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This image depicts the earliest-known daguerreotype of Abraham Lincoln, circa 1846. During this time of his life, Lincoln was a successful trial lawyer who loved to tell stories to his juries. He had an exceptional ability to uncomplicate whatever complicated issues his juries were called-upon to decide.

It seems fitting that on the subject of Lincoln's assassination, we ought to let the President himself - once known as "America's Greatest Story Teller" - have the last word. We take it from "Abe" *Lincoln's Own Yarns and Stories*, compiled by his close friend Alexander K. McClure.

A soldier tells the following story of an attempt upon the life of Mr. Lincoln:

*One night I was doing sentinel duty at the entrance to the Soldiers' Home. [Lincoln's beloved "Summer White House," located about 3 miles from the Capitol, where the family lived from June to November.] *This was about the middle of August, 1864. About eleven o'clock I heard a rifle shot, in the direction of the city, and shortly afterwards I heard approaching hoof-beats. In two or three minutes a horse came dashing up. I recognized the belated President. The President was bare-headed. The President simply thought that his horse had taken fright at the discharge of the firearms.**

On going back to the place where the shot had been heard, we found the President's hat. It was a plain silk hat, and upon examination we discovered a bullet hole through the crown.

The next day, upon receiving the hat, the President remarked that it was made by some foolish marksman, it was not intended for him; but added that he wished nothing said about the matter.

The President said, philosophically: 'I long ago made up my mind that if anybody wants to kill me, he will do it. Besides, in this case, it seems to me, that the man who would succeed me would be just as objectionable to my enemies - if I have any.'

One dark night, as he was going out with a friend, he took along a heavy cane, remarking, good-naturedly:

Mother [Mary Lincoln] has got a notion into her head that I shall be assassinated, and to please her I take a cane when I go over to the War Department at night - when I don't forget it. (Yarns and Stories, pages 211-12)

Abraham Lincoln continues to top the list of most historians when asked, "Who is the greatest American President?" His courage, humility and leadership are part of America's national fabric. The words he left us - like those of the Gettysburg Address - still resonate.

It was his assassination which turned his death into a continuing source of curiosity. But it was his life - and the role he played in holding the country together - that have made him a legend.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Many web sites feature primary material on Abraham Lincoln. The National Archives and the Library of Congress have digitized thousands of Lincoln documents. We provide links to many primary

resources in this story. But we encourage you to visit Professor Douglas Linder's account of the conspiracy trial and Roger Norton's web sites about [the President](#) and [his assassination](#).

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-LAST-WORD-Assassination-of-Abraham-Lincoln>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

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

Questions 2 Ponder

Is Storytelling Part of the Political Process?

Do you think President Lincoln's story-telling ability helped him to get elected as America's 16th President? Why, or why not?

Did his many stories help to make Lincoln an effective President? Explain your answer.

Why is President Lincoln's assassination, 150 years after it happened, still a source of curiosity?

Why Is Lincoln Considered a Memorable President?

What makes Abraham Lincoln one of America's most-memorable Presidents?

Does his assassination play any role in the way Americans still view him? Why, or why not?

If his assassination played a role, why aren't other assassinated Presidents—like Garfield and McKinley—consistently listed near the top of America's best Presidents?

Media Stream



COLONEL A. K. McCLURE

as he looked in the sixties: when he knew Lincoln.
From an old print.

Alexander K. McClure

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Lincoln at Gettysburg

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