

Fragments of Lincoln’s Hair

1865
Removed from mortal assassination wound
On loan from the Paul Hill Collection, Santa Rosa

These fragments of President Abraham Lincoln’s hair have accompanying documentation of authenticity.They are part of a lock of hair removed by surgeons to access the fatal wound the president received at Ford’s Theater on April 14, 1865 from assassin John Wilkes Booth, a confederate sympathizer. Dr. Charles Leale, the first surgeon to arrive in aid of the dying President, wrote that after discovering blood on the President’s shoulder, but no source, he examined his head and found a “large firm clot of blood” behind the left ear “firmly matted with hair.” The hair was removed to gain access to the wound.The lock of hair was presented to Mrs. Lincoln.

Dr. Charles Sabin Taft, a young army doctor, was the second surgeon to arrive. He and Dr. Leale managed to get Lincoln breathing on his own again, but were not able to save the severely wounded president who died the next morning,April 15, 1865.The lock of hair was later presented to Dr.Taft as a memento of his efforts to save Lincoln.Taft’s son inherited several Lincoln relics, including the lock of hair, but sold them in 1908.The lock was encased in a simple gold box about this time. Subsequently the hair and box were sold in 1914 and again in 1993 at public auction.

Artifacts like these give us the feeling of an intimate, physical connection to the past. Lincoln (1809-1865) as the sixteenth president held office from 1861-1865, is generally considered one of the most important presidents in American history and his assassination threw the nation into a period of unprecedented mourning and significantly impacted the course of history.

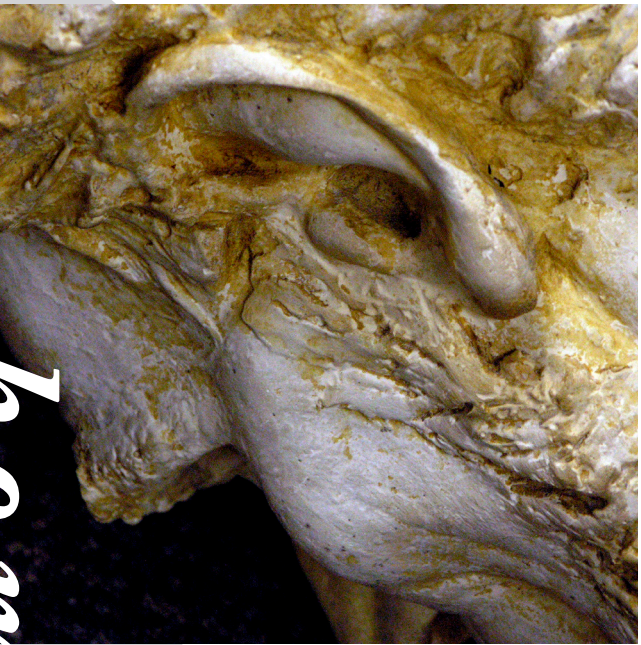


Derringer Pistol

c. 1865
Identical to the firearm used in the assassination of Lincoln
On loan from the Paul Hill Collection, Santa Rosa

On April 14, 1865 John Wilkes Booth shot President Lincoln in the back of the head near the left ear with a single-shot Deringer of precisely the same model as the weapon exhibited here.The President’s death significantly altered the course of events following the Civil War.What may have been a time of reconciliation and healing under Lincoln’s leadership became a period of deepening regional bitterness with the President’s death.

Manufactured by Henry Deringer of Philadelphia, it is about 6 inches long with a 2 ½ inch barrel.Though only eight ounces, it fired a large .44 caliber ball.The trigger and mountings are made of German silver, and there is a small box in the butt of the gun for an extra percussion cap. Deringer pistols were generally favored for their small size, making them easier to conceal. President Lincoln was shot while watching the play “Our American Cousin” at Ford’s Theatre in Washington DC.The Deringer used to kill Lincoln was found on the floor of the State Box at the theatre after the shooting.Today, the actual assassination weapon is in the Ford Theatre’s basement museum.



Bust of Abraham Lincoln

1907
plaster, 2 ft. 8 inches high
Cast by Max Bachmann for PP Caproni & Brothers, Boston
On loan from the Joyce Smith and Georgetown Collection, Sebastopol

This bust of President Lincoln was made by PP Caproni & Brothers (Boston) in 1907, a studio in Massachusetts founded by Florentine master craftsman Pietro Caproni (1862-1928). During the last two decades of the 19th century, he traveled through Europe making molds directly from masterpieces in museums such as the Louvre, the National Museum in Athens, the Vatican, the Uffizi Gallery, and the British Museum. Considered the greatest craftsman of his time, Caproni was one of the last to be allowed the freedom of casting directly from museum pieces.This ‘cast’ reproduction was, in an era before commercial photography, an integral educational tool in teaching people the history of art and antiquities.

In the hard cover PP Caproni & Brothers catalogue, No. 5395 from 1911, this bust sold for \$20 and was made available for schools and universities as an educational tool. Caproni casts can be identified by a metal hallmark imbedded into the base of the cast.

This bust was most recently used as theatrical prop for performances and movies filmed in Sonoma County.



Alaskan and Trans-Siberian Indigenous Carvings

circa 1700-contemporary
On loan from the Daniel Murley Collection, Jenner

This Collection of carvings, made from walrus ivory, whale tooth, reindeer antler, whale baleen and other materials, represents a range of work by indigenous people from Alaska, Greenland and the Trans-Siberian region. The pieces range from older works that embody age-old traditional beliefs of indigenous peoples, to more contemporary artworks produced as saleable items for the consumer market.

Among many notable items, there are several examples of the Tupilak from Greenland traditions dating back some 5,000 years. The Tupilak of ancient tradition was a magically created troll animal manufactured from human bone, earth, seaweed and skin. Individuals created Tupilaks to cause harm to a particular enemy.Today, except in rare circumstances,Tupilaks are not created for diabolical purposes. Rather, Greenlanders create them in the spirit of laughter, goodness and humor.The Tupilaks in this collection are troll-like creatures with distorted features such as overly large head and eyes.

Other carvings in this collection represent the strong tradition of shamanism and spiritual transformation among Alaskan and arctic peoples. One manifestation is the religious belief in reincarnation of human and animal souls, or inua. Physical objects, such as carvings, also possess inua that could take many different forms and this is usually expressed as a human-like face.All entities that possess inua are capable of transformation, and this theme is expressed in many forms of Arctic art, including masks and sculpture.