

## **The Great “What If” Question. How might American history have been different had Lincoln lived?**

**Overview:** Students will discuss the impact of President Lincoln’s assassination on our nation’s Reconstruction policy.

### **Materials:**

Merrill Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1994. excerpts pages 36-50.

Reconstruction Timeline

<http://www.history.umd.edu/Freedmen/procamn.htm>

Second Inaugural, <http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres32.html>

The debate over the Wade Davis Bill, 1864

([http://www.socialstudieshelp.com/Lesson\\_36\\_Notes\\_Wade\\_Davis.htm](http://www.socialstudieshelp.com/Lesson_36_Notes_Wade_Davis.htm))

Merrill Peterson’s book cited above

Reminiscences on Abraham Lincoln

(<http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/quoteabout.htm>)

Merrill Peterson’s book cited above.

*Abraham Lincoln the Martyr Victorious*. Engraving by John Sartain, 1865.

### **Aim/Essential Question:**

Would Reconstruction have been different had Lincoln lived?

### **Background Information:**

Merrill Peterson asked the following question, “The great perplexity of Lincoln and Reconstruction was simply this, would it have been different had he lived?” Lincoln had shown evidence of magnanimity towards the Confederate states as early as 1863 when his *Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction* offered lenient terms to the South. In attempting to implement the plan he met the opposition of Radical Republicans who objected to its leniency and the lack of provisions to insure freedman’s rights. The Radicals wrote a far more stringent law in the Wade- Davis Bill that Lincoln stopped with a pocket veto. Lincoln, in his Second Inaugural Address, declared that “an inscrutable God” is punishing the nation for the sin of slavery and in the last paragraph, he appealed for a policy of reconciliation towards the rebel states. From this, many conclude that if Lincoln had lived he would have attempted to swiftly cement the Union and provide for a program of amnesty that would have allowed Southern leaders to take part in the government. The critical question is how he would have dealt with the Radical Republicans who wanted a much tougher policy. What would he have done when former Confederate states did not enforce Reconstruction laws?

Merrill Peterson summarizes the arguments on whether or not Reconstruction would have been different had Lincoln lived. On the one hand he argued that Lincoln’s extraordinary political skills, his hold on the affections of people, his clear commitment to equal rights and his positive relations with a number of the Radical Republicans would have prevented the discord and made Reconstruction viable. On the other hand, Peterson

argued that President Johnson's policies were the same as Lincoln's policies and had Lincoln attempted to carry them out he would have met the same opposition as Johnson.

**Objectives:**

1. Students will explain the Lincoln and Radical Republican positions on Reconstruction
2. Students will analyze documents related to Reconstruction.
3. Students will take a position and then explain why they support the position of Lincoln or the Radical Republicans.
4. Students will debate the question, "Would Reconstruction have been different had Lincoln lived?"

**Motivation:**

Historians and politicians differ sharply over the question of how Reconstruction might have been different had Lincoln lived. With this in mind read the conflicting statements below.

**Viewpoint A**

"As to the Congress, it is scarcely conceivable" wrote, James Blaine, who knew the body as well as any body, that had Lincoln lived any serious difficulty would have arisen between him and Congress respecting Reconstruction. If he himself was not a Radical Republican, he had always sympathized with the Radical aims and held the upper hands with them....."

**Viewpoint B**

Senator James B. Doolittle of Wisconsin forcefully spelled out the singular identity of the Lincoln Johnson policy of Reconstruction. When President Johnson was impeached, his friends recalled Lincoln's veto of the Wade-Davis bill and surmised that the Radicals would have impeached him too.

Merrill Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1994. excerpts pages 36-50.

Students will discuss the conflicting viewpoints and offer their opinions on the issue. Based on this discussion what is the central question?

**Procedures:**

1. Students will review the Reconstruction Timeline: 1863-1866 and answer the questions below.
  - A. How did Abraham Lincoln's plan for Reconstruction differ from those of the Radical Republicans?
  - B. To what extent did President Johnson and the Congress conflict over Reconstruction?
2. The class should be divided into two groups.

Group 1 will read the last paragraph of the Second Inaugural and answer the questions below:

- a) Why has this paragraph been interpreted as prescribing a policy of leniency to the South? What specific part of the paragraph may point to a mild policy of Reconstruction?
- b) Why were a number of Radical Republicans unhappy with this paragraph?
- c) Do you believe that this Lincoln statement would lead to a successful Reconstruction program? Explain.

Group 2 will read Lincoln's Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction and answer the questions below:

- a) How could those who participated in the rebellion obtain amnesty?
- b) What criteria did Lincoln establish to exclude rebels from amnesty?
- c) How could the rebellious states be restored to the Union? Explain.

Using their notes and answers to the questions the students will answer the following question: Had Lincoln lived could he have implemented these lenient policies?

3. Distribute copies of "The Debate over the Wade Davis Bill." The students selected to role play the Radical Republicans Wade, Stevens and Davis read their prepared statements and answer questions from the class acting as reporters at a press conference. The class has prepared questions for this conference as a homework assignment.

4. Students read the excerpts from Peterson and then debate the question "Had Lincoln lived would Reconstruction have been different?"

### **Questions for Discussion:**

1. Lincoln's plan for Reconstruction was considered relatively lenient. What did Lincoln hope to accomplish by planning a lenient Reconstruction?
2. Radical Republicans vehemently opposed Lincoln and Johnson's Reconstruction policies. They believed that Southerners who had fought in the war were traitors and should not be allowed to govern their states or the nation. Do you agree or disagree with the Radical Republicans? Explain your position.
3. It has been said that Lincoln's assassination made him an American icon. From a leader who was harshly criticized, his martyrdom led to his becoming a reverential figure claiming respect from the nation and the world. How has our memory of Lincoln influenced subsequent historical events?
4. The South instituted a series of Black Codes that would have imposed a new slavery on African Americans. How would these actions have impacted the nation's Reconstruction policies?

### **Summary:**

Assume that President Lincoln had not been assassinated. How might the Reconstruction period have been different?

### **Application:**

1. Students read the Lincoln quotes and explain which of them could be used to argue that Lincoln would have been an effective leader during Reconstruction.

2. Drawing a graph that highlights both low and high periods for African Americans, where would you place Reconstruction?
3. Why is the Civil Rights period of the 1960's often referred to as a second Reconstruction period?

### **Reconstruction Timeline 1863-1866**

#### **1863**

January 1: President Abraham Lincoln signs the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring that the majority of the nation's slave population "henceforth shall be free."

July: In New York City, opposition to the nation's first military draft triggers a riot, the largest in American history, as poor whites protest what they consider to be an unfair draft. Over four days, the riot develops into wholesale violence against African Americans, with an uncounted number of victims.

December 8: President Lincoln announces the Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction. It offers pardon and restoration of property -- except slaves -- to Confederates who swear allegiance to the Union and agree to accept emancipation. Known as the 10 Percent Plan, it requires only 10% of a former Confederate state's voters to pledge the oath before the state can begin the process of readmission into the Union.

#### **1864**

Early 1864: President Lincoln begins Reconstruction in the Union-occupied former Confederate state of Louisiana. Lincoln's lenient 10 percent policy upsets Radical Republicans, who expect the South to do more to gain readmission, and believe Lincoln's approach does not provide enough protection to ex-slaves.

July: In response to Lincoln's plan, Congress passes its own, the Wade-Davis Bill. It increases the allegiance requirement from 10% to a majority of a state's voters, limits many former Confederates from political participation in state government, demands blacks receive not only their freedom but equality before the law, and imposes a series of other requirements on the states. Lincoln did not sign the Wade-Davis Bill; his pocket veto meant the bill did not pass into law.

November 8: Lincoln is reelected.

#### **1865**

By 1865, some 180,000 African Americans had served in the Union Army, over one-fifth of the adult male black population under 45.

January 16: Marching the Union Army through the South with an ever-growing number of freed slaves in its wake, General William Tecumseh Sherman issues Special Field Order 15 setting aside part of coastal South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida for settlement by African Americans. The settlers are to receive "possessory title" to forty-acre plots.

January 31: The Thirteenth Amendment, abolishing slavery throughout the Union, wins Congressional approval and is sent to the states for ratification. By the end of February, 18 states will ratify the amendment; after significant delay in the South, ratification will be completed by December.

February 18: General Sherman's troops enter Charleston, South Carolina.

March: The temporary Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands is established within the War Department. The Freedman's Bureau works to smooth the transition from slavery, providing former slaves with immediate shelter and medical services, help in negotiating labor contracts with landowners, and more. The bureau is initially authorized for just one year, but remains in operation until 1868.

April: In Lincoln's last speech, he mentions suffrage for African American soldiers. The Civil War ends when Confederate general Robert E. Lee surrenders to Union general Ulysses S. Grant. Six days later, President Lincoln is assassinated, and his vice president, Democrat Andrew Johnson from Tennessee, becomes president.

May: President Johnson announces his plan of Presidential Reconstruction. It calls for general amnesty and restoration of property -- except for slaves -- to all Southerners who swear loyalty to the Union. No friend to the South's large landowners, Johnson declares that they and the Confederate leadership will be required to petition him individually for pardons. This Reconstruction strategy also requires states to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment, ending slavery. The president's plan is implemented during the summer.

August/September: President Johnson shows growing leniency toward the white South. He orders the restoration of land to its former owners, including the land provided to freed slaves by General Sherman's January field order. Freedmen are especially reluctant to leave the land they have started farming in South Carolina and Georgia. The president starts aligning himself with the Southern elite, declaring, "white men alone must manage the South."

Fall: Southern states elect former Confederates to public office at the state and national levels, delay ratifying the Thirteenth Amendment, and refuse to extend the vote to African American males. Southern legislatures begin drafting "Black Codes" to re-establish white supremacy. The laws impose restrictions on African Americans, especially in attempts to control labor, for example: freedmen are prohibited from work except as field hands, those who refuse to sign labor contracts are punished, the unemployed can be seized and auctioned to planters as laborers, and children can be taken from their families and made to work. The new laws amount to slavery without the chain.

November-December: At the request of President Johnson, victorious Union general Ulysses S. Grant tours the South, and is greeted with surprising friendliness. His report recommends a lenient Reconstruction policy.

December: President Johnson declares the reconstruction process complete. Outraged, Radical Republicans in Congress refuse to recognize new governments in Southern states. More than sixty former Confederates arrive to take their seats in Congress, including four generals, four colonels and six Confederate cabinet officers including Alexander H. Stephens, the former Vice President of the Confederacy. The Clerk of the House refuses to include the Southern representatives in his roll call, and they are denied their elected seats.

The Union Army is quickly demobilized. From a troop strength of one million on May 1, only 152,000 Union soldiers remain in the South by the end of 1865.

Southern towns and cities start to experience a large influx of freedmen from rural areas. Over the next five years, the African American population of the South's ten largest cities will double.

## **1866**

February: President Johnson vetoes a supplemental Freedmen's Bureau Bill, which Republican moderates have designed to extend protection to Southern African Americans.

April: Another piece of moderate Republican legislation, the Civil Rights Bill, grants citizenship and the same rights enjoyed by white citizens to all male persons in the United States "without distinction of race or color, or previous condition of slavery or involuntary servitude." It passes both houses of Congress by overwhelming majorities, and when President Johnson vetoes it, Congress overrides the veto, making the bill the first major piece of legislation enacted over a presidential veto. The rift between Congress and the president is complete.

May 1: Racial violence rages in Memphis, Tennessee for three days as whites assault African Americans on the streets. In the aftermath, 48 people, nearly all African American, are dead, and hundreds of black homes, churches, and schools have been pillaged or burned.

June 13: Congress sends the Fourteenth Amendment to the states. It presents the Republican vision of a more equal society. The amendment defines citizenship to include all people born or naturalized in the U.S. and increases the federal government's power over the states to protect all Americans' rights. It stops short of guaranteeing blacks the right to vote. The controversial amendment will take over two years to be ratified.

July: Congress re-passes its supplemental Freedmen's Bureau Bill. President Johnson vetoes it again, and Congress again overrides the veto, making the bill a law.

July 24: Tennessee is the first former Confederate state readmitted to the Union.

July 30: Riots break out in New Orleans, Louisiana and a white mob attacks blacks and Radical Republicans attending a black suffrage convention, killing 40 people.

August 28: "The swing around the circle." With Congress demanding that Southern states ratify the Fourteenth Amendment in order to gain re-admittance to the legislature, President Johnson begins a disastrous speaking tour of the North to bolster support for his policies in the mid-term elections. He asks popular Union general Ulysses S. Grant to accompany him. When crowds heckle the president, Johnson's angry and undignified responses cause Grant -- and many white Northerners -- to lose sympathy with the president and his lenient Reconstruction policies.

Fall: Following the president's ruinous campaign, the mid-term elections become a battleground over the Fourteenth Amendment and civil rights. Johnson's opponents are victorious, and the Republicans occupy enough seats to guarantee they will be able to override any presidential vetoes in the coming legislative session.

Union troops are further demobilized; only 38,000 remain in the South by the fall.

## Readings A

### Lincoln's look toward the future

#### 1. Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction

##### Lincoln maps out his plans for amnesty and reconstruction.

December 8, 1863

By the President of the United States of America:

A Proclamation.

Whereas, in and by the Constitution of the United States, it is provided that the President "shall have power to grant reprieves and pardons for offences against the United States, except in cases of impeachment;" and

Whereas a rebellion now exists whereby the loyal State governments of several States have for a long time been subverted, and many persons have committed and are now guilty of treason against the United States; and

Whereas, with reference to said rebellion and treason, laws have been enacted by Congress declaring forfeitures and confiscation of property and liberation of slaves, all upon terms and conditions therein stated, and also declaring that the President was thereby authorized at any time thereafter, by proclamation, to extend to persons who may have participated in the existing rebellion, in any State or part thereof, pardon and amnesty, with such exceptions and at such times and on such conditions as he may deem expedient for the public welfare; and

Whereas the congressional declaration for limited and conditional pardon accords with well-established judicial exposition of the pardoning power; and

Whereas, with reference to said rebellion, the President of the United States has issued several proclamations, with provisions in regard to the liberation of slaves; and

Whereas it is now desired by some persons heretofore engaged in said rebellion to resume their allegiance to the United States, and to inaugurate loyal State governments within and for their respective States; therefore,

I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, do proclaim, declare, and make known to **all persons who have, directly or by implication,** participated in the existing rebellion, except as hereinafter excepted, that a full pardon is hereby

granted to them and each of them, with restoration of all rights of property, except as to slaves, and in property cases where rights of third parties shall have intervened, and upon the condition that every such person shall take and subscribe an oath, and thenceforward keep and maintain said oath inviolate; and which oath shall be registered for permanent preservation, and shall be of the tenor and effect following, to wit:

``I, ---, do solemnly swear, in presence of Almighty God, that I will henceforth faithfully support, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States, and the union of the States thereunder; and that I will, in like manner, abide by and faithfully support all acts of Congress passed during the existing rebellion with reference to slaves, so long and so far as not repealed, modified or held void by Congress, or by decision of the Supreme Court; and that I will, in like manner, abide by and faithfully support all proclamations of the President made during the existing rebellion having reference to slaves, so long and so far as not modified or declared void by decision of the Supreme Court. So help me God."

The persons excepted from the benefits of the foregoing provisions are all who are, or shall have been, civil or diplomatic officers or agents of the so-called confederate government; all who have left judicial stations under the United States to aid the rebellion; all who are, or shall have been, military or naval officers of said so-called confederate government above the rank of colonel in the army, or of lieutenant in the navy; all who left seats in the United States Congress to aid the rebellion; all who resigned commissions in the army or navy of the United States, and afterwards aided the rebellion; and all who have engaged in any way in treating colored persons or white persons, in charge of such, otherwise than lawfully as prisoners of war, and which persons may have been found in the United States service, as soldiers, seamen, or in any other capacity.

And I do further proclaim, declare, and make known, that whenever, in any of the States of Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, and North Carolina, a number of persons, not less than one-tenth in number of the votes cast in such State at the Presidential election of the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty, each having taken the oath aforesaid and not having since violated it, and being a qualified voter by the election law of the State existing immediately before the so-called act of secession, and excluding all others, shall re-establish a State government which shall be republican, and in no wise contravening said oath, such shall be recognized as the true government of the State, and the State shall receive thereunder the benefits of the constitutional provision which declares that ``The United States shall guaranty to every State in this union a republican form of government, and shall protect each of them against invasion; and, on application of the legislature, or the executive, (when the legislature cannot be convened,) against domestic violence."

And I do further proclaim, declare, and make known that any provision which may be adopted by such State government in relation to the freed people of such State, which shall recognize and declare their permanent freedom, provide for their education, and which may yet be consistent, as a temporary arrangement, with their present condition as a laboring, landless, and homeless class, will not be objected to by the national Executive. And <sup>[3]</sup> it is suggested as not improper, that, in constructing a loyal State government in any State, the name of the State, the boundary, the subdivisions, the constitution, and the general code of laws, as before the rebellion, be maintained, subject only to the modifications made necessary by the conditions hereinbefore stated, and such others, if any, not contravening said conditions, and which may be deemed expedient by those framing the new State government.

To avoid misunderstanding, it may be proper to say that this proclamation, so far as it relates to State governments, has no reference to States wherein loyal State governments have all the while been maintained. And for the same reason, it may be proper to further say that whether members sent to Congress from any State shall be admitted to seats, constitutionally rests exclusively with the respective Houses, and not to any extent with the Executive. And still further, that this proclamation is intended to present the people of the States wherein the national authority has been suspended, and loyal State governments have been subverted, a mode in and by which the national authority and loyal State governments may be re-established within said States, or in any of them; and, while the mode presented is the best the Executive can suggest, with his present impressions, it must not be understood that no other possible mode would be acceptable.

<http://www.history.umd.edu/Freedmen/procamn.htm>

## **2. Excerpt: The Second Inaugural (March 4, 1865)**

### **Lincoln calls for a “just and lasting peace.”**

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan--to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.

For full text of the Second Inaugural: <http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres32.html>

## Readings B

### The Debate over the Wade-Davis Bill

In 1864 Benjamin Wade and Henry Winter Davis, sponsored a bill that provided for the administration of the affairs of southern states by provisional governors until the end of the war. They argued that civil government should only be re-established when half of the male white citizens took an oath of loyalty to the Union. The bill also excluded from amnesty all Confederate civil officers above ministerial rank and military officers ranking colonel or above.

On the May 4, 1864, the Wade-Davis Bill was passed in the House of Representatives by 73 to 59. It passed the Senate, 18 to 14 on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, with only one Republican voting against it. However, Abraham Lincoln refused to sign the bill on July 4<sup>th</sup> and so it failed to become law. Lincoln defended his decision by telling Zachariah Chandler, one of the bill's supporters, that it was a question of time: "this bill was placed before me a few minutes before Congress adjourns. It is a matter of too much importance to be swallowed in that way." Lincoln made a speech on July 8<sup>th</sup> where he explained that he had rejected the bill because he did not wish "to be inflexibly committed to any single plan of restoration".

The Radical Republicans were furious with Lincoln's decision. On August 5<sup>th</sup>, Wade and Henry Winter Davis published an attack on Lincoln in the New York Tribune. In what became known as the Wade-Davis Manifesto, the men argued that Lincoln's actions had been taken "at the dictation of his personal ambition" and accused him of "dictatorial usurpation". They added that: "he must realize that our support is of a cause and not of a man."

#### **Document (1) Carl Schurz wrote about the Wade-Davis Bill in his autobiography published in 1906.**

*Senator Benjamin F. Wade, from Ohio, one of the oldest, most courageous, and most highly respected of the anti-slavery champions, and Henry Winter Davis, a member of the National House of Representatives from Maryland, a man of high character and an orator of rare brilliancy, rose in open revolt against Lincoln's reconstruction ideas, and issued a formal manifesto, in which, in language of startling vehemence, they assailed the integrity of his motives as those of a usurper carried away by lust of power.*

Shurz, Carl, *The Autobiography of Carl Schurz*, Reprint Services Corporation, 1991.

#### **Document (2) Benjamin Wade, speech in the Senate (April 21, 1862)**

*If there is any stain on the present Administration, it is that they have been weak enough to deal too leniently with those traitors. I know it sprung from goodness of heart; it sprung from the best of motives; but, sir, as a method of putting down this rebellion, mercy to traitors is cruelty to loyal men. Look into the seceded States, and see thousands*

*of loyal men there coerced into their armies to run the hazard of their lives, and placed in the damnable position of perjured traitors by force of arms.*

**Document (3) Thaddeus Stevens, letter to Edward McPherson about Abraham Lincoln's proclamation after his rejection of the Wade-Davis Bill (July 10, 1864)**

*What an infamous proclamation! The president is determined to have the electoral votes of the seceded States. The idea of pocketing a bill and then issuing a proclamation as how far he will conform to it is matched only by signing a bill and then sending in a veto. How little of the rights of war and the law of nations our president knows!*

**Document (4) Benjamin Wade and Henry Winter Davis issued a joint statement in the New York Tribune after Abraham Lincoln vetoed the Wade-Davis Bill (August 5, 1864)**

*The bill directed the appointment of provisional government by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. The President, after defeating the law, proposes to appoint, without law and without the advice and consent of the Senate, military governors for the rebel States!*

*Whatever is done will be at his will and pleasure, by persons responsible to no law, and more interested to secure the interests and execute the will of the President than of the people; and the will of Congress is to be "held for naught unless the loyal people of the rebel States choose to adopt it."*

*The President must realize that our support is of a cause and not of a man and that the authority of Congress is paramount and must be respected; and if he wishes our support, he must confine himself to his executive duties - to obey and execute, not make the laws - to suppress by armed rebellion, and leave political reorganization to Congress.*

## Reading C

Merrill Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory*, Oxford University Press, 1995.

Excerpt, pages 36-50.

“Might Reconstruction have been different had Lincoln lived? When the question was put to Norman Judd, an Illinois Republican who had been close to Lincoln politically, he replied: ‘If Lincoln had lived he would have tried charity to the rebels till all his political friends were outraged and until he discovered the real animus of the rebels; then he would have tried severity and would become the most popular man in the nation and would have been re-elected for a third term. The answer reflected admiration for Lincoln’s political skills, always responsive to the unfolding logic of events, for his hold on the affections of the people and his commitment to equal rights. Surely he never would have abandoned the freedmen to the mercies of a master class.’ As to Congress: “It is scarcely conceivable wrote, James G. Blaine, who knew that body as well as anyone, ‘that had Lincoln lived any serious difficulty would have arisen between him and Congress respecting the policy of Reconstruction.’ If he himself was not a Radical Republican, he had always sympathized with the Radicals’ aims and held the upper hand with them...’Oh if only Lincoln had lived!’ Carl Schurz had exclaimed in Philadelphia in 1866. “Alas, the good President is dead! We have learned to measure the greatness of our loss by what he has left behind him.”

The opposite opinion held that President Johnson faithfully adhered to Lincoln’s policy; therefore the fate that befell one would have befallen the other. Or as an early historian of Reconstruction put it: “If Lincoln was right so was Johnson and vice versa.” Senator James R. Doolittle of Wisconsin, who in 1864 had declared that next to God Almighty he believed in Abraham Lincoln, forcefully spelled out the singular identity of “the Lincoln Johnson policy of reconstruction” in 1866. When the unfortunate President was impeached, his friends recalled Lincoln’s veto of the Wade-Davis Bill and surmised that the Radicals would have impeached him, too, given the opportunity. There was still another view of the matter, one especially favored by southerners. Had Lincoln lived, he would have pursued his policy of magnanimity, but unlike the inept Johnson he would have succeeded... “Oh mysterious fate!” moaned a southern congressman, “to quench the warm impulses of that kind heart, and turn us over to the tender mercies of bitter, implacable tyrants!”

## Readings D

**Reminiscences on Abraham Lincoln**

**"He keeps his main object -- the preservation of the Union and the Constitution -- distinctly in view, and steadily directs all his actions to it."**

--Goldwin Smith in Macmillan's Magazine

**"Although one of the mildest of men, he was unyielding to efforts which were made to force him to acts which he considered erroneous in themselves, or erroneous because untimely."**

--Hugh McCulloch in "Men and Measures of Half a Century"

**"...Mr. Lincoln was the central figure of our age, and on him were concentrated the love, the faith, the reverence, the hate, the fear, and the calumny, of half the civilized world. The 'plain people' understood him better than did the politicians; and he in turn had a wonderful perception of the real condition of the popular heart and will."**

--William O. Stoddard in "White House Sketches"

**"...he remarked that he had made a vow, a covenant, that if God gave us the victory in the approaching battle, he would consider it an indication of Divine will, and that it was his duty to move forward in the cause of emancipation."**

--Sept. 22, 1862 entry in the Diary of Gideon Welles

**"But Mr. Lincoln's death came at a time propitious to the glorification of his memory. He died at a time when he was preaching reconciliation and the forgetting of the past, when he was nobly repressing the blameworthy exultation of the victorious faction."**

--Editorial in the April 28, 1865 Paris La Patrie

**"Twenty months ago he was without a party. The Copperheads hated him; the 'Conservative Republicans' thought him too fast; the 'Radical Republicans' thought him too slow; the War Democrats were looking for the chance of a return to political power. He held steadily upon his way."**

--From the March 5, 1864 edition of Harper's Weekly

**"He was no fanatic, wedded to one idea, or any abstract principle. If one plan would not do, he would try another."**

--Charles Hodge in "The Princeton Review," July 1865

For additional resources: Presidential Plan for Reconstruction-Abraham Lincoln Proclamation December 8, 1863 Complete Works, John Nicolay and John Hay eds. New York Century, 1894, pp. 442-444