of information text for the purpose of connecting prior knowledge and experiences to text.
- **RI.3.5** Use text features and search tools to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.
- **RI.3.7** Use information gained from illustrations and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text.
- **RI.4.1** Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- **RI.4.2** Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.
- **RI.4.5** Describe the overall structure of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.
- **RI.4.7** Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.
- **RI.5.2** Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.

### Social Studies

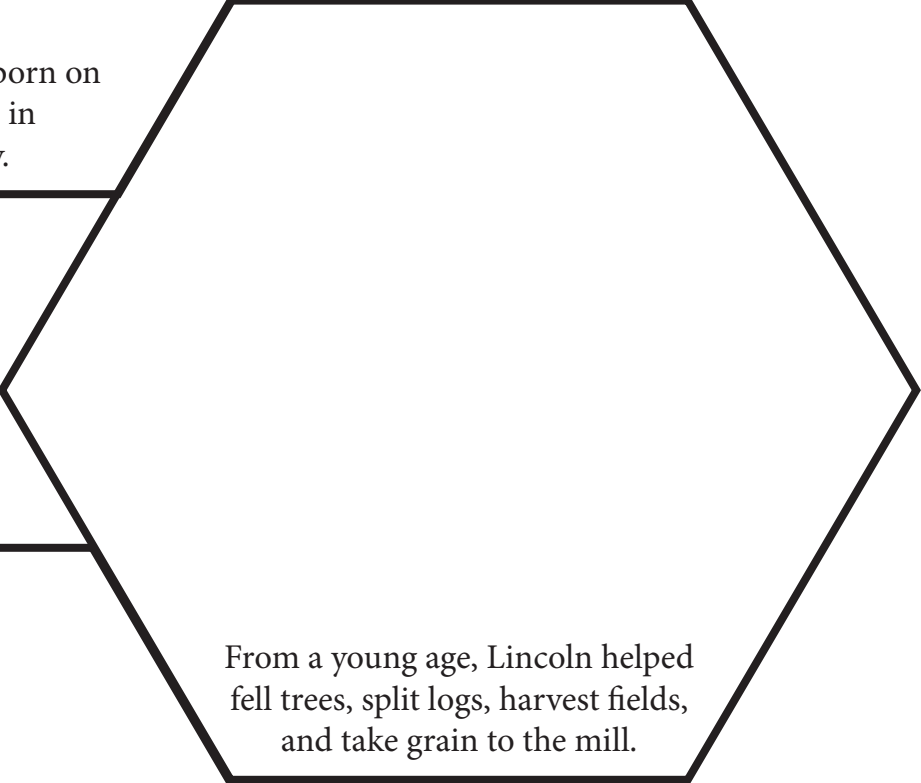
- **K.H.1** Understand change over time.
- **K.G.2** Understand the interaction between humans and the environment.
- **1.H.1** Understand that history tells a story of how people and events changed society over time.
- **2.H.1** Understand how various sources provide information about the past.
- **2.G.2** Understand the effects of humans interacting with their environment.
- **2.C&G.1** Understand the purpose of governments.
- **2.C.1** Understand how various cultures influence communities.
- **3.H.1** Understand how events, individuals, and ideas have influenced history of local and regional communities.
- **3.H.2** Use historical thinking skills to understand the context of events, people, and places.
- **5.H.1** Analyze the chronology of key events in the United States.
- **5.H.2** Understand the role of prominent figures in shaping the United States.
- **5.G.1** Understand how human activity has and continues to shape the United States.
- **5.C&G.1** Understand the development, structure and function of government in the United States.
- **5.C&G.2** Analyze life in a democratic republic through the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

## Who Am I? Clues

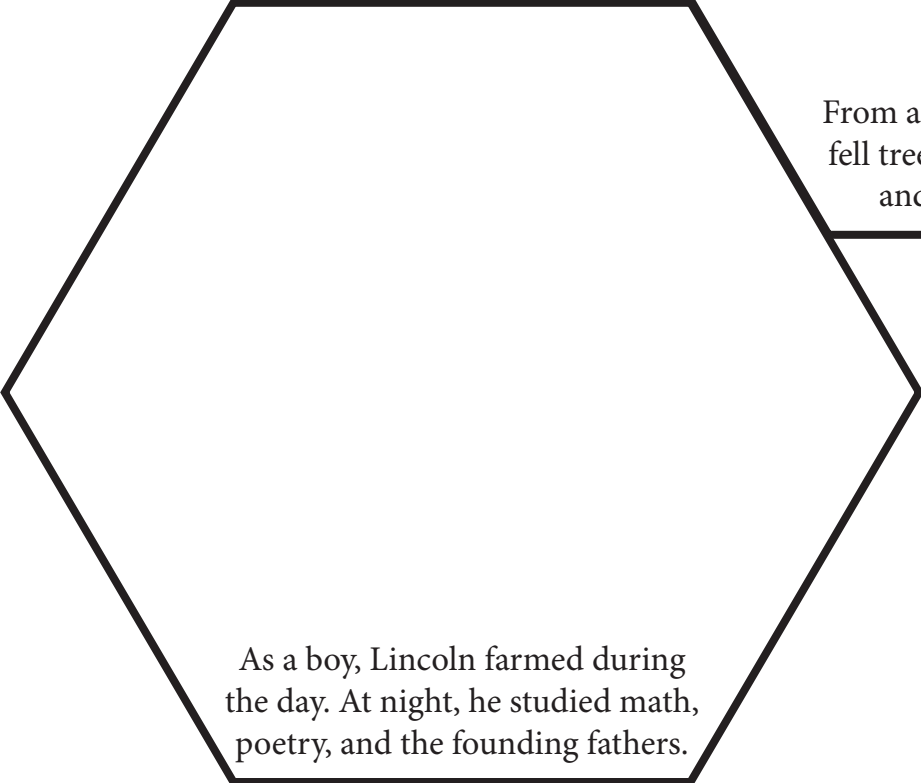
1. I was born on February 12, 1809, in a log cabin in Kentucky.
2. My birthday—along with George Washington’s birthday—is honored on President’s Day each February.
3. As a child, I enjoyed studying the United States’ founding fathers.
4. I was a self-taught lawyer.
5. I was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1846.
6. In 1856, I delivered my now-famous “house divided” speech.
7. During my presidency in 1861, the Civil War started.
8. In 1862, I established the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), which is still being used today.
9. During the Civil War, I signed many acts including the Homestead Act, Pacific Railway Act, and Morrill Land-grant Act.
10. On January 1, 1863, I issued the Emancipation Proclamation.
11. In November of 1863, I delivered the now-famous Gettysburg Address.
12. You can find me on the \$5 bill.
13. You will also find me on Mount Rushmore.
14. I was elected the 16<sup>th</sup> president of the United States of America.
15. The Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., was dedicated to me in 1922.



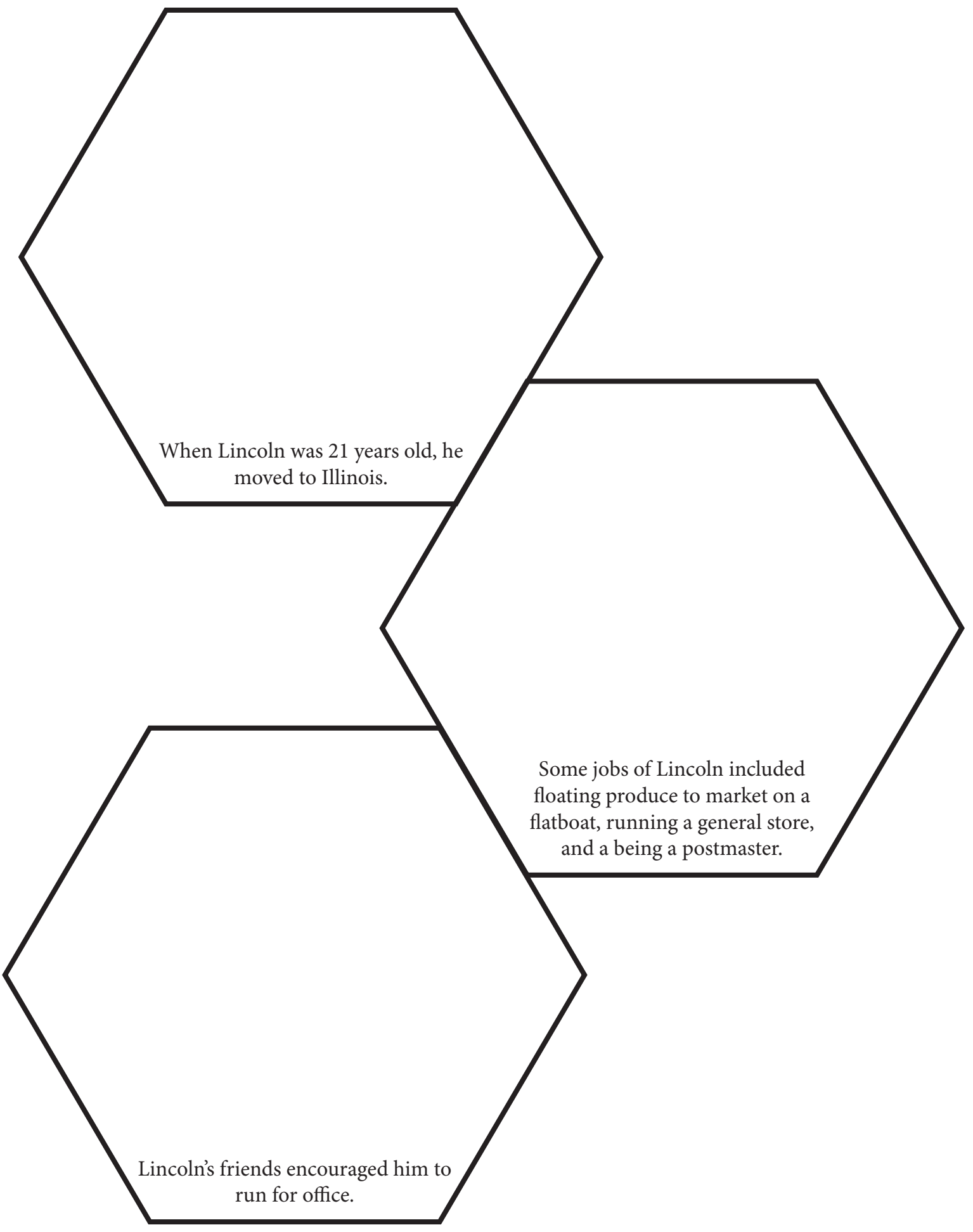
Abraham Lincoln was born on  
February 12, 1809, in  
central Kentucky.



From a young age, Lincoln helped  
fell trees, split logs, harvest fields,  
and take grain to the mill.



As a boy, Lincoln farmed during  
the day. At night, he studied math,  
poetry, and the founding fathers.



When Lincoln was 21 years old, he moved to Illinois.

Some jobs of Lincoln included floating produce to market on a flatboat, running a general store, and a being a postmaster.

Lincoln's friends encouraged him to run for office.

In 1832, Lincoln ran for Illinois state representative but failed. He won in 1834.

Lincoln taught himself law and in 1837 became an attorney in Springfield.

In 1860, voters elected Lincoln the 16th president of the United States.

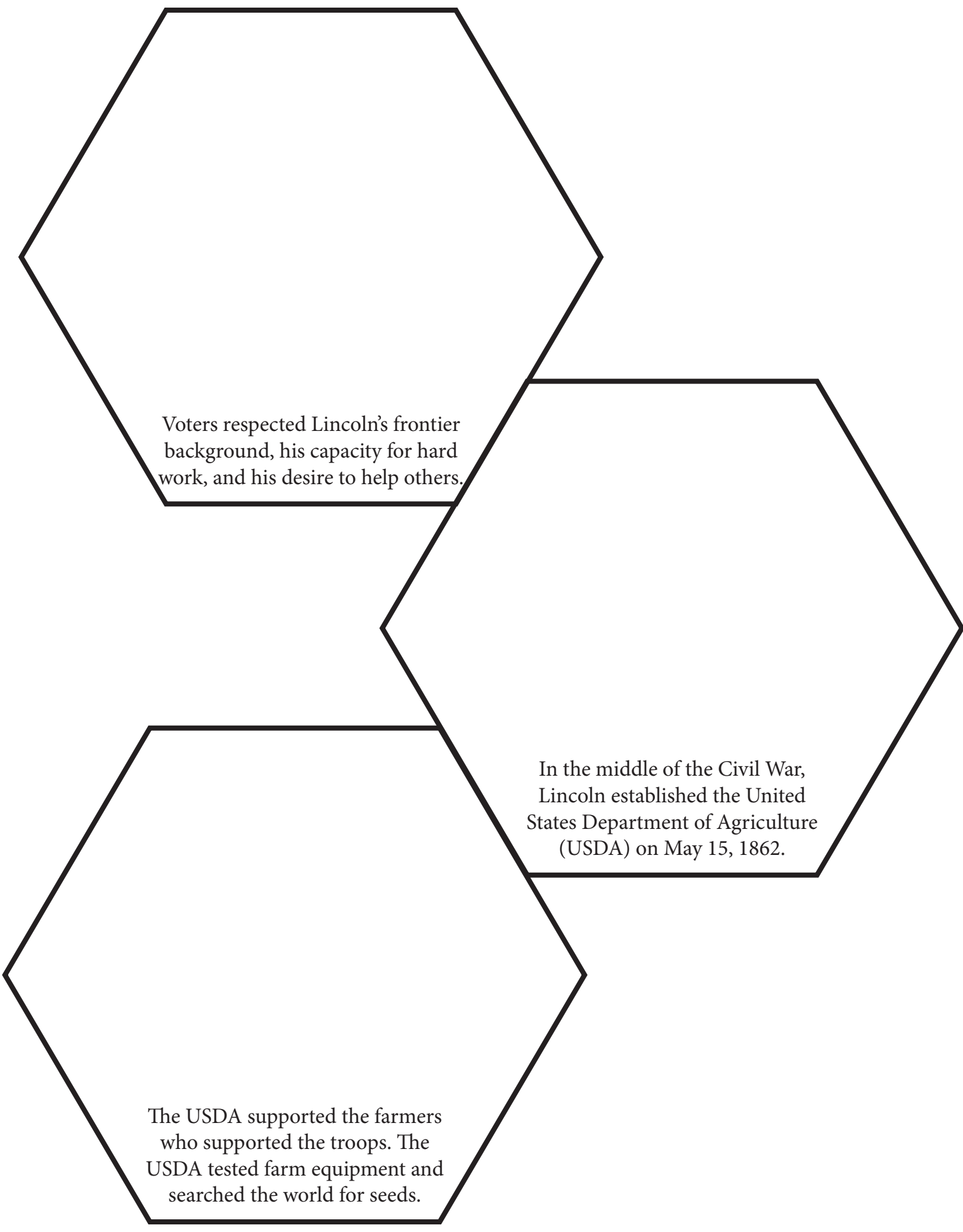




Eleven southern states left  
the Union.

On April 12, 1861, the  
Civil War began.

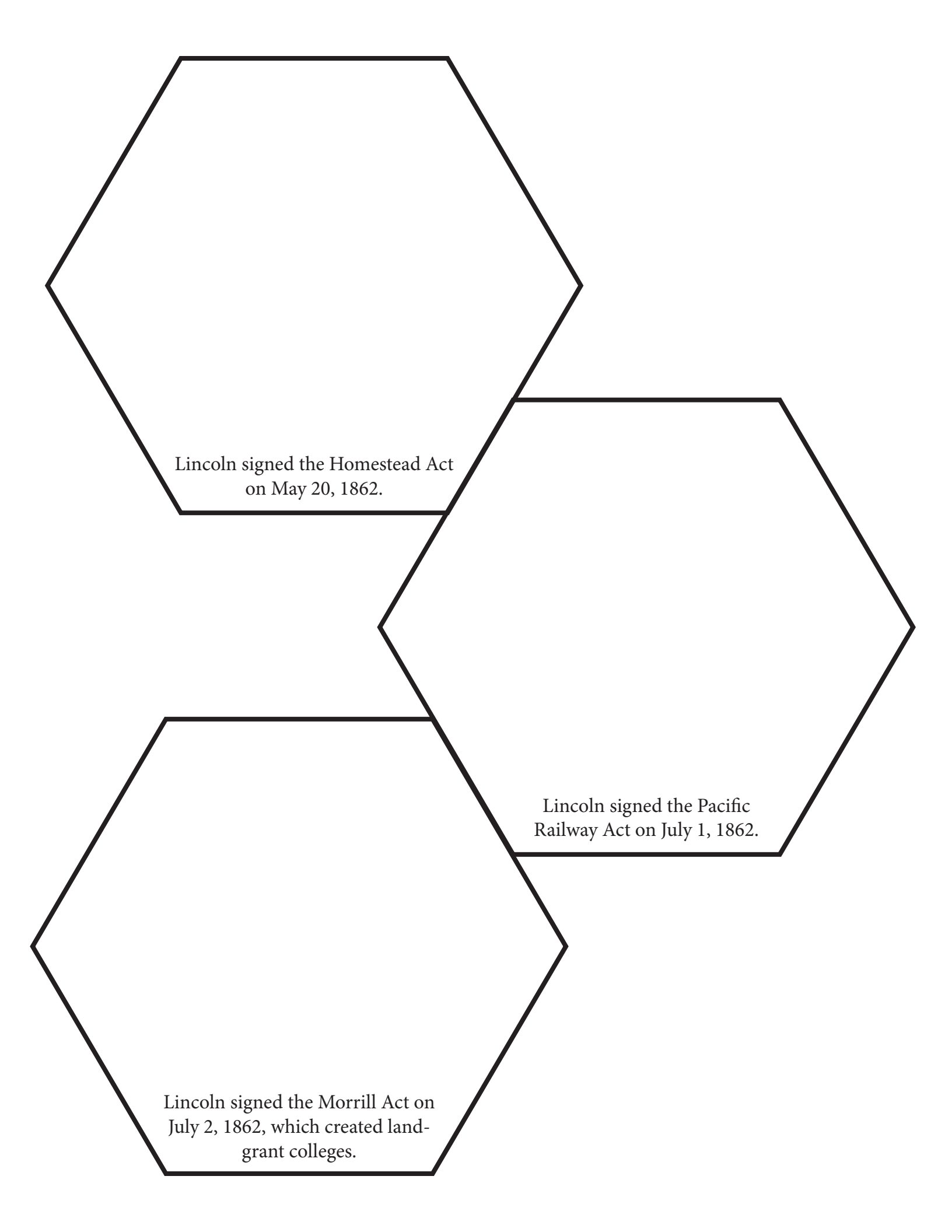
The Civil War ended on April 9,  
1865, when the Confederate army  
surrendered to Union forces.



Voters respected Lincoln's frontier background, his capacity for hard work, and his desire to help others.

In the middle of the Civil War, Lincoln established the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) on May 15, 1862.

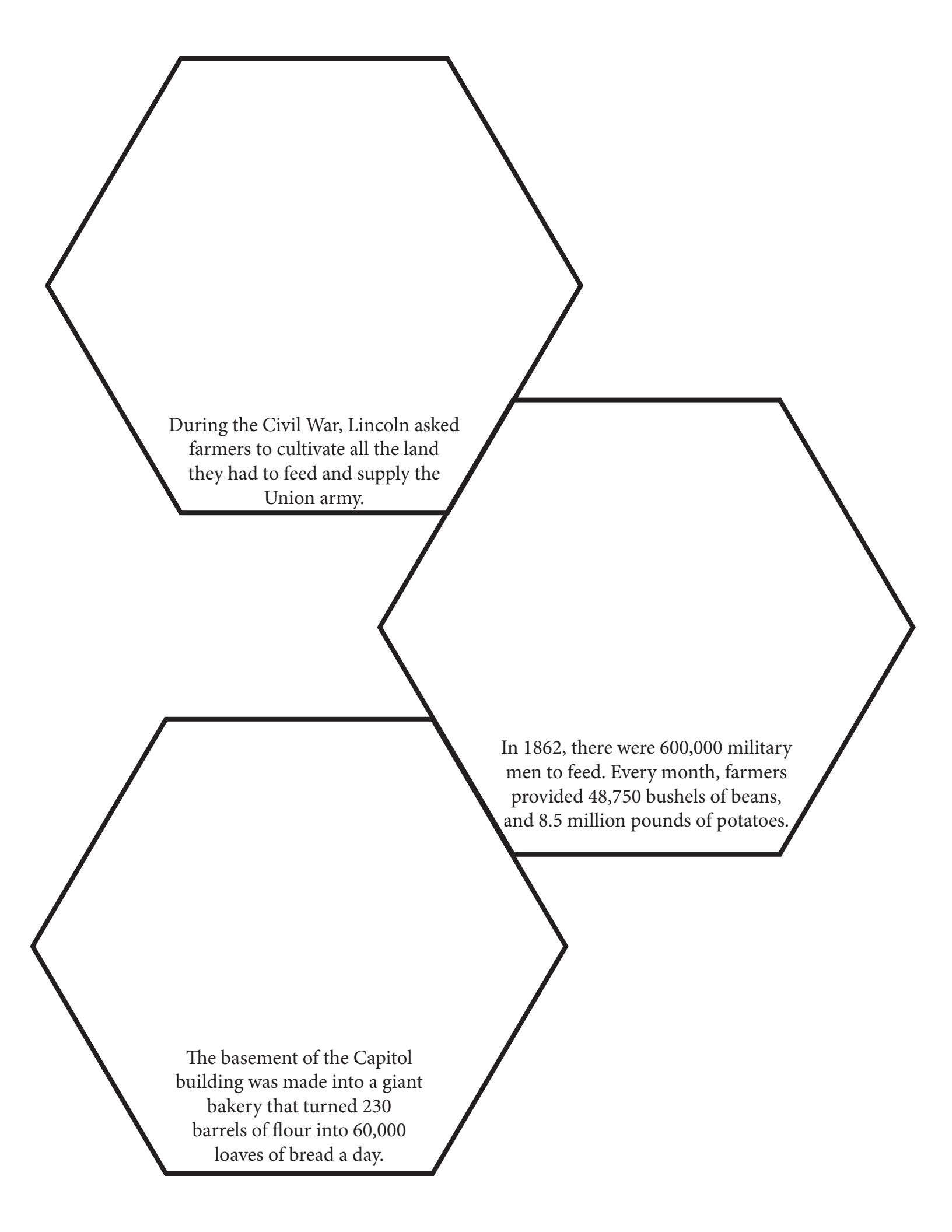
The USDA supported the farmers who supported the troops. The USDA tested farm equipment and searched the world for seeds.



Lincoln signed the Homestead Act  
on May 20, 1862.

Lincoln signed the Pacific  
Railway Act on July 1, 1862.

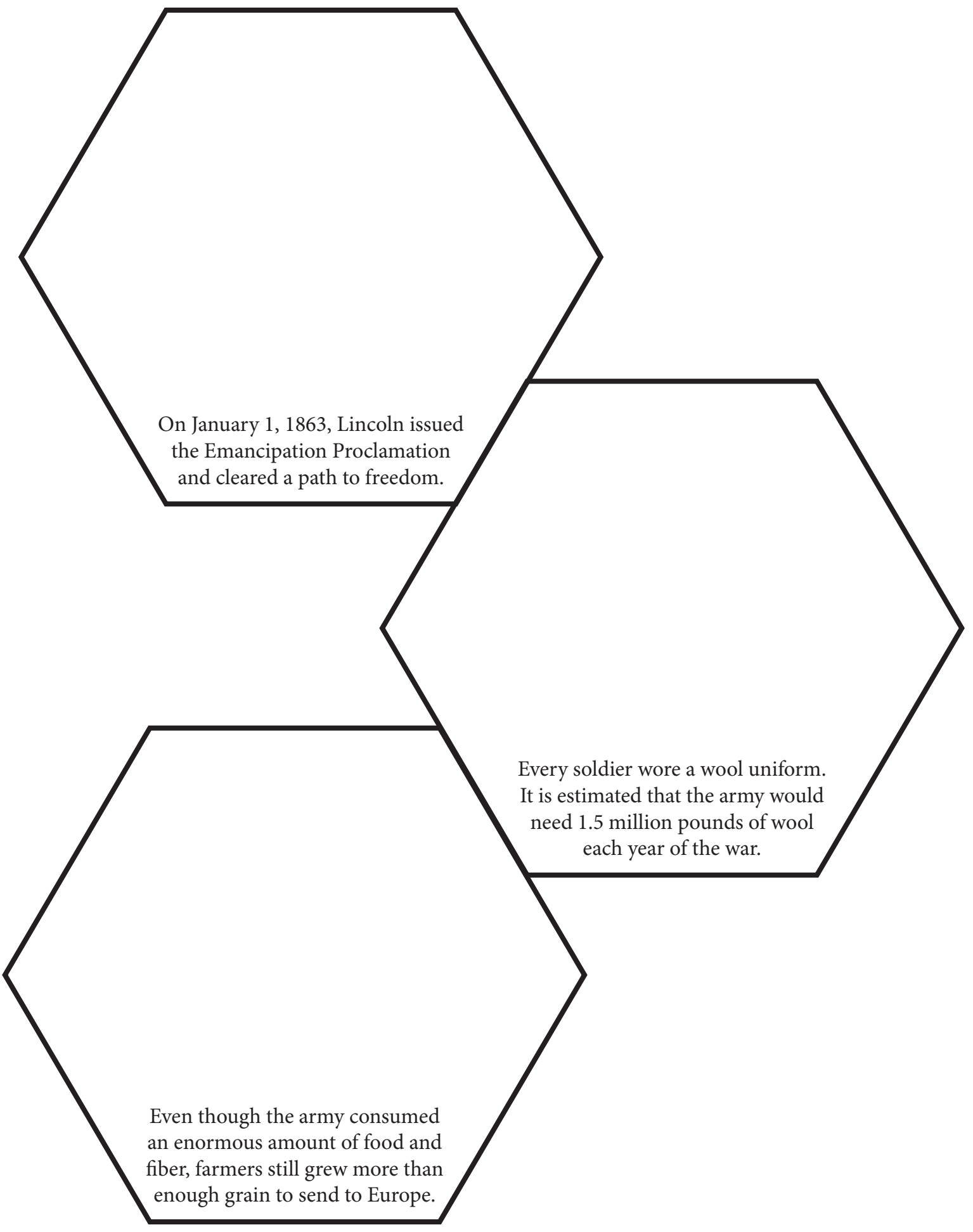
Lincoln signed the Morrill Act on  
July 2, 1862, which created land-  
grant colleges.



During the Civil War, Lincoln asked farmers to cultivate all the land they had to feed and supply the Union army.

In 1862, there were 600,000 military men to feed. Every month, farmers provided 48,750 bushels of beans, and 8.5 million pounds of potatoes.

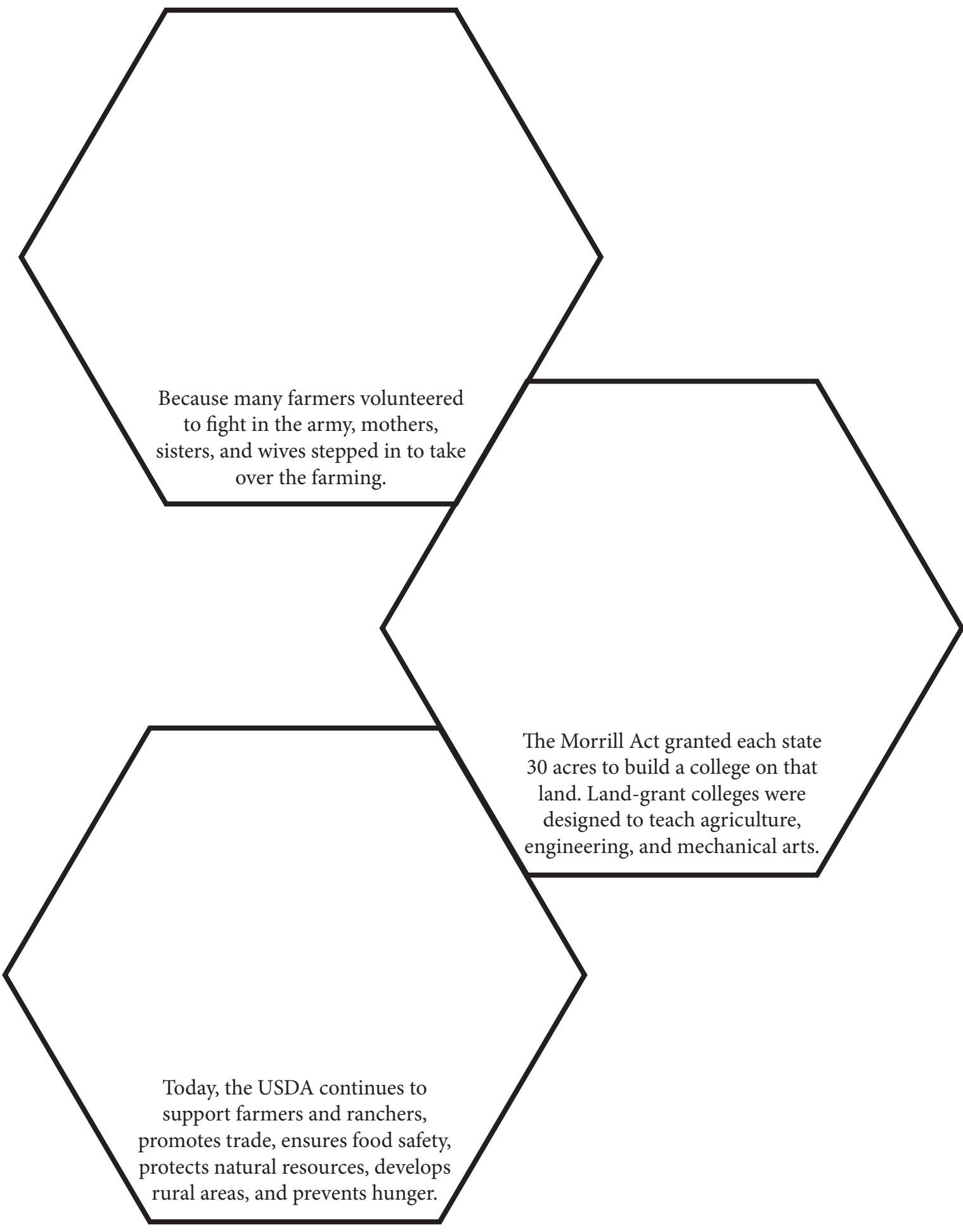
The basement of the Capitol building was made into a giant bakery that turned 230 barrels of flour into 60,000 loaves of bread a day.



On January 1, 1863, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation and cleared a path to freedom.

Every soldier wore a wool uniform. It is estimated that the army would need 1.5 million pounds of wool each year of the war.

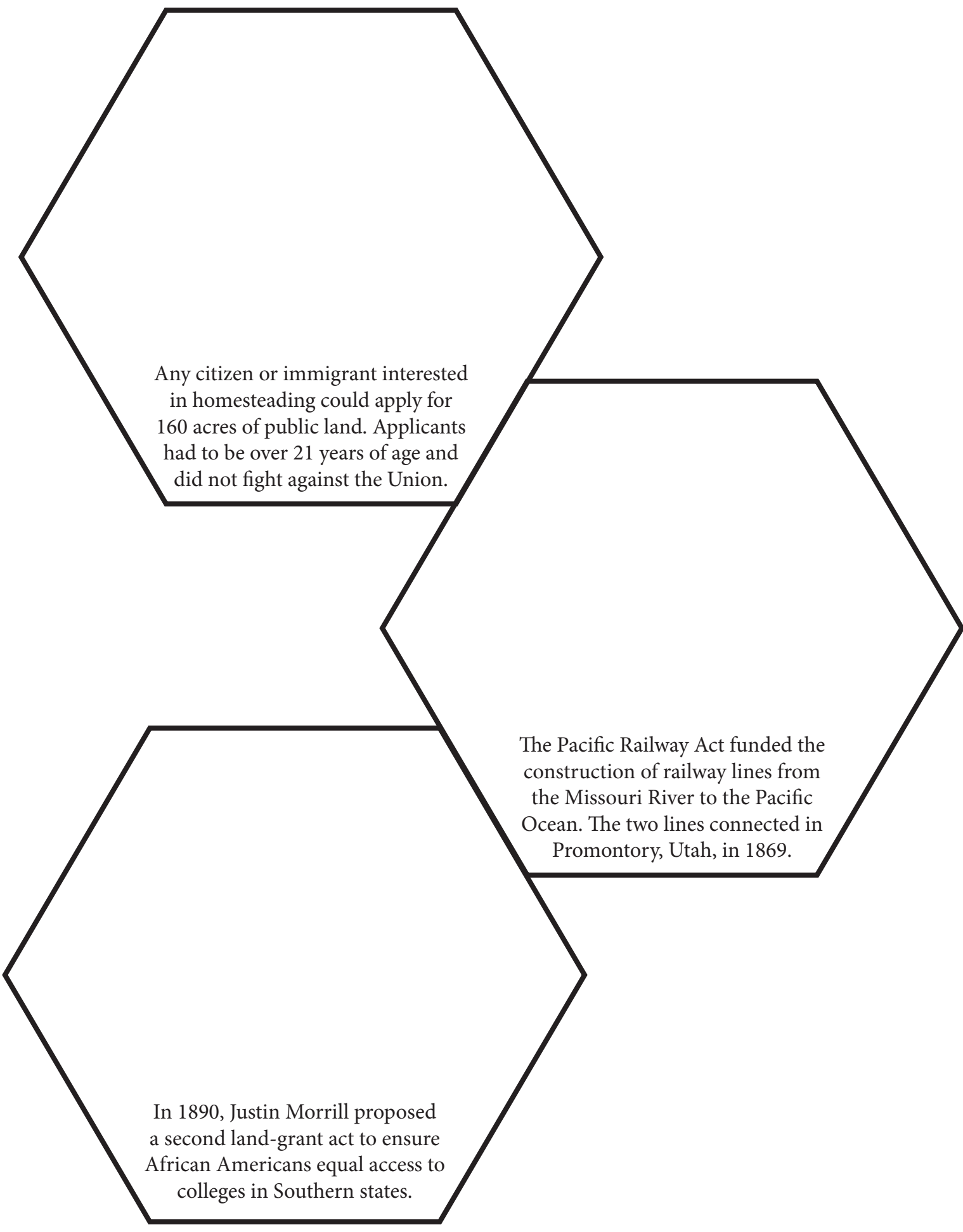
Even though the army consumed an enormous amount of food and fiber, farmers still grew more than enough grain to send to Europe.



Because many farmers volunteered to fight in the army, mothers, sisters, and wives stepped in to take over the farming.

The Morrill Act granted each state 30 acres to build a college on that land. Land-grant colleges were designed to teach agriculture, engineering, and mechanical arts.

Today, the USDA continues to support farmers and ranchers, promotes trade, ensures food safety, protects natural resources, develops rural areas, and prevents hunger.



Any citizen or immigrant interested in homesteading could apply for 160 acres of public land. Applicants had to be over 21 years of age and did not fight against the Union.

The Pacific Railway Act funded the construction of railway lines from the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean. The two lines connected in Promontory, Utah, in 1869.

In 1890, Justin Morrill proposed a second land-grant act to ensure African Americans equal access to colleges in Southern states.