



0. National Treasure: Book of Secrets - Story Preface

1. FORD'S THEATRE
2. A SHOCKING DEATH
3. DIARY of JOHN WILKES BOOTH
4. MISSING PAGES of a DIARY
5. THE STATUE of LIBERTY
6. HMS RESOLUTE
7. OLMEC GLYPHS
8. MOUNT RUSHMORE

Photograph of the Mount Rushmore Monument as seen from the viewing plaza, taken by Dean Franklin on June 4, 2003. Image online courtesy, Wikimedia Commons. License: CC-BY-2.0.

*Breathe a prayer that these records will endure
until the wind and rain alone shall wear them away.*

Gutzon Borglum
1939

The President and First Lady were late for the April 14, 1865 evening performance of *Our American Cousin* starring the popular actress, Laura Keene. It had been a busy day for Mr. Lincoln (who had aged dramatically in twenty years).

Meeting with his cabinet in the morning, the President urged compassion toward the defeated South. Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, recorded Lincoln's sentiments:

I hope there will be no persecution, no bloody work after the war is over. No one need expect me to take part in hanging or killing those men, even the worse of them. Frighten them out of the country, open the gates, let down the bars, scare them off, enough lives have been sacrificed. We must extinguish our resentment if we expect harmony and union. (Quoted by W. Emerson Reck, *Abraham Lincoln, His Last 24 Hours*, at page 37.)

General and Mrs. Grant had planned to attend the play. When they were unable to make it, Mary Lincoln invited another couple. Twenty-eight-year-old Major Henry R. Rathbone and his fiancé, Clara Harris, would share the presidential box that night.

They would soon witness much more than a play.

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

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/National-Treasure-Book-of-Secrets>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/National-Treasure-Book-of-Secrets>



Gutzon Borglum

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Park Service.

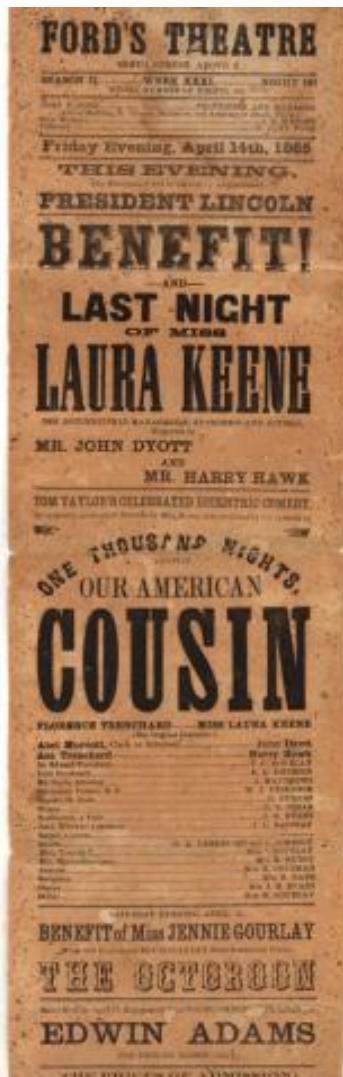
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President Lincoln

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Ford Theater Playbill - Our American Cousin

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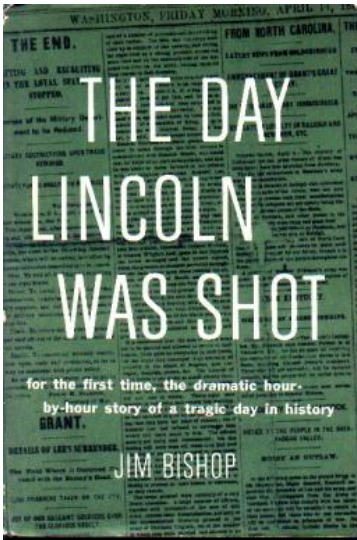
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Laura Keene

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The Day Lincoln was Shot - by Jim Bishop

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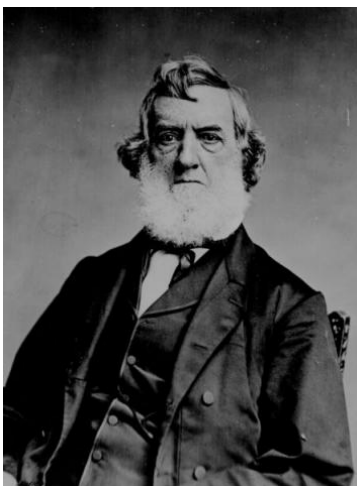
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Abraham Lincoln - 1846 Photo

Image online, courtesy the historyplace.com website.

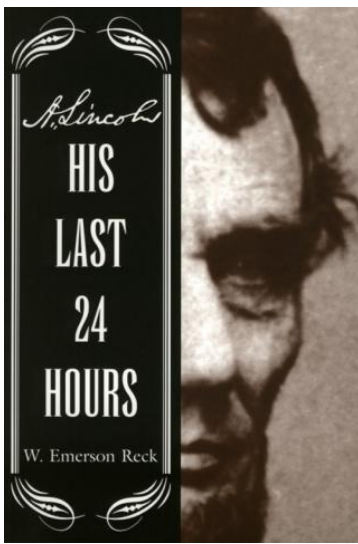
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Gideon Welles

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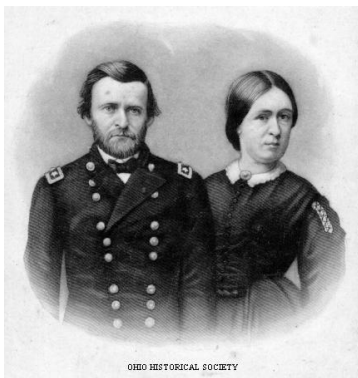


A. Lincoln: His Last 24 Hours - by W. Emerson Reck

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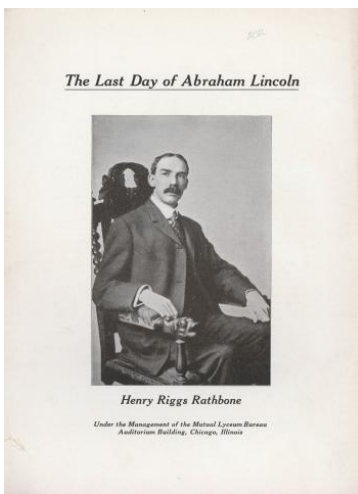


General Ulysses and Mrs. Grant

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Major Henry R. Rathbone

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