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This image, from the Library of Congress, depicts the items which were in President Lincoln's pockets the night he was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth.

The President, meanwhile, was carried across the street to Petersen's Boarding House. The much-loved son of Nancy Hanks and Tom Lincoln was diagonally placed on a bed which was too small for his 6'4" frame. His wound was mortal.

He remained unconscious throughout the night:

The President had been shot a few minutes after ten. The wound would have brought instant death to most men, but his vital tenacity was remarkable. He was, of course, unconscious from the first moment; but he breathed with slow and regular respiration throughout the night. (Abraham Lincoln, by John G. Nicolay, at [page 540](#).)

Shocked, his closest advisors gathered round him. Mary Lincoln was hysterical and, for the most part, not with the President as he lay dying.



News of the shooting quickly spread. Written reports, intended for public reading, predicted a very bad outcome:

*Lincoln Shot
Condition Considered Hopeless
Will Not Live Through Night Doctors Declare*

At 7:22 a.m. the next morning, the President died of his wound. John G. Nicolay, Lincoln's secretary and close aide, tells us about the final moments:

*As the dawn came and the lamplight grew pale, his pulse began to fail; but his face, even then, was scarcely more haggard than those of the sorrowing men around him. His automatic moaning ceased, a look of unspeakable peace came upon his worn features, and at twenty-two minutes after seven he died. Stanton [the Secretary of War] broke the silence by saying: "Now he belongs to the ages."
(See *Abraham Lincoln*, by John G. Nicolay, at page 540.)*

Colonel George V. Rutherford placed silver half-dollars on both of the President's eyes immediately after his death.

Lincoln had never regained consciousness. In his pockets were reading glasses and other personal items. America, just ending the disastrous Civil War, now faced a "national calamity" with the death of her President. Booth's plan, however, was not just to kill Mr. Lincoln.

At the precise moment that the actor was in the theater, one of his co-conspirators was attempting to murder Secretary of State William Seward.

Credits:

The in-text image, by Carol M. Highsmith—Carol M. Highsmith's America—depicts the room in which President Lincoln died. The Library of Congress, where the image is maintained, tells us more about the photo:

Located in the Petersen House across from Ford's Theatre, this is the room where Abraham Lincoln died on April 15, 1865 at the age of 56. Although there is nothing that is original in this room, the layout is exactly the same including the art on the walls. It is a very small room and looks somewhat distorted through the camera's lens.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/NO-HOPE-Assassination-of-Abraham-Lincoln>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/NO-HOPE-Assassination-of-Abraham-Lincoln>

Questions 2 Ponder

What Was in Lincoln's Pockets at the Time Booth Shot Him?

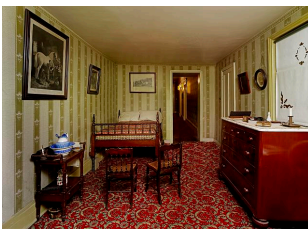
What does the picture of the items in President Lincoln's pocket, at the time he was shot, tell us about Lincoln the man?

How does seeing the room where Lincoln died impact you? Is it helpful, or not helpful, in learning more of the story about his shooting and death?

People formerly placed coins on the closed eyes of someone who had just died. Why do you suppose they did that?

It is always a national disaster if a country's leader dies in office. Was the death of Abraham Lincoln an unusually intense "national calamity?" If so, what would make that so? If not, why not?

Media Stream



[Peterson House Bedroom](#)

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/>

Items in President Lincoln's Pockets When He Was Assassinated

On the night President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, while he attended a play at Ford's Theatre in Washington, he had numerous interesting items in his pockets.

Given to Robert Todd Lincoln, the President's son, the items remained in the President's family until they were donated to the Library of Congress in 1937.

The Library's curators describes the pocketed items:

When Abraham Lincoln was shot at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. on April 14, 1865, he was carrying two pairs of spectacles and a lens polisher, a pocketknife, a watch fob, a linen handkerchief, and a brown leather wallet containing a five-dollar Confederate note and nine newspaper clippings, including several favorable to the president and his policies.

Given to his son Robert Todd upon Lincoln's death, these everyday items, which through association with tragedy had become like relics, were kept in the Lincoln family for more than seventy years. They came to the Library in 1937 as part of the gift from Lincoln's granddaughter, Mary Lincoln Isham.

One pair of the President's glasses was broken and tied with a string:

The items consist of one pair of gold-rimmed spectacles with [sliding] temples and with one of the bows mended with string; one pair of folding spectacles in a silver case; an ivory pocket knife with silver mounting; a watch fob of gold-bearing quartz, mounted in gold; an oversize white Irish linen handkerchief with "A. Lincoln" embroidered in red cross-stitch; a sleeve button with a gold initial "L" on dark blue enamel; and a brown leather wallet, including a pencil, lined in purple silk with compartments for notes, U.S. currency, and railroad tickets.

The wallet held a Confederate five-dollar bill and eight newspaper clippings. The clippings were from papers printed immediately before Lincoln's death, containing complimentary remarks about him written during his campaign for reelection to the Presidency. The Confederate five-dollar bill may have been acquired as a souvenir when Lincoln visited Petersburg and Richmond earlier in the month.

In order of image presentation: 1.) Watch fob 2.) Button 3.) Pocket knife 4.) Handkerchief 5.) Wallet 6.)

Confederate \$5 dollar bill 7.) Glass lense cleaner and buffer 8.) Glasses case 9.) Lincoln's eyeglasses with name on inner stem. (See the [Library of Congress article](#).)

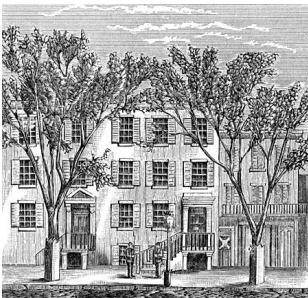
Click on the image for a better view.

Image online via American Treasures of the Library of Congress.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Items-in-President-Lincoln-s-Pockets-When-He-Was-Assassinated>



Petersen's Boarding House

Illustration of Petersen's Boarding House from [Perley's Reminiscences of Sixty Years in the National Metropolis, Volume 2](#), page 173. Online, courtesy Google Books.

Quoted passage from the same work, pages 172-173.

PD

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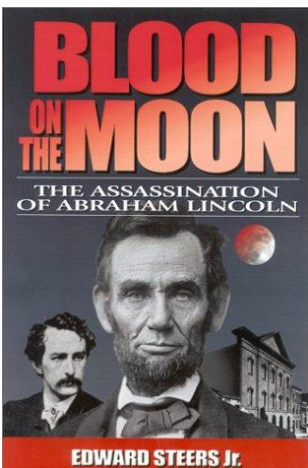


Lincoln - Lay Dying

Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

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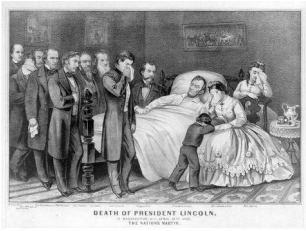


Blood on the Moon - by Edward Steers, Jr.

Book cover, *Blood on the Moon*, online courtesy Amazon.com

Quoted passage from the introduction of *Blood on the Moon*, by Edward Steers, page 7. Online, courtesy Google Books.

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Death of President Lincoln

Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

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Lincoln Surrounded by Government Officials

Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

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Abraham Lincoln's Deathbed

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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