“Abraham Lincoln and Reconstruction: Did Booth’s Bullet Change History?”

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Synopsis

Among Americans there is no more haunting historical what-if than what might have happened had Abraham Lincoln not fallen victim to an assassin’s bullet. Certainly the Great Emancipator could have done a better job at reuniting the nation and protecting black freedom than did his successor ... right? The answer turns out to be more elusive than it might seem at first glance. That the course of events might well have been quite different is easy to assert, but as to the long-term impact, a few caveats may be in order. Discerning reflection may make us ponder the extent to which a tragic event shaped the eventual fate of Reconstruction as an effort to secure national unity, racial justice, and equality for all.