

Even before the warmth of life faded from Lincoln's body, his figure had entered the realm of myth.

Thousands of mourners gathered to watch the procession of his hearse in Washington, D.C.

For the first time in history, an American president had been assassinated.

The ambivalence and animosity of the last election seemed to have been forgotten.

And yet deep, difficult questions remained.

Even Lincoln's fiercest detractors assumed that he had a plan for the reconciliation of the country and the reconstruction of the South.

But Lincoln's successor, Vice President Andrew Johnson, was an enigma.