

The Surratt Courier

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Louise Oertly, Editor

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President's Message

With each issue of the *Courier*, the easy part is pulling together the main articles, as most of them are reprints from past issues. The hard part is figuring out what to write in my President's Message. Sometimes it's easy and I can dovetail the message with the issue's main topic. It didn't happen with this issue. This time inspiration came while going through several folders that I decided to finally organize. You know the ones I'm talking about—the papers that are too interesting to throw away, but you don't know what to do with them in the meantime. Also, to be honest, I had lost track of what was in the folders, and I needed more space in my filing cabinet. It's amazing what you can accumulate, especially if you come from a long line of packrats on both sides of the family.

Although there were some great notes from James O. Hall and John Brennan, the paper that caught my attention was an undated article from *The Washington Post*. Marie McNair's column, "Town Topics," is a rather bad photocopy of the article, which probably dates back to the 1940s or 50s. As with many papers in those folders, I have no idea where it came from or who sent it to me. What makes this article interesting is that it gives a glimpse of Mary Surratt in the early years of her marriage, before her move to Maryland.

Her Family Here Before D.C.

Mrs. Harry Meem, who's been a part of Washington's social and civic life for almost a half century, is writing a book.

The former Louise Hill, whose family was established here before there was a District of Columbia, is putting down the twice-told tales of her mother and grandmother with a view to publication. If, however, her talents as an author are not sufficient, says Mrs. Meem, she will at least have a historical record to pass on to her grandchildren

Where Bolling Field now spreads out over many acres, it was a plantation owned by Mrs. Meem's grandparents. Her grandmother used to tell her grandchildren about Mrs. Surratt (later to be implicated in the assassination of President Lincoln), who would come by horseback each Sunday morning dressed in a green velvet riding habit for Mass in the private chapel on the plantation. With her were her two small children.

This newsletter is a bimonthly publication of the Surratt Society, a non-profit affiliate of the Surratt House Museum, a historic property of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. The Surratt Society's website is surrattmuseum.org Contact us at surratt.society@gmail.com or by mail at: Surratt Society, 9201 Edgeworth Drive #3853, Capitol Heights, MD 20791-3853.

The Surratt House Museum's phone number is (301) 868-1121.

Mrs. Meem's family once owned the land on which the Capitol was built.

With a background rich in history, a memory of the past and an insight into the present, Louise Meem has all the material at hand to write a book well worth reading.

For more information on the history of the land that Mrs. Meem was referring to, see page 12.

Louise Oertly, President

Halloween

By Laurie Verge

Reprinted from Surratt House Docent's Newsletter

Like many of our celebrations, it is believed that Halloween has grown out of an ancient pagan rite of the Druids in England. It was named in honor of the Lord of the Dead, Samhain, (which meant "summer's end" in the Celtic language of the time) and was held at the end of October. It was believed that all the souls of people who had died during the year were gathered before Samhain for final judgment. There was also a gruesome ceremony in which all the evil people were burned to death for their crimes.

When the ancient Romans invaded and conquered the Druids, they began a somewhat gentler celebration, honoring the dead with Feralia (a late-February celebration) and the bounties of the harvest with a festival dedicated to Pomona, goddess of the orchards (in early November). Instead of execution-style burnings, huge bonfires were built to chase away evil spirits.

Finally Christianity came to the area, and the Pope decreed that a feast known as All Saints or All Hallows' Day, honoring saints and martyrs who had died for their faith, would be held on November 1st each year. However, the church had a hard time driving away the old customs, and people began to celebrate All Hallows' Eve (hence, Hallow-Eve or Halloween) as the time when witches, goblins, fairies, and the dead walked the earth. Farmers carried torches around their fields to frighten off these evil spirits, suppers were set on tables for roving ghosts, and children carried candlelit lanterns carved from turnips, potatoes, and large beets to keep the spirits away.

When the colonists came to America, many of them who settled in the north (area now known as New England) tried to do away with these customs. These people were known as Puritans, and they banned things related to the Catholic and the Anglican religions. However, they did believe in witches. Witches had, at first, been considered "wise ones" (from the word "wica"). During the Middle Ages, however, they became feared by many rulers who thought that they could start revolutions. Witchcraft was condemned. In America, this grew into the famous Salem, Massachusetts, Witch Trials of the 1690s. The last recorded American witch trial was in Pennsylvania in 1730. Witches had become the most popular symbol of all the evils that supposedly walked the earth on Halloween. Many tricks were attributed to them on that evening: from stealing things, to unhinging garden gates, mysterious ringing of the door and yard bells, and lifting of outhouses to shed roofs.

The Halloween craze really hit America in the 1840s, when the great potato famine in Ireland drove many Irish to come to America. The Irish were Catholics who celebrated All

Hallows' Day (November 1st), but they also believed strongly in All Hallows' Eve (October 31st). It was the Irish who gave us our jack-o-lanterns. Ireland was filled with bogs and marshes, any of which had strange lights that appeared because of the natural mixture of marsh gases. The Irish believed, however, that these were supernatural lanterns lit by evil spirits to lure people to their deaths in the marshes.

Another folktale involved a greedy blacksmith named Jack, who sold his soul to the devil. When the devil came to collect, Jack tricked him into climbing a tree and then trapped him there by quickly carving a cross on the tree trunk. Years later, when Jack died, his soul was rejected in Heaven because it had previously belonged to the devil. When Jack showed up in Hell the devil refused him too. Before the gates of hell slammed shut behind him, Jack grabbed a scoop of burning coal in a turnip that he had been eating. Ever since, he has walked the Earth carrying his lantern to light the way until the Final Judgement Day. When the Irish brought this story to America, they adapted it a bit—the pumpkin (larger and much easier to carve) became the lantern, instead of a turnip.

Nuts and apples also got into the game. One popular game was placing two nuts, representing lovers, side by side near the fire. If they burned peacefully and slowly, it would be a happy love affair. If, however, they sparked or popped apart, it would be a stormy relationship. Apple peelings thrown over one's shoulder would form your lover's initial on the floor. Apple bobbing was a game originally done by hanging an apple on a string from the ceiling and stealing a bite without using your hands. Bobbing for it in water became a later version. A more dangerous form of the game was suspending a stick on a string from the ceiling. One end of the stick held a candle, the other the apple. One needed to bite the apple without getting burned by the candle.

Costumed trick-or-treaters probably started in England, when on All Souls' Day (November 2nd) costumed children held parades and went from door to door offering to pray or fast for the dead in exchange for money or gifts. In one section of the country, it became customary to hand out small cakes, called "soul cakes," to the children. This custom did not become popular in America, however, until after 1900.

How It All Began

Butler vs Bingham

In the July/August 2023 issue of the *Surratt Courier*, Laurie Verge's article, *Mary Surratt: Did She Or Didn't She?*, mentioned a confrontation between Congressmen John A. Bingham and Benjamin Butler. Naturally I was curious about this Butler/Bingham situation, so I decided to go to one of my favorite websites to see what I could find. [If you don't know what I'm talking about, it's the Library of Congress' website, chroniclingamerica.loc.gov, which features historic U.S. newspapers dating from 1770 to 1963.] According to the articles I found, the accusation was made during a U.S. House of Representatives' discussion on a bill for the relief of the people of the South. The discussion on the bill itself was as interesting as the accusation, so I also included that portion of the articles.

The National Republican (Washington, D.C.)

March 22, 1867

(Page 1, excerpt begins middle of column 6)

CONGRESSIONAL PROCEEDINGS.

FORTIETH CONGRESS—FIRST SESSION

Thursday, March 21, 1867

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The House then went into the Committee of the Whole on the bill for the relief of the people of the South.

Mr. Bingham, of Ohio, proposed to amend by authorizing the Secretary of War to direct the Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau to apply so much of the unexpended fund of the Freedmen's Bureau as may be necessary to supply food and clothing to the destitute people of the South. This, Mr. Bingham said, would not require an additional appropriation.

Mr. Butler, of Massachusetts, proceeded to show by figures from the Freedmen's Bureau, that it had always been the case that more whites had benefited by the bureau than blacks. It was now proposed to take from the loyal blacks to aid rebels who were in idleness leaning upon corner groceries. It was proposed to tax the hated "mudsills" of the North to support the whisky-drinking idleness of the aristocrats of the South. It is said the people are starving, and he [Mr. Butler] accepted the fact. The gentleman from Vermont [Mr. Woodridge] said, the other day, that this was the work of the Lord, and quoted "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." He [Mr. Butler] accepted that fact also, and it would seem that a special providence had sent this famine to Richmond and Andersonville and Milledgeville in order that the people there might appreciate the pangs of starving inflicted upon Union prisoners.

Mr. Spalding, of Ohio, said that, since this question was first brought up, his mind had been the seat of contending feelings and emotions. At first his feelings of benevolence and charity, and a due respect to the civilization of the age, compelled him to determine to vote for the Senate bill, but when he heard the labored arguments on the other side, advocating the proposition as a premium for the persecutions which this House inflicted upon the people of the South, he was brought to a standstill. He could appreciate the course of reasoning of the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. Covode] the other day, who had a son starved to death in the rebel prisons. He [Mr. Spalding] had also two sons who had been captured by the rebels, and subjected to suffering; but if he would see the very men who had caused his sons to suffer he could not, if they were in a starving condition, withhold a helping hand. He could not resist the appeal to his humanity. He was opposed to the amendment offered the other day by the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. Butler], because he did not believe it was made in good faith. Our soldiers were provided for, and the pending question must be considered as a question of fact. If the people of the South were starving, the Government should not withhold a helping hand.

Mr. Woodbridge, of Vermont, sent to the Clerk's desk and had read a printed letter, showing that Union soldiers who had been in rebel prisons were in favor of giving this aid to the starving South.

Mr. Logan, of Illinois, denied that the soldiers were in favor of the resolution, and he referred to the resolutions adopted at a meeting of Post No. 1 of the Grand Army of the Republic, and which had been published in a daily paper of this city.

Mr. Woodridge said he had read the resolutions. They extended thanks to Gen. Logan and Gen. Butler for what was termed their patriotic efforts to defeat the bill. He did not know who composed Post No. 1 of this Grand Army of the Republic, but if they were soldiers and the resolutions referred to expressed their true sentiments, they were lacking in the first principle that distinguished the brave man from the coward.

Mr. Broomall, of Pennsylvania, advocated the passage of the bill.

Mr. Butler referred to the remarks of Mr. Woodbridge, and said he, the other day, understood the gentleman from Vermont to say that he [Mr. Butler] was no statesman. He was very sorry for the fact. He probably would have been a statesman had he been fortunate enough to have secured an election to the Thirty-ninth Congress.

Mr. Woodbridge. I said no such thing, and made no such charge, and the gentleman from Massachusetts knows it. [Sensation.]

Mr. Butler. Then the gentleman says I am a statesman, and I am glad to hear it. [Laughter.] Mr. Butler said that if he had the approval of the soldiers who had periled their lives for the Union, he did not fear the disapproval of gentlemen who worn out the cushioned seats of this House during the war.

Mr. Bingham moved that the committee rise for the purpose of terminating debate.

Mr. Butler said that motion was another specimen of Mr. Bingham's fairness on this question.

Mr. Bingham said the gentleman had no right to impugn his motives or to impute unfairness to him.

Mr. Butler said he withdrew all questions of unfairness, and would call it unfairness on the part of the gentleman.

The committee then rose, and the Speaker resumed the chair and laid before the House three communications from the President of the United States, transmitting papers in relation to treatment of American citizens in Great Britain and its provinces; in relation to the withdrawal of French troops from Mexico; and in relation to the trial of American citizens in Canada on charges of connection with Fenian raids—all of which were referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

On the motion of Mr. Bingham, the House again resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole on the bill making appropriation for the relief of the South.

Mr. Schenck, of Ohio, argued that the wealthy people of the South should be taxed to support the poor, and he sent to the Clerk's desk and had read an extract from an article written by Admiral Semmes, wherein the latter complained that the young men of the South refused to labor when there was opportunity. When he [Mr. Schenck] was in command of a military department, the rebels in Maryland were in the habit of burning down the property of Union men, and this was continued until assessments were made to pay for the property thus destroyed, when the burning stopped. He thought it would have a good effect in this case to tax the wealthy for the support of the poor.

Mr. Pile, of Missouri, said he would at the proper time move to amend the bill so as to give the aid proposed to women and children and aged persons.

Mr. Miller, of Pennsylvania, renewed his amendment setting aside \$75,000 for the purchase of seeds for distribution in the South.

Mr. Stevens, of Pennsylvania, suggested that gardens already cultivated be sent down South. [Laughter.]

Mr. Miller's amendment was rejected.

Mr. Farnsworth, of Illinois, proposed to amend so as to make the aid apply only to those who were helpless and disabled. He was opposed to the bill, but if it must pass, he wanted it put in as good shape as possible.

Mr. Bingham opposed the amendment. There might be many persons starving who were neither helpless nor disabled.

Mr. Broomall, of Pennsylvania, moved to amend by a provision that the benefits of the act shall be extended to all destitute and helpless persons.

Mr. Bingham moved to amend the amendment by making it read, all destitute *or* helpless persons instead of "and." If the "and" were used the persons receiving the benefit would have to be both helpless and destitute.

Mr. Butler said he was in favor of the policy of the President, and he sent to the Clerk's desk and had read the proclamation of Mr. Johnson—when Governor of Tennessee—assessing a tax upon the wealthy citizens of Nashville for the support of the poor. He [Mr. Butler] would admonish the gentleman from Ohio not to go against the policy of the President, especially as he had gone over to the other side, not only bodily but also in the spirit. Mr. Johnson wanted to tax the rich secessionists to feed the poor, and he [Mr. Butler] wished to do only the same thing. He would further ask the other side of the House how they could possibly vote for this measure so long as the money was to be expended by the, to them, greater bugbear—the negro bureau.

Mr. Shellabarger, of Ohio, moved to amend by a proviso that no one should be entitled to the benefits of the bill who was suffering from injuries received while in the service of the Confederate States.

Mr. Bingham hoped the amendment would not be agreed to, and, referring to the remark of Mr. Butler, he said it was not becoming in a gentleman who had voted fifty times in convention for the arch-traitor of the rebellion for President to cast imputations upon his [Mr. Bingham's] motives. He repelled with scorn and contempt any such insinuations as had been made, whether they came from the hero of Fort Fisher not taken, or of Fort Fisher taken. [Great applause on the floor and in the galleries.] He stood here in advocacy of what he believed to be just, and in what the people would sustain him.

Amid much applause and confusion, the Chair [Mr. Blaine] said debate was closed by order of the House.

Mr. Butler, pointing to the clock (which denoted eighteen minutes past three), said he understood debate was to close at 3:15. The gentleman from Ohio had been permitted to exceed his time.

The Chair said that debate was ordered to be closed in eighteen minutes.

Mr. Butler still remained standing, and the Chair asked him if he rose to a question of order.

Mr. Butler said he did not, and was proceeding to speak, when he was called to order amid confusion, during which a motion was made and carried for the committee to rise.

After the Speaker had resumed the chair, Mr. Farnsworth asked unanimous consent for Mr. Butler to reply to Mr. Bingham.

Mr. Eldridge hoped consent would be given. This was an interesting question upon which light was wanted, and he hoped the gentleman would not be bottled up. [Laughter.]

Leave having been granted, Mr. Butler said he had never attempted to conceal the fact that he had fifty-seven times voted for Jeff. Davis for the Presidency.

Mr. Bingham. I only said fifty times.

Mr. Butler paid no attention to the interjection, but continued and said he had supported Jeff. Davis because he believed him to be the representative man of the South and believed that his nomination would tend to disperse the clouds which he [Mr. Butler] saw gathering over the country. The difference between him [Mr. Butler] and the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. Bingham] was that he [Mr. Butler] supported Davis when he was in the Senate and was a loyal Union man; while Mr. Bingham continued to support him now that he was a traitor. He did not expect such a blow as this, however, to come from the side of the House which had always supported Davis, and which was still supporting him. He did not impugn the gentleman's motives. He simply said he thought he [Mr. Bingham] was the leader on that side of the House.

Mr. Bingham denied that Mr. Butler had qualified his remark and said he thought so. If the remark had been qualified, there would have been no offence.

Mr. Butler said he would repeat what he had said, which was that the gentleman had gone over to that side of the House in spirit as well as in body. Referring to Mr. Bingham's allusion to Fort Fisher, Mr. Butler said he never expected that he would be altogether exonerated from some blunders that he had made, but he had done what he could to inflict as much injury as possible upon the rebels, and he never had expected to be censured for that. If the gentleman from Ohio had done as much to cripple the rebellion, he [Mr. Butler] would give him all credit and honor for it. But the only victim the gentleman could produce was a woman hanged—that was Mrs. Surratt. He [Mr. Butler] could stand all that might be said about Fort Fisher if the gentleman could bear up under the blood of a woman, shed upon the scaffold by order of a military commission, on evidence which he [Mr. Butler] believed never did justify this extreme penalty.

Mr. Bingham said that in ten years' experience in Congress he had ever observed due amenities in debate, and he never replied to personal allusions unless they were of a character that could not be passed by. Who made the gentleman from Massachusetts the judge of his (Bingham's) motives? And when it was stated that he had given offence, he attempted to excuse the dishonor he had done himself, and the injustice he had done him [Bingham] by saying he thought so. If that had been the case, the remark would not have been noticed, for he cared no more for the gentleman's thoughts than he did as to who killed Cock Robin. By what right does the gentleman now say that the blood of innocence was on his hands? Does he pretend to apply the remark to the gentlemen, his peers, who were also engaged in the trial referred to? In conclusion, Mr. Bingham stated that he had never desired to take the part he did in the assassination trials, but was summoned to the duty. That trial and the conviction of the accused was matter of record, and he could afford to defy the calumnies of the gentlemen.

At the close of Mr. Bingham's remarks he moved that the House again resolve itself into Committee of the Whole, and that all debate be closed; but he gave way for a time.

Mr. Banks, of Massachusetts, from the Committee on Rules, reported an additional rule authorizing the appointment of a standing committee on labor. Adopted.

Mr. Wilson, of Iowa, from the Committee on the Judiciary, submitted a bill declaring that members of the Thirty-ninth Congress who had been elected to the Fortieth Congress could not draw mileage until the fall session. Passed.

The House then resolved itself into Committee of the Whole on the bill for relief in the South, all debate having been closed.

All the amendments suggested, except Mr. Bingham's, were severally voted down, and the bill was reported to the House as amended, and the appropriation for the relief is to be made out of funds in the Freedmen's Bureau.

The question on its passage in the House will be taken tomorrow at 1 o'clock.

Adjourned at 5:39 p.m.

The National Republican

(Washington, D.C.)

March 27, 1867

(Page 1, excerpt begins bottom of column 4)

Congressional Proceedings

Fortieth Congress – First Session

Tuesday, March 26, 1867

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Butler, of Massachusetts, asked, and obtained, leave to make a personal explanation, and said he had caused to be laid upon the desk of each member a copy of a speech by the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. Bingham], as taken from the official Journal of the House; and also a report of the speech as it appeared from the reporter's notes before it was corrected. He would call attention to the fact that the speech, as taken from the reporter's notes, contained double the amount of the matter given in the official report in the *Globe*. He had always understood that in a debate involving purely personal matters these changes could not be made. But what made the change here yet more odious, was that it was put in such a shape as to make a direct attack in such a way that he [Mr. Butler] could not have answered it as it was put the other day. He would not make a characterization by epithet of what he thought of such a course. He could overlook and excuse what might be said in the heat of debate, but the man was not to be envied who could sit down in the cool of the evening, when all was calm about him, and bring such an accusation against his peers as could not have been answered at the time the debate actually occurred.

The speech was never delivered as printed, and therefore he [Mr. Butler] could not reply to it. In the speech, as delivered, the gentleman says: "By what right does the gentleman thus assail me, or the tribunal of true and brave and honorable men who found the facts upon their oaths and pronounced their judgment. What does the gentleman know of the evidence in the case, and what does he care for the evidence when he thus assails the official conduct of those men who constituted the court." He [Mr. Butler] did know of the evidence taken upon the assassination trial. He had examined it with great care, and the view he expressed the other day as to the innocence of Mrs. Surratt. It was no spasmodic thought of his, but was made up after clear and calm deliberation. In his speech the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. Bingham] said he was the advocate of the United States. He [Mr. Butler] denied the fact. Mr. Bingham was the Special Judge Advocate of the United States, and as such it became his duty to care for the interest of the prisoner, and to present all the evidence bearing upon the case. There was an important part of the evidence which

was not produced upon that investigation. When Booth was captured, his captors found upon his person, among other things, a diary in which Booth set down all the facts connected with the conspiracy; the names of those engaged in it; his motives for the act, and probably some sort of excuse for his part in the matter. Why was the evidence suppressed, and why was not this diary placed in evidence before the commission? His tobacco pipe, and his compass, and even a portion of his clothing was brought before the commission for the purpose of identification; but this diary, which might have given an important light, was not produced at all. That diary is now before the Committee on the Judiciary of this House. He wished it to be understood, however, that he had not had access to the diary, nor had he received any information that he should refer to from any member of that committee; but what he would state he had got from hearsay. That diary was now before the Committee of the Judiciary, and with eighteen pages, that were certainly in it at the time of the capture, cut out. He wanted now to know whether that diary was not whole when it reached the hands of the Government officials? And if it was, what kind of a policy was it to be pursued which placed the tobacco pipe in evidence for the purpose of identifying Booth, and withheld the sure means of identification, which was his own handwriting in his own diary? Why was the diary not placed in evidence as well as the tobacco pipe? The gentleman [Mr. Bingham] accused him [Mr. Butler] of assailing the officers who composed the court, when it was said that Mrs. Surratt was hung unjustly. He [Mr. Butler] had done no such thing. He had in no particular assailed the officer of the court. They acted under their oaths upon such evidence as was presented to them by the Judge Advocate. They did not and could not know the nature of any evidence that was suppressed or withheld from them. They did not see the diary and could not know its contents, but it was the duty of the Judge Advocate to advise them of such testimony, and that he had failed to do. Who spoliated that book? Who cut the leaves from it? Whose knife mutilated it? Who withheld and suppressed testimony, and caused an innocent woman to be hung when he might have saved her by the simple production of the diary? There is a leaf in that diary which was not cut out or spoliated. [Mr. Butler here produced a diary from his pocket and laid it upon the desk before him and continued:] That page had been written over immediately after the assassination and while Booth was a fugitive, and was to the effect that he [Booth] had endeavored to recross the Potomac for the purpose of going to Washington and giving himself up and clearing himself of that of which he was charged. How could that page have been in if the book was not spoliated after it came into possession of the Government; and why was it that the other pages were cut out so that it could not be ascertained how Booth expected to clear himself of his crime? Why was not Col. Conger, who captured Booth, allowed to go on and tell all about the diary? He was examined as to the pipe and other articles, but not a word was uttered about the diary.

Mr. Butler here read from the report of the testimony taken at the assassination trials to show that Conger was examined upon all the subjects named except the diary; and, resuming the thread of his remarks, said the Judge Advocate did not even ask Conger, as is customary, if that was all he knew. The diary would have identified Booth in a moment and beyond a question. He [Mr. Butler] of course could not know what the judgment of the court would have been if that book had been produced. He understood that the specious excuse given for its non-production was lest Booth's glorification of himself and his act should go into the case. It was a piece of evidence which he would not say would have conclusively shown Mrs. Surratt's innocence, but it would have shown that Booth meant a capture of the President before he ever thought of an assassination. Mrs. Surratt might have been cognizant of the meditated abduction, but utterly ignorant of the scheme of assassination. He did not find fault with the action of the court, with the evidence they had before them, but he did object that the evidence was not brought to their attention by the Judge

Advocate, so that if it had been discovered that she was not cognizant of the assassination her life might have been spared, and it was for that reason he felt glad that his hands had not been imbued in her blood, whether she were innocent or guilty.

He brought no charge against the military officers composing the commission. They relied upon the Judge Advocate to produce the evidence and to shed all possible light upon the case. But the fact is that all the testimony was not laid before that tribunal. By the production of the diary before it had been mutilated, Booth's accomplices could have been ascertained. It would have been known why it was that the plan to kidnap had been changed to assassination, and who it was that instigated the assassination, and who it was that would be specially benefited by the change in the succession of Mr. Lincoln after the knife had done its work; and the same book would have explained how Booth expected to clear himself by coming to Washington and giving himself up; but it was never even so much as attempted to ascertain who had cut the leaves from the book. He [Mr. Butler] was only speaking from hearing as to the diary, but members of the Judiciary Committee could correct him if he was wrong. He was not, however, speaking from any knowledge that he had derived from that committee or any member of it. He would not have pursued this matter if the gentleman had not charged him that he had no evidence for the statement he had heretofore made. The gentleman [Mr. Bingham] brought the whole subject here, and he [Mr. Butler] revived it because he desired the fullest investigation.

At the conclusion of Mr. Butler's remarks, he replaced in his pocket the diary which he had taken from it while speaking.

Mr. Bingham asked Mr. Butler to let him have the book.

Mr. Butler declined.

Mr. Bingham said if he had the diary, he wanted him [Mr. Butler] to produce it.

Mr. Butler said the Judiciary Committee had not permitted him to see it. The book he had was his own. He had no doubt, however, that Mr. Bingham knew all about the diary.

Mr. Bingham said he would in a few words answer the disreputable accusations and charges of the gentleman.

The Speaker reminded Mr. Bingham that the word "disreputable" was not parliamentary when applied to another member.

Mr. Bingham begged leave to differ from the Chair. He thought that in this case it was perfectly parliamentary, proper, and in order. Mr. B [Mr. Bingham] then proceeded, and referred to Mr. Butler's charge that he had altered the sense of his remarks the other day in the alterations he had made in the report of his speech. The report of that speech, as handed to him for revision, was one of the worst and most incorrect that had ever come to him from the official desk, and in revising it he had not altered the sense of a single word or sentence; and he defied the gentleman [Mr. Butler] to point out any such alteration. It was the same substance to the very last word, and as appeared from the meagre reports in the papers the day after it was delivered.

He [Mr. Bingham] had charged that that gentleman had assailed the men in the field, and charged them with being stained with innocent blood, and he reiterated that charge. He [Mr. Bingham] had also charged the gentleman that he neither knew nor cared what the evidence was, and he said so yet. But he says there was other evidence withheld. If he [Mr. Butler] is the lawyer he was reputed to be, and there was no disposition on his [Mr. Bingham's] part to underrate an antagonist, the gentleman was to be pitied if he did not know that evidence after the fact was never offered or entertained by a court. He defied the gentleman to show, by any investigation, that any statement or communication, made by John Wilkes Booth was not made after the fact and therefore inadmissible as evidence. Any lawyer knew that such evidence was barred, and he treated with

scorn and contempt any statement that he was obliged, as Judge Advocate, to produce any such evidence. All the judicial tribunals had decided one way upon such evidence, but perhaps the genius of these judges was not equal to the incomparable genius of the incomparable hero of Fort Fisher. [Laughter and applause on the floor and in the galleries.]

Turning to the Speaker, Mr. Bingham said he hoped his last remark would be considered parliamentary.

Mr. Butler rose and desired to be heard.

Mr. Bingham declined to give way. He did not see that the gentleman from Massachusetts had any claim upon him for any favor. He [Mr. Bingham] had never seen any such memorandum or diary as that referred to by Mr. Butler. He doubted if there was one, and he therefore was not surprised that the gentleman should hide away the book which he held up when speaking.

Mr. Butler again assayed to speak.

Mr. Bingham again declined to yield, and said if after the gentleman had refused to let him see the book, he [Mr. Bingham] did not care if he [Mr. Butler] emulated the example set in the vision in the Apocalypse and eat it. [Laughter.] He [Mr. Butler] asks who spoliated the book. That was as interesting a question to him [Mr. Bingham] and as important as to who killed cock-robin, to repeat a remark which he had made the other day. He challenged his antagonist and accuser to produce any evidence to show that he had withheld any testimony at the assassination trial. The gentleman comes here with hearsay testimony—a kind of testimony not generally recognized, except perhaps by a man who lives in a bottle and is fed with a spoon. [Laughter.]

Mr. Bingham hoped the Speaker would not declare that last remark unparliamentary and out of order. He had great respect for the Speaker, and believed he was one of the most impartial presiding officers the House had ever had; and, if he offended, he wanted it to go to the record. The other statement, that he had control of the testimony, shows, on the part of the gentleman from Massachusetts, a disregard of all decency and all law. The gentleman knew that he [Mr. Bingham] was not the official recorder of the court. He knew that the Judge Advocate General of the United States was sitting at the trial daily as the recorder, and that he had the control of all the testimony. He [Mr. Bingham] could not, therefore, be accused of being the organ of the court. If the gentleman excepted to the argument he [Mr. Bingham] made at the trial, and every word of which he had written himself, let him [Mr. Butler] read that argument and point to a line or a word where any part of the case was dealt with unjustly. In the war he was making upon him [Mr. Bingham], the gentleman [Mr. Butler] had a task beyond his powers, and he will show in this, as he did in other positions, that he is not equal to this emergency or up to the high and manifest standard required for success. The plan to kidnap President Lincoln was all put in testimony in before the military commission; and the gentleman says, poor Mrs. Surratt, she might have known of the attempt to kidnap and yet might have been innocent of any attempt or knowledge of the assassination. He had not forgotten the Pagan theory—to say nothing bad of the dead—and he would, therefore, not say one word upon that subject; but whether the gentleman brought his false charges of corruption and malice, he recognized at last that justice to all must be a rule of conduct of which all acts are to be judged official and unofficial. In conclusion, Mr. Bingham again denied having withheld any testimony on the trial referred to. It was painful for him to utter an angry word, and he would repeat what he said the other day, that he had never said a harsh word of a mortal man, except when driven to it by an unjustifiable assault.

Mr. Butler asked the privilege of replying, but objection was made on all sides.

Mr. Ward, of New York, said in view of what had taken place he asked leave to introduce a resolution declaring that it had been asserted in a speech at Boston, by an ex-Cabinet minister,

that Mrs. Surratt had been unjustifiably hung, and that the same having been made upon the floor of the House, a committee should be appointed to investigate the matter.

Mr. Stevens, of Pennsylvania, objected. This controversy should not continue any longer, and it was one that should never have never brought into the House.

A Bit of D.C. Aviation History

By Louise Oertly

Editor's Note: In my President's Message, the article mentioned that "where Bolling Field now spreads out over many acres, it was a plantation owned by Mrs. Meem's grandparents." As most military air fields tend to have a written history, I thought I'd do a little research to see if I could find her grandparents' name. Little did I realize the wealth of information I would find on both the land and the airfield's contributions to aviation history. [Yes, my aviation roots are showing.]

More information about the aviation history/activity at Bolling Field can be found at www.jbab.jb.mil>About-JBAB .]

For those of you who are familiar with the Washington, D.C., area, the military base mentioned is now known as *Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling*. Here is some more information on the area's history.

The earliest known inhabitants of the land where *Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling* is located were the Nacotchtank, an Algonquian people. The largest village was located just north of the present-day Air Force base. There was possibly another village located on the base's grounds, where in 1936 two ossuaries (burial mounds) were discovered.

In 1663, Caecilius Calvert, second Lord Baltimore, granted Giesboro, as the land was then known, to Thomas Dent. In 1715, the Dents sold the land to Colonel Thomas Addison. Louise Meem [1887-1868] is probably part of the Addison family, because the Addisons sold the plantation to George Washington Young in 1863. By this time, the Surratts were in Surrattsville. George Young, in turn, sold the lower portion of the land to his brother Ignatius. During the Civil War, the Federal government leased a portion of the Young land to be used as a Union Cavalry depot.

The land has been leased/owned by the War Department/Department of Defense since 1917.

In late 1917, the Navy began using the northern portion of the Anacostia River for seaplanes. By the beginning of 1918, the *Naval Air Station* was officially established. By mid-1918, Secretary of War Newton Baker decided to lease the Anacostia Flats for military purposes. The land was assigned to the Aviation Section of the Signal Corps, where the landing field would serve as the primary aviation facility for the Nation's Capital.

The *Flying Field at Anacostia*, as it was named then, was the first military airfield near the U.S. Capitol. By June of 1918, its name changed to *Anacostia Experimental Flying Field*.

However, by July, it was decided to combine the Army and the adjoining Navy air fields. It was named *Bolling Field* to honor Colonel Raynal C. Bolling, the first high-ranking Army Air Service officer to be killed in World War I.

Bolling Field has an amazing aviation history, which includes many firsts during the 1920s. One of the most memorable was the first Army Air Tournament (predecessor to the modern airshow). The show included a simulated attack on an observation balloon which resulted in three airmen parachuting from the besieged balloon. One of the stunt pilots was General “Billy” Mitchell, who performed loops, turns, and barrel rolls. It was also from this field that President Woodrow Wilson dispatched pilots to create the first permanent airmail route from Washington, D.C., to New York City and where Charles Lindbergh’s *Spirit of St. Louis* landed here in 1927 on his return to the U.S. after his famous transatlantic flight. In 1928, the *Spirit of St. Louis* was disassembled at Bolling and transferred to the Smithsonian.

By the late 1920s, *Bolling Field* had outgrown the increasing civilian and military demands. Also, there was the ever present threat of the river flooding the air field (five feet of water flooded the flight line in 1928). In 1939, the War Department bought 345 acres of land nearby for a new air field.

In 1939, there was another name change. The old *Bolling Field* was given to the *Naval Air Station Anacostia* and the new airfield was given to the Army Air Corps retained the name *Bolling Field*. In 1948, became *Bolling Air Force Base*, when the field was designated the Headquarters Command U.S. Air Force.

The latest name change came in 2010, the two bases, *Naval Air Station Anacostia* and *Bolling Air Force Base* were merged to become the present day *Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling*.