



Ford's Theatre Explorations – High School

Dear Teacher:

Thank you for bringing your class to visit the Ford's Theatre National Historic Site. These museum guides are intended to deepen student understanding of Abraham Lincoln's presidency and Washington during the Civil War.

BEFORE YOU VISIT THE MUSEUM:

- For your reference, a museum map with suggested path and exhibit guide is included on the next page of this packet. We also encourage you to look at the virtual tour of the museum on our website, which you can find at:
<http://www.fords.org/sites/default/files/virtualTour/index.html>
- Please provide a copy of the guide to each of your students and ask them to bring something to write on and a pencil. Pens are NOT allowed in the museum. As there is partner work within some guides, you may wish to pair off your students before entering the museum.

IN THE MUSEUM: Included below are three different gallery guides around which to structure your museum visit. Choose one or more for your class to complete. As your students go through the museum, you may also wish to fill out a guide along with them.

1. Threats to Lincoln
2. Lincoln and Leadership
3. Women in the Lincoln Era

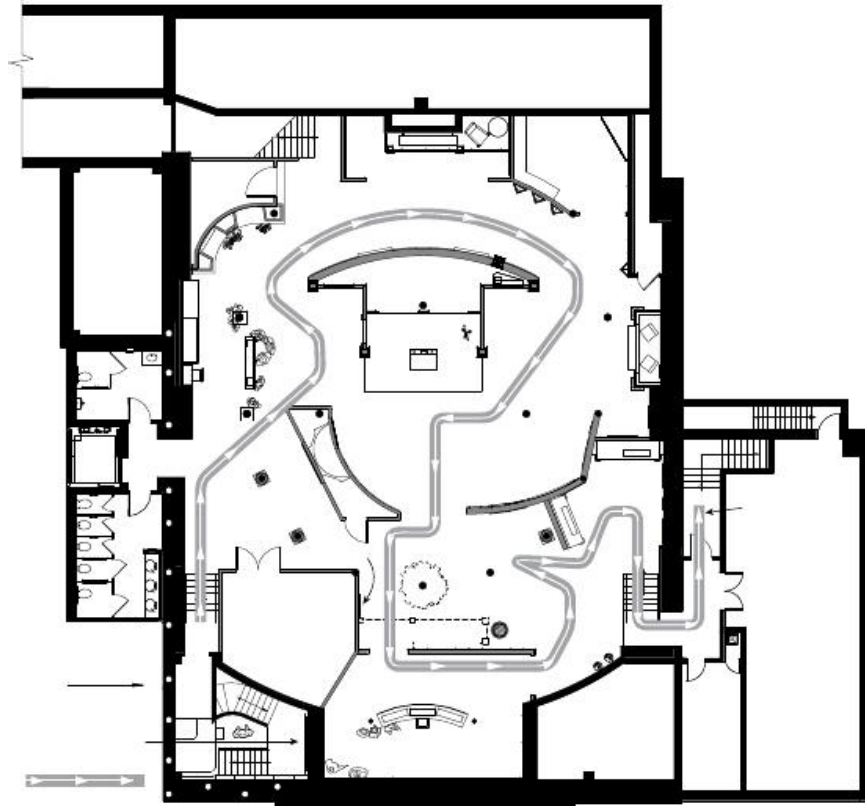
BACK IN THE CLASSROOM: The last two pages of each gallery guide, titled "Classroom Conversations," are intended to be completed once you return to your classroom. Questions presented on these pages are meant to facilitate discussion on material that your students learned at the site.

We hope you enjoy your visit!

A capacity, and taste, for reading, gives access to whatever has already been discovered by others. It is the key, or one of the keys, to the already solved problems. And not only so. It gives a relish, and facility, for successfully pursuing the [yet] unsolved ones.

-- Abraham Lincoln, September 30, 1859, Address before the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society

For more information contact
education@fords.org



For the Teacher: Museum Map and Exhibit Guide

The following list summarizes the exhibits your class will encounter if you follow the suggested path on the map above during your visit.

- Entrance/Washington in the 1860s – describes life in Washington in the early 1860s and the challenges Lincoln faced as he made his way to the city and took up his responsibilities as President.
- Video: “We Must Not Be Enemies” – Lincoln’s First Inauguration
- Lincoln’s Cabinet/A Swarm of Office Seekers – describes how Lincoln filled government positions, shows the contrast between modern presidents and Lincoln, and relates humorous anecdotes about the President.
- The U.S. Sanitary Commission & quilt artifact – illustrates civilian war efforts
- Video: “The March to War” – describes the outbreak of the Civil War and the controversial decisions Lincoln made as the war progressed
- The Improvised War – describes two of Lincoln’s most influential generals and provides a timeline of important events in the early years of the Civil War
- Life in the White House – introduces the Lincoln Family and details their daily life in Washington

For more information contact
education@fords.org

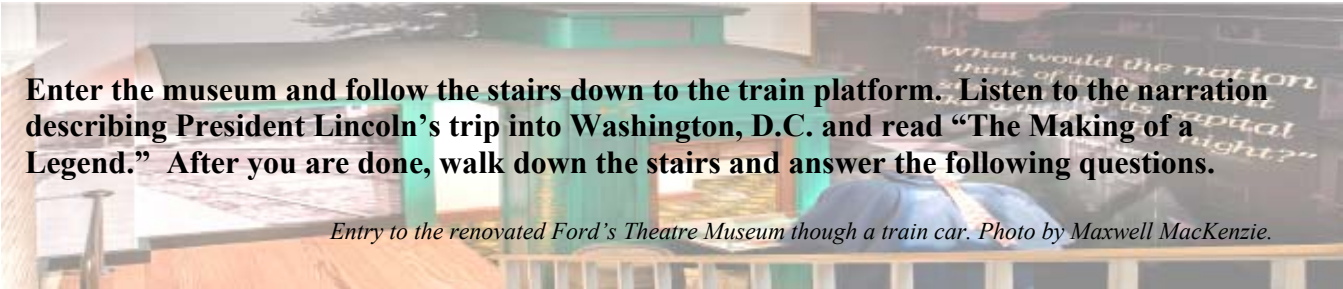


- Freedom Road/Emancipation – presents milestones of Lincoln’s career on the path to emancipation and the elimination of slavery in the United States
- Video: “We Cannot Escape History” – Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass
- Lincoln and the Theatre – describes Lincoln’s love of theatre and the release it provided him from the stresses of office
- Lincoln’s Daily Life & ‘The Bubble’ – recreated office with electronic desk presents a selection of the tasks and challenges Lincoln dealt with on a daily basis.
- A Revolving Door of Union Generals– examines Lincoln’s frustrating search for a general willing to take the necessary steps to victory.
- Video: “The Gettysburg Address” – delivered by four modern presidents and narrated by Tom Brokaw
- 1864: Year of Decisions – follows Lincoln’s difficult campaign for re-election as the tide of the war turned.
- Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address – explores Lincoln’s vision for his second term through quotations from his inaugural address
- Surratt Boarding House & the Conspiracy – introduces John Wilkes Booth and his fellow conspirators, and features artifacts from the assassination plot, including the deringer pistol used by Booth to assassinate Lincoln.
- Visiting Richmond – describes the decisive Union campaigns of early April 1865 which eventually proved to mean the end of the Confederacy.
- Lincoln’s Last Speech – in the wake of Confederate General Lee’s surrender at Appomattox Court House, Lincoln speaks of his intentions for reuniting the country
- The Performance – displays artifacts related to the April 14, 1865 performance of *Our American Cousin* at which Lincoln was assassinated.



Ford's Theatre Museum Guide: Threats to Lincoln

Name: _____ Date: _____



Enter the museum and follow the stairs down to the train platform. Listen to the narration describing President Lincoln's trip into Washington, D.C. and read "The Making of a Legend." After you are done, walk down the stairs and answer the following questions.

Entry to the renovated Ford's Theatre Museum through a train car. Photo by Maxwell MacKenzie.

1. What was the threat to the new president on his way to the nation's capital?



At the model Capitol, watch the video about Lincoln's First Inauguration, "We Must Not Be Enemies."

The unfinished capitol dome on display in the Ford's Theatre Museum. Photo by Maxwell MacKenzie.

2. Think about the events you have already considered leading up to the First Inauguration. Why were people threatening Lincoln?

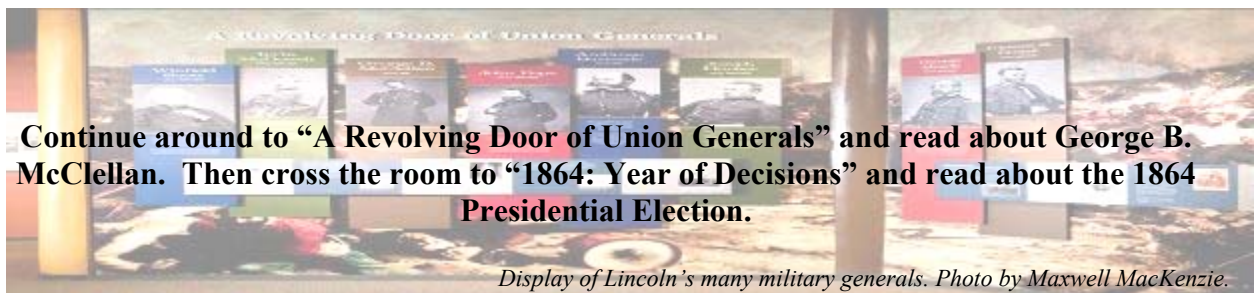


Walk into the alcove on the right of “Life in the White House.”

3. Read “Protecting the President” located on “A Home Away from Home.” Do you think Lincoln was frightened by the bullet that went through his stovepipe hat? Explain.
4. Why would Lincoln brush off the danger of the bullet?

From “Life in the White House”, continue around to your right until you come to “Lincoln and Theatre.” Enter the alcove to the right of the theatre box.

5. Examine the pictures and the text concerning the Booth family on “An Eerie Encounter.” Do you see evidence that foreshadows John Wilkes Booth’s eventual assassination of Lincoln? List what you find.



6. Look at artifacts from the 1864 presidential campaigns. McClellan, the former Union General, was Lincoln’s opponent in the race. How did Democrats want to resolve the Civil War?

For more information contact
education@fords.org



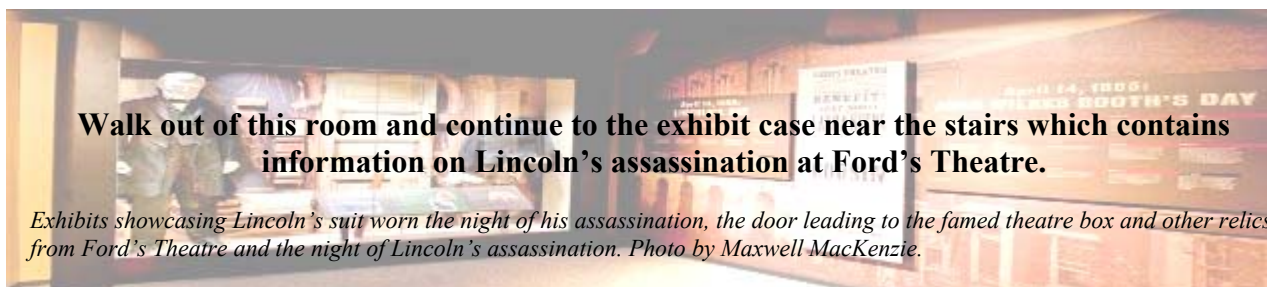
Walk behind the exhibit case and read about some of the people who were involved in the plan to kidnap Lincoln.

Life-size figures of the assassination conspirators guard the exhibits inside the Surratt Boarding House. Photo by Maxwell MacKenzie.

10. Partner Activity: Compare. Each partner should choose a conspirator to read about. After you are finished reading, come back together and make some observations about the people you chose in the chart below (profession, attitude concerning the war, knowledge of Booth, roles and results of their actions in the assassination plot, etc.).

Similarities	Differences

What was the outcome of both of these individuals' parts in the assassination plan?



Walk out of this room and continue to the exhibit case near the stairs which contains information on Lincoln's assassination at Ford's Theatre.

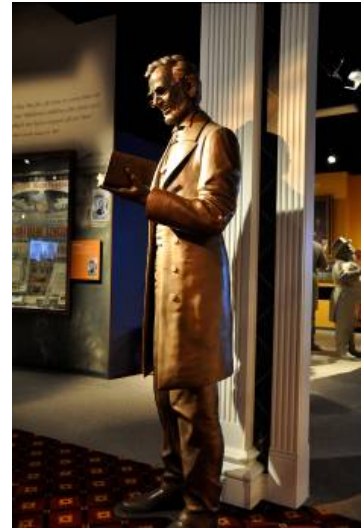
Exhibits showcasing Lincoln's suit worn the night of his assassination, the door leading to the famed theatre box and other relics from Ford's Theatre and the night of Lincoln's assassination. Photo by Maxwell MacKenzie.

For more information contact
education@fords.org



Classroom Conversations

1. Partner Activity: Discussion Question. Lincoln said, “What would the nation think of its President stealing into its capital like a thief in the night?” Explore with your partner what this quote tells you about how Lincoln felt about his entrance into Washington D.C. and record some of your ideas.



Statue of Abraham Lincoln in the Ford's Theatre Museum. Photo by Gary Erskine.

2. Partner Activity: Discussion Question. Before decisive Union victories, how might McClellan have been a threat to Lincoln's reelection in 1864? Record some thoughts from your discussion below.

3. Review some of the threats to Lincoln in the chart below.

Bodily Harm	Political Threats



John Hay reported on Lincoln's visit to Fort Stevens during an attack in July 11, 1864. He said that, *"At three o'clock P.M. the President came in bringing the news that the enemy's advance was at Ft Stevens on the 7th Street road. He was in the Fort when it was first attacked, standing upon the parapet. A soldier roughly ordered him to get down or he would have his head knocked off."* Hay reported that the next day *"The President again made the tour of the fortifications; was again under fire at Ft Stevens; a man was shot at his side."*



*Fort Stevens where Lincoln stood under fire
 Photograph, ca 1920-1950
 Theodore Horydczak, photographer
 Courtesy of Library of Congress*

4. Based on this event and the chart you created above, which type of threat do you think Lincoln was more concerned about?

5. Compare the role of the President as Commander-in-Chief and his function on the front lines in Lincoln's time and today.

Similarities	Differences

6. What other threats can you think of that Lincoln might have faced that you did not explore today?



Move ahead to the statues of office seekers who besieged Lincoln asking for favors. Read the anecdotes in the flip books on the display.

Large figures representing jobseekers and visitors to the Lincoln White House. Photo by Maxwell MacKenzie

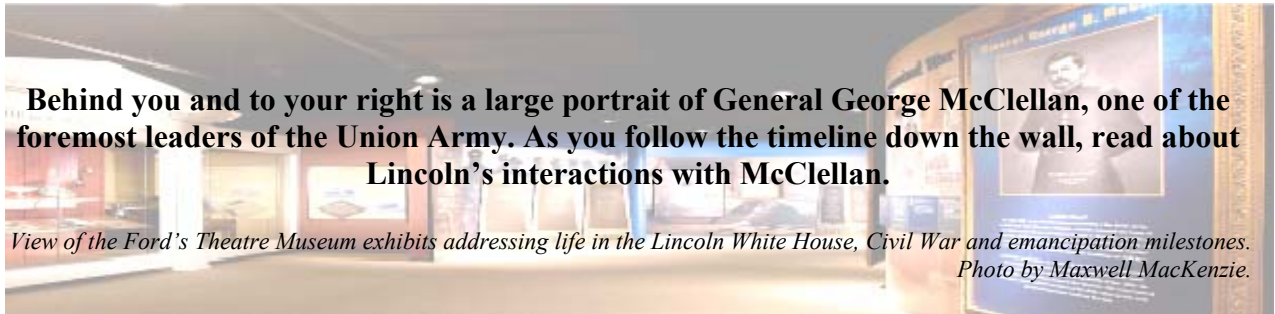
3. Compare and contrast Lincoln's relationship with the public with that of modern presidents and the public.

Similarities	Differences

4. What does Lincoln's approach to dealing with these petitioners reveal about the president's leadership style?

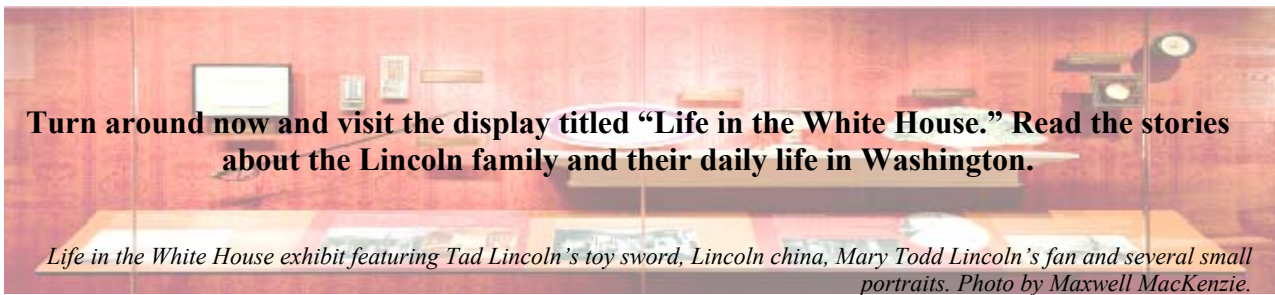


Move forward to the Fort Sumter display, “The March to War,” and watch the video about the outbreak of the Civil War.



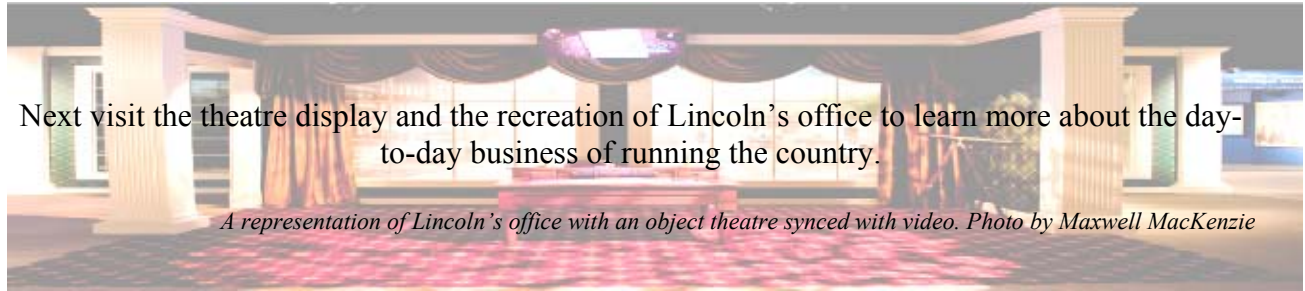
5. Contrast McClellan’s methods of leadership with those of Lincoln.

McClellan	Lincoln



6. What can you learn about Lincoln’s professional qualities from stories about his personal life?

For more information contact
education@fords.org



Next visit the theatre display and the recreation of Lincoln's office to learn more about the day-to-day business of running the country.

A representation of Lincoln's office with an object theatre synced with video. Photo by Maxwell MacKenzie

7. List three issues and decisions other than those related to the war which Lincoln dealt with as president.

Today Lincoln is renowned for his famous speeches and his skill as an orator. Watch the video about the Gettysburg Address to hear how he transformed this aspect of the presidency. Then cross the room and visit the displays about Lincoln's bid for re-election in 1864.

8. Compare the Election of 1864 and the candidates' campaign strategies with presidential elections today.

Similarities	Differences



Walk towards the tree and on your right look for the panel depicting Lincoln's second inauguration. Read the quotation from his inauguration speech: "With malice toward none, with charity for all..."

Representation of Mary Surratt's Boarding House. Photo by Maxwell MacKenzie

9. How does this speech distinguish Lincoln from many of his contemporaries?

Now pass under the stairs and enter the replica of Mary Surratt's boarding house. Look at the conspiracy artifacts in the large case to the left.

Artifact displaying weapons and other items related to the assassination conspirators. Photo by Maxwell MacKenzie.

10. What did John Wilkes Booth hope to achieve by disposing of the Union's most important leaders?

Exit the Boarding House through the doorway on the left and read the panel near the stairs titled "Lincoln's Last Speech."

11. When he gave this speech, Lincoln naturally assumed he still had almost four years ahead of him as president. What do you think he planned to achieve in that time period? What obstacles would he have faced? Based on what you've learned about Lincoln so far, how do you think he would have addressed those issues?



Classroom Conversations

1. Partner Activity: Discussion Question. With a partner or small group, discuss Lincoln's controversial decision to suspend the Writ of Habeas Corpus and his conflict with Chief Justice Taney. Was Lincoln's decision an abuse of power, as his opponents alleged? Was he justified in taking a step which might be unconstitutional? Is it acceptable for a leader to make choices that sacrifice a few liberties or lives for the sake of the greater good? If so, under what circumstances? Record some of your conclusions.

2. Partner Activity: Discussion Question. Think about the concept of authority and what it means to you. Is authority the same thing as power?

3. Think back over the museum and the selections you encountered from four of Lincoln's most famous speeches: his first inaugural speech ("we must not be enemies"), the Gettysburg Address, his second inaugural speech ("with malice toward none") and his last speech (in which he suggested giving the right to vote to former slaves). Brainstorm ideal qualities in a leader which you think Lincoln possessed, as indicated in his speeches.



Ford's Theatre Museum Guide: Women in the Lincoln Era

Name: _____ Date: _____

In this guide you will meet some of the famous – and infamous – women living in Washington in 1865 and learn about each woman's place in history.

Mary Todd Lincoln



The wife of Abraham Lincoln, Mary Todd came from a wealthy Southern family but was deeply devoted to the Union and her pro-abolition Northern husband. When she arrived in Washington from the backwoods of Illinois she was widely disliked and denounced by many as unsophisticated. Her excessive spending exacerbated the issue. She was often ostracized because of her political savvy and her influence over her husband's political career – at the time, not appropriate behavior for women. But Mrs. Lincoln was also a compassionate woman who devoted time to visiting wounded soldiers, bringing them food, helping them write letters home, and providing comfort to those in extreme pain. She was a loving wife and

mother, though given to bouts of melancholy; understandable, since by 1865 she had already suffered the devastating deaths of two of her four sons.

Elizabeth Keckly

Born a slave, Elizabeth Keckly endured both cruelty and kindness at the hands of various owners, but her skill as a dressmaker and the aid of loyal customers and friends enabled her to purchase freedom for herself and her son, who later died fighting for the Union cause. She moved to Washington and went into business for herself as dressmaker to the elite ladies of the capital, including the wife of the President, Mary Todd Lincoln, to whom she eventually became a dear friend and confidante. Mrs. Keckly was influential in helping many newly-freed slaves establish themselves in Washington, and as a family friend of the Lincolns, she was privy to many major events in the Lincoln household and the nation.



For more information contact
education@fords.org



Mary Surratt

Before the war, Mary Surratt and her husband lived in the tiny crossroads town of Surrattsville in Southern Maryland, where they operated an inn and tavern. Although Maryland remained part of the Union during the war, many members of the community, including the Surratts, were not-so-secret Southern sympathizers, and smuggled goods, funds, and spies probably passed through the Surratt tavern. After her husband's death, Mrs. Surratt rented out her property in Maryland and moved to Washington, D.C., where, like many other women, she opened up her home as a boarding house. Guests came and went, and her adult son John often brought visitors into the house, including the famous actor John Wilkes Booth.

Laura Keene

Popular actress Laura Keene was not a Washington native, but in the 1860s, successful actors and actresses were constantly on the road, touring from one city to another. April 1865 brought thirty-nine year old Miss Keene to Washington, D.C. to star in Tom Taylor's popular comedy, Our American Cousin. The April 14th performance would be "the Benefit! and Last Night of Miss Laura Keene." That meant that for this, her 1000th performance, she would receive a percentage of the box office take – which promised to be considerable, since the news that President and Mrs. Lincoln would attend with General and Mrs. Grant meant the house almost completely sold out.



As you travel through the museum, use the above information as a supplemental tool to expand on the exhibits you encounter. Start by reading the displays at the very bottom of the stairs, which describe the city of Washington itself in the 1860s.

Next, look for the exhibit on the U.S. Sanitary Commission and the quilt featuring the signatures of influential men of the 1860s. At the time that Mrs. Lincoln was visiting hospitals, the U.S. Sanitary Commission also provided medical aid to soldiers as well as holding fairs and raffles such as the one for which this quilt was made in order to raise money for the Union cause.



1. The Sanitary Commission was the predecessor to what modern day organization?

2. Compare how civilians in the Civil War supported the army and how people today support soldiers in combat.

Similarities	Differences

3. List two jobs that the Sanitary Commission did for soldiers.

4. Do you think the above jobs were likely done by women or men? Why?

Find the exhibit titled “Life in the White House.” Examine the portraits in the family gallery. As evidenced in this display, family was very important to the Lincolns; but as with many families in the period, theirs was split by the Civil War. Though Mrs. Lincoln was fiercely loyal to the Union, many of her Todd relatives fought and died on the side of the Confederacy.

5. Which of Mrs. Lincoln’s relatives was able to visit her only after taking an oath of loyalty to the Union?



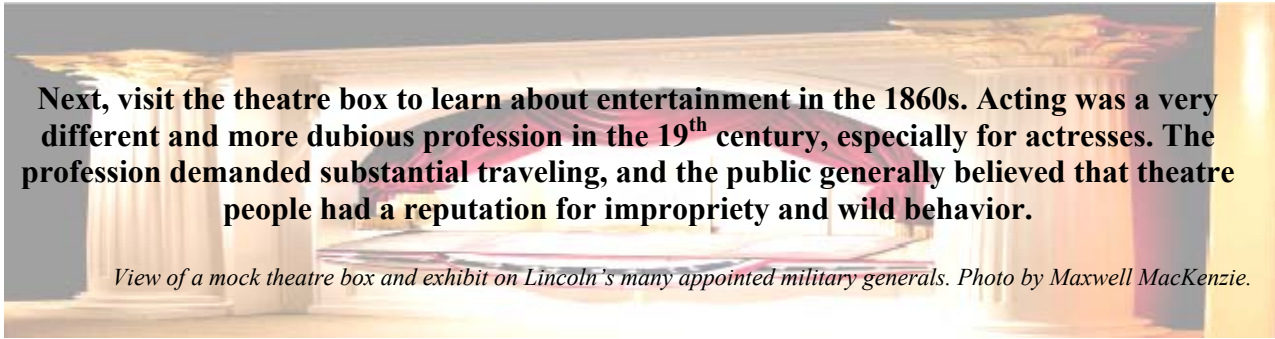
**Next find the picture of a freed slave woman mounted with the Lincoln family portraits:
Elizabeth Keckly.**

6. As you proceed through the museum, watch for Elizabeth Keckly's name to reappear. Write down where you come across her and at what historic events she was present.

Examine the White House artifacts and read the displays about the Lincolns' life in the White House.

Life in the White House exhibit featuring Tad Lincoln's toy sword, Lincoln china, Mary Todd Lincoln's fan and several small portraits. Photo by Maxwell MacKenzie

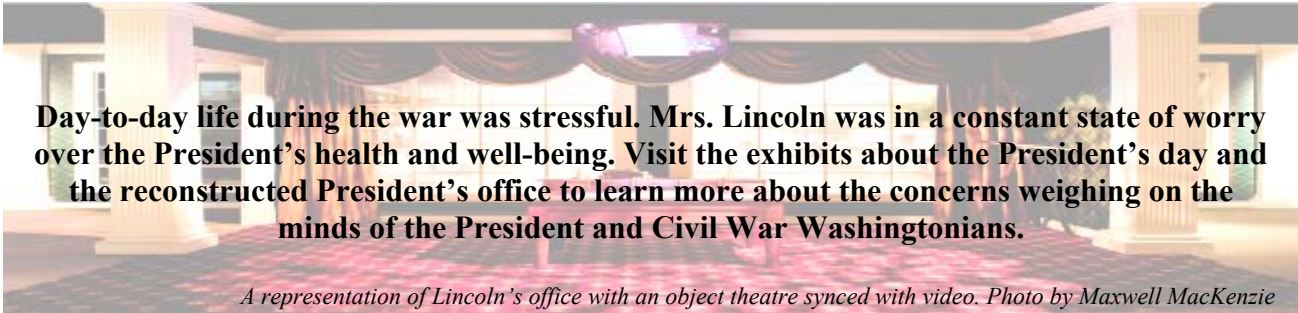
7. How much did Mrs. Lincoln overspend in her remodeling of the White House?
8. Mrs. Lincoln was a controversial figure and was not always widely liked. Do you think Mary Todd Lincoln is a sympathetic figure – yes or no? Explain your answer.
9. The first recorded use of the title "First Lady" was an 1863 reference to Mrs. Lincoln. How has the role of the First Lady evolved since Mrs. Lincoln's time?



Next, visit the theatre box to learn about entertainment in the 1860s. Acting was a very different and more dubious profession in the 19th century, especially for actresses. The profession demanded substantial traveling, and the public generally believed that theatre people had a reputation for impropriety and wild behavior.

View of a mock theatre box and exhibit on Lincoln's many appointed military generals. Photo by Maxwell MacKenzie.

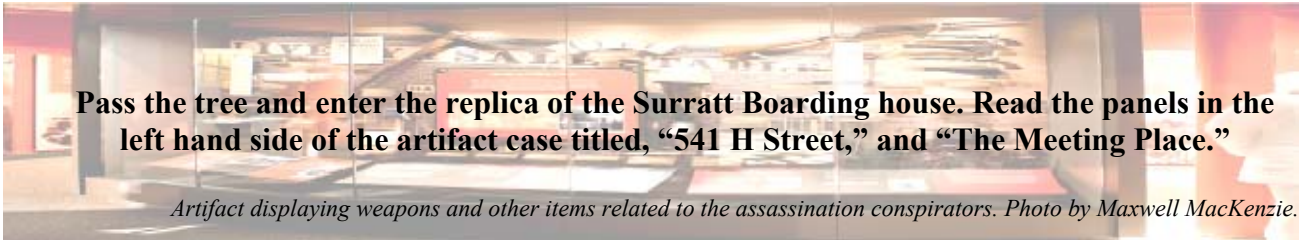
10. What challenges do you think an actress like Laura Keene might have faced in the 1860s, which she would not today?



Day-to-day life during the war was stressful. Mrs. Lincoln was in a constant state of worry over the President's health and well-being. Visit the exhibits about the President's day and the reconstructed President's office to learn more about the concerns weighing on the minds of the President and Civil War Washingtonians.

A representation of Lincoln's office with an object theatre synced with video. Photo by Maxwell MacKenzie

11. After reading about Lincoln's daily routine, list some of the reasons why Mrs. Lincoln was constantly concerned for her husband's well-being.



Pass the tree and enter the replica of the Surratt Boarding house. Read the panels in the left hand side of the artifact case titled, "541 H Street," and "The Meeting Place."

Artifact displaying weapons and other items related to the assassination conspirators. Photo by Maxwell MacKenzie.

For more information contact
education@fords.org



12. What was Mary Surratt's role in the conspiracy and eventual assassination plot against President Lincoln?

13. Given the evidence presented here, do you think Mrs. Surratt was guilty of conspiracy? Why or why not?



Classroom Conversations

1. If Mary Todd Lincoln were alive today, what do you think she would be doing? What would her profession be? How would today's society view her differently than her own?

2. They say 'behind every good man is a good woman.' How might Abraham Lincoln's presidency have been different had he married a different sort of woman than Mary Todd?

3. Elizabeth Keckly wrote her memoirs about her life as a slave and her time in the White House and titled the book *Behind the Scenes*. Though Mrs. Keckly's position 'behind the scenes' is linked to her race and class, the phrase can in some ways be extended to all women of the time. Brainstorm a list of the ways women witnessed and influenced the events of the era from 'behind the scenes.' Don't restrict yourself only to the four women presented in this guide.



4. Partner Activity: Discussion Question. The military commission which tried Mrs. Surratt and the other conspirators sentenced the widow and three of the seven male conspirators to hang, but most of the commission agreed that, given her gender and age, Mrs. Surratt's sentence should be commuted from hanging to a life sentence in prison. They were overruled. Do you agree with their judgment that she should be spared? Why or why not? Record some of your conclusions.

5. Using the poster for Laura Keene's performance in *Our American Cousin* as a model, create a poster for your favorite play or movie in the style of the 1860s.



For more information contact
education@fords.org