

4. Henry “Hank” Aaron

Henry Aaron, better known as Hank, was born on February 5, 1934, in Mobile, Alabama. He played professional baseball for 23 years as an outfielder for the Milwaukee Braves (changed later to the Atlanta Braves) and the Milwaukee Brewers. Aaron was the first to surpass the 714 career home-run record of Babe Ruth and kept the title of home-run king until Barry Bonds passed his 755 record in 2007. Aaron still holds many of baseball’s most distinguished records, such as most runs batted in (2,297), highest total bases run (6,856), and most years with 30 or more home runs (15). After retiring as a player, Aaron became executive vice-president for the Atlanta Braves, where he has been a leading spokesman for minority hiring in baseball. He was elected to baseball’s Hall of Fame in 1982. His autobiography, *I Had a Hammer*, was published in 1990.

5. Thomas Edison

Thomas Edison was born on February 11, 1847, into a middle class family in Milan, Ohio. It became evident early in his life that he was extremely intelligent and inquisitive. His public school teacher was unable to cope with his incessant questions, so Edison’s mother homeschooled him. His appetite for learning was insatiable, however, and he advanced so quickly that his parents hired a tutor to assist with the subjects that were beyond their capability. Edison went on to become one of the greatest inventors of all time. He was granted 1,093 United States patents, the most ever issued to any individual. Perhaps his greatest contribution was the invention of the first successful electric light bulb. He also invented the phonograph and made improvements to the telegraph, telephone, and motion picture technology. Edison was a shrewd businessman and created companies worldwide for the manufacture and sale of his inventions. Along with other manufacturing pioneers of his era, Edison helped make the United States a world industrial power.

6. Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky. He studied diligently to learn all he could while he worked hard in a variety of jobs. He became a lawyer and rode the circuit of courts for many years. His law partner said of him, “His ambition was a little engine that knew no rest.” Lincoln served four successive terms as an Illinois State legislator and one term as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives. He went on to become the 16th president of the United States. He presided over a very tumultuous time in this nation’s history. The states were embroiled in a conflict over slavery and secession that led to the Civil War. On January 1, 1863, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation that declared the slaves forever free. In honor of his leadership during a pivotal point in American history, Abraham Lincoln’s birthday is celebrated annually.