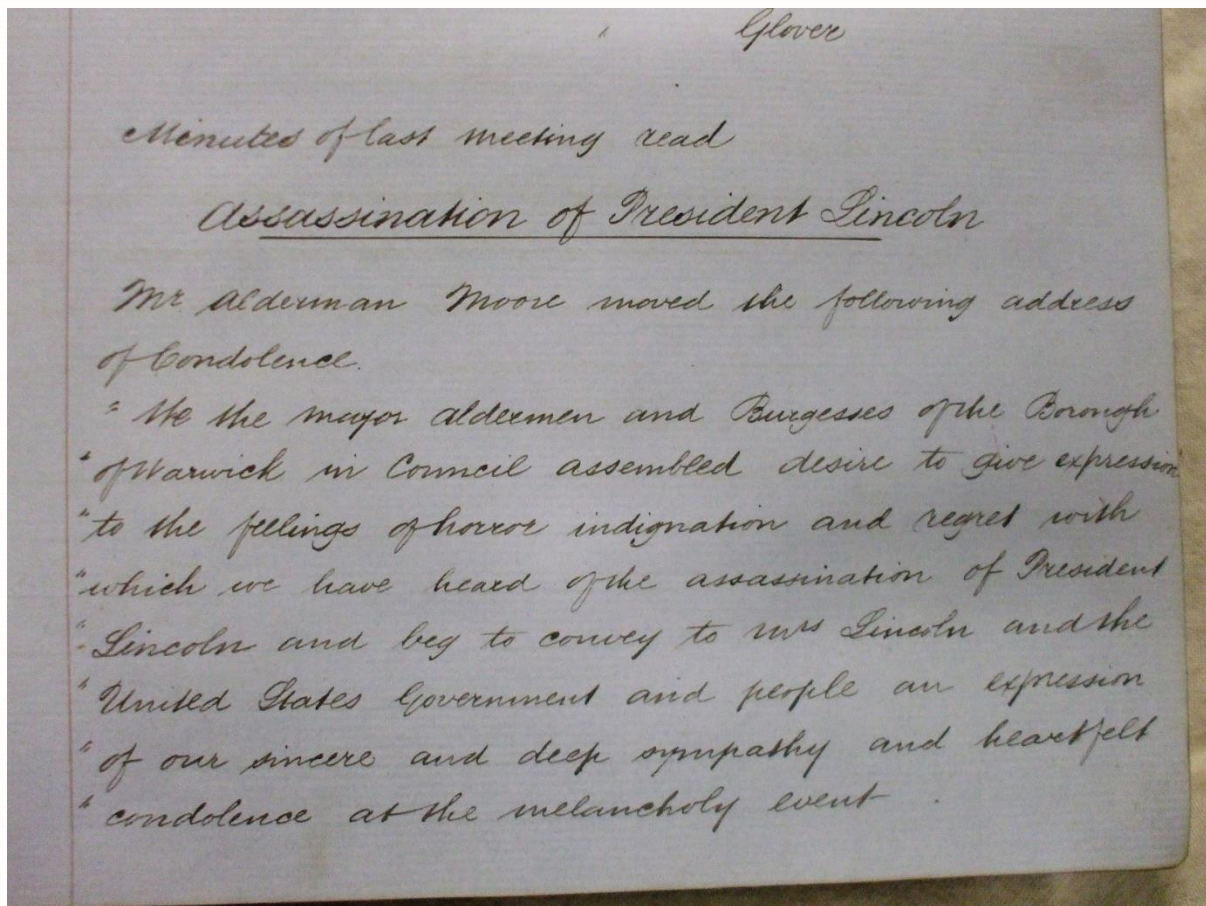


**Warwick Borough Council Minute Book, CR1618/W22/4**

April's Document of the Month focuses on an infamous event in US history, which has a connection to some of the documents held at the Record Office. On 14th April 1865 the 16<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America, Abraham Lincoln, was assassinated at Ford's Theatre, Washington D.C. News of this event spread around the world. It was mentioned in newspapers such as the Warwick Advertiser (which we have back copies of at the Record Office). It even found its way into other records, such as council minutes!



Entry mentioning the assassination, Warwick Borough Council Minutes, Warwickshire County Record Office, CR1618/W22/4.

The example we wish to focus on here is taken from the Warwick Borough Council minute book covering the years 1865-1874 (catalogue reference CR1618/W22/4). At the end of the minutes for a meeting dated 9<sup>th</sup> May 1865 (a few weeks after the event) an address by Mr. Alderman Moore is noted. In the address he states his desire to record an expression of:

“horror, indignation and regret” at the assassination and conveying his and the rest of the council’s sympathies to Mrs Lincoln, the American Government and the American people at the “melancholy event”<sup>1</sup>.

America at the time had just emerged from civil war, and the Emancipation Proclamation had been passed just a couple of years prior.

### **Abraham Lincoln**

Abraham Lincoln was born on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1809 in Kentucky. His father, Thomas, was the descendant of a weaver’s apprentice who had migrated from England to Massachusetts in 1637. His mother, Nancy, died when he was only 9 years old. His father remarried, and Sarah Bush Johnston Lincoln became part of the family. She doted on Abraham and encouraged his love of reading. Lincoln never received much in the way of formal education<sup>2</sup>.

*“Of course when I came of age I did not know much, Still somehow I could read, write and cipher ... but that was all”<sup>3</sup>.*

In March 1830, the family moved to Illinois. He tried his hand at many occupations. He spent some time as a rail splitter, storekeeper, postman and surveyor. With the onset of the Black Hawk War in 1832, he volunteered and was elected as Captain of his company. It was after this that he aspired to be a legislator. He passed the bar examination in 1836 and began to practice law. After about 20 years, he started to become prominent in national politics.

“He was noted not only for his shrewdness and practical common sense, which enabled him always to see to the heart of any legal case, but also for his invariable fairness and utter honesty<sup>4</sup>”.

In 1858, Lincoln ran against Stephen A. Douglas for Senator of Illinois. He ultimately lost this election, but his famous debates with Douglas led to him gaining a national reputation that would win him the Republican nomination for President in 1860. He became the 16<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America in November 1860, and he was re-elected for a second term in 1864<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Warwick Borough Council minute book, Warwickshire County Record Office, CR1618/W22/4.

<sup>2</sup> Information gathered from Richard N. Current, "Abraham Lincoln". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 8 Feb. 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Abraham-Lincoln>, (accessed 02/03/2021).

<sup>3</sup> *Abraham Lincoln*, The White House, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/abraham-lincoln/>, (accessed 02/03/2021).

<sup>4</sup> Richard N. Current, "Abraham Lincoln". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 8 Feb. 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Abraham-Lincoln>, (accessed 02/03/2021).

<sup>5</sup> *Abraham Lincoln*, The White House, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/abraham-lincoln/>, (accessed 02/03/2021).

During his presidency, he led the Country through Civil War, and on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1863, he issued the Emancipation Proclamation. This declared slaves within the Confederacy forever free.

Lincoln married Mary Todd on 4<sup>th</sup> November 1842, and they had four sons, of which only one survived into adulthood. On Good Friday in 1865, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth at Ford's Theatre in Washington. If Lincoln's name wasn't already inscribed into history books, the manner of his death ensured this.

