

Online Exhibit Description Checklist

- ✓ Did I start my description with an attention getter?
 - Question: What happened to Lincoln's Killer?
 - Interesting Fact: 620,000 American died during the Civil War
 - Story: George Meade started his life in Cadiz, Spain and began a journey that would one day bring him to Gettysburg on July 1, 1863.
- ✓ Do I identify each of my artifacts?
- ✓ Do I clearly connect each of my artifacts to the story and take away?
- ✓ Do I end with connecting the entire exhibit to the so what?

Example:

Adapted from - Silent Witnesses: Artifacts of the Lincoln Assassination
<https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/u/0/exhibit/dwIS9Mh5nGISLg>

Abraham Lincoln's assassination on April 14th, 1865, transformed ordinary objects that were in Ford's Theatre that night into historic artifacts. For 150 years, these artifacts have been scattered across the country. In spring 2015, Ford's Theatre brought them together to mark the 150th anniversary of the assassination. Explore these artifacts that bear silent witness to this tragic moment.

Abraham and Mary Lincoln and their guests, Major Henry Rathbone and his fiancée, Clara Harris, took this carriage to Ford's Theatre on the evening of April 14, 1865, to see the comedy "Our American Cousin." This playbill was not a ticket or program for the play, "Our American Cousin." It was an advertisement for that night's performance. This common, insignificant piece of paper was transformed into a priceless artifact by the assassination. (Artifact: Playbill)

On April 14, 1865, the president was a month into his second term, and less than a week had passed since the Confederate surrender at Appomattox. That evening, President Abraham Lincoln looked forward to a night of light comedy. Earlier that day he took a pleasant carriage ride with Mary Lincoln; they looked forward to a new period in their life together. (Artifact Carriage)

On the night of April 14, 1865, the performance of "Our American Cousin" was a benefit for Laura Keene, meaning she would receive the box office proceeds from that night. An acclaimed British actress and the star of the show, Laura Keene was also the first female theatre manager in the United States. (Artifact: Photo of Laura Keene)

On the night of April 14, 1865, the Lincolns and their guests arrived late to Ford's Theatre. As the expected guests of honor walked towards their seats, the band struck up "Hail to the Chief." The audience gave Lincoln a rousing round of applause and a standing ovation. A member of the orchestra used this pair of drumsticks on the night of April 14, 1865. They were

used to play “Hail to the Chief” as President Lincoln and his guests made their way through the balcony to their box. (Artifact: Drumsticks)

John Wilkes Booth made no secret of his approach to the Presidential Box. He presented his calling card to Charles Forbes, Lincoln’s footman, and Forbes allowed him to enter the box. As a famous actor, Booth’s card opened almost any door in Washington. Once inside, Booth wedged the door shut with the leg of a broken music stand that he had stashed there earlier in the day. This prohibited anyone from entering the box immediately following Booth’s gunshot. Booth took his aim in the shadows behind Lincoln’s chair. (Artifact: Gun)

After Booth shot President Lincoln, Henry Rathbone attempted to stop his escape, and Booth slashed Rathbone’s arm to the bone. Even though Rathbone was bleeding profusely, he directed medical attention to the unconscious president. Thus, the blood on these gloves likely belongs to Rathbone, not President Lincoln. (Artifact: Gloves)

Soldiers in the audience that night carried Abraham Lincoln’s body across the street to Petersen’s boarding house, now called the Petersen House, just opposite the theatre. A nightlong vigil for the wounded president took place at his bedside in a back bedroom of the house and outside along Tenth Street. At 7:22 a.m., April 15, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln died.

On the night of the assassination, Lincoln carried these objects in his pockets. The humble items, such as the spectacles he repaired with a piece of string, offer a rare glimpse into Lincoln’s day-to-day life. This is Abraham Lincoln's gold quartz watch fob. The fob acted as a counterbalance or weight to secure a pocket watch to a particular location. (Artifact: Watch) Abraham Lincoln carried this ivory and silver pocket knife with him to Ford’s Theatre on the night of his assassination. (Artifact: Knife)

The first presidential assassination stunned the nation. Already struggling to come to terms with the bloodiest conflict in United States history, the country descended deeper into turmoil. Some mourned the loss, but others celebrated the murder as retribution for Lincoln’s refusal to let the southern states secede. For many of those present as witnesses both human and inanimate, the event proved to be life-changing. Each of these objects was transformed into a witness to national tragedy for all time.



"Our American Cousin"
Playbill
H. Polkinhorn and Sons, 1865



Photograph of Laura Keene
(1855)
Ford's Theatre



Contents of Lincoln’s Pockets
Collection, Watch Fob
Ford’s Theatre