

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT

What happened to John Wilkes Booth? From Jeanne Benoit

Grade – 7-12

Length of class period – *45-60 minutes*

Inquiry – (What essential question are students answering, what problem are they solving, or what decision are they making?)

What really happened to John Wilkes Booth?

Objectives (What content and skills do you expect students to learn from this lesson?)

- The students will read and interrupt excerpts from a diary and news story to decide what really happened to John Wilkes Booth.

Materials (What primary sources or local resources are the basis for this lesson?) – (please attach)

Attention Grabber

April 14, 1865

I struck boldly, and not as the papers say.

I walked with a firm step through a thousand of his friends... A colonel was at his side.

In jumping, broke my leg. I passed all his pickets. Rode sixty miles last night, with the bone of my left tearing the flesh at every jump.

I can never repent it though we hated to kill.

Our country owed all our troubles to him, and God simply made me the instrument of his punishment.

<http://members.aol.com/RVSNorton1/Lincoln52.html>

<http://members.aol.com/RVSNorton/Lincoln40.html>

Activities (What will you and your students do during the lesson to promote learning?)

- Students will be given the attention grabber sheet to begin class. They will be asked: Who do they think wrote this and what was it all about? Who jumped? Where did he jump? Who is the “him” that was killed?
- They will read the diary entries and the description of Booth’s last hours.
- They will discuss how he could have gotten so far and do they think he had help in the escape.

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

- They will be asked to write news stories from different perspectives. How would a Northerner feel about Booth and what happened? How would a southerner feel? Is the opening line about a Hero or a Traitor?

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards –

Formulate historical questions based on primary and secondary sources, including documents, eyewitness accounts, letters and diaries, artifacts, real or simulated historical sites, charts, graphs, diagrams and written texts;

Develop written narratives and short interpretative essays, as well as other appropriate presentations from investigations of source materials.