

The Surratt Courier

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Many feel that the New Year is a time to reflect on the past and a time to look forward to the coming year. For the Surratt House Museum, reflecting on the past is a given. Tied with that, the first 2020 event to look forward to is the museum re-opening for tours on Wednesday, January 15. While there, visitors will enjoy touring the historic house, learning its unique history, and viewing our ongoing exhibit, *The Full Story: Maryland, The Surratts and the Crime of the Century*. It reflects on Maryland's culture, its role in the Civil War, the choices made by the Surratt family, and the after-effects on the family and the nation. There is also a full line-up of special events and programs already in place for 2020. Here are some of the programs offered with more being planned:

- February 15, *The Road to Freedom: From Maryland Slavery to Queen Victoria's Court* follows the life of Josiah Henson from his birth into slavery to his life after his flight to freedom in Canada.
- February 29, *Black History on Wheels* takes a bus trip to nearby Montgomery County, Maryland, for visits at a black history museum and a restored black school.
- March 28, *Anna Ella Carroll: Fact or Fiction?* Mary Margaret Revel Goodwin of the Maryland Museum of Women's History introduces us to this controversial Maryland woman who is believed to have had the attention of Mr. Lincoln and Gen. Grant.

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Surratt House is open for guided tours on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 11 am to 3 pm and on Saturdays and Sundays from 12 noon to 4 pm, with the last tours beginning one-half hour before closing. **Members receive free admission with current membership cards as do active members of the armed forces upon presentation of current military ID.**

December 16, 2019 – January 14, 2020 – **Surratt House Museum will be closed to public tours.** The office will remain open on a limited basis during the week after Christmas. Please call 301-868-1121 to make sure that someone is on duty before you visit.

January 11, 2020 – **Annual Volunteer Luncheon**, 1-3 pm at the museum, honoring our volunteer staff who keep the doors open to visitors at Surratt House.

January 14, 2020 – **Annual Lasagna Luncheon**, 11 am-1 pm at the museum for workers at other divisions who assist us with programs, maintenance, landscaping, and more.

January 15, 2020 – **The museum opens for its 2020 season (and 44th year as a public historic house museum).**

This newsletter is a monthly publication of The Surratt Society, a non-profit volunteer affiliate of Surratt House Museum a historic property of The Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission, 9118 Brandywine Road, Clinton, MD 20735. 301-868-1121. Visit surrattmuseum.org. Annual membership is \$10.

President's Message –con't.-

- April 3-5, *Annual Conference*
- April 11, 18, 25, *Booth Escape Route bus tours.*
- May 16, *The War Outside My Window* allows us to see the Civil War through the eyes of 12-year-old invalid, LeRoy Wiley Gresham of Georgia. After four long years, the war ends in 1865, along with LeRoy's life and journal (now in the Library of Congress).
- July 11, we bring back movie night by presenting the movie, *The Conspirator*, the story of Mary Surratt and the Lincoln assassination conspiracy.
- July 25, *Enjoy Our Bounty* brings local farmers and gardeners and their produce and expertise to our vendors' market.
- September features three more bus tours of the escape route the assassins.
- October 17, *The Sweet Taste of History* unwraps the story of America's favorite treat and includes samples and sales.
- November 14, *Thanksgiving From 1621 to the Present* brings food historian Joyce White to explore the political, social, economic, and cultural traditions that make Thanksgiving an American holiday. There will also be samples available.
- From November 25- December 13, step back in time and enjoy *The Charm of a Victorian Christmas* in our mid-1800s farmhouse.

If you have not received information in the mail, you can check surrattmuseum.org for conference information. We are also on Facebook, and reminders of upcoming events will appear in this newsletter throughout the year.

May all of our members have a safe, healthy, and happy New Year; and we hope to see you at many of our upcoming events.

LOUISE OERTLY, President

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Jacqueline LaRocca and Michael Fahey-
Sykesville, Maryland
Jill Fraley – Hughesville, Maryland

And warm greetings to our new Life Member,
Tony Rose of Palmyra, Pennsylvania.

Unfortunately, we are sad to report the November death of longtime member and supporter, James Cathro of Clinton, Maryland. Sincere sympathies to his family.

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OF NOTE...

Our beautiful 2020 Calendar of Events arrived on November 1. If you would like to receive one in the mail, please send an email to laurie.verge@pgparks.com or call 301-868-1121

Another Surratt volunteer authors a book...
Lynn Buonviri is a resident of St. Mary's County in Southern Maryland, an area that is widely known for a resident "witch" of the 1600s, who was cast out and died in the winter elements. We have the book in stock: *Moll Dyer and Other Witch Tales of Southern Maryland*. \$18 plus \$4 p/h (Maryland residents must add 6% sales tax is mailing within the state.) Visa/MC via 301-868-1121 or check payable to Surratt House Museum, 9118 Brandywine Road, Clinton, Maryland authored by Society members – two of which are museum volunteers.

DID SLAVERY REALLY CAUSE THE CIVIL WAR?

by William L Richter

On December 20, 1860, South Carolina seceded from the Union. The United States, as envisioned and created by the Founding Fathers, died, never to be reborn. Eventually, in its place stood a new entity, for all practical purposes better called, in the jargon of modern day Illinois license plates, the "Land of Lincoln."ⁱ Its motto was a "new birth of freedom," which, we are indoctrinated, was "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."ⁱⁱ

But were these high-minded slogans really why America fought its bloodiest war? Abraham Lincoln blamed slavery for the whole conflict in his Second Inaugural speech.ⁱⁱⁱ Present day historians tend to agree.^{iv} While admitting there are diverse reasons for southern secession, Charles B. Dew's study of the written and spoken words and actions of the various commissioners sent from the already seceded states to those slave states which had yet failed to act, Southerner to Southerner, overwhelmingly reveals slavery to be the prime cause of secession, stated or implied.^v

Or was there something else, other than eradicating slavery, involved in Republican policy? Might this other help explain why the Nullification Crisis of 1832-1833 was over the tariff, or why Reconstruction's dedication to black civil rights disappeared during the Gilded Age?^{vi} Historian Walter Kirk Wood says, "Yes." In his book, *Beyond Slavery*, Wood blames the Civil War on what he calls the "Northern Nationalist Movement" of the first half of the 19th century, not slavery.^{vii}

This campaign, according to Wood, essentially involved a change in the meaning of "all men are created equal" in the Declaration of Independence. In the 18th century, when Thomas Jefferson penned the words, it did not have the meaning that modern historians say. Instead it was a statement more about independence and justification of the colonies' revolutionary break with England.

It restated the ideas of John Milton, Algernon Sydney, and John Locke that were part of the Whig tradition justifying the English Glorious Revolution of the late-17th century. These words were not repeated in a single state constitution of the era. Sovereignty rested with the people of the individual states. "Free and equal" meant to preserve the people from a government that had become "corrupt, arbitrary, and imperious."^{viii}

But in the 19th century, the Northern Nationalist Movement altered this Jeffersonian meaning. Just as the Declaration of Independence was the work of several men, the new meaning was the work of many theorists following the defeat of Napoleon I in 1815. Based on the concepts of European Romanticism that flowed from the radical 1792-1794 Jacobin phase ("off with their heads") of the French Revolution, the French rejected the American revolutionary dream for their own. Liberty, equality and democracy were not American ideas, but French. So was abolition of slavery, with the Haitian revolt leading the way.

The new society was to be a perfection of humanity based on the expansive concepts of liberty, equality and fraternity, or the compulsory part of Jean Jacques Rousseau's philosophy. This made the Latin American revolutions in the New World and European revolutions in Greece, Spain, Russia and Naples, and especially the German states and France in 1848, violent and less compromising than that in the United States of 1776-1789, which was more of Rousseau's return to nature and an idealized past emphasizing a Whiggish British history with the liberty of individual rights. The Europeans went for the democratic liberty of popular rule through an uncompromising centralism, what Rousseau called the "General Will." Or, as Lincoln called it at Gettysburg, using the immigrant German Romantic Francis Lieber as his guide, "government of the people, by the people, and for the people."^{ix}

But there was a problem with this Romantic Nationalist Movement—it only took part in a small section of the nation, the part known for its "isms," New England and New York's "Burned Over

District” and the Old Northwest settled by Yankees as they moved west.^x Then a political reality struck the reformers. It was named the Slave Power Conspiracy. Constitutional compromises back in 1787 had resulted in unintended consequences in American government. It had a Southern bias that was stuck in the Jeffersonian past.

Before 1860, all the Presidents but two (John Adams and his son John Quincy) were either slaveholders or slavery sympathizers imbued with the old Jeffersonian (1776) interpretation of free and equal. A majority of Supreme Court justices had the same fault; as did half of the U.S. Senate; most Representatives elected from western New York, Pennsylvania, and those from Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois south of the National Road (Interstate 70 today);^{xi} the Southern states which counted 3/5 of their black population for representation; the house speaker, senatorial president *pro tempore*, and most committee chairmen of both houses, and most government employees, who hailed from Virginia and Maryland. There would be no New Birth of Freedom until the old Slave Power had been crushed.^{xii}

To prove this point, historian Clyde N. Wilson analyzed the ideas of 19th-century American economists, Matthew Carey and his son, Henry, in a recent article entitled “The War for Southern Independence: My Myth or Yours.”^{xiii} These men were important because they expanded on Alexander Hamilton’s federally-paid financial concepts (a U.S. bank, high tariffs, and internal improvements [roads, bridges, rivers, harbors, canals, railroads]) promoting the development of industrialism, while he served as Secretary of State during George Washington’s presidential administrations.^{xiv} The Careys’ similar notions,^{xv} in turn, were promoted politically by Henry Clay^{xvi} and his protégé, Abraham Lincoln,^{xvii} before and during the American Civil War and became part of the Republican Party platform in 1860.^{xviii} Indeed, Lincoln did not go over from the Whigs to the Republicans until they adopted Whig economic policies.^{xix}

The most important point Wilson makes is that the American System, as envisioned by the Careys, Clay, and Lincoln, was compulsory, not voluntary. Because the debate over the tariff and other aspects of the American system had been compromised to a revenue basis, Matthew Carey threatened the South with the full vengeance of the industrializing North, which was to be financed by tariff income. He spoke of growing Northern military manpower (immigration) and warships and warned that the South had a lengthy coast line that could be easily invaded in the future. Indeed, this was the outcome of the Civil War.

After the war, Carey’s son declared that the war itself was caused by “free trade,” not slavery as is popular among 21st-century historians. That is, the Civil War was envisioned years before as a justifiable economic punishment to reconstruct the wayward South into a tariff-based industrial economy. The Slave Power Conspiracy, not slavery *per se*, for too long had allowed the South to inhibit the natural growth of the nation.^{xx} Lincoln’s “unconstitutional” war settled that much.^{xxi}

ⁱ Akhil Amar Reed, *The Law of the Land: A Grand Tour of Our Constitutional Republic* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 3-29.

ⁱⁱ Gettysburg Address, in Roy P. Basler *et al.* (eds.), *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* ((9 vols, New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953), vii, 17-23.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, VIII, 332-33.

^{iv} A good example is Eric Foner, *The Second Founding: How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution* (New York: Norton, 2019), which agrees with Lincoln and shows how the Reconstruction Amendments to the Constitution (Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth) helped to mitigate some of the problems posed by emancipation which Lincoln referred to in his Second Inaugural speech. Foner’s emphasis on how recently freed blacks contributed to this Reconstruction process can be seen in his earlier volume, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988). See also, John David Smith (ed.), *Interpreting American History: Reconstruction* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2016).

^v Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), especially 1-22.

^{vi} For the Nullification Crisis, see William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836* (Harper & Row, 1968). Of interest in Northern avoidance of the slavery issue during the war for Union is the recent article by Robert I. Girardi, "Phantom of Discontent: Illinois Regiments Rebel against the Emancipation Proclamation," *North & South*, Series II, 1 (No. 2, Sept.-Oct. 2019), 12-21. The abandonment of the civil rights movement is in C. Vann Woodward, *Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1951), and Rayford W. Logan, *The Betrayal of the Negro from Rutherford B. Hayes to Woodrow Wilson* (New enlarged ed., New York: Collier, 1965).

^{vii} Walter Kirk Wood, *Beyond Slavery: The Northern Romantic Nationalist Origins of America's Civil War* (Columbia, S.C.: Shotwell Publishing LLB, 2018), ix-xi.

^{viii} Wood, *Beyond Slavery*, 7-9. See also, Pauline Maier, *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence* (New York: Random House, 1997), xvii, 134-35, and the writings of Bernard Bailyn, *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), and his *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 196-220; and Caroline Robbins, "Algernon Sidney' Discourses Concerning Government: Textbook of Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Series 3, 4(1947), 267-96.

^{ix} Wood, *Beyond Slavery*, 13-17. See also, Ethan Kyle, *Romantic Reformers and the Antislavery Struggle in the Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); W. Caleb McDaniel, *The Problem of Democracy in the Age of Slavery: Garrisonian Abolitionists and Transatlantic Reform* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013); Richard Stites, *The Four Horsemen: Riding to Liberty in Post-Napoleonic Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Merrill D. Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind* (New York: University of Virginia Press, 1960).

^x See, e.g., Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1950), and Conrad Wright, *The Beginnings of Unitarianism in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955).

^{xi} The construction of this coalition is related in Robert V. Remini, *Martin Van Buren and the Making of the Democratic Party* (New York: Norton, 1959).

^{xii} The potency of the slave power is the theme of several studies, including James M. Banner, *To the Hartford Convention: The Federalists and the Origins of Party Politics in Massachusetts, 1789-1815* (New York: Knopf, 1970), 99-109; Alfred W. and Ruth G. Blumrosen, *Slave Nation: How Slavery United the Colonies & Sparked the American Revolution* (Nashville, IL: Sourcebooks, Inc., 2005); David Waldstreicher, *Slavery's Constitution from Revolution to Ratification* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2010); Paul Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders: Race and Liberty in the Age of Jefferson* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1996); Garry Wills, *Negro President: Jefferson and the Slave Power* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 2009); Don E. Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Russel B. Nye, "The Slave Power Conspiracy: 1830-1860," *Science & Society*, X, (No. 3, Summer, 1946), 262-274; Larry Gara, "Slavery and the Slave Power: A Crucial Distinction," *Civil War History*, 15 (1969), 5-18; and especially, Leonard L. Richards, *The Slave Power: The Free North and Southern Domination, 1780-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000); Michael Todd Landis, *Northern Men with Southern Loyalties: The Democratic Party and the Sectional Crisis* (Cornell University Press, 2014).

^{xiii} Clyde Wilson, "The War for Southern Independence: My Myth or Yours?" Abbeville Institute (ed.), *Exploring the Southern Tradition* (McClellanville, S.C.: Abbeville Institute Press, 2019), 3-12.

^{xiv} Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick, *The Age of Federalism: The Early American Republic, 1788-1800* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 65-74, 92-114, 223-44.

^{xv} See, e.g., Mathew Carey, *Essays on political economy: or, The most certain means of promoting the wealth, power, resources, and happiness of nations: applied particularly to the United States* (Philadelphia: H. C. Carey & I. Lea, 1822).

^{xvi} Lively, Robert A. "The American System, a Review Article," *Business History Review*, 29 (March, 1955), 81-96; Henry Clay, "The American System," in Daniel Walker Howe (ed.), *The American Whigs* (New York: Wiley & Sons, 1973), 32-43; Harvey Wish, *Society and Thought in Early America* (New York: Longmans, Greene and Co., 1950), 322.

^{xvii} Michael Lind, *What Lincoln Believed: The Values and Convictions of America's Greatest President* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 81-84; Sidney Blumenthal, *A Self-Made Man: The Political Life of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016), 78-79, 92-100, 281-284; David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 36, 52, 110; Gabor S. Boritt, *Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 4, 22, 87, 93-94, 98-99, 210; David Donald, "Abraham Lincoln: Whig in the White House," in his *Lincoln Reconsidered: Essays on the Civil War Era* (2nd ed., New York: Vintage, 1956), 187-208.

^{xviii} Kirk Harold Porter and Donald Bruce Johnson, *National Party Platforms, 1840-1964* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966); Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 240.

^{xix} Daniel Walker Howe, "Why Abraham Lincoln Was a Whig," 16, (No. 1, Winter 1995), 27-38; Gabor S. Boritt, "The Right to Rise," in Cullom Davis et al. (eds.), *The Public and the Private Lincoln* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), 57-70; Joel H. Silbey, "Always a Whig in Politics: The Partisan Life of Abraham Lincoln," *Papers of the Abraham Lincoln Association*, 8 (1986), 21-42.

^{xx} Wilson, "The War for Southern Independence: My Myth or Yours?" 3-12, *passim*.

¹⁰⁰ M. E. Bradford, "The Lincoln Legacy: A Long View," in his *Remembering Who We Are: Reflections of a Southern Conservative* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 144; Thomas J. Pressly, "Emancipating slaves, Enslaving Free Men": Modern Libertarians Interpret the United States Civil War," *Civil War History*, 46 (No. 3, 2000), 354-65.

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COMMENTARY ON ROBERT G. WICK'S "LAFAYETTE S. FOSTER: A CONNECTICUT ENIGMA"

by John C. Fazio

I read Robert G. Wick's article on Lafayette S. Foster, in the April 2019 *Courier*, with great interest ("Lafayette S. Foster: A Connecticut Enigma"). I was doing well until I came to pages 12 and 13, where I found the author questioning the trend in recent years, among historians, scholars, writers, etc., in the direction of concluding that John Wilkes Booth and his action team were in fact part of a larger conspiracy to assassinate Lincoln and other Federal leaders and that the conspiracy originated with the Confederate government and its Secret Service Bureau.

Mr. Wick acknowledges the unlikelihood that a paper trail would be left by the organizers of such a conspiracy, but nevertheless argues that "...absence of evidence in this case generally does indicate an evidence of absence." It seems to me that reasonable minds can differ as to the meaning of this sentence, which seems intended to carry more weight than it actually does. Why "this case" should be any different than any other case of a like kind is left unsaid, and the qualifier "generally" opens the door to a lot of different possibilities. In any case, Mr. Wick concludes that "...without more evidence forthcoming, their (William Tidwell's, James O. Hall's and David Gaddy's) theory of a larger Confederate conspiracy remains just that." Mr. Wick, of course, makes reference to the conclusion of Confederate complicity in the events of April 14, 1865, in the three historians' seminal 1988 work *Come Retribution* and Tidwell's later solo, in 1995, *April '65*.

Mr. Wick appears to base his doubts on the fact that "...little in the way of physical evidence has ever been offered to show definitive proof," i.e. of the complicity of the Confederate leadership. To begin with, "definitive proof" is a high bar; few things in history, that need to be proved definitively, can be. "Clear and convincing evidence" and "proof beyond a reasonable doubt" are more reasonable bars. Secondly, what does the author have in mind when he speaks of "physical evidence?" I will assume he has in mind a writing or writings wherein Jefferson Davis or Judah Benjamin or Jacob Thompson orders John Wilkes Booth to assassinate Lincoln, or a writing in which one of these leaders, or perhaps another leader (Alexander Stevens, Clement Clay, George Sanders?), orders Lewis Powell to assassinate Secretary of State William Seward, or other writings wherein some leader orders some underling to assassinate someone.

If this is, in fact, what Mr. Wick has in mind, then, in my judgment, his expectation is wholly unreasonable, because it is a certainty that such writings will never be found because they never existed. Surely Mr. Wick must know, or at least surmise, that orders of such a sensitive and odious nature would never be committed to paper, even in code, because if they ever saw the light of day they would irreparably damage not only their authors, but indeed the entire *raison d'être* of the separation of eleven states from the United States, that is to say, the entire cause of the Confederacy.

Thus it was that when James P. Holcombe was sent to Canada in February, 1864, by Davis, he was sent to carry out "duties already entrusted," but not specified in writing. Similarly, when Davis sent Clement C. Clay and Jacob Thompson to Canada in April, he sent them with "such instructions as you have received from me verbally, in such manner as shall seem most likely to conduce the furtherance of the interests of the Confederate States of America." And similarly, orders to Captain Thomas Henry Hines, the principal player in the Northwest Conspiracy, to capture political control of the States of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois in 1864, were also given only verbally. It does not require a particularly vivid imagination to know why the instructions and orders to these men, and doubtless to many other Confederate Secret Service operatives, were given only verbally, in person or by courier, namely because they were odious in the extreme, the kinds of instructions and orders that called for political assassinations and the death of innocents on a massive scale. Based on subsequent and well-known events, we now know that, in fact, they did just that.

So, if we accept the nonexistence of writings in which orders were given by Confederate leaders to assassins or would-be assassins to murder federal leaders, then it is fair to ask: What evidence do we have to implicate the Confederate leadership in the events of April 14, 1865? And the answer to the question is: actually, quite a lot.

But before I enumerate the items of evidence, let me caution the reader to avoid the common mistake of denigrating circumstantial evidence. There is absolutely nothing wrong with circumstantial evidence. People are convicted on the basis of such evidence every day. Indeed, it is so strong and pervasive that many, I dare say most, prosecutors prefer to have it than to have eyewitness or material evidence, both of which are more easily impeached. That said, the evidence that favors the implication of the Confederate government and its Secret Service Bureau in the events of April 14, 1865, includes the following:

1. Jefferson Davis is known to have said, in 1862, that if it were necessary, he (or we) had friends enough in the North to destroy the president and every head of the departments.
2. On April 3, 1865, Secretary of State William Seward said to Attorney General James Speed that "If there were to be assassinations, now is the time". Seward was privy to all Union intelligence.
3. There were at least a dozen attempts on Lincoln's life both before and after the Wistar and Dahlgren-Kilpatrick Raids on Richmond in February and March, 1864. Is it reasonable to suppose that all were rogue operations? Or is it more reasonable to believe that some, perhaps most, maybe even all, were carried out with the knowledge, and therefore the approval, of the Confederate leadership?
4. Based on events that followed the raids on Richmond, it is safe to conclude that the Confederate leadership saw in them, especially the orders to the leaders of the raids to either capture or assassinate Davis and his cabinet, license to respond in kind. Thus it was that a series of high-level meetings, in which both the political and military leadership of the Confederacy participated, were held in Richmond, shortly after the raids, to discuss appropriate counter-measures to the raids.
5. Dr. Luke P. Blackburn, a member of the Canadian Cabinet (the Confederate Secret Service's Canadian contingent), attempted, in the summer of 1864, to assassinate Lincoln by sending him shirts "infected" with yellow fever. This was a part of Blackburn's yellow fever plot to spread pestilence in the North, which plot was known to Davis, Secretary of State Judah Benjamin and Davis's three appointees to the Canadian Cabinet, James Holcombe, Clement C. Clay and Jacob Thompson. These three men, together with Blackburn, met several times with and counseled one Joseph Godfrey Hyams, in Canada, with respect to the plot and the attempted assassination. This attempted assassination and the Confederate leaders' knowledge of it must be regarded as a smoking gun, or as close to one as we are ever likely to get, unless we are prepared to believe that the Confederate leadership was ready and willing, if not quite able, to assassinate Lincoln in the summer of 1864, but then changed its collective mind by the spring of 1865, despite the fact that the Southern press was then fairly baying for the blood of Union leaders.
6. There is strong evidence that Confederate leaders signed off on the assassinations of Governors John Brough of Ohio, Oliver P. Morton of Indiana and Richard Yates of Illinois (as well as any and all federal, state and even municipal officials who stood in the way of gaining complete political control of those three states), as part of the Northwest Conspiracy of 1864, which was led by Captain Thomas Henry Hines, whose work was directly supervised by James Seddon, the Confederate Secretary of War. If the Confederate leaders signed off on these assassinations—of men whose contribution to their losses was relatively meager and at a time when the Confederacy was still in the game, albeit not by much, and their resources not yet depleted, though not sufficient, why would they not sign off on the assassinations of men whose contribution to their losses was major and when their backs were to the wall and their resources all but exhausted?
7. In conversations between Confederate Secret Service operatives in Canada, as testified to in the trial of the Lincoln conspirators, in May and June, 1865, there are dozens of references to assassination, not only of Lincoln, but also of six other federal officeholders and of Lincoln's entire cabinet, but only one reference to abduction.
8. The Confederate government was at all times aware of Booth and his action team and their activities and did nothing to stop him. The evidence for this is overwhelming. Booth's right hand was John Surratt, Jr., who was Judah Benjamin's official courier, meeting with him weekly. In addition, Booth was known to be very close

- to Confederate agent Thomas Harbin, who later wrote of his experiences as a Confederate Secret Service agent, when it was safe to do so, and among other things said that he reported directly to Davis.
9. Kidnapping of Lincoln as an object of Booth and his action team is a myth. Conspirator Samuel Arnold, in his Memoirs, confirmed that it was a myth. Judge Advocate General John Bingham and Military Commissioner Thomas M. Harris both concluded, after listening to the testimony of hundreds of witnesses at the trial of the conspirators, that it was a myth, that the object of Booth had always been assassinations.
 10. Thomas F. Harney led a mission to Washington from Richmond in early April, 1865. The purpose of the mission was to assassinate Lincoln and as many other federal officeholders as could be lured into a wing of the White House prior to blowing it up, making use of an "entertainment" or "serenade" for the purpose. Harney was aided at every step of the way by trainmen, post commanders, guides, other agents and John Mosby himself, between Richmond, which he left on April 1, and his capture on April 9 or 10 at Burke's Station, near Washington. Could such a mission, with so much help along the way, have been attempted without the knowledge and approval of the Confederate leadership? Clearly, no.
 11. We know with certainty that an attempt on the life of Secretary of State William Seward was also made on April 14. We know with near certainty that attempts were also made on the same night on the lives of Vice President Andrew Johnson, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton and Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant. A .38 caliber Whitney revolver that, incredibly, misfired when Lewis Powell tried to shoot Frederick Seward, the Secretary's son, and neck and back plates on Seward that were there because of a recent carriage accident, saved the Secretary. We're not sure what saved Johnson—probably security about the door to his suite or perhaps he was sleeping or otherwise engaged in his suite and therefore unresponsive to door knocking. A broken doorbell appears to have saved Stanton and an alert brakeman and a locked car door appear to have saved Grant.
 12. There is evidence that Mosby Rangers were in and around Ford's Theatre on the night of April 14.
 13. There is evidence of treason in the crossing of the Navy Yard Bridge by Booth and his co-conspirator David Herold.
 14. Booth and Herold were given much help by members of the "mail line" in Maryland and Virginia after the assassination. Such help suggests foreknowledge of the crime and arrangement to facilitate the fugitives' escape.
 15. Lewis Powell said to Thomas T. Eckert, the Assistant Secretary of War, that government prosecutors did "not have the one-half of them" (i.e. conspirators) and that it was his impression that arrangements had been made with others for the same disposition of other federal officeholders as he was to make of Seward. With respect to the first statement, the government had nine conspirators, or alleged conspirators, including the dead Booth. That would mean there were no fewer than 18 involved in the conspiracy. But Herold said that Booth had told him there were 35 involved. And Booth's actor friend from New York, Samuel Knapp Chester, said that Booth had told him there were between 50 and 100 involved. Can even a number between 18 and 35 have been necessary to assassinate one man? And could a conspiracy involving such a number have been carried out in Washington, a city saturated with Confederate agents, without the knowledge and therefore the approval of the Confederate leadership? With respect to the second statement, can we read in it anything less than a well-laid plan to decapitate the United States government, or, if not a well-laid plan, at least a plan.
 16. After the assassination, the Bureau of Military Justice came into the possession of a letter dated April 10, 1865, and addressed to Booth at the National Hotel in Washington. The letter was signed "T.I.O.S." and stated, *inter alia*, that "If the four are assassinated our wrongs are avenged" and that "there is one man to everyone in the Cabinet".
 17. Another letter that came into the possession of the Bureau of Military Justice after the assassination was dated May 10, 1865, and came from a Union agent in Paris who referred to a note from a Confederate agent, identified as "Johnston", probably an alias, which came to his attention. In the note, "Johnston" said that he had followed Grant for two days, which is indicative of the scope of the conspiracy. He also said that Booth had said that he would never be taken alive, that he would bullet himself first, which is indicative of the Confederate underground's familiarity with Booth and also of Booth's likely commitment to something more lethal than kidnapping, something for which he would be willing to exchange his life. Johnston also said that he arrived in Washington on April 14 at 5:00 pm and that within half an hour knew that an "attack" would be

made that night and that "had it been carried out as was arranged previously, some 15 of the Yankee leaders would have been now quietly resting where they should have gone some 4 years (ago)". The authenticity of this letter, of the "T.I.O.S." letter, and, for that matter, of any of the letters that came into the possession of the Bureau, has never been successfully challenged.

18. In his May 1 confession, George Atzerodt said that Booth had told him that "the New York crowd" had plans to "get the president certain" and "get him quick" and that if he didn't get the president quickly, the New York crowd would. Does anyone suppose that these statements referred to kidnapping? Atzerodt also referred to the Harney plot of blowing up part of the White House, though he did not mention Harney by name.
19. All the letters that came into the possession of the Bureau of Military Justice after the assassination, which relate to Confederate Secret Service work, speak only of assassination; none speaks of kidnapping.
20. Major Confederate leaders who were most likely complicit in the events of April 14, including Judah Benjamin, Jacob Thompson, George Sanders, John Surratt, Benjamin Franklin Stringfellow and Thomas Harbin, all fled the country after the assassination, Stringfellow for two years, Thompson for three or four years, Harbin for five years, Sanders for seven years and Benjamin never to return. Surratt was brought back from Egypt in chains 19 months after fleeing.
21. Henri Beaumont de Ste. Marie, who was with John Surratt in Italy (they were both Papal Zouaves), swore in an Affidavit he prepared in 1866, addressed to Secretary of State Seward, that Surratt admitted to him that he and Booth had killed Lincoln, but that when he was asked if Davis was complicit in the assassination, answered "I am not going to tell you". That response, of course, is as good as an affirmative answer, because it means that Surratt knew (and as Judah Benjamin's official courier who admitted to killing Lincoln, why wouldn't he know the breadth of the conspiracy?), otherwise he would have said, simply, "I don't know", and that Davis was complicit, otherwise he would have said, simply, "No. Davis had nothing to do with it; he was completely innocent", or words of similar import. Surratt's answer---"I am not going to tell you"---, in response to the question "Was Davis involved in the assassination", must be regarded as another smoking gun, or as close to one as we are ever likely to get.
22. There is a statement from one Susannah Hamm of Richmond that was made to the Bureau of Military Justice after the assassination. She said, *inter alia*, that "The plan of inviting Mr. Lincoln to the theater was fixed upon in Richmond". There are many reasons, too many to enumerate here, why Ms. Hamm's statement is entitled to great weight; it is perfectly consistent with other items of evidence we have that demonstrate the complicity of the Confederate leadership in the events of April 14.
23. A displaced Michigander in wartime Richmond wrote that he heard a lot of talk there about plots to assassinate Federal leaders and that the Richmond newspapers encouraged such plots. He wrote, further, that the assassination of Lincoln and his cabinet was much talked about in Richmond as a probability and that by August of 1864 the city was caught in what he described as an "assassination frenzy". If it was a frenzy in August, 1864, could it have been anything less than white hot by the spring of 1865?
24. By April, 1865, the Confederacy was almost finished. There was virtually nothing left to its leaders but multiple assassinations and the presidential succession statute of 1792, which was then in effect and which would have created crippling chaos in the federal government if major figures in that government could be eliminated.
25. Lastly, consider this statement by William A. Tidwell, who spent his entire life in government intelligence. In his book, *April '65*, he wrote:

What has been established, however, is a network of documented facts that logically coincide with the information that would have had to exist if Davis did decide to attack the leaders of the Federal government. One can refute the logic only by a bizarre distortion of reason. The probability that all of these facts were true and that Davis did not make the critical decision is very slight indeed.

Now, having said all of that, the next question is: At what point does a theory cease to be a theory and become a fact? Frankly, I don't know. I suspect that every case is in some degree different. There are, after, all, Holocaust deniers and those who reject evolution and climate change, despite the fact that the Holocaust is absolutely and

totally beyond any doubt whatsoever and evolution and climate change are affirmed by more than 99% of experts in the respective fields (paleontologists, biologists and climate scientists).

So let me say this to those who still doubt that the Confederate government and its Secret Service Bureau were in any way complicit in the events of April 14, 1865, in Washington, and who believe that such doubt constitutes sufficient justification to deny that complicity is an established fact and to continue to relegate it to the inferior status of theory: In my judgment, the totality of the evidence adduced and enumerated above constitutes at least a prima-facie case of complicity, which means that the burden of proof shifts from the proponents of complicity to the opponents. Those who continue to maintain non-complicity are now charged with the task of trying to prove it. Accordingly, I ask that all such persons present their evidence. I do not even ask for clear and convincing evidence, proof beyond a reasonable doubt or "definitive proof"; I ask only for evidence, any evidence, of non-complicity, other than florid, *ipse dixit* and self-serving denials and gratuitous exculpations.

One final note: In his article, Mr. Wick mentions the apparent fact that Lafayette S. Foster was not targeted for assassination on April 14 and refers to this as a "flaw" in the theory of Confederate complicity. Not really. To begin with, we don't know with absolute certainty that Foster was not targeted. Remember that "Johnston" spoke of attempts on the lives of 15 Yankees. It is entirely possible that Foster was one of these, but that the attempt failed, as it did in every other case that night except for Booth's attempt. Second, if he was not targeted, it was almost certainly because he was not a member of Lincoln's inner circle and an attempt on his life, therefore, would have been seen as a clear indication, if not proof positive, of the real purpose of the conspiracy and therefore of the hand of Richmond behind it. I tend to favor the latter rationale as being the more plausible.

As for leaving Foster alive, and the consequences of that fact as far as creating chaos in the federal government is concerned, it seems doubtful to me that the conspirators in Richmond would have thought of every last detail, or would have believed that they could provide for every eventuality, or that they would have believed that taking out at least Lincoln, Johnson, Seward, Stanton and Grant, arguably the five most important people in the United States at that time, would not create the chaos they felt they needed to create an opening for them to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat. "The best laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley", said the Scottish poet Robert Burns. And Helmuth von Moltke, Chief of Staff of the Prussian army before World War I, added that "No battle plan survives first contact with the enemy." The conspirators in Richmond were human beings, not robots. They could, therefore, be expected to make mistakes, and they did. It would have been an act without precedent or parallel if they didn't.

AND, ON A LIGHTER NOTE...

As we enter another New Year, it's time to reminisce about social customs of our 19th-century ancestors. The following material on the practice of conducting personal house calls on New Year's Day is excerpted from materials online from the Winterthur Museum in Delaware and *The Washington Post*:

Looking to kick the New Year off right? Why not skip the bacchanalian revelry of New Year's Eve and recreate the centuries-old custom of calling on friends on New Year's Day? Popular in the 1800s, calling evolved from a Dutch tradition of observing New Year's celebrations into a more refined practice of men, sometimes armed with small gifts of candy and flowers, visiting women who received visitors during certain hours. They gained admission into reception rooms with calling cards, and once inside they stayed only 10 to 15 minutes in order to make the rounds. These open houses featured refreshments, light fare, and more importantly, eligible young women.

On New Year's Day 1857, Samuel Edward Warren, a 25-year-old single professor at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, recorded a full day of calling in his journal. At 11:15 a.m. he ventured out. He deviated from the formula somewhat by calling upon both women and men, including the mayor, with a dinner break intermission. At one house, he was entertained with the story of a southern student who "when he saw snow for the first time, set a ball of it by his stove to 'dry' it to send it home as a curiosity." Although Warren

did not meet his future wife on this day, he was introduced to several new people and invited to future social gatherings, which prompted him to judge the day "very pleasant."

On New Year's morning of 1863, President Abraham Lincoln hosted a three-hour reception in the White House. That afternoon, Lincoln slipped into his office and — without fanfare — signed a document that changed America forever. It was the Emancipation Proclamation, decreeing "that all persons held as slaves" within the rebellious Southern states "are, and henceforward shall be, free." In 1864, a small cadre of African American men and women decided to break the color line at one of the Lincolns' New Year's receptions. Among them were two U.S. Army doctors dressed in full uniform.

One of the doctors, Anderson Abbott, later recalled that President Abraham Lincoln received them politely. When they passed into the East Room, however, the assembled crowd stared in shocked surprise. At first, Abbott felt like crawling "into a hole." "As we had decided to break the record, we held our ground," he wrote. The two men kept themselves busy for about half an hour, looking at the art on the walls and listening to the Marine Band, all the while under the gaze of the incredulous white guests — including Robert Lincoln. [Note: Our newsletter carried the story of this several years ago.]

By the late 1800s, an increasing population resulted in a frenetic new pace to calling, with competitions among men to visit the most number of houses and women to collect the most calling cards, and unsurprisingly, a rise in intoxication. Etiquette manuals began addressing these problems around 1880, albeit with conflicting advice. One manual suggested women send personal invitations to gentlemen, while another considered this in poor taste - ignoring the open house concept. Announcing open houses in local newspapers was, however, acceptable. Nonetheless the tide was turning: *Godey's Magazine* lamented in 1897, "the good old custom of keeping open house on New Year's Day, has, like a great many old-time customs fallen into desuetude" and that in large cities calls "are considered extremely bad form." France was noted as still observing New Year's calls as people there had not abused the practice.
