Lesson Activity Three: Document #1

Document #1:

Mary Henry, the daughter of the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, recorded her thoughts about the death of Lincoln in her diary the day President Lincoln died.

[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 belligerants [sic] 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 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.
Lesson Activity Three: Document #2

Document #2:


http://RememberingLincoln.Fords.org/node/462

“Copperhead” was a pejorative term used to describe any citizen in the North who disagreed with the Federal Government’s war policy and advocated negotiating a settlement with the Confederacy to end the war. Copperheads did not advocate for emancipation.

*teacher can censor this word if deemed inappropriate*

The following elegant specimen of Copperhead sentiment and argument is from the La Crosse Democrat, edited by “Brick” Potnerory:

The war is virtually ended.

Where are the will-o-the-wisp statesmen and generals who led the Abolition party through the bloody lanes of tyranny and power, from plunder to corruption?

Where is Lincoln, the patron saint of niggerism*, who owes so much to John Wilkes Booth, and who is well-nigh forgotten already, with hardly a dozen in the land to revere his memory?

Where is Chase? Where is Brough? Where is that crowd of Constitution-breaking, law-despising fungi?

Gone or going into oblivion, leaving a nation in tears, a country in ruins, a once happy people in debt and taxation, a treasury once well filled with coin, empty, and thousands of millions for us to pay. – They have gone to perdition, and their victims are many. They have gone from their field of power.

We deprecate assassination, yet we feel compelled to thank God for calling Abraham Lincoln home, wherever that home may be. The will of God be always done on earth as it is in Heaven. Not all the cannon in the world ever sent an echo so far into the future as did the report of a pistol that fatal night in a Washington theatre, where great men were playing and nations the spectators. It woke up the American people. It broke the spell. It gave the country a statesman for a President. It flashed the *sic semper tyrannis* from Maine to the golden strands of our western boundaries, and halted the advance of usurpation most effectually. – Lincoln has gone. Booth has gone. The nation wept, and yet for what it did not know.

“Democracy” is coming up to our help. Read!

Peering through the bloody vista—rising gradually in lovable sublimity—lifting itself to meet the wish of millions, there once more comes to the nation, Democracy, blessed hope and joyous memories. The people have tired of strange doctrines, and every breeze comes to us laden with glad tidings of a return to the only true principles of government. Democracy still lives. It cannot die, for with it dies the hopes of the nation—the Republic itself. And we shall live to chronicle its restoration to power and to mingle our voice with those who will rejoice, as surely as we have lived to see come and go the men named above and the principles they advocated.”
Lesson Activity Three: Document #3

Document #3:

P.W. Oakley of St. Louis, Missouri, wrote this letter to Norman Henry Ives in Nashville, Tennessee.

April 22, 1865
St. Louis Mo
Friend Ives
Dear Sir,
I just got your note of Apr. 10th. I was glad to receive a line from my brother soldier. It has been a long time since I had a line from you. I am glad that you have got around once more. I can get around very well, but my limb discharges yet. It is very sore. I am haveing [sic] a peace of bone coming out, & I hope when it gets out that it will close up. We aught [sic] to be thankful to god that we came out as well as we did, many a poor man has lost his life since this war began. What a loss we have met with. (Aughful [sic] to think of, when we think of Uncle Abe. & to think that it was a Reb. that took his life. The Rebs. have lost a good friend in the death of our Chief Magistrate, for he has gave the Rebs more lenity than Andy Johnson will. I say when they struck at the heart of Mr. Lincoln they struck at the heart of all loyal men in America, & I hope to god that Andy Johnson will make the head men of the south pull hemp. You are aware how I once felt in regard to this war. But, I say today, kill the last traitor to his country. By the way, Ives, I have got the bigist son of his age in the west. 10 months old and his weight is 40 lbs. Have you seen a bigger one than that? If so, let me know it. My wife is well. And so is my son. Ives, some day you will get your money that I owe you. I shant forget your kindness nor nether shall I forget that I ow you. I would like to see you & if you should come to St Louis, come and see me. Say what you are at in your next.
Yours &c,
P.W. Oakley
From now until God’s judgement day, the minds of men will not cease to thrill at the killing of Abraham Lincoln, by the hand of Booth, the actor, in the theatre at Washington, on the night of April 14th, 1865. It goes upon that high judgement roll for nations and for universal man, with the slaying of Tarquin, of Caesar, of Charles I, of Louis XVI, of Marts. Variously, most oppositely will men judge it. Some will regard it with all the horror of the most wicked assassination, others will feel it to be that righteous retribution which descends direct from the hand of God upon the destroyer of human liberty, and the oppressor of a free people. Ours should not have been the hand for the deed. Nor does our conscience yield approval to it. But whilst we often condemn the human instrumentality, the death it inflicts is recognized to be a doom of that awful Nemesis which avenges wrong in dark and cruel fate. Mr. Lincoln was, it is true, the lawful head of the government of the United States. It may be that his own sense of right has gone along with all his acts in that high place. He has impressed us as natively a kindly, genial man. We do not suppose a love of oppression, or tendency to wrong, any part of his original disposition. We believe he thought at the beginning, that the great movement of the Southern people for self-government was a mere passionate outbreak, caused by designing leaders, and that the hearts of the great mass of the people would soon return to the Union. In good faith, he thought “nobody hurt,” and very few likely to be hurt. He thought that the “fire-eaters” who had been warning and threatening in words so long at Washington, had even carried secession to the extent of a practical joke…

He may have felt pity, but no remorse; and to fasten despotism upon a people free as himself, entitled to life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness like himself, he would have stood unmoved and inflexible and with no eye turned to heaven, would have seen the swept from the earth and only the land remaining, and felt himself a great Republican President, and one of the world’s heroes…Doubtless if the South had bowed a submissive knee and kissed the rod of its masters, Mr. Lincoln's good human would have largely returned. Conquered and loyal, behaving ourselves quietly, bending meekly to the burdens put upon our backs, and drawing smoothly under the yoke fastened upon our necks, Mr. Lincoln would have imagined himself friendly and patronizing toward us….He was the instrument of the North to effect upon us and our children this destructive, ruinous object…

From 1787 to 1861 no guard had a President of the United States. He was the chosen officer of a free people, with no more concern for his personal security than that of the humblest individual in the land. If the reign of despotism is again to be re-inaugurated at this day and over this people, then let despotism and whoever may be its minions beware the deserved fate of tyrants.
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