

SMITHSONIAN EDUCATION ONLINE CONFERENCE SERIES:
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

MARY HENRY DIARY SESSION
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION ARCHIVES
4 February 2009

PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENTS/IMAGES/CLIPPINGS
DEATH OF PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN, APRIL 15, 1865

Images of Lincoln Deathbed: Contact Chicago Historical Society for permission to reproduce: www.chicagohistory.org

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

The Deathbed of the Martyr President Abraham Lincoln, 1865, Chicago Historical Society, engraving

Death of Abraham Lincoln (April 15, 1865), by Alonzo Chappel (1828-1887) and John Badger Bachelder (1825-1894), 1868, Chicago Historical Society, 28 1/4 x 46 in., oil

Mary Henry Diary:

These images and documents may be reproduced for classroom use without further permission.

Diary entry for April 15, 1865, pages 1-4, Smithsonian Institution Archives

Diary entry for April 18, 1865, pages 1-2, Smithsonian Institution Archives

News clippings:

Contact your librarian/media specialist to obtain copies of the news clippings from the proQuest database.

New York Times, April 15, 1865, Page 1, column 1, "Telegram Extra: Assassination of Abraham Lincoln." ProQuest Historic New York Times database

New York Times, April 15, 1865, Page 1, column 3, "Another Account." ProQuest Historic New York Times database

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PRIMARY SOURCES: GROUP EXERCISE

Break up into three separate groups to look at and analyze historic documents, news clippings, and images.

- **GROUP 1: Mary Henry diary and transcript**
- **GROUP 2: News clippings reporting Lincoln's assassination**
- **GROUP 3: Images of Lincoln's deathbed scene**

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PRIMARY SOURCES: GROUP EXERCISE

BREAK OUT EXERCISE:

Each of the three groups will:

- ✓ Look at document/clipping/image carefully.
- ✓ Address primary source questions.
- ✓ Discuss questions and evaluate evidence.
- ✓ Select a recorder and prepare answers to the questions assigned to your group in bold.

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PRIMARY SOURCES: GROUP EXERCISE
DOCUMENTS: DIARY

- ✓ Is this diary a primary source?
- ✓ Are any/all parts of it a primary source?
- ✓ Who wrote this diary?
- ✓ When and where was this diary produced?
- ✓ Why was this diary produced?
- ✓ Who was the intended audience?
- ✓ What was the point of view of the creator?
- ✓ How are heroes portrayed in documents?
- ✓ How could you corroborate the information in the diary?
- ✓ Summarize the contents.

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PRIMARY SOURCES: GROUP EXERCISE
DOCUMENTS: NEWS CLIPPINGS:

- ✓ Is this news clipping a primary source?
- ✓ Are any/all parts of it a primary source?
- ✓ Who created this news report?
- ✓ When and where was this report produced?
- ✓ Why was this report produced?
- ✓ Who was the intended audience?
- ✓ How are heroes portrayed in press reports?
- ✓ Are there any contradictions in the information in the reports?
- ✓ Summarize the contents.

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PRIMARY SOURCES: GROUP EXERCISE
IMAGES:

- ✓ **Are these images primary sources?**
- ✓ **Who created these images?**
- ✓ **What is going on in these images?**
- ✓ **Why were these images created?**
- ✓ **Who was the intended audience?**
- ✓ **What was the point of view of creator?**
- ✓ **How do these images differ, if at all?**
- ✓ **Analyze body language, clothing, objects and activities.**
- ✓ **What can we learn from these images about attitudes towards Lincoln's death?**

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QUESTION WORKSHEET

GROUP #: _____

SOURCES:

DIARY

NEWSCLIPPINGS

IMAGES

RECORDER: _____

QUESTION #1:

QUESTION #2:

QUESTION #3:

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PRIMARY SOURCES: GROUP EXERCISE

- ✓ **After break-out groups examine their documents, have the entire group come back together.**
- ✓ **Have each break-out group discuss assigned questions.**
- ✓ **Discuss all three sets of documents together.**

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**PRIMARY SOURCES: GROUP EXERCISE
FULL GROUP EXERCISE:
QUESTIONS**

- ✓ **When you combine these primary sources, is the whole greater than the sum of its parts?**

- ✓ **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?**

- ✓ **Are there any conflicts or contradictions between the various types of evidence? How can you resolve them?**

- ✓ **What do these documents tell you about the public's initial reaction to Lincoln's death?**

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PRIMARY SOURCES: GROUP EXERCISE

FULL GROUP EXERCISE: DISCUSSION

Discuss the following:

- ✓ How does reading these documents differ from reading a biography of Lincoln with a description of his assassination?**

- ✓ What are their strengths as an educational tool? What are their weaknesses?**

- ✓ What do these sources teach students about attitudes towards heroes and how to evaluate information about them?**

- ✓ How could you use primary sources like these in your classroom?**

- ✓ How can primary sources teach your students about the lives and contributions of important figures in American history?**

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PRIMARY SOURCES IN YOUR CLASSROOM

How can letters/images/diaries/news clippings, etc., be used in your classroom?

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 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.

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IMPACT OF PRIMARY SOURCES ON STUDENTS

- Improve reading comprehension and literacy skills.
- Enhance vocabulary.
- Teach coping/life skills.
- Provides realistic accounts of heroic figures.
- Develop observation and visual analysis skills.
- Improve analytical skills by distinguishing primary and secondary sources.
- Develop critical skills as older students are asked to compare and evaluate the point of view and information in the primary sources.
- Teaches them to identify and resolve conflicting evidence.
- Raise awareness of their own role in history and historic events in which they participate.

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LIST OF RELIABLE WEBSITES WITH DOCUMENTS ON-LINE

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

Digital Classroom, National Archives,
http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/teaching_with_documents.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/>

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

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

Lincoln's Assassination:

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

The Society will have new exhibitions opening on February 12, 2009. Check chicagohistory.org for details.

Smithsonian Scrapbook: "Mary Henry's Diary,"
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/mary.htm>

Institutional History Division
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