



## Teacher Guide: "Lincoln's Death" on Fords.org

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Webpage: <https://www.fords.org/lincolns-assassination/lincolns-death/>

### Overview of webpage

This page uses short descriptions, an annotated version of a famous painting and first-person accounts to discuss the Petersen House vigil for President Abraham Lincoln after his assassination.

### Structure of page

- The menu just below the main image navigates to a subpage about the [outdoor vigil](#) as Lincoln was dying inside the Petersen House, and pages on [Investigating the Assassination](#) and [Impact on a Nation](#).
- As you scroll down through this page, there is a short summary of what happened between the shooting and Lincoln's death.
- It continues to a section titled **President Lincoln's Last Hours**, which is a painting of Lincoln in bed with a large crowd in the room with him. There is a link to the painting with hot spots for 11 people. Each image can be clicked on to reveal a line or two about the person, along with an accompanying image. The painting can be enlarged for easier viewing. The people highlighted are (moving left to right in the painting):
  - Major Henry Rathbone
  - Gideon Welles
  - Andrew Johnson
  - Elizabeth Dixon
  - Mary Lincoln
  - Dr. Lyman Beecher Todd
  - Dr. Charles Leale
  - Dr. Charles Sabin Taft
  - Robert Lincoln
  - Reverend Dr. Phineas Gurley
  - Edwin Stanton
- An eyewitness account from Clara Harris, who was in the Presidential Box on the night of the assassination, follows the painting.

## Listing of Primary Source Accounts

- The page includes six [first hand accounts](#), including images and text. These are all short (a short paragraph or two) and together provide a sense of those present at the Petersen House. These do NOT open in new pages but pop up on clicking the person.
  - **Elizabeth Keckly:** a close friend of Mary Lincoln; African-American dressmaker; quote regarding Mary sending for her and note never arriving at Keckly's house.
  - **Maunsell B. Field:** present in the Petersen House; quote about Mary Lincoln in the parlor.
  - **James Tanner:** took notes for Stanton in Petersen House; describing initial interviews and general flow of people.
  - **Willie Clark:** inhabitant of room where Lincoln was taken; general comments on his experience.
  - **Gideon Welles:** Secretary of the Navy; diary entry about general sense of crowd and reactions of white and "colored" people.
  - **Dr. Charles Leale:** first physician to attend Lincoln at Ford's Theatre, continuing at Petersen House; comments on placement of Lincoln and treatment.

## Suggested Activities for Students

1. Write a newspaper account of Lincoln's final hours in the Petersen House. Describe who was coming in and out of the house. Include quotes from at least three of the six first and accounts featured on the website.
2. Examine the painting of Lincoln lying in the Petersen House. Pick one of the unidentified people in the painting. Imagine that you are that person. Write a letter to a friend or relative describing what you saw that night.
3. Can you think of an event in your lifetime that had as much of an impact on the country as the Lincoln assassination did? Create a 30-second to 1-minute video, for a social media platform like TikTok or Instagram, describing this event and how you think it compares to the night of Lincoln's assassination.