

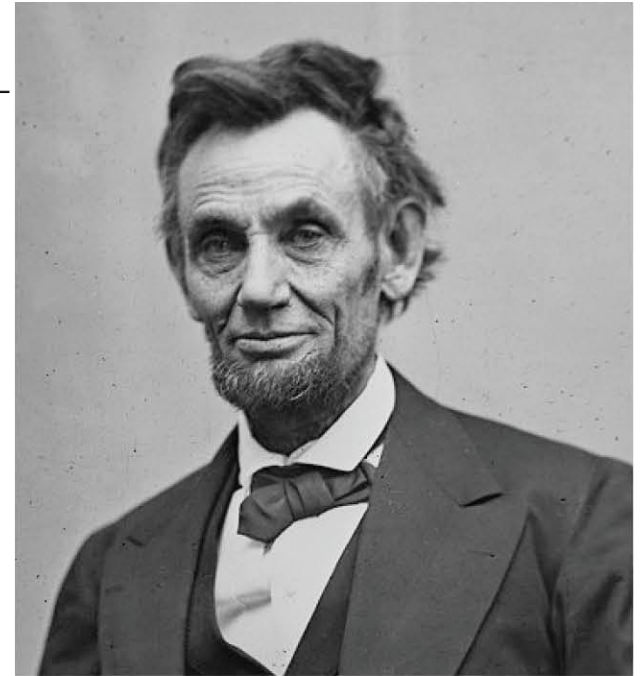
# Abraham Lincoln's Hat

On April 14, 1865, President Lincoln decided to see a play with his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, and friends Major Henry Rathbone and Clara Harris at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. As he sat in his seat in a special reserved box, he took his hat off and placed it on the floor. Around 10:15 p.m., well-known actor and Confederate *sympathizer* John Wilkes Booth, angry over the Confederacy's *defeat* in the Civil War, burst into the President's box and shot him. Knowing it would become an American treasure, the War Department claimed possession of his hat and other things he had with him the night of the attack. In 1867, the hat was given to the Smithsonian as a representation of one of our country's greatest leaders.



**Answer the questions below on a separate piece of paper.**

1. During the Civil War, many of the Southern U.S. States wanted to secede, or form their own separate country and government. Do you think states should be able to secede? Why or why not?
2. The Smithsonian has to do many things to make sure Lincoln's hat, now almost 150 years old, does not show wear or age. Do you think it is important to preserve historical items?



*Abraham Lincoln*

## **Vocabulary**

*sympathizer*: Someone who supports a cause or political movement. "President Lincoln sympathized with the north during the Civil War."

*defeat*: the loss of a game or competition. "The Little League game ended in crushing defeat for the Allentown Owls, but at least their moms took them to pizza afterwards."