

Write a Letter

In The Huntington's Library collection is a large holding of objects relating to President Abraham Lincoln. This includes a photograph of 12 men who were pallbearers in President Lincoln's funerary procession. A pallbearer is an individual who helps carry the coffin at a funeral. The men in the photograph, taken by Mathew B. Brady's studio, paid to have their portrait taken to document this historic event. During the procession, there were different groups of men who helped carry Lincoln's coffin. The job of these 12 men was to carry the coffin from the Capitol Rotunda in Washington, D.C., to the awaiting hearse. These men were not documented in the official program, and for a long time, their identities were lost in history. Written in pencil at the bottom of the photograph are the men's names.

[Zoom in](#) to take a closer look at this photograph and view the names of the forgotten pallbearers.



Click on the image to watch a video about the forgotten pallbearers.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29bSd3AcTzO>

Now it's time to write a letter.

Materials

- Paper
- A writing utensil (pen, pencil, marker, etc.)

Steps

1. Pick one of the men in the photograph.
2. Think about what you would like to learn from this individual. What questions could you ask him? What would you tell him about life today?
3. Then write a letter to the man you chose.

Questions

1. How did you decide which of the pallbearers to write a letter to? Was it difficult to choose?
2. Why do you think the names of these individuals were lost for so many years?
3. Research other important political figures who have died. Who were the pallbearers for their funerals? Were the names of the individuals documented, or was a photograph taken, such as this one?

