

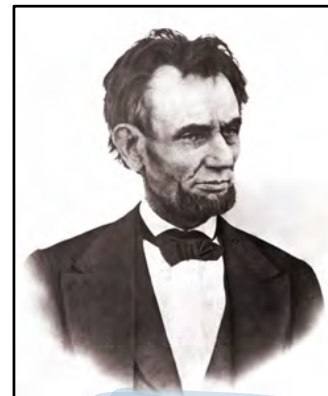
Abraham Lincoln's Assassination

Two days after Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House, Abraham Lincoln gave a speech detailing his plans for rebuilding the Union. John Wilkes Booth, a successful actor from Maryland, was in the audience. Booth believed in slavery and white supremacy. Upon hearing Lincoln's speech he said to his companion, "That is the last speech he will ever make."

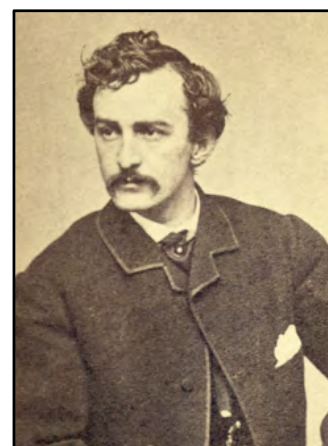
Earlier in the year, Booth had made failed attempts to kidnap the president. After hearing the speech, he planned Lincoln's assassination. With the help of his co-conspirators, he planned to kill President Abraham Lincoln, Vice President Andrew Johnson, and Secretary of State William H. Seward all in the same night. They decided upon the evening of April, 14, 1865, when Lincoln would be attending a play at Ford's Theatre in Washington D.C.

The play was "Our American Cousin", a comedy. Lincoln was accompanied by his wife Mary Todd Lincoln, a young officer named Major Henry R. Rathbone, and his fiancé Clara Harris. John Wilkes Booth waited outside the presidential box for the lead actor to utter a very funny line. Amid the laughter, he barged into Lincoln's box with a dagger and a pistol. He fired the pistol six inches from Lincoln and slashed Rathbone with his dagger. He then jumped from the balcony onto the stage. Some witnesses said his foot caught on a flag

and he broke his leg. Some said that Booth declared, "Sic Semper Tyrannis" which is Latin for "Thus be it always for tyrants." Others reported that he said, "The South is avenged!" Booth ran off the stage and escaped by horse. Lincoln had been shot in the head. He was brought to a nearby boarding house where he died the next morning.



Abraham Lincoln
March 1865



John Wilkes Booth

