

**0. Assassination of Abraham Lincoln - Story Preface**

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Photo portrait of Abraham Lincoln taken in February, 1865 by Alexander Gardner. Maintained by National Portrait Gallery, O-118, M-100. Online courtesy, Wikimedia Commons.

*The President's head dropped upon his shoulders;  
the ball was in his brain.*

George Alfred Townsend

Special Correspondent in  
The Life, Crime, and Capture of John Wilkes Booth  
1866

On the way to his new position, Abraham Lincoln (like Barack Obama, 138 years later) took a train ride from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C. Ahead of the man from Illinois was a seemingly impossible job. A greatly divided country was inching closer to civil war.

At the capitol, Lincoln delivered his first Inaugural Address. He warned the country:

*We are not enemies but friends -  
We must not be enemies.*

His words, of course, went unheeded.

In April of 1861, the month following his speech, the American Civil War began.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Assassination-of-Abraham-Lincoln)

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See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Assassination-of-Abraham-Lincoln)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Assassination-of-Abraham-Lincoln>

**Questions 2 Ponder**

**How Can Citizens of the Same Country View Each Other as Enemies?**

When Abraham Lincoln said, "We are not enemies but friends - We must not be enemies," was he acknowledging that the United States was fractured to the breaking point in 1861? Explain your answer.

What was causing citizens of the same country to view each other as “enemies?”

What are the kinds of issues which could cause Americans, even today, to view each other as “enemies” instead of “friends?” How can we examine issues without succumbing to polarizing viewpoints?

## Media Stream



### Abraham Lincoln - At His First Inauguration

Photo, courtesy Library of Congress - image vctt8photo.

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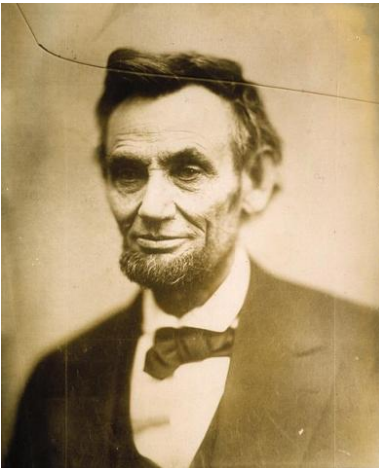


### Townsend - Author of John Wilkes Booth Bio

Photo of George Alfred Townsend, 1899, from his book *Poems of Men and Events* (New York, E.F. Bonaventure). Online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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### Lincoln - Trailer (2012 Film)

Trailer of "Lincoln," a film by Steven Spielberg. Copyright, DreamWorks Pictures, all rights reserved. Clip provided here as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with the film.

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### American Civil War - Beginning and End

From, *The Civil War: A Ken Burns Film*, online via PBS.

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### Barack Obama - Whistle Stop Train Tour

Video clip, courtesy Obama-Biden Transition Project web site (change.gov).

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