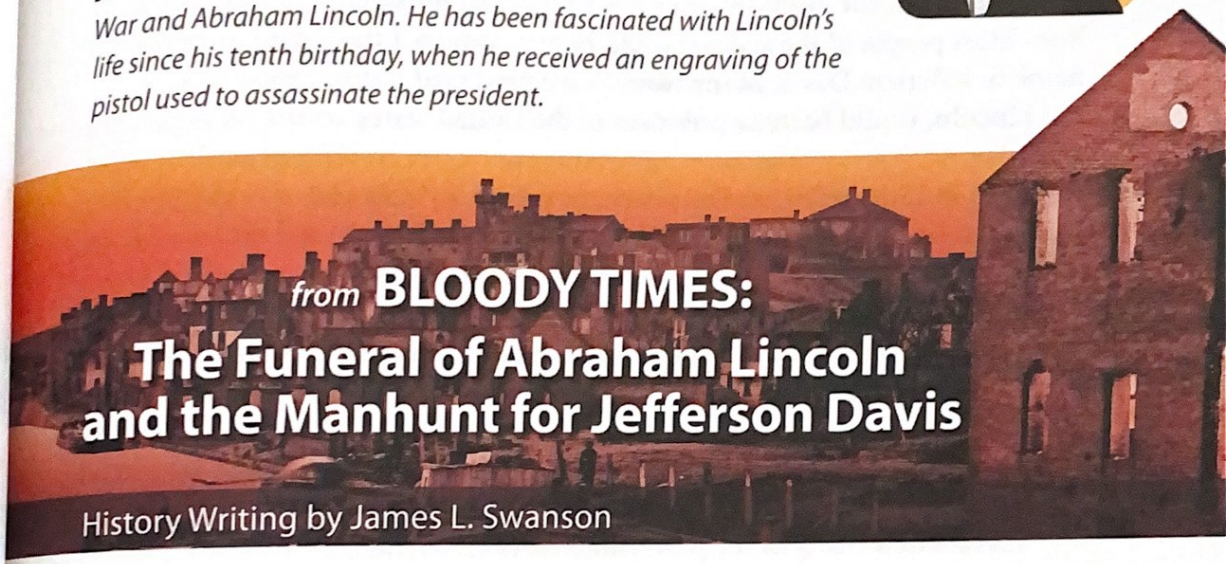
Background *Confederate leaders believed that by abandoning their capitol in Richmond, they would be able to prolong the Civil War. But just a few days after they left Richmond, General Robert E. Lee was forced to surrender to the Union Army. Shortly after, the Civil War ended and President Lincoln was assassinated.*

James L. Swanson *has written several books about the Civil War and Abraham Lincoln. He has been fascinated with Lincoln's life since his tenth birthday, when he received an engraving of the pistol used to assassinate the president.*



from BLOODY TIMES: The Funeral of Abraham Lincoln and the Manhunt for Jefferson Davis

History Writing by James L. Swanson

SETTING A PURPOSE As you read, pay attention to the details the author provides about Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis. What sorts of leadership qualities did each man possess?

Prologue

In the spring of 1865, the country was divided in two: the Union in the North, led by Abraham Lincoln, fighting to keep the Southern states from **seceding** from the United States. The South, led by its president, Jefferson Davis, believed it had the absolute right to quit the Union in order to preserve its way of life, including the right to own slaves. The bloody Civil War had lasted four years and cost 620,000 lives. In April 1865, the war was about to end.

secede (sĭ-sēd´) *v.* When you *secede*, you formally withdraw from an organization or association.

Introduction

In April of 1865, as the Civil War drew to a close, two men set out on very different journeys. One, Jefferson Davis, president

of the Confederate States of America,[1] was on the run, desperate to save his family, his country, and his cause. The other, Abraham Lincoln, murdered on April 14, was bound for a different destination: home, the grave, and everlasting glory.

Today everybody knows the name of Abraham Lincoln. But before 1858, when Lincoln ran for the United States Senate (and lost the election), very few people had heard of him. Most people of those days would have recognized the name of Jefferson Davis. Many would have predicted Davis, not Lincoln, would become president of the United States someday.

Born in 1808, Jefferson Davis went to private schools and studied at a university, then moved on to the United States Military Academy at West Point. A fine horseback rider, he looked elegant in the saddle. He served as an officer in the United States army on the western frontier, and then became a planter, or a farmer, in Mississippi and was later elected a United States Congressman and later a senator. As a colonel in the Mexican-American War, he was wounded in battle and came home a hero.

Davis knew many of the powerful leaders of his time, including presidents Zachary Taylor and Franklin Pierce. He was a polished speech maker with a beautiful speaking voice. Put simply, he was well-known, respected, and admired in both the North and the South of the country.

What Davis had accomplished was even more remarkable because he was often ill. He was slowly going blind in one eye, and he periodically suffered from malaria, which gave him fevers, as well as a painful condition called neuralgia. He and his young wife, Sarah Knox Taylor, contracted malaria shortly after they were married. She **succumbed** to the disease. More than once he almost died. But his strength and his will to live kept him going.

succumb
(sə-kŭm´) *v.* To *succumb* is to give in to an overwhelming force.

Abraham Lincoln's life started out much different from Jefferson Davis's. Born in 1809, he had no wealthy relatives to help give him a start in life. His father was a farmer who could not read or write and who gave Abe an ax at the age of nine and sent him to split logs into rails for fences. His mother died while Lincoln was still a young boy. When his father

[1] **Confederate States of America:** the government formed by the 11 southern states that seceded from the United States.

remarried, Abe's stepmother, Sarah, took a special interest in Abe.

By the time Abe Lincoln grew up, he'd had less than a year of school. But he'd managed to learn to read and write, and he wanted a better life for himself than that of a poor farmer. He tried many different kinds of jobs: piloting a riverboat, surveying (taking careful measurement of land to set up boundaries), keeping a store, and working as a postmaster.

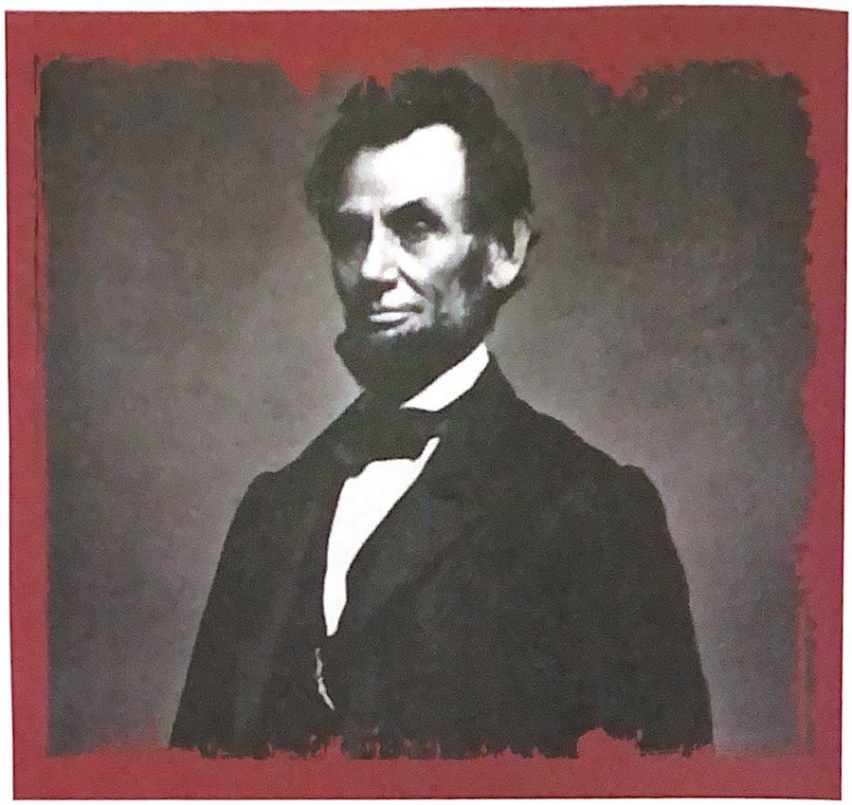
He read books to teach himself law so that he could practice as an attorney. Finally in 1846 he was elected to the U.S. Congress. He served an unremarkable term, and at the end of two years, he left Washington and returned to Illinois and his law office. He was hardworking, well-off, and respected by the people who knew him—but not nearly as well-known or as widely admired as Jefferson Davis.

It may seem that two men could not be more different than Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis. But in fact, they had many things in common. Both Davis and Lincoln loved books and reading. Both had children who died young. One of Davis's sons, Samuel, died when he was still a baby, and another, Joseph, died after an accident while Davis was the president of the Confederacy. Lincoln, too, lost one son, Eddie, at a very young age and another, Willie, his favorite, while he was president of the United States.

Both men fell in love young, and both lost the women they loved to illness. When he was twenty-four years old, Davis fell for Sarah Knox Taylor. Called Knox, she was just eighteen and was the daughter of army general and future president Zachary Taylor. It took Davis two years to convince her family to allow her to marry him—but at last he did. Married in June of 1835, just three months later both he and Knox fell ill with malaria, and she died. Davis was devastated. His grief changed him—afterward he was quieter, sterner, a different man.

Eight years later, he found someone else to love. He married Varina Howell, the daughter of a wealthy family. For the rest of his life, Davis would depend on Varina's love, advice, and loyalty. They would eventually have six children; only two would outlive Jefferson Davis.

Lincoln was still a young man when he met and fell in love with Ann Rutledge. Everyone expected them to get married, but before that could happen, Ann became ill and died. Lincoln himself never talked or wrote about Ann after her



Abraham Lincoln, president of the United States of America

death. But those who knew him at the time remembered how crushed and miserable he was to lose her. Some even worried that he might kill himself.

Abraham Lincoln recovered and eventually married Mary Todd. But their marriage was not as happy as that of Jefferson and Varina. Mary was a woman of shifting moods. Jealous, insulting, rude, selfish, careless with money, she was difficult to live with.

By far the greatest difference between Davis and Lincoln was their view on slavery. Davis, a slave owner, firmly believed that white people were superior to blacks, and that slavery was good for black people, who needed and benefited from having masters to rule over them. He also believed that the founding fathers of the United States, the men who had written the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, a number of whom had owned slaves, had intended slavery to be part of America forever.

Lincoln thought slavery was simply wrong, and he believed that the founders hadn't intended it always to exist in the United States. Lincoln was willing to let slavery remain legal in the states where it was already permitted. But he

thought that slavery should not be allowed to spread into the new states entering the Union in the American south and southwest. Every new state to join the country, Lincoln firmly believed, should prohibit slavery.

Lincoln explained his views in several famous debates during his campaign for Senate in 1858. The campaign debates between Lincoln and Stephen Douglas brought Lincoln to national attention for the first time. Though he lost that Senate race, his new visibility enabled Lincoln to win the presidential nomination and election in 1860. To the surprise of many, it was Abraham Lincoln who became the president of the United States by winning less than 40 percent of the popular vote. More people voted for the other three candidates running for president than for Lincoln.

Chapter One

On the morning of Sunday, April 2, 1865, Richmond, Virginia, capital city of the Confederate States of America, did not look like a city at war. The White House of the Confederacy was surprisingly close to—one hundred miles from—the White House in Washington, D.C. But the armies of the North had never been able to capture Richmond. After four years of war, Richmond had not been invaded by Yankees. The people there had thus far been spared many of the horrors of fighting. This morning everything appeared beautiful and serene. The air smelled of spring, and fresh green growth promised a season of new life.

As he usually did on Sundays, President Jefferson Davis walked from his mansion to St. Paul's Episcopal Church. One of the worshippers, a young woman named Constance Cary, recalled the day: "On the Sunday morning of April 2, a perfect Sunday of the Southern spring, a large congregation assembled as usual at St. Paul's." As the service went on, a messenger entered the church. He brought Jefferson Davis a telegram from Robert E. Lee.

The telegram was not addressed to Davis, but to his secretary of war, John C. Breckinridge. Breckinridge had sent it on to Davis. It told devastating news: The Union army was approaching the city gates, and the Army of Northern Virginia, with Lee in command, was powerless to stop them.

Headquarters, April 2, 1865

General J. C. Breckinridge:

I see no prospect of doing more than holding our position here till night. I am not certain that I can do that. . . . I advise that all preparation be made for leaving Richmond tonight. I will advise you later, according to circumstances.

R. E. Lee

On reading the telegram, Davis did not panic, but he turned pale and quietly rose to leave the church. The news quickly spread through Richmond. "As if by a flash of electricity, Richmond knew that on the morrow her streets would be crowded by her captors, her rulers fled… her high hopes crushed to earth," Constance Cary wrote later. "I saw many pale faces, some trembling lips, but in all that day I heard no expression of a weakling fear."

Many people did not believe that Richmond would be captured. General Lee would not allow it to happen, they told themselves. He would protect the city, just as the army had before. In the spring of 1865, Robert E. Lee was the greatest hero in the Confederacy, more popular than Jefferson Davis, who many people blamed for their country's present misfortunes. With Lee to defend them, many people of Richmond refused to believe that before the sun rose the next morning, life as they knew it would come to an end.

Jefferson Davis walked from St. Paul's to his office. He summoned the leaders of his government to meet with him there at once. Davis explained to his cabinet[2] that the fall of Richmond would not mean the death of the Confederate States of America. He would not stay behind to surrender the capital. If Richmond was doomed to fall, then the president and the government would leave the city, travel south, and set up a new capital in Danville, Virginia, 140 miles to the southwest. The war would go on.

Davis told the cabinet to pack their most important records and send them to the railroad station. What they could not take, they must burn. The train would leave tonight, and he expected all of them to be on it. Secretary of War John C. Breckinridge would stay behind in Richmond to make sure

[2] **cabinet:** a government leader's advisers.

the evacuation of the government went smoothly, and then follow the train to Danville. Davis ordered the train to take on other cargo, too: the Confederate treasury, consisting of half a million dollars in gold and silver coins.

After spending most of the afternoon working at his office, Davis walked home to pack his few remaining possessions. The house was eerily still. His wife, Varina, and their four children had already evacuated to Charlotte, North Carolina. His private secretary, Burton Harrison, had gone with them to make sure they reached safety.

Varina had begged to stay with her husband in Richmond until the end. Jefferson said no, that for their safety, she and the children must go. He understood that she wanted to help and comfort him, he told her, "but you can do this in but one way, and that is by going yourself and taking our children to a place of safety." What he said next was frightening: "If I live," he promised, "you can come to me when the struggle is ended."

On March 29, the day before Varina and the children left Richmond, Davis gave his wife a revolver and taught her how to use it. He also gave her all the money he had, saving just one five-dollar gold piece for himself. Varina and the children left the White House on Thursday, March 30. "Leaving the house as it was," Varina wrote later, "and taking only our clothing, I made ready with my young sister and my four little children, the eldest only nine years old, to go forth into the unknown." The children did not want to leave their father. "Our little Jeff begged to remain with him," Varina wrote, "and Maggie clung to him . . . for it was evident he thought he was looking his last upon us." The president took his family to the station and put them aboard a train.

While Jefferson Davis spent his last night in the Confederate White House, alone, without his family, he did not know that Abraham Lincoln had left his own White House several days ago and was now traveling in Virginia. Lincoln was visiting the Union Army.[3] The Union president did not want to go home until he had won the war. And he dreamed of seeing Richmond.

[3] **Union Army:** the land force of the military that fought for the northern states during the Civil War.

Chapter Two

On March 23 at 1:00 P.M., Lincoln left Washington, bound south on the ship *River Queen*. His wife, Mary, came with him, along with their son Tad. A day later the vessel anchored off City Point, Virginia, headquarters of General Grant and the Armies of the United States.

Lincoln met with his commanders to discuss the war. General William Tecumseh Sherman asked Lincoln about his plans for Jefferson Davis. Many in the North wanted Davis hanged if he was captured. Did Lincoln think so, too? Lincoln answered Sherman by saying that all he wanted was for the Southern armies to be defeated. He wanted the Confederate soldiers sent back to their homes, their farms, and their shops. Lincoln didn't answer Sherman's question about Jefferson Davis directly. But he told a story.

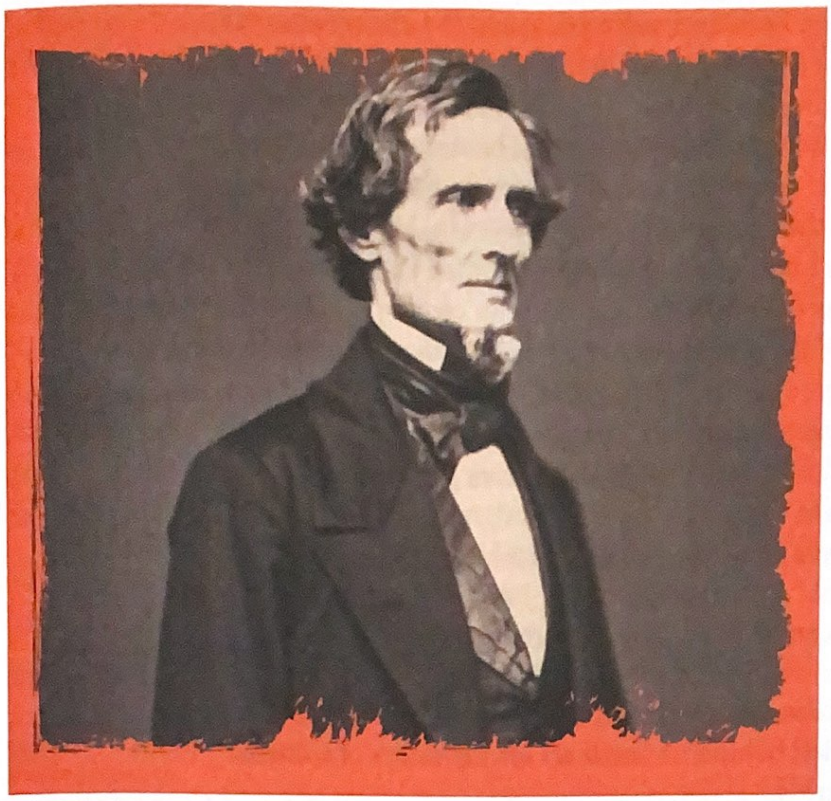
There was a man, Lincoln said, who had sworn never to touch alcohol. He visited a friend who offered him a drink of lemonade. Then the friend suggested that the lemonade would taste better with a little brandy in it. The man replied that if some of the brandy were to get into the lemonade "unbeknown to him," that would be fine.

Sherman believed that Lincoln meant it would be the best thing for the country if Jefferson Davis were simply to leave and never return. As the Union president, Lincoln could hardly say in public that he wanted a man who had rebelled against his government to get away without punishment. But if Davis were to escape "unbeknown to him," as Lincoln seemed to be suggesting, that would be fine.

At City Point Lincoln received reports and sent messages. He haunted the army telegraph office for news of the battles raging in Virginia. He knew that soon Robert E. Lee must make a major decision: Would he sacrifice his army in a final, hopeless battle to defend Richmond, or would he abandon the Confederate capital and save his men to fight another day?

In the afternoon of April 2, Lee telegraphed another warning to Jefferson Davis in Richmond. "I think it absolutely necessary that we should abandon our position tonight," he wrote. Lee had made his choice. His army would retreat. Richmond would be captured.

Davis packed some clothes, retrieved important papers and letters from his private office, and waited at the mansion.



Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederate States of America

Then a messenger brought him word: The officials of his government had assembled at the station. The train that would carry the president and the cabinet of the Confederacy was loaded and ready to depart.

Davis and a few friends left the White House, mounted their horses, and rode to the railroad station. Crowds did not line the streets to cheer their president or to shout best wishes for his journey. The citizens of Richmond were locking up their homes, hiding their valuables, or fleeing the city before the Yankees arrived. Throughout the day and into the night, countless people left however they could—on foot, on horseback, in carriages, in carts, or in wagons. Some rushed to the railroad station, hoping to catch the last train south. Few would escape.

But not all of Richmond's inhabitants dreaded the capital's fall. Among the blacks of Richmond, the mood was happy. At the African church, it was a day of **jubilation**. Worshippers poured into the streets, congratulated one another, and prayed for the coming of the Union army.

jubilation
(jo͞o´bə-lā´shən) *n.* *Jubilation* is the act of celebrating.

When Jefferson Davis got to the station, he hesitated. Perhaps the fortunes of war had turned in the Confederacy's

favor that night. Perhaps Lee had defeated the enemy after all, as he had done so many times before. For an hour Davis held the loaded and waiting train in hopes of receiving good news from Lee. That telegram never came. The Army of Northern Virginia would not save Richmond from its fate.

Dejected, the president boarded the train. He did not have a private luxurious sleeping car built for the leader of a country. Davis took his seat in a common coach packed with the officials of his government. The train gathered steam and crept out of the station at slow speed, no more than ten miles per hour. It was a humble, sobering departure of the president of the Confederate States of America from his capital city.

As the train rolled out of Richmond, most of the passengers were somber. There was nothing left to say. "It was near midnight," Postmaster General John Reagan, on board the train, remembered, "when the President and his cabinet left the heroic city. As our train, frightfully overcrowded, rolled along toward Danville we were **oppressed** with sorrow for those we left behind us and fears for the safety of General Lee and his army."

oppress
(ə-prĕs´) *v.* When you *oppress* someone, you overwhelm or crush them.

The presidential train was not the last one to leave Richmond that night. A second one carried another cargo from the city—the treasure of the Confederacy, half a million dollars in gold and silver coins, plus deposits from the Richmond banks. Captain William Parker, an officer in the Confederate States Navy, was put in charge of the treasure and ordered to guard it during the trip to Danville. Men desperate to escape Richmond and who had failed to make it on to Davis's train climbed aboard their last hope, the treasure train. The wild mood at the station alarmed Parker, and he ordered his men—some were only boys—to guard the doors and not allow "another soul to enter."

Once Jefferson Davis was gone, and as the night wore on, Parker witnessed the breakdown of order: "The whiskey…was running in the gutters, and men were getting drunk upon it.… Large numbers of **ruffians** suddenly sprung into existence—I suppose thieves, deserters…who had been hiding." If the mob learned what cargo Parker and his men guarded, then the **looters**, driven mad by greed, would have attacked the train. Parker was prepared to order his men to fire on the crowd.

ruffian
(rŭf´ē-ən) *n.* A *ruffian* is a thug or a gangster.

looter
(lo͞ot´ər) *n.* A *looter* is someone who steals during a war or riot.

Before that became necessary, the treasure train got up steam and followed Jefferson Davis into the night.

To add to the chaos caused by the mobs, soon there would be fire. And it would not be the Union troops who would burn the city. The Confederates accidentally set their own city afire when they burned supplies to keep them from Union hands. The flames spread out of control and reduced much of the capital to ruins.

Union troops outside Richmond would see the fire and hear the explosions. "About 2 o'clock on the morning of April 3d bright fires were seen in the direction of Richmond. Shortly after, while we were looking at these fires, we heard explosions," one witness reported.

On the way to Danville, the president's train stopped at Clover Station. It was three o'clock in the morning. There a young army lieutenant, eighteen years old, saw the train pull in. He spotted Davis through a window, waving to the people gathered at the station. Later he witnessed the treasure train pass, and others, too. "I saw a government on wheels," he said. From one car in the rear a man cried out, to no one in particular, "Richmond's burning. Gone. All gone."

As Jefferson Davis continued his journey to Danville, Richmond burned and Union troops approached. Around dawn a black man who had escaped the city reached Union lines and reported what Lincoln and U. S. Grant, the commanding general of the Armies of the United States, suspected. The Confederate government had abandoned the capital during the night and the road to the city was open. There would be no battle for Richmond. The Union army could march in and occupy the rebel capital without firing a shot.

The first Union troops entered Richmond shortly after sunrise on Monday, April 3. They marched through the streets, arrived downtown, and took control of the government buildings. They tried to put out the fires, which still burned in some sections of the city. Just a few hours since Davis had left it, the White House of the Confederacy was seized by the Union and made into their new headquarters.

Chapter Three

The gloom that filled President Davis's train eased with the morning sun. Some of the officials of the Confederate government began to talk and tell jokes, trying to brighten the mood. Judah Benjamin, the secretary of state, talked about food and told stories. "[H]is hope and good humor [were] inexhaustible," one official recalled. With a playful air, he discussed the fine points of a sandwich, analyzed his daily diet given the food shortages that plagued the South, and as an example of doing much with little, showed off his coat and pants, both made from an old shawl, which had kept him warm through three winters. Colonel Frank Lubbock, a former governor of Texas, entertained his fellow travelers with wild western tales.

But back in Richmond, the people had endured a night of terror. The ruins and the smoke presented a terrible sight. A Confederate army officer wrote about what he saw at a depot, or warehouse, where food supplies were stored. "By daylight, on the 3d," he noted, "a mob of men, women, and children, to the number of several thousands, had gathered at the corner of 14th and Cary streets … for it must be remembered that in 1865 Richmond was a half-starved city, and the Confederate Government had that morning removed its guards and abandoned the removal of the **provisions**. . . . The depot doors

provisions (prə-vĭzh′ənz) *n.* *Provisions* are a stock of necessary supplies, such as food.

Richmond, Virginia shortly after Union forces entered the city on April 3, 1865.

were forced open and a demoniacal struggle for the countless barrels of hams, bacon, whisky, flour, sugar, coffee . . . raged about the buildings among the hungry mob. The gutters ran with whisky, and it was lapped up as it flowed down the streets, while all fought for a share of the plunder."

A Union officer wrote about what he saw as he entered the city in early morning, when it was still burning. "As we neared the city the fires seemed to increase in number and size, and at intervals loud explosions were heard. On entering the square we found Capitol Square covered with people who had fled there to escape the fire and were utterly worn out with fatigue and fright. Details were at once made to scour the city and press into service every able-bodied man, white or black, and make them assist in extinguishing the flames."

Constance Cary ventured outside to see her ruined and fallen city. Horrified, she discovered that Yankees had occupied the Confederate White House. "I looked over at the President's house, and saw the porch crowded with Union soldiers and politicians, the street in front filled with curious gaping negroes." The sight of ex-slaves roving freely about disgusted her. "It is no longer our Richmond," she complained, and added that the Confederate anthem still had the power to raise some people's spirits: "One of the girls tells me she finds great comfort in singing 'Dixie' with her head buried in a feather pillow."

All day on April 3, Washington, D.C., celebrated the fall of Richmond. The *Washington Star* newspaper captured the joyous mood: "As we write Washington city is in such a blaze of excitement and enthusiasm as we never before witnessed here. . . . The thunder of cannon; the ringing of bells; the eruption of flags from every window and housetop, the shouts of enthusiastic gatherings in the streets; all echo the glorious report. RICHMOND IS OURS!!!"

The Union capital celebrated without President Lincoln, who was still with the army. While Washington rejoiced, the secretary of war, Edwin Stanton, worried about Lincoln's safety. He believed that the president was traveling in enemy territory without sufficient protection. Stanton urged Lincoln to return to Washington. But Lincoln didn't take the warning. He telegraphed back:

Head Quarters Armies of the United States
City-Point,
April 3. 5 P.M. 1865

Hon. Sec. of War
Washington, D.C.

Yours received. Thanks for your caution; but I have already been to Petersburg, stayed with Gen. Grant an hour & a half and returned here. It is certain now that Richmond is in our hands, and I think I will go there to-morrow. I will take care of myself.

A. Lincoln

President Davis did not arrive in Danville until 4:00 P.M. on the afternoon of April 3. It had taken eighteen hours to travel just 140 miles. The plodding journey from Richmond to Danville made clear an uncomfortable truth. If Jefferson Davis hoped to avoid capture, continue the war, and save the Confederacy, he would have to move a lot faster than this. Still, the trip had served its purpose. It had saved, for at least another day, the Confederate States of America.

On the afternoon and evening of Monday, April 3, the government on wheels unpacked and set up shop in Danville, Virginia. Jefferson Davis hoped to remain there as long as possible. In Danville he could send and receive communications so that he could issue orders and control the movements of his armies. It would be hard for his commanders to telegraph the president or send riders with the latest news if he stayed on the move and they had to chase him from town to town. In Danville he had the bare minimum he needed to continue the war.

The citizens of Danville had received word that their president was coming, and a large number of people waited at the station for his train. They cheered Jefferson Davis when he stepped down from his railroad car. The important people of the town opened their homes to the president and his government. But soon refugees fleeing from Richmond and elsewhere flooded into Danville. There was not enough room for everyone. Many slept in railroad cars and cooked their meals in the open.

But in Danville Davis and his government had little to do except wait for news. The future course of the war in Virginia

depended upon Robert E. Lee and what was left of his army. Davis expected news from Lee on April 4, but none came. The president longed for action: He wanted to rally armies, send them to strategic places, and continue fighting. Instead, he had to sit still and wait for word from the Army of Northern Virginia.

"April 4 and the succeeding four days passed," noted Stephen R. Mallory, the secretary of the navy, "without bringing word from Lee or Breckinridge, or of the operations of the army; and the anxiety of the President and his followers was intense." Refugees from Richmond carried wild stories. Some said Lee had won "a glorious victory." Others said Lee was too busy fighting to send messengers. Jefferson Davis ignored the rumors.

On April 4, as Davis waited impatiently for news, Lincoln experienced one of the most thrilling days of his life. "Thank God that I have lived to see this!" he wrote. "It seems to me that I have been dreaming a horrid dream for four years, and now the nightmare is gone. I want to go to Richmond."

Admiral Porter, a Union navy admiral, agreed to take him there, "[i]f there is any of it left. There is black smoke over the city." On the *River Queen* they traveled up the river toward Richmond. When the water became too shallow for big boats, Porter transferred the president and Tad to his personal craft, the "admiral's barge." Despite the fancy name, it was no more than a big rowboat. But it allowed them to continue.

The city looked eerie. Lincoln and Porter peered at the rebel capital but saw no one. They saw smoke from the fires. The only sound was the creaking of the oars. "The street along the river-front was as deserted," Porter observed, "as if this had been a city of the dead." Although the Union army had controlled the city for several hours, "not a soldier was to be seen."

The oarsmen rowed for a wharf, and Lincoln stepped out of the boat. Admiral Porter described what happened next: "There was a small house on this landing, and behind it were some twelve negroes digging with spades. The leader of them was an old man sixty years of age. He raised himself to an upright position as we landed, and put his hands up to his eyes. Then he dropped his spade and sprang forward." The man knelt at Lincoln's feet, praising him, calling him

the messiah[4] come to free his children from slavery. "Glory, Hallelujah!" he cried, and kissed the president's feet. The others did the same.

Lincoln was embarrassed. He did not want to enter Richmond like a king. He spoke to the **throng** of former slaves. "Don't kneel to me. That is not right. You must kneel to God only, and thank him for the liberty you will hereafter enjoy."

throng
(thrông) *n.* A *throng* is a large group of people.

Before allowing Lincoln to leave them and proceed on foot into Richmond, the freed slaves burst into joyous song:

Oh, all ye people clap your hands,
And with triumphant voices sing;
No force the mighty power withstands
Of God, the universal King.

The hymn drew hundreds of blacks to the landing. They surrounded Lincoln, making it impossible for him to move. Admiral Porter recognized how foolish he had been to bring the president of the United States ashore without enough soldiers to protect him.

The crowd went wild. Some rushed forward, laid their hands upon the president, and collapsed in joy. Some, too awed to approach Father Abraham, kept their distance and, speechless, just stared at him. Others yelled for joy and performed somersaults. Lincoln spoke to them: "My poor friends, you are free—free as air. You can cast off the name of slave and trample upon it. . . . Liberty is your birthright.... But you must try to deserve this priceless **boon**. Let the world see that you merit it, and are able to maintain it by your good works. Don't let your joy carry you into excesses. Learn the laws and obey them. . . . There, now, let me pass on; I have but little time to spare. I want to see the capital."

boon
(bo͞on) *n.* A *boon* is a gift or benefit.

Porter ordered six marines to march ahead of the president and six behind him, and the landing party walked toward downtown Richmond. The streets were dusty, and smoke from the fires still hung in the air. Lincoln could smell Richmond burning. By now thousands of people, blacks and whites, crowded the streets.

[4] **messiah:** the savior or liberator.

"The crowd went wild. Some rushed forward, laid their hands upon the president, and collapsed in joy."

A beautiful girl, about seventeen years old, carrying a bouquet of roses, stepped into the street and advanced toward the president. Admiral Porter watched her struggle through the crowd. "She had a hard time in reaching him," he remembered. "I reached out and helped her within the circle of the sailors' bayonets, where, although nearly stifled with dust, she gracefully presented her bouquet to the President and made a neat little speech, while he held her hand. . . . There was a card on the bouquet with these simple words: 'From Eva to the Liberator of the slaves.'"

Porter spotted a sole soldier on horseback and called out to him: "Go to the general, and tell him to send a military escort here to guard the President and get him through this crowd!"

"Is that old Abe?" the trooper asked before galloping off.

Lincoln went on to the Confederate White House and entered Jefferson Davis's study. One of the men with him remembered watching Lincoln sit down and say, "This must have been President Davis's chair." Lincoln crossed his legs and "looked far off with a serious, dreamy expression." Lincoln knew the Confederate president had been here, in this room, no more than thirty-six hours ago. This was the closest Abraham Lincoln had ever come to Jefferson Davis.

One observer remembered that Lincoln "lay back in the chair like a tired man whose nerves had carried him beyond his strength." Sitting in the quiet study of the Confederate president, perhaps Lincoln weighed the cost—more than 620,000 American lives[5]—paid to get there. He did not speak. Then he requested a glass of water.

After Lincoln left the Confederate White House, he toured Richmond in a buggy. Blacks flocked to him and rejoiced, just

[5] **more than 620,000 American lives:** the number of deaths caused by the Civil War.

as they had done at the river landing. But not all of Richmond welcomed him to the ruined capital. Most whites stayed in their homes behind locked doors and closed shutters, with some glaring at the unwelcome conqueror through their windows.

It was a miracle that no one poked a rifle or a pistol through an open window and opened fire on the despised Yankee president. Lincoln knew the risk. "I walked alone on the street, and anyone could have shot me from a second-story window," he said. His Richmond tour was one of Lincoln's triumphs. It was the most important day of his presidency. It was also one of the most dangerous days of his life. No American president before or since has ever placed himself at that much risk.

Before Lincoln left Richmond, the Union general left in charge of the city asked Lincoln to tell him how he should deal with the conquered rebels. Lincoln's answer became an American legend. He replied that he didn't want to give any orders, but, "If I were in your place I'd let 'em up easy, let 'em up easy."

During his time in Richmond, Lincoln did not order arrests of any rebel leaders who stayed in the city, did not order their property seized, and said nothing of **vengeance** or punishment. Nor did he order a manhunt for Davis and the officials who had left the city less than two days ago. It was a moment of remarkable greatness and generosity. It was Abraham Lincoln at his best.

vengeance (vĕn´jəns) *n.* *Vengeance* is a punishment given in return for a wrong.

COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSION With a partner, discuss how Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis demonstrated leadership qualities in the last days of the war. Cite specific evidence from the text to support your ideas.

Analyze Structure: Comparison and Contrast

8.RI.1.3, 8.RI.2.5

The Civil War is a topic that lends itself to the examination of two sides. One way to do that in writing is through the use of **compare and contrast organization,** a pattern of organization in which an author compares two or more subjects by explaining how they are similar and contrasts them by explaining how they are different.

- Two subjects can be compared and contrasted within a single paragraph. In this example from *Bloody Times*, Swanson identifies ways that Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis were alike:

  It may seem that two men could not be more different . . . But in fact, they had many things in common. Both . . . loved books and reading. Both had children who died young.

- A comparison and contrast can be made in two separate paragraphs, with one paragraph covering various aspects of the first subject and the next paragraph covering similar aspects of the second subject.
- A comparison and contrast can be made within larger sections of a piece, such as chapter by chapter.

Look for examples of each type of compare and contrast organization as you analyze *Bloody Times*.

Analyze Connotative Meanings

8.RI.2.4, 8.L.3.5c

Word choice, an author's selection of words, can affect a reader's attitude toward a subject. For example, every word has a dictionary definition, or **denotation.** Words also have **connotations**—the feelings or ideas that people associate with that word. Words with a similar denotation can have a positive, neutral, or negative connotation.

Positive	Neutral	Negative
determined, resolute	firm	stubborn, obstinate

Study this sentence. How would your feelings about Lincoln be different if the author had used the word *stubbornly* instead of *firmly*?

Every new state to join the country, Lincoln firmly believed, should prohibit slavery.

Review *Bloody Times* to find another sentence whose meaning would change if a word with a similar denotation but different connotation was used.

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Analyzing the Text

8.RI.1.1, 8.RI.1.
8.RI.2.4, 8.RI.2.
8.W.1.2, 8.W.3.
8.W.3.8, 8.W.3.

Cite Text Evidence Support your responses with evidence from the text.

1. **Identify Patterns** Review the overall pattern of organization that author James Swanson used in this piece. How is the organizational pattern in the introduction different from each of the chapters?
2. **Interpret** Reread lines 74–82. Swanson writes that Davis was "sterner." How is the connotation of *stern* different from words such as *harsh* and *authoritarian* that have similar denotations?
3. **Compare** What does the author identify as the greatest difference between Davis and Lincoln? How did this difference affect the life course of these two men?
4. **Draw Conclusions** Reread lines 175–183. Describe Jefferson Davis's behavior. What does his conduct reveal about his character?
5. **Evaluate** When an author refers to another literary work without naming it, it is called an **allusion.** Identify several allusions to the Bible in lines 502–546. What do these suggest about the way Lincoln was viewed by the end of the Civil War?

Writing and Research

With a small group, conduct research and write a short report about how Lincoln's views on slavery and emancipation changed over time. Explain his thoughts about emancipation before, during, and after the Civil War, and describe what led to his changing attitudes. Share your findings with the class.

PERFORMANCE TASK

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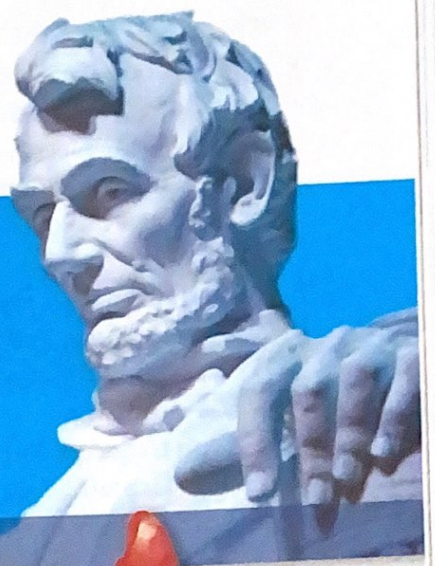
Respond in Writing Create a poster that compares and contrasts Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis.

- First, draw a Venn diagram on your poster. Label each side of the diagram with one man's name and include an image to represent him.
- Next, revisit the text of *Bloody Times* to identify character traits of these two leaders. Write the traits in the appropriate sections of your Venn diagram.
- Finally, use the traits you identified to write a brief character sketch of each man below the corresponding parts of the diagram.

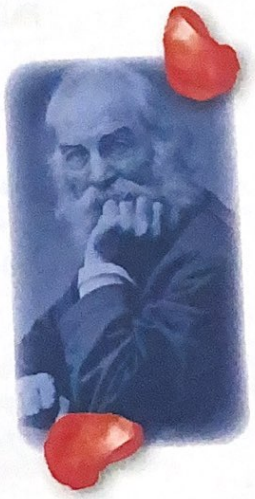
Background *On April 14, 1865, only five days after the Civil War ended, President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated at the Ford Theater in Washington, D.C., where he was watching a performance. Lincoln was shot by John Wilkes Booth, a famous actor and a Confederate sympathizer. Although Booth initially escaped, he was discovered days later by Union soldiers. Booth was killed while trying to avoid capture.*



O Captain! My Captain!

Poem by Walt Whitman

Walt Whitman (1819–1892) *was a great admirer of President Lincoln. After the president was assassinated, Whitman wrote "O Captain! My Captain!" to capture the sense of tragedy that descended upon the country. Largely unknown to the public when he wrote this poem, Whitman eventually gained a reputation as one of the greatest American writers. "O Captain! My Captain!" is among his most famous works, and his book of poems,* Leaves of Grass, *is considered one of the masterpieces of American literature.*



SETTING A PURPOSE As you read, look for evidence of Whitman's feelings about Lincoln. Do others seem to share his feelings? Write down any questions you have as you read.

O Captain! My Captain!

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack,[1] the prize we sought[2]
is won,

The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel,[3] the vessel grim and daring:
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung[4]—for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores
a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck,
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed
and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
But I with mournful tread,[5]
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSION What conflicting thoughts and feelings does this poem express about the end of the Civil War? With a partner, discuss whether you think many Americans shared Walt Whitman's feelings. Cite specific evidence from the text to support your ideas.

[1] **rack:** a mass of wind-driven clouds.
[2] **sought** (sôt): searched for; tried to gain.
[3] **keel:** the main part of a ship's structure.
[4] **flung:** suddenly put out.
[5] **tread** (trĕd): footsteps.

Determine Meaning of Words and Phrases

8.RL.2.4, 8.RL.2.5

One way poets can help readers understand things in new ways is by using **figurative language,** or imaginative descriptions that are not literally true. A **metaphor** is a type of figurative language in which an author compares two things that are generally different but have some quality or qualities in common. In an **extended metaphor,** this comparison between two things is developed at some length and in different ways.

An extended metaphor in a poem may continue, or extend, through several lines or stanzas or throughout the entire poem. In "O Captain! My Captain!" Whitman uses an extended metaphor to express his feelings about Lincoln and the Civil War. Reread the poem and determine what is being compared.

Analyze Structure

8.RL.2.5

Certain forms of poetry are associated with particular topics. For example, sonnets are often associated with love, and limericks are often associated with humor. "O Captain! My Captain!" is an elegy. An **elegy** is a poem in which the speaker reflects on death. In contrast to other forms of poetry, elegies often pay tribute to someone who has recently died.

Most elegies use formal, dignified language and are serious in **tone,** which is the writer's attitude toward the subject. Elegies may also express

- sorrow and grief
- praise for the person who has died
- comforting thoughts or ideas

In these lines from "O Captain! My Captain!," Whitman expresses his own sorrow.

But I with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,

Review "O Captain! My Captain!" and identify words and phrases that pay tribute to Lincoln's greatness.

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Analyzing the Text

8.RL.1.1, 8.RL.2.4, 8.RL.2.5, 8.SL.1.1, 8.S

Cite Text Evidence Support your responses with evidence from the text.

1. **Interpret** Reread lines 1–3. In Whitman's metaphor, what is the "fearful trip," the "ship," and the "prize" that was won? What is the "port"? Express your answer in a chart like the one shown.

Element	What It Represents
fearful	
trip	
ship	
prize	
port	

2. **Interpret** Examine lines 3–13. Describe the grand celebration that Whitman tells about in these lines. Why are the crowds rejoicing?
3. **Evaluate** When there is a contrast between appearance and reality, **irony** results. Why is it ironic that the crowds are celebrating in this poem?
4. **Cite Evidence** How does Whitman express his own grief about Lincoln's death? Cite three specific examples.
5. **Evaluate** Reread lines 20–21. What is the meaning of these lines in terms of Whitman's extended metaphor?

PERFORMANCE TASK

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Speaking Activity: Choral Reading Work with a small group to present a choral reading of "O Captain! My Captain!"

- Begin by rereading the poem carefully. As a group, decide how each line should be read based on its message. Are the words expressing sorrow? praise? comfort?
- Next, decide who will read each line or part of a line. Should some words be read by one speaker? by two speakers? by your entire group?
- The choices you make about how the lines will be spoken should reflect your analysis of the poem. Be prepared to explain your choices.