

LINCOLN'S DEATH and AFTERMATH

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In this lithograph by Dominique C. Fabronius, based on original art by Trevor McClurg, we see a Civil-War soldier returning home to his family. Much of the war's aftermath, however, did not proceed as President Lincoln had hoped. Published by Endicott & Co., in New York, circa 1866. <u>Online</u> via the Library of Congress.

Soon after General Lee's 9 April 1865 <u>surrender</u> at the Wilmer <u>Wilmer McLean</u> home in the Virginia <u>village</u> of Appomattox <u>Court House</u>, the President and Mrs. Lincoln went to Ford's Theater with friends. It was April 14th. They were going to attend a performance of the English play, "My American Cousin."

Earlier in the day, according to William H. Crook, the President's bodyguard, <u>Lincoln</u> confided his thoughts about assassination. He was haunted by a dream he had had three days earlier. But his words to Crook are eerie:

Crook, do you know I believe there are men who want to take my life? And I have no doubt they will do it...I know no one could do it and escape alive. But if it is to be done, it is impossible to prevent it.

The President and First Lady arrived at Ford's Theater after the performance was started. They were accompanied by 28-year-old Major Henry R. Rathbone and his fiancé Clara Harris. The performance had already begun as the President took his seat in a red rocking chair in the presidential box.

At around 10 P.M., John Wilkes Booth - an actor with Southern sympathies - entered the presidential box with his derringer. Crook, the President's chief bodyguard, was off-duty. In his place, John F. Parker was responsible for the President's safety.

Accounts vary on Parker's whereabouts at the precise moment Booth entered the box. Some say the President permitted him to take a better seat, thereby leaving Lincoln unguarded. Others say he was in a tavern across the street and wasn't seen again until around 6 a.m. the next morning.

With no one around to stop him, Booth pulled out <u>his pistol</u> and <u>fired</u> one shot into the President's head. The bullet entered through his left ear and lodged behind his right eye.

As the President slumped forward, Major Rathbone struggled with Booth who, using his knife, slashed Rathbone's arm. Booth jumped from the box but the spur of his boot caught a flag. <u>Falling to the floor</u>, he fractured his leg.

Undaunted, Booth fled the theater through the back door and escaped on horseback. He crossed the <u>bridge</u> over the "East Branch" of the river as he fled to Anacostia.

The President, meanwhile, was carried across the street to Petersen's Boarding House. He was diagonally placed on a bed which was too small for his 6'4" frame. His wound was <u>mortal</u>. Shocked, his closest advisors <u>gathered</u> round him. Mary Lincoln was hysterical and, for the most part, was not with the President as he lay dying.

At 7:22 a.m. the next morning, President Abraham Lincoln died of his wound. Colonel George G. 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.

To allow people around the country to actively participate in funeral services, officials arranged for a funeral train to transport the President's body to several different cities before he was laid to rest in <u>Springfield</u>, Illinois. In <u>New York</u> someone took a picture of the President in his <u>open coffin</u>. (It is one of only two known pictures of the President in his coffin.) In Chicago, more than 125,000 people viewed his body.

With a price on his head, John Wilkes Booth was <u>captured</u> and shot while hiding in a barn near Bowling Green, Virginia. He died the same day - April 26, 1865 - which was also the day that Confederate <u>General Johnston</u> <u>surrendered</u> to Union General Sherman.

Conspiracy charges were brought against several people; four were convicted and sentenced <u>to death</u>. <u>Mary</u> <u>Surratt</u>, whose guilt has long been questioned, was <u>publicly hanged</u> with <u>three others</u> on July 7, 1865 at the old Penitentiary. Today Ft. McNair has been built over the place of that execution. The Civil War, with all its horror, continues to <u>haunt and fascinate</u> Americans. The first President to be assassinated, Lincoln - for many individuals - remains the most popular Chief Executive ever elected to serve in that capacity.

At the time, however, the plea of his <u>second inaugural</u> - to "bind up the nation's wounds" with "<u>malice toward</u> <u>none</u>" - was often ignored as the North began its harsh Reconstruction of the South. Without Lincoln helming the executive branch, some members of Congress wanted to exact a heavy price for the "war of rebellion."

Integration of former slaves into American life also proceeded much slower than Lincoln would have approved. Even as Congress gave new constitutional rights to African-Americans, soon after the President's death, those rights were quickly eroded (or taken away) by subsequent lawmakers and/or state voters.

For example ... Republican Senator <u>Hiram Rhodes Revels</u> - a freedman from Mississippi who was appointed to serve as the first African-American in Congress - lost his seat when it came time for the people to vote. The <u>aftermath of the war</u>, in other words, did not proceed as President Lincoln had so eloquently urged.

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

<u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/LINCOLN-S-DEATH-and-AFTERMATH-Civil-War-U.S.-Un</u> forgettable-Sights

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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Media Stream





Appomattox Court House - Scene of Surrender Courtesy, National Park Service. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Appomattox-Court-House-Scene-of-Surrender

<u>Confederate Surrender - Wilmer McLean Home</u> Courtesy, U.S. National Archives photo. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Confederate-Surrender-Wilmer-McLean-Home



Appomattox Court House - Troops at War's End Photo, U.S. Library of Congress. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Appomattox-Court-House-Troops-at-War-s-End



<u> Abraham Lincoln - Photo, 10 April 1865</u>

Photo, U.S. National Park Service - from the NPS Historical Handbook, Number 1969. View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Abraham-Lincoln-Photo-10-April-1865</u>



John Wilkes Booth - Actor and Assassin

Photo, courtesy U.S. National Archives. View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/John-Wilkes-Booth-Actor-and-Assassin</u>









<u>Abraham Lincoln - "Martyr of Liberty"</u> Image, Library of Congress. View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Abraham-Lincoln-Martyr-of-Liberty-</u>

John Wilkes Booth - Leaps from Stage Image, from the Library of Congress - American Memory Collection. View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/John-Wilkes-Booth-Leaps-from-Stage</u>

John Wilkes Booth - Escapes Washington Photo by Mathew Brady, online via the U.S. National Archives; ARC Identifier 524762; NAIL Control Number NWDNS-111-B-343. Public domain. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/John-Wilkes-Booth-Escapes-Washington

John Wilkes Booth - Injured Leg in Fall Image, U.S. National Archives. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/John-Wilkes-Booth-Injured-Leg-in-Fall



<u>Abraham Lincoln - His Last Hour</u> Image, Library of Congress - American Memory Collection. View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Abraham-Lincoln-His-Last-Hour</u>



Abraham Lincoln - Content of Pockets at Shooting Photo, Library of Congress. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Abraham-Lincoln-Content-of-Pockets-at-Shooting











<u>Abraham Lincoln - Glasses in His Pocket</u> Image, Library of Congress - from the *Treasures of the Library of Congress* Exhibit.

Image, Library of Congress - from the *Treasures of the Library of Congress* Exhibit. View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Abraham-Lincoln-Glasses-in-His-Pocket</u>

Abraham Lincoln - Lying in State at Springfield Image, from Treasures of the Library of Congress. Library of Congress, Treasures image vc49.2. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Abraham-Lincoln-Lying-in-State-at-Springfield

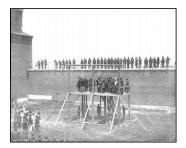
Abraham Lincoln - New York City Funeral Image, from the Library of Congress - American Memory Collection. The picture was originally published in Harper's Weekly. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Abraham-Lincoln-New-York-City-Funeral

Abraham Lincoln - In His Coffin, NYC Image, U.S. National Archives. View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Abraham-Lincoln-In-His-Coffin-NYC</u>

John Wilkes Booth - Captured and Shot Image, Library of Congress - American Memory Collection. View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/John-Wilkes-Booth-Captured-and-Shot</u>













Lincoln Conspirators - Sentenced to Hang Illustration, from the Library of Congress - American Memory Collection. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lincoln-Conspirators-Sentenced-to-Hang

Lincoln Conspirators - Death by Hanging Image, the U.S. Library of Congress. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lincoln-Conspirators-Death-by-Hanging

<u>Lincoln Conspirators - Hanging Platform</u> Image, Library of Congress - American Memory Collection. View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lincoln-Conspirators-Hanging-Platform</u>

Abraham Lincoln - Delivering Second Inaugural Photo, Library of Congress - American Memory Collection. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Abraham-Lincoln-Delivering-Second-Inaugural

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<u>Hiram Rhodes Revels - First African-American in Congress</u> Clip, from a <u>CSPAN</u> broadcast, paying tribute to Senator Hiram Revels. Online, courtesy CSPAN's channel at YouTube. View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hiram-Rhodes-Revels-First-African-American-in-Congress



Impact of Reconstruction on African-Americans

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