



LINCOLN'S DEATH: MEMORIES AND IMAGES
Primary and Secondary Sources

Objectives: Students will learn the difference between primary and secondary sources, and the values and challenges of both. Students will evaluate the way news of important events reaches the public, comparing news sources of today to those of the mid-19th century.

Time: 55 minutes (*Adjust Time As Needed*)

- introduction, (*suggested: 15 minutes*)
- small groups, (*suggested: 20 minutes*)
- large group discussion, (*suggested: 20 minutes*)

Skills: Critical Thinking, Visual and Written Comprehension

Subject: Social Studies, American History, Document Based Questions and Answers

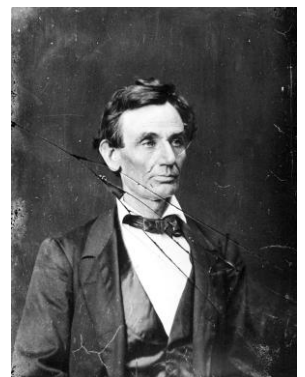
Materials: (contained below)

- Excerpts from Mary Henry's diary on the death of Lincoln, images and transcripts
- Newspaper clippings on the death of Lincoln
- Images of Lincoln's death bed
- Group worksheets

Grade Level: Grades 6 –8

Historical Overview:

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) was the sixteenth President of the United States. He was elected in 1860, and again in 1864. He served as president during the Civil War, which divided the country into the Union and the Confederacy over the issues of slavery and states' rights versus a strong federal government. During the war, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, freeing all slaves in the rebel states. The Civil War began on April 12, 1861, and did not end until April 9, 1865. The Confederate states gradually rejoined the Union, and a long process of Reconstruction began.



On the evening of April 14, 1865 John Wilkes Booth shot President Lincoln at Ford's Theater in Washington, DC, just five days after the end of the Civil War. In the chaos that followed Wilkes' act, Lincoln was carried across the street to the Petersen



House, where he died the next morning, April 15. News of the shooting and Lincoln's death spread quickly throughout the city of Washington and the country. With limited communication sources, many differing accounts were given of that horrible night.

Mary Anna Henry (1834-1903) was the daughter of Joseph Henry, the first Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. She lived with her family in the Smithsonian Institution Building, or "Castle" on the National Mall in Washington, DC, from 1855 to 1878. Mary was well-educated and kept company with many prominent scientific and political citizens of Washington, including the Lincolns. During the Civil War, DC remained the capital of the Union, but from the "Castle", Mary could see the Confederate States of America. On the border between the warring Union and Confederacy, Mary wrote about events in the city over the course of the entire Civil War in her diary.



Primary and Secondary Sources:

A **primary source** is any original source of information that provides a direct or first-person connection to a historical event. Examples may include: documents such as letters, diaries, birth certificates, receipts, and notebooks; photographs and drawings; objects, such as clothing or furnishings; oral history interviews, and home movies. Primary sources were created by a person who witnessed an event first-hand.

Secondary sources are summaries, second-hand accounts, and analyses of events. They were created by someone who did not witness the event, but may have read or heard about it. Examples may include: books or articles written on a topic, artworks depicting an event, letters or diaries recounting a version of events told to the author by another source.

One source can contain both primary and secondary information. For example, a diary entry that contains a version of events the author read in the newspaper (**secondary**) and the author's feelings about the event (**primary**). Whether a source is primary or secondary can depend on the question you ask. If you are looking for information on how an event occurred, the diary entry written from a newspaper article would be a secondary source (the newspaper article may



be a primary source). But if you are asking how the author learned about an event, the diary entry written from a newspaper article would be a primary source.

Primary sources provide valuable information that we cannot find elsewhere. They speak to us in a first-person voice and bring history alive. They provide an individual's view of historic events and times, and they tell stories about how people lived and coped in the past. These letters, diaries, and photographs create engaging stories for students to learn about and relate to. By comparing conflicting primary sources, students learn to carefully examine actual documents, as well as the words they contain, evaluate evidence and point of view, and develop critical thinking skills about the past and also about their world today.

News Sources:

When an important event occurs news travels fast. However, stories from different sources often vary in minor ways. Sometimes the truth of an event is warped in the retelling. A traumatic event can lead to confusion, and the true details are difficult to discern.

In the mid-19th century people would have received news from newspapers, telegraph, and word-of-mouth, whether in conversation or in a letter from a friend. Important information traveled quickly between cities via short telegraph reports. At that time newspapers printed multiple editions per day, so that timely information reached the public. Today we receive news almost constantly on television and the internet, as well as by word-of-mouth.



Instructions for Teachers:

Explain the differences between a primary and secondary source to your students. Ask them to think of examples of both primary and secondary sources. Ask why they think primary sources are a valuable way to study history.

Discuss the different ways that news is delivered today. Ask students how they learn about important events. Ask them to try to imagine how people in the mid-19th century would have learned about important events.

Divide students into small groups. Print copies of the sources and worksheets for each student in each group. Each group will be given a different set of sources: the Mary Henry diary excerpts, the newspaper clippings, or the photograph and painting.

Before sending the groups to analyze and read their respective sources, describe the historical context of Abraham Lincoln's death.

Have the students examine the original documents and discuss them with their group. Encourage the students to use the original documents, but can utilize the transcripts for reading if necessary.

After students have analyzed and read their sources and answered their questions in the small groups, bring the class back together for a large discussion. Have each group share a summary of their sources and the answers they found. Ask these questions to begin a discussion:

- What do these documents tell you about the public's initial reaction to Lincoln's death?
- Are there any conflicts or contradictions between the various types of evidence? How can you resolve them?
- Does one form of evidence shed light on other forms of evidence?
- Does one document help you to evaluate the quality of information in other documents?
- When you combine these primary sources, is the whole greater than the sum of its parts?

Please note that all Smithsonian Institution primary and secondary source materials can be used and reproduced for educational purposes without further permission.



Instructions for Students:

In your assigned groups, look at, read and analyze your original source documents or images carefully. Answer the questions listed on your worksheet, using evidence from the documents or images to support your answers.



Mary Henry Diary Entry on the Death of Abraham Lincoln

Names: _____

Questions:

1. Who wrote this diary?
2. When and where was this diary written?
3. What is this diary entry describing?
4. Why was this diary written?
5. Who was the intended audience?
6. What was the point of view of the diary writer?
7. What does the diary entry tell you about life in Washington, DC at the time of Lincoln's assassination?
8. Is this diary a primary source or secondary source, or both?
9. Are any/all parts of it a primary source, explain why or why not?
10. How could you check the accuracy of the information in the diary?
11. How does the information in the entry compare to what you have learned in your textbooks?



Newspaper Reports of Lincoln's Death

Names: _____

Questions:

1. Who created these news reports?
2. When and where was this news clipping printed?
3. What are these news reports describing?
4. Why were these reports produced?
5. Who was the intended audience?
6. Are there any contradictions in the information in the different reports?
7. What does the news clipping tell you about life in Washington, DC, at the time of Lincoln's assassination?
8. Are these news reports primary sources or secondary sources, or both?
9. Are any/all parts of these news reports primary sources, explain why or why not?
10. How could you check the accuracy of the information in the news clipping?
11. How does the information in the news clipping compare to what you have learned in your textbooks?



Images of Lincoln's Death

Names: _____

Questions:

1. Who created these images?
2. When and where were these images created?
3. What is happening in these images?
4. Compare and contrast the images, how are they similar, how are they different, if at all?
5. Why were these images created?
6. Who was the intended audience?
7. What was the point of view of the creators in each image?
8. What do the images tell you about life in Washington, DC, at the time of Lincoln's assassination?
9. What can we learn from these images about attitudes towards Lincoln's assassination?
10. What type of sources are the images, primary, secondary, or both, explain why?
11. How could you check the accuracy of the images?



Mary Henry Diary Entry, April 15, 1865:

1865
were rewarded by a speech from the
Sec and another from someone whom
we did not recognise. After cheers
for the Union, the President, the
Army, the Navy and of for the brave
dead and wounded the patriots
marched off to the inspiring air of
"Really Round the Flag Boys".
15th. We were awakened this morning
by an announcement which almost
made our hearts stand still with
consternation. The President was
shot last night in the Theater.
When the morning paper was is-
sued, he was still alive although
little or no hopes were entertained
of his recovery but now the tolling
bells tell us he has ceased to breathe.
He is dead. Mr. De Brest has just
told Hannah he died at 1/2 7 O'clock.
Deeply must the country mourn
his death for although uncouth &
ungainly he was true hearted mag-
nanimous and kind and in the
present crisis ready to follow
such a course with the defeated

Mary Henry Diary entry for April 15, 1865, page 1, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>



1865
Seditious as would win them
back to their allegiance to the Government
and subdue the rebellion in their
hearts as well as subjugate their
arms. The South has lost in him
a good & judicious friend. His
successor Johnson heartily desires the
death of the leaders of the rebellion
& is in every way at heart in his views.
I have not given the particulars of
the disaster. It was announced
in the yesterday's papers that the
President with Gen Grant would
be at Ford's Theater in the evening
and a large crowd collected there
in consequence. Gen Grant however
left the city before night for N.Y.
Mrs. Lincoln had not been well &
the President went to the place
of amusement with reluctance,
not wishing to disappoint the
audience. He was received with
more than usual applause. About
4 1/2 O'clock a shot was heard
which was at first supposed to
be from the stage and a man

Mary Henry Diary entry for April 15, 1865, page 2, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>



1865
kaped from the President's box upon
the stage crying "Ei Semper Tyrannis"
"I have done it." and making his way
to the door mounted a horse & rode
off. The shrieks of Madame Lincoln
first announced to the petrified
audience the catastrophe which had
taken place. The President was found
to be in a state of insensibility
shot twice through the head. He
was immediately conveyed to
a house opposite the theater followed
by Mrs. L. escorted by her friends
in an almost frantic condition.
At the same time of the accident
an attempt was also made upon
the life of Sec. Seward. The assassin
entered the house upon the plea that
he had brought a prescription of
Dr. Verdi. The physician of the
Sec. He pushed & pulled the secret
into the room of the sick man &
after disabling the attendants in-
flicted several sabre wounds in his
neck & then made his escape.
Sec. Stanton it is said was warned

Mary Henry Diary entry for April 15, 1865, page 3, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>



1865
of the danger and guarded
himself against it. The rain is
falling heavily and the bells the
tell their melancholy tale.
4 P.M. The last day of excitement
is over. The President's body has been
embalmed and lies in state at the
White House. while the frantic grief
of Mrs. Lincoln has settled into an
apathetic dejection from which it is
impossible to arouse her. The President
remained unconscious to the last.
The members of the Cabinet, Mrs. &
Miss Horner and Miss Harris
surrounded his bed. Dr. Gurley
was present & afterwards escorted
the bereaved widow to her home.
At the request of Mrs. Lincoln
he communicated the mournful
intelligence to poor little Tad.
who was wandering from group
to group of the sorrowing attendants
on hearing vainly to find out what
was the matter. His eyes when
he heard that he was fatherless
were exceedingly touching. He

Mary Henry Diary entry for April 15, 1865, page 4, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>



Mary Henry Diary Entry, April 18, 1865:

April 18th 1865
Chief Magistrate. The Assassins have not yet been found. The feeling against the South is exceedingly bitter. Mr. Seward's wounds are not as serious as was at first supposed, and he will probably recover. He was informed last night of the death of the President and of the critical condition of his son who still remains in a state of insensibility. The funeral ceremonies are expected to take place on Wednesday.
18th Have just returned from the President's house where I passed the night. I went to see Dr. & Mrs. S. yesterday afternoon. The Dr. said he had been called to go to the President about 9 o'clock in the morning. He found him in the house opposite the theater lying insensible upon a bed with the life blood dripping from the wound in his head upon the pillow or the floor beneath. The several members of the Cabinet & other persons were standing around the deepest sorrow depicted upon their countenances. The Dr. went to the bed



April 1865
Side but for a while was too much
overcome with his feelings to perform
the religious services required of him.
He went to Mrs Lincoln and found
her in an almost frantic condition.
The President died about 9 1/2 O'clock.
Mr Furlay returned to his bed side
a few moments before his decease.
He made his way through the
sorrowing & silent spectators &
found him slowly drawing his
breath - at long intervals lying as
if perfectly motionless. A faint
flicking perceptible motion in his
throat - and all was over. So white
was the room that the motion of the
President's neck was distinctly heard.
After a solemn impressive prayer
Mr Furlay went to break the sad
intelligence to Mrs Lincoln who
was in the parlor below. She cried
out Oh why did you not tell me
he was dying? Robert Lincoln
showed great self possession &
calmness and did all in his
power to comfort his sorrow

Mary Henry Diary entry for April 18, 1865, page 2, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>



April 1865
Stricken Father. Mr. Lincoln
went with her to the White House
Some of her expressions are exceedingly
painful. To day the remains of
the good kind man are deposited
in the East Room and from an
early hour the streets have been
thronged with people going to take
their last view of him. Sally & Annie
Kennedy asked me to go with them
but I thought I would rather accom-
pany him as I saw him last at the
Camp at the inauguration. Mary
and I are going out again soon
we feel too weak to remain at
home. Father says that the feeling
of resentment against the Southern
in New York is better in the extreme.
One man in an expression indicating
want of sympathy in the general
sorrow was thrown over the railing of
a ferry boat & instantly crushed by
the wheels. We expect Father tonight
He heard the news shortly after
his arrival in New York on Friday
night.

Mary Henry Diary entry for April 18, 1865, page 3, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>



Transcript Mary Henry Diary Entry April 15:

[April] 15th. We were awakened this morning by an announcement which almost made our hearts stand still with consternation. The President was shot last night in the Theater. When the morning paper was issued he was still alive although little or no hopes were entertained of his recovery but now the tolling bells tell us he has ceased to breathe. He is dead. Mr. De Bust has just told Hannah he died at ½ 7 o'clock. Deeply must the country mourn this death for although uncouth & ungainly he was true hearted, magnanimous and kind and in the present crisis ready to follow ~~the~~ such a course with the defeated **[Start Page 2]** belligerents as would win them back to their allegiance to the Government and subdue the rebellion in their hearts as well as subjugate their aims. The South has lost in him a good & judicious friend. His successor Johnson heartily desires the death of the leaders of the rebellion & is in every way ultra in his views. I have not given the particulars of the disaster. It was announced in the yesterday's papers that the President with Gen Grant would be at Ford's Theater in the evening and a large crowd collected there in consequence. Gen Grant however left the city before night for N.Y. Mrs. Lincoln had not been well & the President went to the place of amusement with reluctance, not wishing to disappoint the audience. He was received with more than usual applause. About 9½ o'clock a shot was heard which was at first supposed to be from the stage and a man **[Start Page 3]** leaped from the President's box upon the stage crying, "Sic semper Tyrannis" "I have done it." and making his way to the door mounted a horse & rode off. The shrieks of Madame Lincoln first announced to the petrified audience the catastrophe which had taken place. The President was found to be in a state of insensibility, shot twice through the head. He was immediately conveyed to a house opposite the theatre followed by Mrs. L. escorted by her friends in an almost frantic condition.

At the same time of the accident an attempt was also made upon the life of Sec. Seward. The assassin entered the house upon the plea that he had brought a prescription of Dr. Verde the physician of the Sec. He pushed passed the servant into the room of the sick man & after disabling the attendants inflicted several sabre wounds in his neck & then made his escape. Sec. Stanton it is said was warned **[Start Page 4]** of the danger and guarded himself against it. The rain is falling heavily and the bells still toll their melancholy tale.



Transcript Mary Henry Diary Entry April 18:

[April] 18th. Have just returned from the Kennedys where I passed the night. I went to see Dr. & Mrs. Gurley yesterday afternoon. The Dr. said he had been called to go to the President about 4 o'clock in the morning. He found him in the house opposite the theatre lying insensible upon a bed with the life blood dripping from the wound in his head upon the clothes on the floor beneath. The several members of the Cabinet & other persons were standing around the deepest sorrow depicted upon their countenances. The Dr. went to the bed **[Start Page 2]** side but for a while was too much overcome with his feelings to perform the religious services required of him. He went to Mrs. Lincoln and found her in an almost frantic condition. The President died about 7½ o'clock. Dr. Gurley returned to his bed side a few moments before his decease. He made his way through the sorrowing & silent spectators & found him slowly drawing his breath at long intervals lying as before perfectly motionless. A faint hardly perceptible motion in his throat and all was over. So still was the room that the ticking of the President's watch was distinctly heard. After a solemn & impressive prayer, Dr. Gurley went to break the sad intelligence to Mrs. Lincoln who was in the parlor below. She cried out "Oh why did you not tell me he was dying?" Robert Lincoln showed great self possession & calmness and did all in his power to comfort his sorrow **[Start Page 3]** stricken Mother. Dr. Gurley went with her to the White House. Some of her expressions are exceedingly painful. To day remains of the good kind man are deposited in the East Room and from an early hour the streets have been thronged with people going to take their last view of him. Sally & Annie Kennedy asked me to go with them but I thought I would rather remember him as I saw him last at the Capitol at the inauguration. Carry and I are going out again soon, we feel too restless to remain at home. Father writes that the feeling of resentment against the Southerners in New York is bitter in the extreme. One man for an expression indicating want of sympathy in the general sorrow was thrown over the railing of a ferry boat & instantly crushed by the wheels. We expect Father to night. He heard the news shortly after his arrival in New York on Friday night.



Newspaper Reports of Lincoln's Death:
(Contains Multiple News Reports from Various Sources in One News Clipping)

President Lincoln Shot by an Assassin.

**The Deed Done at Ford's
Theatre Last Night.**

THE ACT OF A DESPERATE REBEL

**The President Still Alive at
Last Accounts.**

**No Hopes Entertained of His
Recovery.**

**Attempted Assassination of
Secretary Seward.**

DETAILS OF THE DREADFUL TRAGEDY.

[OFFICIAL.]

WAR DEPARTMENT,
WASHINGTON, April 15—1:30 A. M. }

Maj.-Gen. Dix :

This evening at about 9:30 P. M., at Ford's Theatre, the President, while sitting in his private box with Mrs. LINCOLN, Mrs. HARRIS, and Major RATHBURN, was shot by an assassin, who suddenly entered the box and approached behind the President.

The assassin then leaped upon the stage, brandishing a large dagger or knife, and made his escape in the rear of the theatre.

The pistol ball entered the back of the President's head and penetrated nearly through the head. The wound is mortal. The President has been insensible ever since it was inflicted, and is now dying.

About the same hour an assassin, whether the same or not, entered Mr. SEWARD's apartments, and under the pretence of having a prescription, was shown to the Secretary's sick chamber. The assassin immediately rushed to the bed, and inflicted two or three stabs on the throat and two on the face. It is hoped the wounds may not be mortal. My apprehension is that they will prove fatal.

The nurse alarmed Mr. FREDERICK SEWARD, who was in an adjoining room, and hastened to the door of his father's room, when he met the assassin, who inflicted upon him one or more dangerous wounds. The recovery of FREDERICK SEWARD is doubtful.

It is not probable that the President will live throughout the night.

Gen. GRANT and wife were advertised to be at the theatre this evening, but he started to Burlington at 6 o'clock this evening.

At a Cabinet meeting at which Gen. GRANT was present, the subject of the state of the country and the prospect of a speedy peace was discussed. The President was very cheerful and hopeful, and spoke very kindly of Gen. LEE and others of the Confederacy, and of the establishment of government in Virginia.

All the members of the Cabinet except Mr. SEWARD, are now in attendance upon the President.

I have seen Mr. SEWARD, but he and FREDERICK were both unconscious.

EDWIN M. STANTON,
Secretary of War.

New York Times, April 15, 1865, "President Lincoln Shot by an Assassin," Part 1.
<http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/>



DETAIL OF THE OCCURRENCE.

WASHINGTON, Friday, April 14—12:30 A. M.
 The President was shot in a theatre at eight, and is, perhaps, mortally wounded.

Secretary SEWARD was also assassinated.

SECOND DISPATCH.

WASHINGTON, Friday, April 14

President LINCOLN and wife, with old friends, this evening visited Ford's Theatre for the purpose of witnessing the performance of the "American Cousin."

It was announced in the papers that General GRANT would also be present, but he took the late train of cars for New-Jersey.

The theatre was densely crowded, and everybody seemed delighted with the scene before them. During the third act, and while there was a temporary pause for one of the actors to enter, a sharp report of pistol was heard, which merely attracted attention, but suggesting nothing serious, until a man rushed to the front of the President's box, waving a long dagger in his right hand, and exclaiming "*Sic semper tyrannis*," and immediately leaped from the box, which was in the second tier, to the stage beneath and ran across to the opposite side, making his escape amid the bewilderment of the audience from the rear of the theatre, and mounting a horse, fled.

The screams of Mrs. LINCOLN first disclosed the fact to the audience that the President had been shot, when all present rose to their feet, rushing toward the stage, many exclaiming "Hang him! hang him!"

The excitement was of the wildest possible description, and of course there was an abrupt termination of the theatrical performance.

There was a rush toward the President's box, when cries were heard: "Stand back and give him air." "Has any one stimulants?" On a hasty examination, it was found that the President had been shot through the head above and back of the temporal bone, and that some of the brain was oozing out. He was removed to a private house opposite to the theatre, and the Surgeon-General of the army and other surgeons sent for to attend to his condition.

On an examination of the private box, blood was discovered on the back of the cushioned rocking chair on which the President had been sitting, also on the partition and on the floor. A common single-barreled pocket pistol was found on the carpet.

A military guard was placed in front of the private residence to which the President had been conveyed. An immense crowd was in front of it, all deeply anxious to learn the condition of the President. It had been previously announced that the wound was mortal; but all hoped otherwise. The shock to the community was terrible.

The President was in a state of syncope, totally insensible, and breathing slowly. The blood oozed from the wound at the back of his head. The surgeons exhausted every effort of medical skill, but all hope was gone. The parting of his family with the dying President is too sad for description.

At midnight, the Cabinet, with Messrs. SUMNER, COLFAX and FARNSWORTH, Judge CURTIS, Gov. OGLESBY, Gen. MEIGS, Col. HAY, and a few personal friends, with Surgeon-General BARNES and his immediate assistants, were around his bedside.

The President and Mrs. LINCOLN did not start for the theatre until fifteen minutes after eight o'clock. Speaker COLFAX was at the White House at the time, and the President stated to him that he was going, although Mrs. LINCOLN had not been well, because the papers had announced that General GRANT and they were to be present, and, as Gen. GRANT had gone North, he did not wish the audience to be disappointed.

He went with apparent reluctance and urged Mr. COLFAX to go with him; but that gentleman had made other engagements, and with Mr. ASHMAN, of Massachusetts, bid him good bye.

When the excitement at the theatre was at its wildest height, reports were circulated that Secretary SEWARD had also been assassinated.

On reaching this gentleman's residence a crowd and a military guard were found at the door, and on entering it was ascertained that the reports were based on truth.

Everybody there was so excited that scarcely an intelligible word could be gathered, but the facts are substantially as follows:

About 10 o'clock a man rang the bell, and the call having been answered by a colored servant, he said he had come from Dr. VERRILL, Secretary SEWARD's family physician, with a prescription, at the same time holding in his hand a small piece of folded paper, and saying in answer to a refusal that he must see the Secretary, as he was entrusted with particular directions concerning the medicine.

He still insisted on going up, although repeatedly informed that no one could enter the chamber. The man pushed the servant aside, and walked heavily toward the Secretary's room, and was then met by Mr. FREDERICK SEWARD, of whom he demanded to see the Secretary, making the same representation which he did to the servant.

What further passed in the way of colloquy is not known, but the man struck him on the head with a "billy," severely injuring the skull and felling him almost senseless. The assassin then rushed into the chamber and attacked Major SEWARD, Paymaster of the United States army and Mr. HANSELL, a messenger of the State Department and two male nurses, disabling them all, he then rushed upon the Secretary, who was lying in bed in the same room, and inflicted three stabs in the neck, but severing, it is thought and hoped, no arteries, though he bled profusely.

The assassin then rushed down stairs, mounted his horse at the door, and rode off before an alarm could be sounded, and in the same manner as the assassin of the President.

It is believed that the injuries of the Secretary are not fatal, nor those of either of the others, although both the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary are very seriously injured.

Secretaries STANTON and WELLES, and other prominent officers of the government, called at Secretary SEWARD's house to inquire into his condition, and there heard of the assassination of the President.

They then proceeded to the house where he was lying, exhibiting of course intense anxiety and solicitude. An immense crowd was gathered in front of the President's house, and a strong guard was also stationed there, many persons evidently supposing he would be brought to his home.

The entire city to-night presents a scene of wild excitement, accompanied by violent expressions of indignation, and the profoundest sorrow—many shed tears. The military authorities have dispatched mounted patrols in every direction, in order, if possible, to arrest the assassins. The whole metropolitan police are likewise vigilant for the same purpose.

The attacks both at the theatre and at Secretary SEWARD's house, took place at about the same hour—10 o'clock—thus showing a preconcerted plan to assassinate those gentlemen. Some evidence of the guilt of the party who attacked the President are in the possession of the police.

Vice-President JOHNSON is in the city, and his headquarters are guarded by troops.



Special Dispatch to the New-York Times.

WASHINGTON, Friday, April 14, }
 11:15 P. M. }

A stroke from Heaven laying the whole of the city in instant ruins could not have startled us as did the word that broke from Ford's Theatre a half hour ago that the President had been shot. It flew everywhere in five minutes, and set five thousand people in swift and excited motion on the instant.

It is impossible to get at the full facts of the case, but it appears that a young man entered the President's box from the theatre during the last act of the play of "Our American Cousin," with pistol in hand. He shot the President in the head and instantly jumped from the box upon the stage, and immediately disappeared through the side scenes at the rear of the theatre, brandishing a dirk knife and dropping a kid glove on the stage.

The audience heard the shot, but supposing it fired in the regular course of the play, did not heed it till Mrs. LINCOLN'S screams drew their attention. The whole affair occupied scarcely half a minute, and then the assassin was gone. As yet he has not been found.

The President's wound is reported mortal. He was at once taken into the house opposite the theatre.

As if this horror was not enough, almost at the same moment the story ran through the city that Mr. SEWARD had been murdered in his bed.

Inquiry showed this to be so far true also. It appears a man wearing a light coat, dark pants, slouch hat, called and asked to see Mr. SEWARD, and was shown to his room. He delivered to Major SEWARD who sat near his father, what purported to be a physician's prescription, turned, and with one stroke cut Mr. SEWARD's throat as he lay on his bed, inflicting a horrible wound, but not severing the jugular vein and not producing a mortal wound.

In the struggle that followed, Major SEWARD was also badly, but not seriously, wounded in several places. The assassin rushed down stairs, mounted the fleet horse on which he came, drove his spurs into him, and dashed away before any one could stop him.

Reports have prevailed that an attempt was also made on the life of Mr. STANTON.

In the struggle that followed, Major SEWARD was also badly, but not seriously, wounded in several places. The assassin rushed down stairs, mounted the fleet horse on which he came, drove his spurs into him, and dashed away before any one could stop him.

Reports have prevailed that an attempt was also made on the life of Mr. STANTON.

MIDNIGHT.

The President is reported dead. Cavalry and infantry are scouring the city in every direction for the murderous assassins, and the city is overwhelmed with excitement. Who the assassins were no one knows, though every body supposes them to have been rebels.

SATURDAY MORNING - 1 O'CLOCK.

The person who shot the President is represented as about 30 years of age, five feet nine inches in height, sparely built, of light complexion, dressed in dark clothing, and having a genteel appearance. He entered the box, which is known as the State box, being the upper box on the right hand side from the dress-circle in the regular manner, and shot the President from behind the ball entering the skull about in the middle behind, and going in the direction of the left eye; it did not pass through, but apparently broke the frontal bone and forced out the brain to some extent. The President is not yet dead, but is wholly insensible, and the Surgeon-General says he cannot live till day-break. The assassin was followed across the stage by a gentleman, who sprang out from an orchestra chair. He rushed through the side door into an alley, thence to the avenue and mounted a dark bay horse which he apparently received from the hands of an accomplice, dashed up it toward the back part of the city. The escape was so sudden that he effectually eluded pursuit. The assassin cried "*sic semper*" in a sharp, clear voice, as he jumped to the stage, and dropped his hat and a glove.

Two or three officers were in the box with the President and Mrs. LINCOLN, who made efforts to stop the assassin, but were unsuccessful, and received some bruises. The whole affair, from his entrance into the box to his escape from the theatre, occupied scarcely a minute, and the strongest of the action found everybody wholly unprepared. The assault upon Mr. SEWARD appears to have been made almost at the same moment as that upon the President. Mr. SEWARD'S wound is not dangerous in itself, but may prove so in connection with his recent injuries. The two assassins have both endeavored to leave the city to the northwest, apparently not expecting to strike the river. Even so low down as Chain Bridge, cavalry have been sent in every direction to intercept them.

SATURDAY, 1:30 o'clock A. M.

The President still lies insensible. Messrs. STANTON, WELLS, McCULLOCH, SPEED and USHER are with him, as also the Vice-President, the Surgeon-General, and other Surgeons.

There is a great throng about the house, even at this hour.

2 o'clock A. M.

The President still lives, but lies insensible, as he has since the first moment, and no hopes are entertained that he can survive.

The most extravagant stories prevail, among which one is to effect, that Gen. GRANT was shot while on his way to Philadelphia, of course this is not true.

Another is, that every member of Mr. SEWARD'S family was wounded in the struggle with the assassin there. This also is untrue. Mr. FRED. SEWARD, the Assistant Secretary, and Major CLARENCE SEWARD, of the army, were wounded, neither of them dangerously.

New York Times, April 15, 1865, "President Lincoln Shot by an Assassin," Part 3.

<http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/>



Images of Lincoln's Death:



Photograph of bedroom where Lincoln died in Peterson house, taken shortly after body was removed, April 15, 1865, photograph, Chicago Historical Society.

<http://www.chicagohistory.org/>

NOTES:



Death of Abraham Lincoln (April 15, 1865), by Alonzo Chappel (1828-1887) and John Badger Bachelder (1825-1894), 1868, Chicago Historical Society, 28 ¼ x 46 in., oil.

<http://www.chicagohistory.org/>

NOTES:



Further Activities:

Have students use contemporary materials to make them aware of the historic events of which they are part.

- Take a series of photographs
- Clip articles on a topic, such as a local hero, from newspaper
- Keep a journal/diary that reflects their thoughts on an important figure in today's world
- Interview an important figure in your community
- Write a letter describing an event they witnessed
- Create a drawing of an event they witnessed
- Interview another student about an event in which they participated

Additional Resources:

Reliable websites with documents online:

SI Stories, Smithsonian Institution Archives,
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/index.htm>

Smithsonian Institution Archives History Pages,
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history>

Smithsonian Institution Archives Home Page,
<http://siarchives.si.edu/>

Historic Pictures of the Smithsonian, Smithsonian Institution Archives,
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/historic-pictures-smithsonian>

Smithsonian Institution Education site,
<http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/>

Smithsonian Institution Abraham Lincoln Online Conference,
<http://www.smithsonianconferences.org/2009/siarchives/>

American Memory, Library of Congress, <http://memory.loc.gov>

Digital Classroom, National Archives, <http://www.archives.gov/education/index.html>

Edsitement, The Best of the Humanities on the Web, National Endowment for the Humanities,
<http://edsitement.neh.gov/>

History Matters, The U.S. Survey Course on the Web, The Social History Project,
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/>

New York Times Archive, <http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/>

Chicago Historical Society: "Wet with Blood: The Investigation of Mary Todd Lincoln's Cloak,"
<http://www.chicagohistory.org/wetwithblood/index.htm>