

HOW LINCOLN MET DEATH

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Chapter 5

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The identical flag lowered at Fort Sumter on April 14, four years before, was raised at the hour of noon over the battered fort by General Robert Anderson, who had been in command when it was hauled down. (1) The cycle had been completed, the Civil War was over, the North victorious. The week had been one of continuous celebration.

"The illumination epidemic broke forth again tonight", said a Washington despatch of the thirteenth. "Every street from Georgetown to Navy Yard, and a majority of the houses in all the streets were brilliant with patriotic fires. The like was never seen before in the National Capitol. The words "Union", "Victory", "Grant", "Sheridan", "Sherman", "Thomas", "Ferry", "Farragut", and "Porter" were blazed from a thousand dwellings, while music, steam-whistles, cheers and speeches intensified the all-prevalent delirium". (2)

On the next evening among other celebrators there was a procession of some 1500 Washington arsenal operatives out with "music transparencies, rockets, etc. They paid their respects to the President, General Grant and Secretary Stanton and Wells". (3)

*On the afternoon of the fourteenth*

~~That~~ afternoon, The National Republican carried the statement that "Lieut.-General Grant, President Lincoln and ladies, will occupy the State Box at Ford's Theatre tonight, to witness Miss Laura Keene's Company in Tom Taylor's "Our American Cousin".

How fitting it was that the promise of peace was to be celebrated together that night by the two greatest heroes of the war. The nervous tension of the past four years and the worry of it all was to be forgotten in the hilarious atmosphere of a popular comedy.

The feeling of the North cannot be better expressed than in an editorial, "The Dawn of Peace", which appeared in The New York Daily Tribune on this never-to-be forgotten fourteenth of April.



"The path of Peace opens pleasantly before us. There may be thorns in the way as we advance, obstacles to be removed, pitfalls and snares to be avoided, but we look back to the dread road we have traveled for four long and weary and painful years, and the road before us smiles only with summer sunshine.

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"It is a moment only for rejoicing. The hours of despondency—how many we have passed through!—the fears that courage, or strength, or resources might fail us, have passed away. The good fight has been fought; the Right has triumphed. We are a Nation, no longer divided against itself, but one, indivisible, united, FREE.

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"The war is over. The house is to be set in order, but the cause of disorder exists no longer. Within the week the President has issued two Proclamations giving notice to the world that we are not now a distracted household, that the nations are to conduct themselves accordingly, and cannot again be permitted to take advantage of our disturbed condition..... The dispensation is over, the new era begun! The throes, the pains, the tortures of birth are finished. A new world is born, and the Sun of Peace rises in splendor to send abroad over the land its rays of warmth and light! Never before had nation so much cause for devout Thanksgiving; never before had a people so much reason for unrestrained congratulation and the very extravagance of joy."

Into this picture steps the assassin--

The story of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln is most clearly and graphically told in the testimony given under oath at the trial of the conspirators held in Washington, May 1 to June 30, 1865, the trial of John A. Surratt, June 10 to August 10, 1867, the impeachment investigation of Andrew Johnson by the House of Representatives in 1867 and the current newspaper files of the period. It is mostly from these sources that we draw the events of that tragic time.

As far as can be ascertained from the testimony, the first definite resolve by John Wilkes Booth to assassinate Abraham Lincoln was made on Tuesday night, April 11, four days before the fatal Good Friday. (4) Booth had arrived in Washington from New York, Saturday, April 8, (5) and on Tuesday evening, accompanied by Lewis Payne, one of the abduction plotters, he listened to President Lincoln's speech given from one of the White House windows to a crowd assembled on the lawn. According to Payne's statement made <sup>a short time</sup> before his execution, Booth became enraged when the President intimated that he favored the elective franchise for the more intelligent Negroes. ~~he~~ "he tried to persuade me to shoot the President while in the window," <sup>declared</sup> ~~but~~ <sup>who claimed he</sup> Payne told Booth that he "would take no such risk"; and Booth, <sup>that</sup> in a frenzy of rage, <sup>then</sup> remarked: "That is the last speech he will ever make." <sup>(6) #</sup> John Wilkes Booth now had worked himself into the belief that he was destined to <sup>save the South and</sup> rid the world of a tyrant. This and his morbid desire for immortality had convinced him that in the future his deed would be admired as a glorious act of heroism. Such a singular contrast in motives was beyond the conception of the bewildered government officials upon whom the burden of investigation fell after the rash deed had been consummated. Had it been otherwise, succeeding events would have followed a much saner course.

Let us from here, <sup>b</sup> account chronologically for the principal characters taking part in the tragedy:

David Herold, the conspirator captured with Booth, according to the Washington Star of April 22, 1865, was "talking to friends in front of the Metro-



politan Hotel on Wednesday (April 12)<sup>(6)</sup>

*who according to his own  
confession was*

That same Wednesday afternoon, George Atzerodt, the conspirator, selected to kill Vice-President Johnson, ascertained the location of Mr. Johnson's room at the Kirkwood House and before eight ~~a.m.~~ <sup>o'clock on the morning</sup> of the fourteenth, ~~the following Friday,~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~there~~ <sup>there</sup> had registered and had been assigned a room ~~there~~, just above the Vice-President's ~~room~~ <sup>he was</sup> ~~although he had put up previously at the Pennsylvania House whenever in Washington.~~ (7)

After firing the fatal shot, Booth exclaimed (8) "sic semper tyrannus!"

On Thursday morning, the day before the assassination, he asked another guest at the National Hotel whether "tyrannus" was spelled with two n's or two r's. (9).

The testimony of C.D. Hess, given at the conspiracy trial, covers all the known activities of Booth on Thursday afternoon.

"I am manager of Grover's Theatre and I have been in the habit of seeing John Wilkes Booth very frequently. On the day before the assassination he came into the office during the afternoon, interrupting me and the prompter of the theatre in reading a manuscript. He seated himself in a chair, and entered into a conversation on the general illumination of the city that night. He asked me if I intended to illuminate. I said yes, I should, to a certain extent; but that the next night would be my great night of illumination, that being the celebration of the fall of Sumter. He then asked, 'Do you intend to' or 'Are you going to invite the President?' My reply, I think, was, 'Yes; that reminds me I must send that invitation.' I had in my mind for several days to invite the Presidential party that night, the fourteenth. I sent my invitation to Mrs. Lincoln. My notes were usually addressed to her, as the best means of accomplishing the object." (8)

Booth's last letter to his mother bore the Washington, D.C., post office stamp, dated April 14 and was headed, "April 14, 2 a.m." (11)

On the morning of Friday the fourteenth, about 9 o'clock, Booth had a hair cut at a barber shop near Grover's Theatre. (12) H. Clay Ford, treasurer of Ford's Theatre testified with reference to Booth's actions <sup>on the fourteenth</sup> ~~that day~~: "I returned



to the theatre from my breakfast about half-past 11 o'clock that day, when my brother, James R. Ford, told me that the President had engaged a box for that night. John Wilkes Booth was at the theatre about half an hour afterward. I do not know that the fact of the President's going to the theatre that night was communicated to Booth, but I think it is very likely he found it out while there. I saw him going down the street while I was standing in the door of the theatre; as he came up he commenced talking to the parties standing around. Mr. Raybold then went into the theatre and brought him out a letter that was there for him. He sat down on the steps and commenced reading it. This was about 12 o'clock. He stayed there perhaps half an hour. I went into the office, and when I came out again he was gone....

"There were several around Booth, talking to him. Mr. Gifford was there; Mr. Evans, an actor, and Mr. Grillet, I remember, were there at the time.

"The President's visit to the theatre that evening could not have been known until 12 o'clock, unless it was made known by some one from the Executive Mansion. It was published in the Evening Star, but not in the morning papers. (11)

James R. Ford, business manager of the theatre, testified: "I was first apprised of the President's intended visit to the theatre on Friday morning, at half-past 10 o'clock. A young man, a messenger from the White House, came and engaged the box. The President had been previously invited to the theatre that night, and I had no knowledge of his intention to visit the theatre until the reception of that message. I saw John Wilkes Booth about half-past 12, two hours after I received this information. I saw him as I was coming from the Treasury Building, on the corner of Tenth and E Streets. I was going up E street, toward Eleventh street; he was coming from the direction of the theatre." (14).

James J. Gifford, stage carpenter, Ford's Theatre:

"I saw J. Wilkes Booth, about half-past 11 or 12 o'clock, on the fourteenth, pass the stage entrance and go to the front door. He bowed to me, but we had no conversation." (15).

Louis J. Carland, costumer at Ford's Theatre, testified that he knew "John Wilkes Booth quite well and had seen him three times April 14, 1865; the first time a little after 12 but before 1 o'clock in front of the theatre, the second time between 5 and 6 p.m., the third time still later than this." (16)



Sometime during the afternoon Booth bored a hole in the door of the Presidential box and <sup>he</sup> secured a bar for the passageway door leading from the dress circle to the box. (16 1/2)

<sup>Lewis</sup> Louis J. Weichmann, a boarder at the city home of Mary Surratt, testified that he had hired a buggy at Howard's Livery Stable about 2:30 on April 14 and drove Mrs. Surratt to Surrattville (ten miles distance), arriving there about 4:30. Just before leaving the city he saw Booth in the parlor with Mrs. Surratt. (17)

**About five o'clock Mrs Surratt met John Lloyd, the tenant, at her tavern. She gave him a pair of field glasses and told him to have these and the "shooting irons," which had been left there several weeks before. <sup>ready</sup> that night. (C.T. p 85-86 and p 113)**

Anna

E. Surratt, in defense of her mother, testified that John Wilkes Booth was at their Washington House, Friday the fourteenth; ~~and~~ that her mother was preparing to go to Surrattville and that the carriage was at the door; that Booth only stayed a very few minutes. (18).

*Said on the witness stand*

James W. Pumphry, Washington livery stable keeper:- "I was acquainted with J. Wilkes Booth. He came to my stable about 12 o'clock of the fourteenth of April 1st, and engaged a saddle-horse, which he said he wanted about 4 or half-past that day. He had been in the habit of riding a sorrel horse, and he came to get it, but that horse was engaged, and he had in its place a small bay mare, about fourteen or fourteen and a half hands high. I have never seen the mare since." (19).

Thomas J. Raybold, (20) <sup>the</sup> an employe of Ford's Theatre, Mary Jane Anderson, (21) who lived back of the theatre, James P. Ferguson, (22) keeper of a restaurant adjoining the theatre, and others testified that they saw Booth <sup>there</sup> at the theatre that afternoon.

*referred to in H. Clay Ford's testimony*

*eleven o'clock*

About 11 that morning Booth was noticed in the office of the National Hotel, where he lived, but nothing remarkable was visible in his appearance, except that it was thought that he looked unusually pale.

At about 4 p.m. he again made his appearance in the hotel office, and inquired of Henry Merrick, <sup>the</sup> a clerk, <sup>who remembered having seen him that morning</sup> whether a letter had been left for him in his absence. On being answered in the negative, <sup>according to Merrick</sup> he seemed greatly disappointed, and with a nervous air called for a sheet of paper and an envelope. He had written but a few words when he said, "Merrick, is this the year 1864 or '65?" "You are



surely joking, John<sup>f</sup> replied Merrick, "you certainly know what year it is."

"Sincerely I do not," he rejoined, and on being told, resumed writing. It was then, according to the clerk, that he noticed something troubled and agitated in Booth's appearance, which was entirely at variance with his usual quiet deportment. Sealing his letter, he placed it in his pocket and again left the hotel. He reappeared about 6:30<sup>and</sup> took tea, after which he left his room key at the office and went out. (23)

Thus, we quite definitely account for the movements of the assassin up to the evening of the assassination.

On that Friday afternoon, after learning that the President and Mrs. Lincoln, accompanied by General and Mrs. Grant, would attend the performance of "Our American Cousin" at Ford's Theatre<sup>N</sup> that night, Booth had gone to Grover's Theatre<sup>N</sup> (24) where he wrote a letter intended for the National Intelligencer, a local Washington paper. This was to give his justification for the assassination. He was on his way about four o'clock to post this when on Pennsylvania Avenue<sup>b</sup> he met John Matthews, the actor who had become so greatly frightened when invited by Booth to come in on the abduction plots. (25) Matthews was playing that night at Ford's Theatre<sup>N</sup>. Booth, who was on horseback, stopped, shook hands with him and passed the compliments of the day— Then some of the captured officers of General Lee's army came down the avenue and Matthews said to Booth: "Johnny, have you seen Lee's officers just brought in?" Booth replied, "Yes, Johnny, I have," and placed his hand upon his forehead and exclaimed "Great God, I have no longer a Country"<sup>N</sup>. Matthews, observing that he was pale, nervous and agitated, remarked, "John, how nervous you are: what is the matter?" "Oh, no, it is nothing," answered Booth, then he said to Matthews, "Johnny, I have a little favor to ask of you; will you grant it?" Receiving an affirmative reply, he continued, "Perhaps I may leave town tonight and I have a letter here which I desire to be published in The National Intelligencer. Please attend to it for me, unless I see you before ten o'clock tomorrow. In that case, I will see to it myself." (26)

At that moment Matthews observed General Grant riding by in an open carriage with his baggage and called Booth's attention to this with, "Why, Johnny, there goes Grant. I thought he was coming to the theatre<sup>N</sup> this evening with the President." "Where?"



*excitedly inquired,* Booth ~~exclaimed~~. *stated* Matthews claims that he pointed to the carriage and that then Booth galloped down the avenue after it.

Matthews was so terrified by the events of that night that reading the letter in the early morning hours after the assassination and finding that it was a statement of Booth's murderous plans, he destroyed it, but later, ~~in order~~ to clear up the matter for the editors of The National Intelligencer, he testified as to the circumstances of its destruction. It ended, according to Matthews, with the statement that "The moment has at length arrived when my plans must be changed. The world may censure me for what I am about to do; but I am sure that posterity will justify me. Signed, 'Men who love their country better than gold or life. John Wilkes Booth--Payne--Atzerodt and Herold.'" (27)

Jesse R. Grant, a son of General Grant, *states that he* was in the carriage with his parents. *He says,* (28) "I remember clearly ~~the~~ the drive down Pennsylvania Avenue to the depot, the iron-tired wheels of our carriage rattling and bumping over the cobblestones. It was in the early evening, but the ~~avenue~~ avenue was deserted and quiet as midnight.

"We were nearing the railway station when a man on horseback overtook us, drew alongside, and, leaning down, peered into our carriage. Then he wheeled his horse and rode furiously away." (29)

Although the afternoon papers had carried the announcement that General and Mrs. Grant would attend the play at Ford's Theatre ~~that~~ that evening with the President and Mrs. Lincoln, the Grants had finally decided to decline the invitation.

*are explained by* General Grant in his ~~Memoirs~~ *explain* their reasons for this apparently hasty action. *wrote* "While in Washington, ~~said~~ the General, "I was very busy for a time in preparing the necessary orders for the new state of affairs, communicating with my different commanders of separate departments, bodies of troops, and so on. But by the 14th I was pretty well through this work, so as to be able to visit my children, who were then in Burlington, New Jersey, attending school. Mrs. Grant was with me in Washington at the time, and we were invited by President and Mrs.

Lincoln to accompany them to the theatre on the evening of that day. I replied to the President's verbal invitation to the effect that if we were in the city we would take great pleasure in accompanying them; but that I was very anxious to get away and visit my children, and if I could get through my work during the day I should do so. I did get through and started by the evening train on the 14th, sending Mr. Lincoln word, of course, that I would not be at the theatre. (30)

Fortunate indeed it was for the Grants that they left town, for Booth had declared to Payne that he "wanted no botching with the President and General Grant."

(31)

Mrs. Lincoln then invited in their place, a betrothed couple, Miss Clara Harris and Major Rathbone, <sup>of General and Mrs. Grant's daughter and step-son of Senator Ina Harris of New York,</sup> The President said that evening to Robert, his older son, who had returned from the front that day, "We want you to go to the theatre with us, son." "I'm too tired," answered the boy, "I'll just finish this cigar and then I'll go up to bed." (32) *And it was said that afterwards the boy he grieved over this refusal, feeling that had he been with the party he might have prevented the tragedy.*

That evening about eight o'clock Speaker Schuyler Colfax, of Indiana, and George A. Ashmun, of Massachusetts, who had presided in 1860 over the convention in Chicago which nominated Mr. Lincoln for president, called at the White House. After giving Mr. Ashmun a card admitting him the next morning, Mr. Lincoln said, "You are going with Mrs. Lincoln and me to the theatre this evening, I hope." But Mr. Colfax replied that he had other engagements which he could not break. (N.Y. Tribune,

April 17, 1865.) While the President was occupied in conversation with Mr. Colfax, Mrs. Lincoln entered the library and <sup>said,</sup> half in jest and half in earnest, "Mr. Lincoln, are you going to the theatre with me tonight or not?" Mr. Lincoln, turning to Mr. Colfax, <sup>replied</sup> said, "I suppose I must go." (33)

During the afternoon Booth <sup>had</sup> called at the Kirkwood House and left his card for Colonel William Browning, secretary to Vice-President Johnson, with a notation, "Don't wish to disturb you. Are you at home? John Wilkes Booth." Booth had known Browning in Nashville, Tennessee. Colonel Browning remarked when handed the card by the clerk: "It is from Booth. Is he playing here?" Since the Vice-



President was an intended victim, Booth without doubt was attempting to learn what his plans might be for the evening. (34)

G.A. Bunker, a room clerk at the National Hotel, testified, "I last saw John Wilkes Booth about 7 o'clock of the evening of the assassination, (35) when he passed out of the hotel for the last time. He spoke to me as he went off."

George Atzerodt made the following statement before his execution: (36)  
"On the evening of the 14th of April, I met Booth and Payne at the Herndon House in this city at 8 o'clock. He (Booth) said he himself should murder Mr. Lincoln and General Grant, Payne should take Mr. Seward, and I should take Mr. Johnson. I told him I would not do it; that I had gone into the thing to capture, but I was not going to kill. He told me I was a fool; that I would be hung anyhow, and that it was death for every man that backed out; and so we parted. I wandered about the streets until about two o'clock in the morning, and then went to the Kimmell House, and from there pawned my pistol at Georgetown and went to my cousin's house in Montgomery County, where I was arrested the nineteenth following."

Payne, when asked by his counsel as to the nature of the conspiracy, replied: "It was a plan to carry off Lincoln and give him up to the Confederates, but when that failed, Booth who was the only one in earnest, proposed to kill Lincoln and all the Cabinet. All the rest backed out and scattered like a lot of beggars. We never heard of Surratt, of Arnold, or any of them again. I told Booth that I would go in with him, and he preferred to kill Lincoln, while I was set upon Seward. I deserve to be killed, and so does Booth. The rest were women and babies." (37)

It was a gala performance at Ford's Theatre that night. The play, "Our American Cousin," was of the type suitable to relieve the tension of the past week.

About 8:30 that evening, Major Henry R. Rathbone and Miss Harris joined the President and Mrs. Lincoln at the White House and went to Ford's Theatre with them, in their carriage. The President and his guests were received with great furore on entering the theatre, the actors stopped playing, the band struck up "Hail to The Chief", and the audience rose and received ~~him~~ <sup>them</sup> with vociferous cheering.

The party proceeded along ~~to~~ the rear of the dress circle and entered the box that had been set apart for their reception. <sup>This was composed of</sup> ~~Two~~ of the large stage boxes of the second tier on the right-hand side of the house, facing the stage, <sup>which</sup> had been thrown into one, and decorated with curtains of beautiful lace and buff satin. ~~The exterior of the box was~~ <sup>and</sup> profusely draped with the national flag. (38) In this double box was a large armchair that had been placed nearest the audience, farthest from the stage, partially screened from observation, which the President took and occupied during the whole evening, except once when he got up to put on his overcoat. (39)

The theatre, which had a capacity of over two thousand, was crowded, there were "many ladies in rich and gay costumes, officers in their uniforms, many well-known citizens, young folks, the usual cluster of gas lights, the usual magnetism of so many people, cheerful with perfumes, music of violins and flutes - and over all, that saturating, that vast, vague wonder, Victory, the nation's victory, the triumph of the Union, filling the air, the thought, the sense, with exhilaration more than all the perfumes." (40)

There were two alleys at Ford's Theatre, one led from the stage along the east side, the other from the back of the playhouse to a small alley which communicated with Ninth and other streets. The first was quite public and escape to it improbable, while the second, leading from the back of the stage, was comparatively safe. (41)

About 9:30 Booth rode up to the back alley door, ~~and~~ called for Edward Spangler, in whose care he left <sup>his</sup> the horse, and passed through the theatre to the front. Spangler turned the horse over to Joseph Burroughs, <sup>nicknamed "Peanuts,"</sup> a boy who carried bills for the theatre. (42) A little after ten Booth called for whisky (43) at a restaurant adjoining the theatre and at ten minutes past ten re-entered the front vestibule and asked the time of the door-keeper. Then, according to the testimony of one who witnessed his movements, "he slipped out and walked in again, entering by the door that leads to the parquet and dress circle. Came out again and then went up the stairway to the dress circle."

Making his way to the aisle leading by the wall toward the door of the President's box, he stopped and leisurely took a survey of the house, (44) and selecting one of his visiting cards showed it to the President's messenger, entered the door of



the lobby leading to the box (45) —closed and barred it and then after peering through a gimlet hole <sup>which</sup> he had made <sup>that</sup> in the afternoon and finding all clear, he opened the box door, pointed the pistol at the back of the President's head and fired the fatal shot.

"The awful tragedy in the box makes everything else seem pale and unreal. Here were five human beings in a narrow space—the greatest man of his time, in the glory of the most stupendous success in our history, the idolized chief of a nation already mighty, with illimitable vistas of grandeur to come; his beloved wife, proud and happy; a pair of betrothed lovers, with all the promise of felicity that youth, social position, and wealth could give them; and this young actor, handsome as Endymion upon Latmos, the pet of his little world. The glitter of fame, happiness, and ease was upon the entire group, but in an instant everything was to be changed with the blinding swiftness of enchantment. Quick death was to come on the central figure of that company—the central figure, we believe, of the great and good men of the century. Over all the rest the blackest fates hovered menacingly—fates from which a mother might pray that kindly death would save her children in their infancy. One was to wander with the stain of murder on his soul, with the curses of a world upon his name, with a price ~~set~~ upon his head, in frightful physical pain, till he died a dog's death in a burning barn; the stricken wife was to pass the rest of her days in melancholy and madness; of those two young lovers, one was to slay the other, and then end his life a raving maniac." (37a).<sup>46</sup>

*When the pistol shot rang through the audience there was*  
"A moment's hush - a scream - the cry of murder - Mrs. Lincoln leaning out of the box, with ashy cheeks and lips, with involuntary cry, pointing to the retreating figure, 'He has killed the President!' And still a moment's strange, incredulous suspense - and then the deluge! - then that mixture of horror, noises, uncertainty - (the sound, somewhere <sup>back</sup>, of a horse's hoofs clattering with speed) - the people burst through chairs and railing, and break them up - that noise adds to the queerness



of the scene - there is inextricable confusion and terror - women faint - feeble persons fall, and are trampled on - many cries of agony are heard - the broad stage suddenly fills to suffocation with a dense and motley crowd, like some horrible carnival - the audience rush generally upon it - at least the strong men do - the actors and actresses are there in their play costumes and painted faces, with mortal fright showing through the rouge - some trembling, some in tears - the screams and calls, confused talk - redoubled, trebled - two or three manage to pass up water from the stage to the President's box - others try to clamber up." (47)

Describing what took place in the box, Major Rathbone said, "When the second scene of the third act was being performed, and while I was intently observing the proceedings upon the stage, with my back toward the door, I heard the discharge of a pistol behind me, and, looking around, saw through the smoke a man between the door and the President. The distance from the door to where the President sat was about four feet. At the same time I heard the man shout some words, which I thought was 'Freedom!' I instantly sprang toward him and seized him. He wrested himself from my grasp, and made a violent thrust at my breast with a large knife. I parried the blow by striking it up and received a wound several inches deep in my left arm, between the elbow and the shoulder. The man rushed to the front of the box, and I endeavored to seize him again, but only caught his clothes as he was leaping over the railing. The clothes, as I believe, were torn in the attempt to hold him. As he went over upon the stage, I cried out, 'Stop that man!' I then turned to the President; his position was not changed; his head slightly bent forward, and his eyes were closed. I saw that he was unconscious, and supposing him mortally wounded, rushed to the door for the purpose of calling medical aid.

"On reaching the outer door of the passageway, I found it barred by a heavy piece of plank, one end of which was secured in the wall, and the other resting against the door. It had been so securely fastened that it required considerable force to remove it. This wedge or bar was about four feet from the



floor. Persons upon the outside were beating against the door for the purpose of entering. I removed the bar, and the door was opened. Several persons, who represented themselves as surgeons, were allowed to enter. I saw there Colonel Crawford, and requested him to prevent other persons from entering the box.

"I then returned to the box, and found the surgeons examining the President's person. They had not yet discovered the wound. As soon as it was discovered, it was determined to remove him from the theatre. He was carried out, and I then proceeded to assist Mrs. Lincoln, who was intensely excited, to leave the theatre. On reaching the head of the stairs, I requested Major Potter to aid me in assisting Mrs. Lincoln across the street to the house where the President was being conveyed. The wound which I had received had been bleeding profusely, and on reaching the house, feeling very faint from the loss of blood, I seated myself in the hall, and soon after fainted away, and was laid upon the floor. Upon the return of consciousness, I was taken to my residence.

"In a review of the transactions, it is my confident belief that the time which elapsed between the discharge of the pistol and the time when the assassin leaped from the box did not exceed thirty seconds. Neither Mrs. Lincoln nor Miss Harris had left their seats. " (48)

After savagely slashing Major Rathbone, Booth rushed forward, placed his left hand on the railing of the box and vaulted lightly over to the stage. It was a nine-foot leap, but not an unusual one for him, for he was in the habit of introducing sensational leaps in his plays. In "Macbeth" where he met the Weird Sisters, he leaped from a rock twelve feet high. He did not make the leap this time in safety though, for his spur caught in the folds of the Union flag which draped the box and he fell, the torn flag trailing in his spur. (49) Although he immediately rose and ~~rushed~~ <sup>ran</sup> across the stage as though he had not been hurt, his left leg <sup>had been</sup> fractured near the ankle.

*William Withers,*  
The leader of the orchestra that night, has described Booth's wild rush across the stage. "I had some business with our stage manager, on the night of  
*"testified Mr. Withers"*

the fourteenth, in regard to a national song that I had composed, and I went to see what costume they were going to sing it in. After talking with the manager, I was returning to the orchestra, when I heard the report of a pistol. I stood with astonishment, thinking why they should fire off a pistol in "Our American Cousin"<sup>(7)</sup>. As I turned round I heard some confusion, and saw a man running toward me with his head down. I did not know what was the matter, and stood completely paralyzed. As he ran, I could not get out of his way, so he hit me on the leg, and turned me round, and made two cuts at me, one in the neck and one on the side, and knocked me from the third entrance down to the second. The scene saved me. As I turned, I got a side view of him, and I saw it was John Wilkes Booth. He then made a rush for the back door, and out he went. I returned to the stage and heard that the President was killed, and I saw him in the box, apparently dead." (50)

The assassin was identified by other members of the theatre<sup>(8)</sup> staff and persons in the audience who saw him leap from the box and run across the stage. Rushing to the rear door, <sup>he jerked the reins from "Peanuts" Burroughs</sup> Booth struck and knocked down Burroughs, the boy who was holding his horse, <sup>rewarded him with a curse and a kick</sup> and leaping to the saddle rode rapidly away. (51)

During this time Payne was making a wild attempt on the life of William H. Seward, the Secretary of State, and would have succeeded but for an iron brace holding in place the Secretary's recently broken collar bone, and the <sup>defensive</sup> efforts of the attending nurse.

The gas-lights had been turned low at the Seward home, and all was quiet. In the sick-room with the Secretary were his daughter, <sup>6</sup> and an invalid soldier nurse. The other members of the family had gone to their respective rooms.

"There seemed nothing unusual in the occurrence, <sup>6</sup> when a tall, well-dressed, but unknown man presented himself below; and informing the servant that he brought a message from the doctor, was allowed to come up the stairs to the door of Seward's room. He was met here by the Assistant Secretary, (52) who refused him admission, explaining that the sleeping invalid must not be disturbed. He paused, apparently irresolute. When advised to leave his message, and go back to report to the doctor, he



replied: "Very well, Sir, I will go," and turning away, took two or three steps down the stairs.

"Suddenly, turning again, he sprang up and forward, having drawn a navy revolver, which he leveled, with a muttered oath, and pulled the trigger.

"And now, in swift succession, <sup>relaxes the son,</sup> like the scenes of some hideous dream, came the bloody incidents of the night--of the pistol missing fire--of the struggle in the dimly-lighted hall, between the armed man and the unarmed one--of the blows which broke the pistol of the one and fractured the skull of the other--of the bursting in of the door--of the mad rush of the assassin to the bedside, and his savage slashing, with a bowie-knife, at the face and throat of the helpless Secretary, instantly reddening the white bandages with streams of blood--of the screams of the daughter for help--of the attempt of the invalid soldier nurse (53) to drag the assailant from his victim, receiving sharp wounds himself in return--of the noise made by the awakening household, inspiring the assassin with hasty impulse to escape, leaving his work done or undone--of his frantic rush down the stairs, cutting and slashing at all whom he found in his way, wounding one in the face and stabbing another in the back--of his escape through the open doorway--and his flight on horseback down the Avenue.

<sup>"according to Frederick Seward,</sup>  
"Five minutes later, the aroused household were gazing, horrified, at the bleeding faces and figures in their midst--were lifting the insensible form of the Secretary from a pool of blood--and sending for surgical help. Meanwhile, a panic-stricken crowd was surging in from the street, to the hall and rooms below, vainly inquiring or wildly conjecturing what had happened." (54)

From this most sanguinary scene let us turn to the ridiculous part played by the assassin selected to murder the Vice-President. Atzerodt, as was told in his confession, did not attempt to carry out the part assigned him in the plot, did not occupy his room at the Kirkwood nor take away the weapons left in the room for his use by Herold, but wandered around on horseback until he learned that Booth had carried out to the bitter end the horrible drama, and Atzerodt, now

terror-stricken, struck out in the early morning hours for the home of a cousin twenty-two miles away where he was later arrested.

That afternoon about 5 o'clock Herold had walked down Tenth street with Scipiano Grillo, a restaurant keeper near Ford's Theatre, and enquired of Grillo whether he had seen John Wilkes Booth. Grillo answered that he had about 11 o'clock. They walked on and met Atzerodt sitting on the steps of the Kirkwood. (55)

Herold's actions on the fourteenth are best described by John Fletcher. "David E. Herold came to our stable in company with the prisoner, Atzerodt, about a quarter to 1 o'clock, on the fourteenth of April, and engaged a horse which he told me to keep for him and he would call for it at 4 o'clock. Before he mounted the horse he asked me how late he could stay out with him. I told him he could stay out no later than 8 o'clock, or 9 at furthest. After that hour I became very uneasy about the horse and wanted to see about it before I closed up the stable; and that is how I got to see Atzerodt and Herold.

"At about 10 o'clock, having a suspicion that Herold was going to take the horse away, I went across E street and up Fourteenth street, till I came upon Pennsylvania Avenue, close to Willard's, where I saw Herold riding the roan horse. He seemed as if he was coming down from the Treasury upon the Avenue. He was passing Fourteenth Street; the horse was pulling to get to the stable. I suppose Herold knew me by the light of the lamp, for he turned the horse around, and I hallooed to him, but he put spurs to it, and went, as fast as the horse could go, up Fourteenth street, making no reply to me. That was about twenty-five minutes past 10.

"I then returned to the stable for a saddle and bridle and horse myself, and went along the avenue until I came to Thirteenth street; went up Thirteenth street to E; along E until I came to Ninth, and turned down Ninth street to Pennsylvania Avenue again. I went along the avenue to the south side of the Capitol. I there met a gentleman, and asked him if he had passed any one riding on horseback. He said yes and that he was riding very fast. I followed on until I got to the Navy Yard bridge, where the guard halted me, and called for the sergeant of the guard. He



came out, and I asked him if a roan horse had crossed that bridge, giving him a description of the horse, saddle, and bridle, and the man that was riding. He ~~said~~ <sup>replied</sup>, 'Yes, he has gone across the bridge.' 'Did he stay long here?' I asked. He replied, 'He said that he was waiting for an acquaintance of his that was coming on; but he did not wait, and another man came riding a bay horse or a bay mare, right after him.' 'Did he tell you his name?' 'Yes, he said his name was Smith' <sup>(b)</sup> I asked him if I could cross the bridge after them. He ~~said~~ <sup>replied</sup>, 'Yes, you can cross, but you cannot return'. I said, 'If that is so, I will not go.' So I turned around and came back to the city again." (56)

While at various times when danger seemed imminent guards, pickets and patrols had been much in evidence around Washington, they were now not deemed so necessary. Richmond had fallen, General Lee, the great Southern leader, had surrendered. The war was practically over and the rigors of military restrictions and discipline were greatly relaxed.

The roads of travel north and south were again open. Troops were being mustered out and sent home for peaceful pursuits. "Everywhere the air was filled with the spirit of disorganization." Even during the periods of fighting near Washington, danger was expected from without, not within the gates, and two horsemen on the way out to their homes south of the city, even though it was beyond the nine-o'clock limit, had fair chances of not being detained months before the night of the assassination. (57)

Abraham Lincoln <sup>b</sup> himself <sup>b</sup> explains the laxity of the guards in allowing Booth and Herold to cross the Navy Yard bridge. Just before starting for the theatre <sup>(b)</sup> two men who wanted a pass that they might get through the lines to go to Richmond called at the White House. Mr. Lincoln gave them the following notation:

"No pass is necessary now to authorize any one to go to and return from Petersburg and Richmond. People go and return just as they did before the war.

"A. Lincoln."

Let us follow the escaping assassin across the bridge by means of the testimony of Sergeant Silas T. Cobb:

"On the night of the 14th of April, I was on duty at the Navy Yard bridge. At about half-past (10) or (11) o'clock, a man approached rapidly on horseback. The sentry challenged him, and I advanced to see if he was a proper person to pass.

"I asked him, 'Who are you, sir?' He <sup>replied</sup> ~~said~~, 'My name is Booth.' I asked him where he was from. He made answer, 'From the city.' 'Where are you going?' I <sup>inquired</sup> ~~said~~, and he replied, 'I am going home.' I asked him where his home was. He said it was in Charles. I understood by that that he meant Charles County. I asked him what town. He said he did not live in any town. I said, 'You must live in some town'. Said he, 'I live close to Beantown: but do not live in the town.' I asked him why he was out so late; if he did not know the rule that persons were not allowed to pass after (9) o'clock. He said it was new to him; that he had somewhere to go in the city, and it was a dark night, and he thought he would have the moon to ride home by. The moon rose that night about that time. I thought he was a proper person to pass, and I passed him. (A photograph of J. Wilkes Booth was shown the witness.) That is the man that passed first. He rode a small sized horse, rather an undersized horse, I should think, a very bright bay, with a shining skin, and it looked as though he had just had a short burst—~~a~~ short push—and seemed restive and uneasy, much more so than the rider. In all, I had some three or four minutes' conversation with him before I allowed him to pass.

"In perhaps five or seven, or, at the outside, ten minutes, another person came along. He did not seem to be riding so rapidly as the first, or his horse did not show signs of it as much as the first. I asked who he was and he said that his name was Smith, and that he was going home; that he lived at the White Plains. I asked him how it was that he was out so late. He made use of a rather indelicate expression, and said that he had been in bad company.

"Afterward, a third horseman rode up, and made inquiry after a roan horse; after a man passing on a roan horse. He made no inquiry about the other horseman who



had passed first. He did not seem to have any business on the other side of the bridge that I considered of sufficient importance to pass him, and so I turned him back." (59)

*removed from the theatre and*

The dying President had been laid upon a bed in a small room in a house across the street, ~~from the theatre~~. Mrs. Lincoln, as was described by Major Rathbone, followed, half distracted, tenderly cared for by Miss Harris. Messengers were sent for the Surgeon General and the President's family physician and to notify the Cabinet members.

A crowd of people rushed to the White House and, bursting through the doors, shouted the dreadful news to Robert Lincoln and Major John Hay, one of the President's secretaries. The son and Secretary as they hurried with Senator Sumner to Abraham Lincoln's bedside, found every thoroughfare blocked by swiftly gathering mobs, wild with excitement. (60)

They were soon at the President's bedside. Secretary Stanton and the other members of the cabinet were at hand almost as soon. "A vast crowd, surging up Pennsylvania Avenue toward Willard's Hotel, cried, 'The President is shot!' 'President Lincoln is murdered.' Another crowd sweeping down the avenue met the first with the tidings, 'Secretary Seward has been assassinated in bed.' Instantly a wild apprehension of an organized conspiracy and of other murders took possession of the people. The shout 'to arms!' was mingled with the expressions of sorrow and rage that everywhere filled the air. 'Where is General Grant?' or 'where is Secretary Stanton?' 'Where are the rest of the cabinet?' broke from thousands of lips. A conflagration of fire is not half so terrible as was the conflagration of passion that rolled through the streets and houses of Washington on that awful night." (61)

The President was unconscious from the first moment; but breathed with slow and regular respiration throughout the night. As the dawn came, and the lamplight grew pale in the fresher beams, his pulse began to fail; but his face even then was scarcely more haggard than those of the sorrowing group of statesmen and generals around him. His automatic moaning, which had continued through the night, ceased; a look of

unspeakable peace came upon his worn features. At twenty-two minutes after seven he died and "the Surgeon General gently crossed the pulseless hands of Lincoln across the motionless breast and rose to his feet," while the Reverend Doctor Gurley prayed in "subdued and tremulous tones": "Thy will be done, Amen." The Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton, "raised his head, the tears streaming down his cheeks" and sobbed out that never-to-be-forgotten epitaph: "Now he belongs to the Ages."

Walt Whitman, who found in Abraham Lincoln his ideal hero, on this occasion wrote,

"O Captain! my Captain! <sup>u</sup>or fearful trip is done,  
The Ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,  
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,  
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;  
Rise up--for you the flag is hung--for you the bugle trills,  
For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths--for you the shores  
a-crowding,  
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning.

My captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,  
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse, nor will,  
The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,  
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;

Exult, O shores, <sup>6</sup>and ring, O bells!  
But I with mournful tread,  
Walk the deck my Captain lies,  
Fallen cold and dead."



ch 5

HOW LINCOLN MET DEATH.

Notes.

(1.) Rhodes Vol. V, p.139.

(2.) Washington April 13, 1865, Special to N.Y. Tribune.

(3.) N.Y. Tribune, Sat. April 15, 1865.

(3 1/2) *Everyday Life of Abraham Lincoln by Francis E. Brown p 582*

(4.) Booth was seen by Louis Weichmann, a roomer at Mrs. Surratt's, Tuesday evening, April 11th, at the National Hotel. C.T. p.114.

(5.) C.T. p.46.

(6) Testimony of Thomas T. Eckert, acting Assistant Secretary of War - Imp. Inv. p.673-674. Herndon's Lincoln p.579, states that Herold was with Booth at the White House grounds on the night of the 11th and that according to Frederick Stone, Herold's counsel, Herold claimed that Booth declared: "That means nigger citizenship. Now, by God! I'll put him through!"

(7) C.T. p.144, 146.

(8) "Abraham Lincoln" by Nicolay & Hay, Vol. X, p.298. - There has been considerable discussion as to whether Booth uttered this--the motto of the State of Virginia--before leaping from the box or after jumping to the stage. Capt. Theodore McGowan, A.A.C., to General Augur, who was in the audience, stated, according to the N.Y. Tribune of Mon. April 17th: "as he leaped from the box he cried distinctly the motto of Virginia "Sic Semper Tyrannus".

*Booth stated in his diary that he uttered the motto before he fired the shot.*

*Thus always with Tyrants*

"There is a popular misconception", says the Boston Sunday Globe April 16, 1905,

"that after his leap to the stage Booth faced to the front, swung his dagger and shouted "Sic semper tyrannis." Not only are the words of Dr Yates (an eye witness) strong in their denial of this, but every morning paper in Washington the following morning and every witness at the trial but one stated that his cry of "Sic semper tyrannis!" (Thus Harry Hawk, a member of the theatrical company that night is reported in the Boston Herald, April 11, 1897, "He jumped to the stage, but before he jumped he shouted "Sic semper tyrannis."

(9) Jesse W. Weik in the Century Magazine

(9) Jesse W. Weik, in the Century Magazine, Feb. 1913.

(10) C.T. P. 99.

(11) It is directed to "Mrs. M.A. Booth, No. 28 East Nineteenth Street, New York, N.Y." and bears a Washington, D.C., ~~Post~~ Office stamp, dated April 14. It bears the appearance of having been written in considerable haste, and is all contained on one side of half a sheet of note paper:

"April 14 - 2 A.M."

"Dearest Mother - I know you expect a letter from me, and am sure you will hardly forgive me. But indeed I have nothing to write about. Everything is



dull; that is, has been till last night. (The illumination) Everything was bright and splendid. More so in my eyes if it had been a display in a nobler cause. But so goes the world. Might makes right. I only drop you these few lines to let you know I am well, and to say I have not heard from you. Excuse brevity; am in haste. Had one from Rose. With best love to you all, I am your affectionate son ever,

JOHN"

This letter is at present in possession of the War Department. Lincoln Scrap New York Tribune May 1, 1865, and Book, Congressional Library, p. 94 - Philadelphia Ledger, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1865.

Charles H. H. Wood, Barber at shop, <sup>Booker and Stewart on E Street near</sup>

Grover's Theater, Washington, D.C. Trial of John H. Surratt July 3, 1867, <sup>Pages 494-5,</sup> testified that he trimmed John Wilkes Booth's hair on the morning of April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1865 about 9 o'clock, and that he had worked at this shop for two years and had frequently cut Booth's hair. That he had cut Booth's hair in Baltimore when Booth was a boy."

(12) →

(13) C.T. p. 99-100.

(14) C.T. p. 100-101.

(15) C.T. p. 77, 109.

(16) S.T. p. 570.

(17) C.T. p. 113.

(17 1/2) C.T. pp 85-86 and p 113.

Insert note 19-

"Pumphrey testified with reference to what transpired between him and Booth the 14<sup>th</sup>."

He asked me to give him a tie-rein to hitch the horse. I told him not to hitch her, as she was in the habit of breaking the bridle. He told me he wanted to tie her while he stopped at a restaurant and got a drink. I said, "Get a boy at the restaurant to hold her." He replied that he could not get a boy. "O," said I, "you can find plenty of boot-blacks about the streets to hold your horse." He then said, "I am going to Grover's Theater to write a letter; there is no necessity of tying her there, for there is a stable in the back part of the alley; I will put her there." He then asked where was the best place to take a ride to; I told him, "You have been some time around here, and you ought to know." He asked, "How is Crystal Spring?" "A very good place," I said, "but it is rather early for it." "Well," said he, "I will go there after I get through writing a letter at Grover's Theater." He then rode off, and I have never seen Booth since."

(18) C.T. p. 131.

(19) C.T. p. 72

(20) C.T. p. 109-110.

(21) C.T. p. 75.

(22) C.T. p. 76.

(23) Washington Dispatch, April 15, 1865 to The N.Y. Tribune, April 17, 1865.

(24) Testimony James W. Pumphrey, C.T. p. 72.

(25) Chester's Testimony, C.T. p. 44.

(26) Booth mentioned this in the Diary he wrote while fleeing through Southern Maryland.

(27) Matthews Testimony at Imp. Inv. P. 782-784 and S.T. p. 82; Testimony of John T.

See testimony of J. G. Bufford S.T. pp 326-329 and C.T. pp 77 and 109.



Ford, Imp. Inv. P.552-554 and a letter from John Matthews, dated July 17, 1867, to the "Editors, Intelligencer" which was published by them. Clipping in the Lincoln Scrap Book, Congressional Library, P.94-95.

- (28) "In the Days of My Father, General Grant" P.37.
- (29) *Ward Lamon in his "Recollections of Abraham Lincoln" p 279, reports that General Grant said after the assassination, in reference to his departure from Washington on April 14th.*  
 "As we were driving along Pennsylvania Avenue, a horseman rode rapidly

past us at a gallop, and wheeling his horse, rode back, peering into our carriage as he again passed us. Mrs. Grant, with a perceptible shade of concern in her voice and manner, remarked to me: "That is the very man who sat near us at lunch today with some others, and tried to overhear our conversation. He was so rude, you remember, as to cause us to leave the dining room. Here he is again, riding after us!" For myself I thought it was only idle curiosity, but learned afterward that the horseman was Booth."

"~~Recollections~~" by Ward Lamon, P.279.

- (30) Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, Vol. 11, P.507-509.
- (31) C.T. P.305.
- (32) In The Daily Province, Vancouver, B.C., Dec 17, 1921.
- (33) MSS. of Lieutenant E.P. Doherty, "Panorama of the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln," written about 1885.
- (34) C.T. P.70.
- (35) S.T. P.329
- (36) Statement by George A. Atzerodt, C.T. P.307.

" The prisoner, Atzerodt, submits the following statement to the Court: I am one of a party who agreed to capture the President of the United States, but I am not one of a party to kill the President of the United States, or any member of the Cabinet, or General Grant, or Vice-President Johnson. The first plot to capture failed; the second - to kill - I broke away from the moment I heard of it.

" This is the way it came about: On the evening of the 14th of April I met Booth and Payne at the Herndon House, in this city, at eight o'clock.



He (Booth) said he himself should murder Mr. Lincoln and General Grant, Payne should take Mr. Seward, and I should take Mr. Johnson. I told him I would not do it: that I had gone into the thing to capture, but I was not going to kill. He told me I was a fool; that I would be hung anyhow, and that it was death for every man that backed out; and so we parted. I wandered about the streets until two o'clock in the morning, and then went to the Kimmell House, and from there pawned my pistol at Georgetown and went to my cousin's house in Montgomery county, where I was arrested the 19th following. After I was arrested, I told ≡ Provost Marshal Wells and Provost Marshall McPhail the whole story; also told it to Capt. Monroe, and Col. Wells told me if I pointed out the way Booth had gone I would be reprieved, and so I told him I thought he had gone down Charles County in order to cross the Potomac. The arms which were found in my room at the Kirkwood House and a black coat, do not belong to me, neither were they left to be used by me. On the afternoon of the 14th of April, Herold called to see me and left the coat there. It is his coat, and all in it belongs to him, as you can see by the handkerchiefs, marked with his initial, and with the name of his sister, Mrs. Naylor. Now I will state how I passed the whole evening of the 14th of April. In the afternoon, at about two o'clock, I went to Keleher's stable, on Eighth street, near D, and hired a dark bay mare and rode into the country for pleasure, and on my return put her up at Naylor's stable. The dark bay horse which I had kept at Naylor's before, on about the 3rd of April belonged to Booth; also the saddle and bridle. I do not know what became of him. At about six in the evening, I went to Naylor's again and took out the mare, rode out for an hour, and returned her to Naylor's. It was then nearly eight, and I told him to keep the mare ready at ten o'clock, in order to return her to the man I hired her from. From there I went to the Herndon House. Booth sent a messenger to the "Oyster Bay," and I went. Booth wanted me to murder Mr. Johnson. I refused. I then went to the "Oyster Bay," on the Avenue, above Twelfth street, and whiled away the time until nearly ten. At ten I got

the mare, and having taken a drink with the hostler, galloped about town, and went to the Kimmell House. From there I rode down to the depot, and returned my horse, riding up Pennsylvania Avenue to Keleher's. From Keleher's I went down to the Navy Yard to get a room with Wash. Briscoe. He had none, and by the time I got back to the Kimmell House it was nearly two. The man Thomas was a stranger I met on the street. Next morning, as stated, I went to my cousin Richter's in Montgomery county.

George A. Atzerodt."

- (37) Letter to the Chicago Tribune - Clipping Lincoln Scrap Book, Congressional Library, P. 99, also C.T. P. 314 and Imp. Inv. P. 674.
- (38) McClure, P. 502.
- (39) C.T. P. 78-79.
- (40) "Abe Lincoln's Yarns and Stories" by Alexander K. McClure, P. 502/
- (41) History of Secret Service by Baker, P. 474-5.
- (42) C.T. P. 74.
- (43) Testimony of Peter Taltavul. C.T. P. 72, S.T. P. 157.
- (44) Testimony of James P. Ferguson. S.T. P. 129.
- (45) Testimony of Capt. Theodore McGowan. C.T. P. 78. A winding stair case went up to the lobbies which led to the Presidential box and according to General Baker, the Chief of the Federal Secret Service at that time, no decently dressed person would have found much difficulty in making entrance by this stair after the doors had been opened for the ingress of the party. ("History of Secret Service," Baker, P. 474.
- (46) "Abraham Lincoln" by Nicolay & Hay, Vol. X, P. 295.  
" *states a writer in the New York Tribune*  
No blood relationship existed between Miss Harris and Major Rathbone, and they were grown up when their parents married. They were naturally congenial, and their mutual share in the tragedy, with her subsequent nursing of him while recovering from his wound, resulted, naturally enough, in their marriage not long afterward, when they took up their residence abroad, with every promise for a



happy life, so far as external things were concerned. But the tragedy had planted its seed of evil in the memory of the husband, and, in course of time, the father of several children. He brooded over it until his mind was unhinged, developing a homicidal tendency from which his wife more than once--if I remember rightly--barely escaped; when one night, on the eve of his proposed removal to an asylum, he made a rush, with murderous intent, on their children. His wife, of course, threw herself between them and her maniac husband, and paid with her life the forfeit of a mother's devotion. Thus also died by murder one linked with the great murder of her period and herself a woman of no inconsiderable talent, and one of the most prominent in Washington society during the Civil War. And thus, as so often before and since, was exemplified the melancholy truth that a great wrong wrought in high places <sup>b</sup> breeds similar if less conspicuous evil to which no limit of time or place can be assigned. (A.G.B. in N.Y. Tribune, Dec 6, 1896.)

- (47) Walt Whitman - quoted from "Life of Lincoln" by Browne, p. 707-709.
- (48) C.T. p. 78-79.
- (49) "Abraham Lincoln" by Nicolay & Hay, Vol. X, p. 298.
- (50) C.T. p. 79.
- (51) C.T. p. 74.
- (52) The son, Fredrick W. Seward,
- (53) Sergeant G.F. Robinson.
- (54) "Seward at Washington" by Fredrick W. Seward, Derby & Miller, New York, 1891.  
p. 276-277.
- (55) C.T. p. 176.
- (56) C.T. p. 83, - 145
- (57) The Navy Yard Bridge was also known as the Eastern Branch Bridge and the Anacostia Bridge - "Washington During War Time" 1861-1865 - Collected and Edited by Marcus Benjamin.
- (58) The last writing of Abraham Lincoln is in possession of Mr. O.H. Oldroyd, Washington, D.C., who is the owner of the famous Oldroyd Collection of

Lincolnia<sup>na</sup> which is housed in the place where Lincoln died, across the street from Ford's Theatre.

Among the many valuable articles in this wonderful collection is this last writing of Lincoln. It is carefully cased in and protected against the ravishings of light and the all too curious sight-seer. Mr. Oldry<sup>ed</sup>, who has been most painstaking in verifying and making historically accurate the articles in his collection, wrote for the author this interesting account of the pass and how it came into his possession:

"President Lincoln was seated in his office in the White House on the evening of April 14, 1865, with Mr. George Ashmun, President of the National Convention at Chicago that nominated Mr. Lincoln for the Presidency in 1860. Mr. Stackelford, an usher at the White House, entered the room and announced that Mrs. Lincoln was ready to go to the Theatre. Mr. Lincoln simply nodded and proceeded with the conversation. The usher appeared the second time and stated that Mrs. Lincoln was in the carriage and anxious to go to the Theatre. Mr. Lincoln said, "I guess I must obey." He wrote a card, "Admit Mr. Ashmun tomorrow morning at nine o'clock," handed it to Mr. Ashmun and they walked out of the office together. Two men were standing in the ante-room, and Mrs Stackelford said to Mr. Lincoln, "These two men would like to have a pass to go to Richmond." Mr. Lincoln bade Mr. Ashmun good-bye and returned to his office and wrote, "No pass is necessary now to authorize any one to go to and return from Petersburg and Richmond. People go and return just as they did before the War. A.Lincoln." He repeated these words to Mr. Stackelford and as they walked out together Mr. Stackelford put the writing in his pocket. It occurred to him as to what a nice thing it would be to have such a writing from the President as a souvenir... When outside he repeated to the men what the President had written. This satisfied them. I obtained all of these details in personal conversation with Mr. Stackelford, with whom I talked on numbers of occasions.



When I came to Washington in 1893, I heard that Mr. Stackelford had the last writing of Mr. Lincoln. I went to see him and explained that I was opening up the house in which Lincoln died and placing therein my collection, and wanted to know if he would let me have the last writing of Mr. Lincoln for my collection. His reply was that he would not part with it for anything. About fourteen years thereafter Mr. Stackelford died. I then went to see his widow about it, but she, also, refused to part with the writing. Very soon thereafter the widow became sick, and was ill for about a year, when she died. Very soon after the widow's death the sister came to see me and said that the illness of Mrs. Stackelford had about dissipated their funds and she would sell me the writing. I purchased the same from her and it has been in my possession in the collection ever since.

January 11, 1923.

(Signed) O.H. OLDROYD"

- (59) C.T. ~~P.~~ 84.
- (60) "Abraham Lincoln" Nicolay & Hay, Vol. X, ~~P.~~ 299-301
- (61) "The Life, Crime & Capture of John Wilkes Booth," by George Alfred Townsend, ~~P.~~ 10.
- (62) "Abraham Lincoln" Nicolay & Hay, Vol. X, ~~P.~~ 301-302.
- (63) See Barrett Wendell's "A Literary History of America," ~~P.~~ 474.