

# The Surratt Courier

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Louise Oertly, Editor

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As the holiday season approaches, a variety of old and new holiday movies begin to appear on the television again, or however you view them today. I particularly enjoy the various versions of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. Yes, some are better than others, but you always know that in the end the "Scrooge" character—be they male or female; placed in the past or in the modern world—will find the spirit of Christmas.

*A Christmas Carol* was published in 1843 and was an immediate success with readers. It initially cost five shillings and sold about 12,500 copies within the first five months of publication. Critics predicted that it would be a favorite for generations to come—as proved by the number of movies based on its message.

Whether it was a coincidence or as a result of the book, other Christmas customs started making their appearances in England around the same time. The first Christmas card was also printed in 1843. [See the November/December 2020 President's Message.] As for the Christmas tree, that is another story in itself. Although Queen Victoria is usually credited for introducing the Christmas tree tradition to England, it was actually her German grandmother who brought it to Windsor first. It was in 1800, when Queen Charlotte, wife of George III, set up the first known Christmas tree in England. Of course, the English upper class would soon follow this royal custom. It was only after an engraving of Victoria and Albert's tree appeared in the December 1848



*Illustrated London News* that the custom began to be copied by the general public and two years later made its way to the U.S. This time the engraving, without the royal

accessories, appeared in *Godey's Lady's Book*.

Dickens and *A Christmas Carol* have been credited by some for influencing his generation to more fully embrace the Christmas season. During Dickens' early days, Christmas was just another workday, unless it fell on Sunday. Some say this is a holdover from when Oliver Cromwell prohibited the celebration of Christmas in 1643. A Vermont factory owner was said to

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*The Surratt Society's mailing address is: 9201 Edgeworth Drive #3853, Capitol Heights, MD 20791 Annual Surratt Society membership dues are \$10.*

be so moved by Dickens' recital of Scrooge's story, that he began shutting down his factory on Christmas day. One article said: "Of all the triumphs of a triumphant career, Dickens' *Carol* surely holds the dearest place." However, *A Christmas Carol* is not the only Dickens story enlivened by Christmas scenes. They can also be found in *Sketches by Boz*, *The Pickwick Papers*, *Great Expectations*, and *Edwin Drood*. He even wrote of Antarctic explorers celebrating *Christmas in the Frozen Regions*. His daughter Mamie wrote, "To my father it was a time dearer than any other part of the year, I think."

When the 58-year old Dickens died in 1870, a young Londoner reportedly asked, "Dickens dead? Then will Father Christmas die, too?" Perhaps Dickens was thinking of himself when he wrote the lines:

*And it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God Bless Us, Every One!*

I wish you and your family a happy and safe holiday,

Louise Oertly, President

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## IN MEMORIAM

In 2021, the Surratt Society lost two of our historians. They were both experts in the medical field and enjoyed sharing their Lincoln assassination knowledge at Surratt Society events.

### **Blaine Houmes, M.D.**

September 13, 1952 – June 2, 2021

Blaine earned a bachelor's degree in microbiology at Iowa State University in 1974. After one year of graduate school at Ames, he began a career at a Cedar Rapids quality assurance lab and quickly found it boring. Eager for something completely different, he was hired as an EMT at the Cedar Rapids Area Ambulance Service and simultaneously completed one of the first paramedic certifications in Iowa along with a second bachelor's degree in English at the University of Iowa. Not stopping there with his education, he would graduate from the University of North Dakota's School of Medicine in 1988, competing his internship and residency programs at Cook County Hospital in Chicago. He practiced emergency medicine at Mercy Hospital in Cedar Rapids, then briefly at Jones Regional Hospital in Anamosa until his retirement. He was a member of the Iowa Medical Society, American College of Emergency Physicians, the American Academy of Emergency Medicine, and the American Academy of Forensic Sciences. He also served a term on the Iowa Board of Medicine and for 10 years was a deputy medical examiner for Linn County.

He considered medicine as an honorable profession, but his true avocation revolved around his family and Abraham Lincoln. He was an armchair Lincoln student, speaking at national conferences and authoring several medical and history journal articles, along with book reviews. In the Lincoln field of study, he was well-known for his photographic collections and assassination-related materials. He was also a speaker at several of Surratt Society conferences.

He is survived by his wife and two children. The full obituary may be viewed at: [murdochfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Blaine-Houmes/](http://murdochfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Blaine-Houmes/)

**John L. Howard, M.S.**  
July 28, 1950 – November 1, 2021

John attended William Paterson University and received his Bachelor of Arts in General Biology in 1972, and his Masters of Science in Virology from Seton Hall University in 1975. He worked in the pathology lab at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey with regard to cancer research and virology during the height of the AIDS pandemic. For well over 37 years, he worked as a pathology supervisor in numerous medical centers and hospitals. He also performed more than 1,000 autopsies at various hospitals and was quite proud to serve his community in this way at a moment's notice.

His love of science and medical background was a natural progression into a career in teaching. In addition to working as a pathologist assistant and histotechnician, John taught anatomy and physiology at Bergen Community College and later taught basic science at The Craig School, a private coeducational day school for students with special needs. For the last 16 years, John worked as a science teacher at Passaic Valley Regional High School.

John was a true renaissance man with varied interests stretching across magic, historical mystery (such as Jack the Ripper and the Lindbergh kidnapping), the outdoors, hiking, fishing, hunting, American heritage horses, fencing, classic cars, classical music, and big band numbers. He was an accomplished horseman with a love of equitation that led him to sign up as a volunteer special mounted deputy with the police unit on Garret Mountain.

His love of American history led him to be a tour historian with the Surratt Society for over 21 years. As a tour guide, John provided historical narration and commentary on the escape of John Wilkes Booth following the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln.

He is survived by his wife and two children. The full obituary may be viewed at: [bizub-Parker.com/obituary/John-Howard](http://bizub-Parker.com/obituary/John-Howard)

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## **Lloyd Revisited**

The January/February 2021 issue of *The Surratt Courier* featured a series of past *Courier* and *Surratt Society News* articles on John M. Lloyd. Here are two more articles of interest to round out his story.

### **Hiding the Shooting Irons**

by James O. Hall

Reprinted from *The Surratt Courier*, March 1986

The question most frequently asked by visitors at the Surratt Tavern is about the “shooting irons.” How did they get there, how were they hidden, where are they now?

The abduction of President Lincoln, so long planned by John Wilkes Booth and his mismatched cabal, was attempted on March 17, 1865. Booth had misinformation that Lincoln planned to attend a play, *Still Waters Run Deep*, to be given that afternoon at Campbell Hospital on the outskirts of Washington City. Everybody got ready and rushed out to waylay the President

as he returned from the performance. Lincoln did not come. He attended a ceremony at the National Hotel instead. [Editor's Note: Ironically, it was the same hotel where Booth was staying.] As part of the kidnap attempt, David E. Herold was sent out to Surrattsville in Booth's buggy, carrying with him the arsenal of weapons Booth had collected for later use in escaping to Virginia with the captured Lincoln.

Herold hung around the tavern for a while, but nobody showed up with Lincoln as a prisoner. He then drove on down to the village of T.B. and waited some more. Nobody showed there either. So he went to bed at John C. Thompson's tavern. The next morning he took the weapons and started back for Surrattsville. On the road he met John H. Surratt, Jr., and George A. Atzerodt. They told him the abduction had fizzled.

Back at the tavern there was a problem! What to do with the two Spencer carbines and the ammunition? Surratt knew just the place to hide them—in the ceiling joists above the dining room. The butt ends of the joists were exposed in the loft above the attached kitchen. So Surratt and John M. Lloyd, the tavern keeper, stuffed them well back through the openings. There they stayed until Lloyd took them out on the night of April 14, 1865.

Booth and Herold came to the tavern about midnight. Herold took one of the carbines and some ammunition. Booth complained that he could not carry the other carbine, as his leg was broken. That left one carbine with Lloyd at the tavern. He hid it again. This time by hanging it on a cord and lowering it down from the kitchen loft between the studs in the kitchen/dining room wall. The cord broke or was later cut, which allowed the carbine to fall down in the wall.

The carbine taken by Herold was recovered at Garrett's farm in Caroline County, Virginia. The second carbine was chopped out of the tavern wall. Both are now on display at Ford's Theatre.

The best description of how the second carbine was recovered is contained in the testimony of Andrew Kaldenbach at the trial of John Surratt, Jr., in 1867. This testimony is given below:

**Andrew Kaldenbach, residence Washington, sworn and examined by the District Attorney**

**Q.** Do you know a place called Surrattsville in Prince George's County, Maryland?

**A.** Yes, sir.

**Q.** How far it is from here?

**A.** About ten miles from the Navy Yard Bridge.

**Q.** Do you know John M. Lloyd?

**A.** Yes, sir.

**Q.** Do you recollect being there some time in the spring of 1865?

**A.** Yes, sir.

**Q.** State if at that time you recovered any firearm there; and if so, state the circumstances under which you recovered it.

**A.** Yes, sir; I found a firearm there; I lived there then. It was about the 25<sup>th</sup> of April, or somewhere thereabouts. I found it in the partition between the plastering.

**Q.** What did you find?

**A.** I found a carbine. It had a covering over it.

**Q.** Describe in what part of the house it was.

**A.** It was between the dining room, and the main house, and the kitchen, which was attached to the main building.

**Q.** Was it concealed?

**A.** It was right between the plastering in the partition wall.

Q. Describe fully to the jury the examination you made, and what you discovered at the time.

A. There were detectives there. I am not certain what date it was; somewhere about the 25<sup>th</sup> of April. (This examination objected to by Mr. Bradley [counsel for John Surratt] as irrelevant, unless intended to contradict the witness, Lloyd, and the prosecution could not contradict its own witnesses. The district attorney said the witness need not state what Mr. Lloyd told him.)

A. This detective was there on that night. He told me there was a firearm there, and said I must find it. This detective and myself went in search of it, and after searching it for some time I found it.

Q. Tell the jury how you found it, where it was concealed, and everything about it.

A. I took a hatchet, knocked the plastering loose, and found it between the partitions. After I found it, I went for this detective before I removed it all. He took it in his possession and carried it off.

Q. Who was the detective?

A. His name was George Cottingham, a government detective, at that time stationed down there.

Q. State how it was you happened to go to that particular place, and find it.

A. It was by the direction of Mr. Lloyd.

Q. Would you know that carbine if you were to see it again?

A. I did not examine it particularly. It had a cover over it; a light and a dark cover.

Q. Did you take the cover off?

A. Only a part of it—enough to show the breech of the gun.

Q. Can you say what kind of a carbine it was?

A. I do not know the name of it.

Q. How often did it shoot?

A. I do not know; I did not examine it.

Q. When did you receive the information from Mr. Lloyd that the gun was there? (Question objected to by Mr. Bradley, the objection subsequently withdrawn.)

A. About the 25<sup>th</sup> of April.

Q. Where were you when you received it?

A. I was at Surrattsville, at the house.

Q. In what room?

A. I was in the dining room at that time, attending to Mr. Lloyd's family. They were sick at the time, and asked me to attend to them for Mr. Lloyd, in his absence.

Q. Was Mr. Lloyd there at that time?

A. He came there that night.

Q. Was Mr. Lloyd in the room at the time you received the information where the carbine was concealed?

A. Yes, sir; he was in the room at that time.

Q. Look at that carbine, (carbine with cover on exhibited to witness) and state whether that is the one you found.

A. That is the one we found; or at least the cover is the one, and the rope.

Q. Examine carefully, and see if you can state with certainty.

A. I think it is the same one. It is the same cover, the same rope, the same washer, and a similar gun. I could not say it was the same gun.

Q. As far as you now recollect making an examination, does it resemble that gun in all respects?

A. Yes, sir; a similar gun. If it is not the one, it is exactly like it.

**Andrew Kaldenbach cross-examined by Mr. Bradley:**

- Q. I understand you to say a detective came there that night—the 25<sup>th</sup> of April—about that time, and said there was a gun there that must be found.  
A. I was informed that it was secreted there, and he told me I was to find it.  
Q. Then you got the information from Mr. Lloyd where you were to look for it?  
A. Yes, sir.  
Q. And then you broke through the partition with a hatchet and found the gun?  
A. Yes, sir.  
Q. Which was the same description of gun as that.  
A. Yes, sir.

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**Paid Witness**

The April 1984 issue of the *Surratt Society News* announced that a copy of a receipt was found by Mike Kauffman in the David Rankin Barbee papers at Georgetown University. It shows that Mrs. Surratt's tenant at the tavern, John M. Lloyd, not only turned state's evidence against his landlady and gave hanging testimony, he was also paid \$3.00 a day to do it. This receipt was originally in the Comptroller General's files and shows that Lloyd received \$150.00 (more than \$2,500 in today's dollars) for 50 days of "service" as a witness.

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**David Edgar Herold**

Editor's Note: On October 15, 2001, Ford's Theatre held its annual symposium, entitled *A Day of Conspiracy at Ford's Theatre*. The program focused on the Lincoln conspirators, and Laurie Verge was one of the speakers. Her topic was David Edgar Herold. She admitted that this was the first time she had actually given a speech on the gentleman, who got her interested in the Lincoln assassination story in the first place.

**That Trifling Boy...**

by Laurie Verge  
Reprinted from *The Surratt Courier*, January 2002

For twenty-five years [in other words, since 1975], I have given speeches to civic groups, school groups, Civil War Round Tables, antique arts study groups, historical societies, book clubs, and others. I have been a talking head on the History Channel, A&E, C-SPAN, and several other radio and [prime time] television programs. All of those speeches have been on the Surratt family and the Lincoln assassination. This is the first time I have actually talked on the gentleman who got me interested in the Lincoln assassination in the first place—David Edgar Herold.

I was first introduced to David Herold and John Surratt, Jr., when I was about ten years old. Don't worry, I'm not quite old enough to have known them in person, but let me tell you about how I first came to hear of them. My mother had embarked on the project of cleaning out our attic. This was in the same home that my great-grandparents, Joseph Eli and Laura Susannah Huntt, began housekeeping in 1862. It stood in the little hamlet with the strange name of T.B. about five miles south of the Surratt House.

Let me just say as a way of preface that I came from a family that never threw anything away—a trait that I absolutely hated as a child. On this particular day, my mother was trying to make a dent in the attic clutter. She would pitch things out the window and my 80-year-old grandmother, with whom we lived, would hobble out to the lawn and drag it back in. About a third of the way into the project, my mother opened up what had once been a tall, wicker laundry hamper. It was filled with old nightclothes, towels, and assorted linens—all clean, starched, and folded for storage many long years ago.

About half-way down in the hamper was a man's nightshirt. This was to be my introduction to the Lincoln assassination story. My mother said something like, "Well, here's Davy's nightshirt. I haven't seen it in ages." I had never heard of anyone in the family named "Davy," and I certainly didn't know what a nightshirt was, so I asked my mother to explain. This is when the vague concept of the American Civil War and the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln became something more to me than just a lesson in my 4<sup>th</sup> grade social studies book. Who would ever guess that Davy Herold would be the instigator of a career change for me nearly 30 years later.

Here's the story of our family's experience with David Edgar Herold. Supposedly, Davy stopped at the T.B. store of my great-grandfather, Joseph Eli Huntt, in the late afternoon of April 13, 1865. He had been down in Charles County and had been caught in a spring shower. He asked to spend the night beside the store's stove, but was invited instead to bed down at the Huntts's home next door. He dined with the family, went to bed in a downstairs bedroom, and was gone when the family got up early the next morning. He left behind his nightshirt—actually the nightshirt of John Surratt, according to the laundry mark in its neckband. It was saved by my great-grandmother and used by Methodist ministers, who rode circuit and stayed frequently with the Huntts. My grandmother was born in 1874 and remembered seeing the neckband intact for years after. When it [the neckband] became badly frayed, it was ripped out and burned in the kitchen stove. The remaining shirt is now on display at the Surratt House Museum.

Sometime in the late morning of April 15, 1865, troops knocked on the door of the Huntts' home and asked if the family had heard riders during the night. They had, because the dogs in the village started to bark while the Huntts were feeding their two-month-old son in the wee small hours. My great-grandfather learned later that day from the proprietor of the T.B. hotel what had happened and for whom they were looking. When Herold was identified as one of Booth's men, my great-grandfather blurted out the story of his visit. He was advised to keep quiet—and he did....That's my family's story, and I'm sticking to it!

I was hooked on the Lincoln assassination story, thanks to the tie-in with David Edgar Herold. However, as I read more on the subject, I kept coming across references to Davy being everything from immature to mentally defective. So, I decided to maintain a low profile on the subject.

In 1975, I became one of the first guides at the Surratt House Museum and was privileged to be trained in its history by none other than James O. Hall. He was very interested that I knew about where things were in T.B. in 1865 and my link to Herold. A few years later, with his help,

I edited the book *From War Department Files*. This was a compilation of the statements made by the conspirators upon their arrest. It was in the days before computers, and, as I plunked away on my electric typewriter, deciphering 1865 handwriting, I began to see Mr. Herold in a slightly different light. His statement, made after 12 days of being on the run and, I am sure, intense Federal questioning, did not seem like the ramblings of a shallow person. He seemed to tell only what he wanted the authorities to know, and he managed to jumble the facts in a manner that indicates that he was deliberately misleading his interrogators. He carefully avoided giving away people's names, who helped along the escape route. Only once did he come close to slipping. In talking about Thomas Jones, he mentioned "Thomas" and then made it "Mr. Thomas." David Edgar Herold needed a little more consideration.

Let's start with a little background. He was the sixth of ten children born to Adam George and Mary Porter Herold. Two brothers died before David's birth on June 16, 1842, so the young man gained the distinction of being the only boy among seven sisters. My family used to say that that was part of the problem right there. Davy lacked male companionship. A modern psychologist might say that he was ripe for the picking by the manipulative Mr. Booth, whom everyone seemed to respect.

David was raised in a large, comfortable home right outside the gates of the Washington Navy Yard, where his father was the post's chief clerk. The family was apparently well-off and well-respected. His father owned three adjacent houses of what is now 8<sup>th</sup> Street, S.E., two other houses in the neighborhood, and two buildings in Baltimore. They were communicants at Christ Episcopal Church nearby, although it is questionable about how often David attended. The family of John Philip Sousa could be counted among their friends, as could many of the leading families in southern Maryland. His father often took his only son on hunting expeditions around Piscataway, not far from Surrattsville. Davy said that partridge hunting and shooting were his passions. During his interrogation, he boasted about knowing just about everyone in lower Maryland and mentioned a number of names with ties to the history of Surratt tavern. Walter Edelin, John Steed, James Burch, and Walter Griffin were some acquaintances who lived within a small radius of the tavern.

He did have time for some studies. There has been a persistent theory that he attended the venerable Charlotte Hall Military Academy in St. Mary's County, Maryland, and that that is where he met John Surratt, Jr. It's time to lay that to rest—there is no documentation that either man attended that school. In fact, on May 1, 1865, Professor N.F.D. Browne, headmaster at Charlotte Hall, made a statement for *The Washington Star* in which he stated that Herold "...was never a student at this school or known in this neighborhood." Since Charlotte Hall is about forty miles from Washington, it is quite likely that Davy's travels never took him in that direction.

Herold first attended a school run by a Mr. Cox and a Mr. Marlot. Some sources say that he handled himself well among the older boys and could joke his way out of tense situations, a trait that might have assisted him later in April of 1865. He must have made good enough grades to be accepted at Georgetown College, where he studied pharmacy from October of 1855 through April of 1858. From there he finished his studies at the prestigious Rittenhouse Academy on Indiana Avenue in the city. Of course, we know he attended these schools—we do not know what his grades were....

Using his pharmacy background, he got his first job with a Dr. Bates near the Navy Yard. He then worked for druggist William Thompson near the White House and supposedly delivered a bottle of castor oil to the White House. In the fall of 1863, he went to work for and lived with Dr. Francis Walsh on 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Dr. Walsh appears to have liked Davy and testified for him at the

trial. On the other hand, another employer, Dr. McKim testified that he would never trust David to deliver medicine to any patients for fear that the boy would tamper with the medicine for laughs. Most of those who testified regarded Herold as immature and unreliable. The most frequently used word in the various defense testimonies given in his behalf at the Conspiracy Trial is *trifling*.

Apparently, his father did not trust him either. When he died in the fall of 1864, Adam Herold left a codicil to his will that stipulated that, under no circumstances, should his son be allowed the duty of settling his estate.

It was around the time of his father's death that David left the drugstore business and went to Maryland for two or three months of hunting. During that time, he dislocated an ankle.

There is a story from an 1895 article in the New York *Morning Advertiser* about a Col. A.J. McGonigle, who was on the staff of General Sheridan. Around January 1, 1865, he was on leave in Washington, D.C., when he met the mother of Davy. He mentioned that he was looking for a civilian clerk, and Mrs. Herold asked him to employ her son, saying that he was an excellent accountant had been employed in a drug store, came with good recommendations, but that he was keeping bad company in Washington. She wanted him removed from that company. The colonel made inquiries and found that David did come with good recommendations. All arrangements were made, but David found an excuse not to accompany the colonel on the agreed upon day.

Instructions were left for a pass to be issued to allow Herold to go to the front a few days later. Then a letter was received that he had sprained his ankle and could not make the trip until after the first of February. The next time that Col. McGonigle heard about David Herold was in reading that he was wanted as an accomplice in the assassination of President Lincoln.

Davy told the authorities much the same story—that he was offered a clerk position with the base hospital of the Army of the James and was to report to a Captain Burrell on April 1, 1865. He should have kept that appointment.

So how did Herold get drawn into Booth's plans to capture President Lincoln in the fall of 1864? We can probably trace it back to hunting trips in southern Maryland. He met a lot of people along the way. He would later claim to have known George Atzerodt for five years and John Surratt, Jr., since 1856. He never mentioned meeting Louis Weichmann, but Louis later testified that he had met Herold in the summer of 1863 at the Surratts' home. He talked about a contingent of the Marine Band serenading the patrons of the tavern at some local political gathering and that Herold was tagging along with the Band. He also knew Michael O'Laughlen, whom he had met in Baltimore via Atzerodt and even John Wilkes Booth, who supposedly visited Thompson's drug store while Herold was employed there in 1863. Davy placed it as the time when Booth had his neck operated on and said that he saw Booth once or twice a week, receiving invitations to the theater from the actor, and visited his rooms at the National Hotel, where he even saw his friend George Atzerodt. There is much to indicate that he spent quite some time with Atzerodt, visiting the fellow conspirator at the Pennsylvania House hotel nearly every day for about two weeks, attending the circus with him, and frequenting the Canterbury, a cheap music hall downtown.

A friendship with Atzerodt might be understandable, but what would cause the debonair John Wilkes Booth to cultivate a friendship with immature Herold? If Asia Booth Clarke is to be believed, her brother was smuggling quinine to the Confederacy. An insider in a drug store could be invaluable.

This would put Herold in touch with most of the key players a full year before the capture plot began to unfold. And, given the fact that Herold knew the geography and people of southern Maryland very well—especially southern Prince George's and Charles Counties—he would be an

asset to any plans that required taking the captured President through this area, which teemed with Confederate sympathizers.

*The Washington Post* of May 18, 1865, carried an article that Louis Weichmann, witness for the prosecution, quoted later in his book, *The True History of the Lincoln Assassination*. “Report now connects Herold with a new phase of this stupendous piece of villainy, the assassination ploy. It has been developed that about the first of April, Herold made several efforts to obtain a situation at Thompson’s Drug Store, corner of 15<sup>th</sup> Street and New York Avenue. The medicines for the White House were obtained from this drug store, and it is now believed that the plan of the conspirators was to get Herold a place in this drug store—he was trained to the drug business, it will be remembered—for the purpose of placing poison in prescriptions sent for the use of Mr. Lincoln. It will be remembered too, that in the evidence concerning the plans of the conspirators, there is mention of obscure hints by some of them concerning an attempt to use *the cup*, which attempt had failed. The failure of Herold to obtain a situation at Thompson’s may have had some connection with these allusions.” The article was also repeated in the *New York World* on May 20, 1865. Was this just part of the rumor mill, or was it the beginning of Booth’s turn from capture to murder?

I tend to bristle when I hear historians speak of Booth’s gang of misfits. None of them were rocket scientists, however, I personally feel that each man was chosen for his specific area of expertise and that they were innocuous people who could fit into the backdrop without arousing suspicion. Who would look at trifling David Herold and suspect that he was valuable to a plan to capture the President of the United States: He not only assisted that failed attempt, he was active in the assassination plot after others faded away, and he was the one man who stayed with Booth to the bitter end. Whether that was through dedication to a cause, loyalty to a friend, or stupidity, we will never know.

We first hear of Herold in the failed kidnap attempt. As part of the plan for March 17, 1865, he was sent ahead into Prince George’s County with supplies which included two Spencer repeating carbines. He reportedly waited at Surratt Tavern for the others to show up with the captured President. When no one came Herold went five miles down the road to T.B., where he spent the night at the hotel there. The next morning he asked the proprietor to hold the weapons for him. Upon being denied, he headed back towards Washington. Meeting Surratt and Atzerodt somewhere on the road between T.B. and Surrattsville, he accompanied the two back to the Surratt Tavern, where the items were hidden in a room over the kitchen at Surratt’s old home. There the items would stay until midnight on April 14<sup>th</sup>.

Herold was apparently a busy little bee on the day of the assassination. If my family story is correct, he returned to the city from T.B. early in the morning. One of his sisters would say that he was at home in time for breakfast. Several people testified to seeing him with Atzerodt that afternoon. One Charles Bohleyer supposedly saw him and two others in a buggy near the Navy Yard about noon. A James Steel also saw him with two men in a buggy near Steel’s store at 8<sup>th</sup> and L Streets about 3 or 4 p.m. Forest Queen reportedly saw him running for a street car between 4 and 5 p.m., and a Mr. Strother saw him during the evening. According to stableman John Fletcher, Herold hired a roan horse from him that day and said that he would return around 4 p.m. He came back about 4:30, selected a saddle and bridle, and agreed to have the horse back no later than 9 p.m. The next time Fletcher saw the horse [it was after 10 p.m.] and Herold was on Pennsylvania Avenue near the Treasury Building. Herold was headed out of town and eluded Fletcher.

On the night of April 14, 1865, Herold was assigned to guide Lewis Powell from Secretary Seward's home into Southern Maryland. Some think that he fled when cries of murder went up from the house. Others think that Herold left because he was the point man—assigned to see that Powell and Atzerodt carried out their respective duties—and then to find Booth and head to safety in Maryland and Virginia. One statement has Herold running to Atzerodt's room at Kirkwood House after the murder. Whatever your take on it, Herold did guide Booth through the region and chose to stay when he had ample opportunity to desert. He did not have to follow Booth out of Washington, he could have left him at Mudd's or again at the pine thicket. Upon reaching the Virginia shore, he went alone to Mrs. Queensberry's cottage, and then back to Booth. He did leave him overnight at the Garrett farm, while he went to Bowling Green to find shoes—but he came back the next day.

When the Garrett's barn was surrounded in the early morning hours of April 26<sup>th</sup>, David then chose to surrender. He was brought back to Washington and placed upon the ironclad *Montauk*, where he gave a statement to Special Judge Advocate General John A. Bingham. He handled himself quite well and even managed to lead Bingham astray on some key points concerning his escape. He told them what he wanted them to know.

In his testimony, Herold put a unique spin on the sequence of events. He claimed to have been down in the country on April 14, 1865, trying to sell a horse for Atzerodt. He took drinks at the Surratt Tavern (then under management of John Lloyd) and then headed back to Washington late that night. About three miles north of Surrattsville, near Soper's Hill, he met Booth coming out of Washington. Booth invited him to go back to the country with him—advising him that the bridges into the city were closed for the night. Booth complained of a sprained ankle. Signing on as a companion, Herold said he accompanied Booth to a place near Bryantown and then separated from him for about four hours. When he met up with him again, Booth told of going to a doctor (unnamed) and of using the assumed name of Tyson. Under separate interrogation, Dr. Samuel Mudd soon clarified that story—Herold was with Booth (or Tyson or Tysee) and used the name Henson. Herold claimed to have attempted to desert Booth, when he learned of his foul deed, but that Booth threatened him and also told him that he was already implicated. Booth urged Herold to go with him to Mexico where they would make lots of money—as soon as they learned the Spanish language. Herold stayed with the assassin, and the rest is history.

Taken prisoner at Garrett's farm, he was brought back to Washington, placed on the ironclad, and then transferred to the Old Arsenal Penitentiary to stand trial. There's not much to read in the trial transcript about Davy. His defense portion consists of one and one-quarter pages of men who basically identify him as a trifling, immature, young man. One said that he was easily persuaded and led—a perfect candidate for Booth's gang. In his closing arguments, Herold's defense lawyer, Frederick Stone, focused on questioning the legality of the military court to try its civilian prisoners and also maintained that the capture scheme and the assassination were two different plots, bringing the implications of conspiracy into question. There was little else he could do.

Newspapers would make brief mention of his nervous behavior during the trial. At one point, they said he “giggled out loud” when the controversial Dr. Mary Walker appeared in court in her trousers and tunic. But then, so did most of the courtroom.

There is one unsatisfied piece of evidence about Herold. General Hartranft, who was in charge of the prisoners at the penitentiary, spoke of Herold wanting to make a confession. Paper and pen were brought, and Hartranft said Herold wrote furiously for hours on that confession. What happened to it? Atzerodt's damning confession made it into print briefly in 1865, and then

it went into hiding in the papers of his attorney, William Doster. It was found there over 100 years later by Joan Chaconas, working on a tip from a Doster descendant. There is no hint as to what Herold said and where his confession went. One more missing piece of the assassination puzzle. Would it have told us anything new?

Along with Mrs. Surratt, Atzerodt, and Powell, Herold was sentenced to hang on July 7, 1865. *The Evening Star* of July 7, 1865, reported thusly: “David E. Herold, whose cell was on the third tier, was next informed of his doom, when he trembled like a leaf. He acknowledged that he was in the plot to abduct the President, having got into it through John Surratt.”

Several of his sisters visited him in his cell the night before, and reports were made of much weeping and wailing. A local story has circulated that friends of Mrs. Herold tried to spare her the agony of knowing when her son would die. The family knew that the execution was to be performed before 2 p.m., so all clocks in the house were stopped so that she would not know when the hour came. Unfortunately, they could not stop the bell at St. Peter’s Church, and its tolling of the hour told her that her son was dead.

An interesting sidelight to the story of David Herold might be woven around the old adage that a man likes to die with his boots on. Throughout the escape, David evidently had a problem with his boots. His feet hurt—plain and simple. When he left Booth at the Garrett farm that first night, he went into Bowling Green to find a new pair of shoes. One of the Confederate soldiers, Absalom Bainbridge, who was aiding them at that point, spoke of this. After his arrest, he complained about sore feet to Col. Doherty. A horse was procured for him and he was tied to it. While in prison on the ironclad, he asked that someone contact his mother to get him a pair of shoes. When the time came for the hanging, however, Davy and the other two men went to their deaths in stocking feet, according to an extra edition of *The Washington Star* newspaper.

On page 208 of the hardbound copy of the Peterson version of *The Conspiracy Trial and Related Events*, it is revealed that David Edgar Herold suffered a slow death: “Herold, who had been called the silly boy all through the trial, was the most frightened on the scaffold and he stayed alive after hanging longer than the others, trying to draw his body up repeatedly, so that there would not be much weight on his neck.” [In other words, death by slow strangulation]

In 1869, Herold’s body was removed from its second grave at the Old Arsenal Penitentiary and placed next to his father in Washington’s famous Congressional Cemetery. His mother and five sisters attended the interment. In 1903, his sister, Elizabeth Jane, was buried on top of him. The other six girls also surround him in the family plot.

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## **A Christmas Present**

Research on Dickens’ background mentioned his public readings, which debuted in 1853 and opened with a reading of *A Christmas Carol*. It also mentioned his 1867 American tour and that it was Dickens who set the price at \$2.00 per person—much to the dismay of the owners of the venues. At his sold out American opening, scalpers demanded as much as \$36 (\$600 today) for the \$2.00 ticket. In one case, Dickens did agreed to a guaranteed \$3,000 for just a one night appearance in Hartford. Reading this, I wondered if he appeared in Washington, D.C., and further research confirmed that he did. As a holiday present to our *Courier* readers, here is the 1868 review of his Washington appearance, plus something extra.

## Charles Dickens' First Reading in Washington

Reprinted from *The National Republican*, February 4, 1868

The first reading of Mr. Charles Dickens took place at Carroll Hall last night, and was a complete success. The hall was crowded and the audience was one of the most brilliant[LO1], intelligent and appreciative that ever assembled in the city, and the cordial reception given to Mr. Dickens, on his first appearance on the platform and throughout the evening, must have been most gratifying to his feelings. But one unpleasant circumstance occurred to mar the pleasure of the evening, and that was the want of a sufficient flow of gas to enable those in the rear part of the hall to see the distinguished author and reader. For this Mr. Dickens was not to blame. He was, to our knowledge, very much annoyed by the evident want of light in the hall, and apologized to the audience and promised that on the future evenings of his readings the evil should be remedied.

Mr. Dickens is an artist in all that he does, and seldom have we seen a more finished piece of work than his whole performance of last evening. So careful is he of every point that nothing shall go amiss, that he has brought with him from England all the appointments by which he is surrounded when he reads at home. At the back of the reader on the platform is stretched a long screen covered with dark red cloth, and in front of it stands a table with square legs, covered with rich crimson velvet—the top, also, covered with the same, hanging over the edge, and bordered with a heavy fringe. At one side of this table projects a little shelf, also covered with velvet, on which are a water bottle and glass, and at the left-hand corner is a square block about eight inches high—that also covered, top and sides, with velvet, like the rest. On this block the reader rests his book, and uses it, beside, as an accessory in his by-play. Now it is Bob Cratchite's desk in Scrooge's office. Now it is Mr. Fizziwig's desk, from which he looks benignantly down on his apprentices. Now it is the desk on which rests the Christmas goose of the Cratchite family. A very useful little velvet box Mr. Dickens makes it, and the audience gets to look upon it as quite a delightful piece of furniture.

Mr. Dickens enters, holding the book in both his hands; and, standing at his velvet desk, proceeds to work, like a man of business. He is dressed with perfect neatness and simplicity, not a trace of the old floppery is seen in his buttonhole in the shape of a white carnation, and a pink rosebud on his shirt front. There is nothing more pretending than a plain gold stud. He has, to be sure, a considerable watch-chain, and on his finger a diamond ring—but nothing is noticeable in his dress. He stands there a quiet gentleman, plain Charles Dickens, and that name is grace and ornament enough.

The very first words “Marley was dead, to begin with! That was certain”—settled the question of success. The way in which those words were uttered, showed that the reading was to depend for all effect upon the worth of what was read, and upon the sincerity of the reader. From first to last there is no trickery in it—full of action, abounding in gesture, with a voice for every character in every mood, with a face for every man, woman, and child, reflecting every feeling. There is no straining for stage effect, no attitudizing, no affectation. The most effective reading we ever listened to—it was the most beautifully simple, straightforward, hearty piece of painting from life. Dear Bob Cratchite made twenty-five hundred friends before he had spoken two words, and if everybody had obeyed the impulse of his heart, and sent him a Christmas goose, he would have been suffocated in a twinkling, under a mountain of poultry. As for the delightful Fizziwigs, not the coldest heart in the audience, but warmed to them at once. Probably never was a ball so thoroughly enjoyed as the one given by these worthy people to their

apprentices. The greatest hit of the evening was the point where the dance executed by Mr. and Mrs. Fizziwig to Miss Fizziwig was described.

Next to this, the most effective point was Tiny Tim, whose plaintive treble, with Bob Cratchite's way of speaking of him, brought out so many pocket handkerchiefs that it looked as if a snowstorm had somehow got into the hall without tickets. Seldom do we hear such genuine pathos as that with which Mr. Dickens read the poor father's lament over his little lame child, and great was the genius which enabled him to walk so safely on the dangerous edge that separates nature, pure and simple, from mere travesty.

The Christmas party at the house of Scrooge's nephew, where Tuppins plays blind man's bluff with the plump sister in the lace tucker, was a thing never to be forgotten. When Dickens said, "I no more believe that the man was blindfolded than I believe he had eyes in his boots," his facial expression—indignant as of a man who is being put upon, and yet with consciousness of the absurdity of the statement that makes him laugh in spite of his anger—was inimitable, and it was long before the audience would let him get on. At last we had it, and the plump sister with the lace-tucker to become immortal.

There was an intermission of about ten minutes between the reading of *The Christmas Carol* and *The Trial Scene from Pickwick*, and as he closed the book with Tiny Tim's "God bless us every one," the enthusiasm of the vast assembly broke forth in such expressions as showed plainly enough that the heart under all their silk and broadcloth was fairly stirred and beating with warm good will. But Dickens was plainly not to be persuaded into a speech. For all the uproar, he did not appear again until the court called up the case of Bardell vs. Pickwick. It is easy to see that the reader himself had a peculiar affection for this part—a leaf torn from a book that is associated with the beginning of his fame, the end out of which this splendid tree stock, set with flower and fruit, has grown. He read it with full force, throwing himself into it with all his heart, and, we may add, with all his body; for he put much more acting into this part of his reading than into the first part. Sergeant Buzfuz's speech to the Jury was without a flaw, a pearl of the art of acting, and no words of anybody could express the way in which Nathaniel Winkle was before us.

Not less excellent was the Judge—the sourest, driest, most cross-grained piece of legal stupidity that ever was seen or heard of. Talk about facial expression, nothing more wonderful was ever seen than the change from the Judge, who seemed to always be smelling something disagreeable, to the frank, cheery face of Samuel Weller, as fresh as a rose and as good to look at. Here was a scene: The minute the Court said, "Call up Samuel Weller," that friend of near thirty years' standing was recognized by the audience at a glance, and his mounting the stand was a signal for such a handshaking (speaking in a figure) that he will never forget. And wasn't it jolly to see him, jolly to hear him, and, jolliest of all, to hear that deep, rich voice of his old father, deep and rich as the foam on his quart pot of ale, calling out from the gallery, "Put it down with a *we*, my Lord; put it down with a *we*."

In reading these works of his, Mr. Dickens neither follows the original text, nor adheres closely by any means to the text of the pretty and convenient hand-books which he has himself condensed and prepared. His delivery has marked peculiarities, and thoroughly original. He deals much in the rising inflection at the end of sentences, is sometimes monotonous, and keeps up old pronunciations that we seldom hear on this side of the water. But, on the whole, his accent and pronunciation are not what we call English. The great difference between his delivery and that of our best Americans is in its slow, deliberate, clear-cut distinctness. This is in the descriptive parts. Where it suits the occasion, his delivery takes every shape, and is good for all needs. Scrooge's growl—Bob Cratchite's trembling appeal—the pompous bluster of Buzfuz—Mrs. Cluppins's

maundering whine—and Sam Weller’s manly yeoman’s shout, are an echoed by that magical voice, which will be recognized wherever it is heard in America as the voice of a great author, and of the greatest, perhaps, (certainly in versatility of power the greatest) that has ever charmed our people.

A singular funny incident occurred while Mr. Dickens was reading Sergeant Buzfuz’s speech to the jury. The most perfect silence was broken by the sudden barking of a black dog, which so excited the laughable in Mr. Dickens and the audience that the reading was delayed for several minutes. All the tickets were sold for last night. Very few remain unsold for this evening and the readings on Thursday and Friday.

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### **An Additional Note on Charles Dickens**

When the Surratt Society’s Vice President and my co-conspirator on the *Courier*, William (aka Bill) Binzel, learned about the above article, he sent me the following regarding another Dickens’ event that took place during his 1868 Washington, D.C., tour.

“In early 1868, Charles Dickens toured the United States touting *A Christmas Carol* and other of his works. Readers may not know that he had dinner with Stanton [Secretary of War] and Sumner [U.S. Senator from Massachusetts] in 1868 and asked them about their recollections about Lincoln’s death. The most cited source of *Lincoln’s dream* is from Gideon Welles’ diary, but that Dickens recorded it as well it gives Welles’ account credibility. He wrote the following to a friend, John Foster:”

*I dined with Charles Sumner last Sunday [February 2, 1868], against my rule; and as I had stipulated for no party, Mr. Secretary Stanton was the only other guest, besides his own secretary. Stanton is a man with a very remarkable memory, and extraordinarily familiar with my books.... He and Sumner having been the first two public men at the dying President’s [Lincoln] bedside, and having remained with him until he breathed his last, we fell into a very interesting conversation after dinner, when, each of them giving his own narrative separately, the usual discrepancies about the details of time were observable. Then Mr. Stanton told me a curious little story which will form the remainder of this short letter.*

*On the afternoon of the day on which the President was shot, there was a cabinet council at which he presided. Mr. Stanton, being at the time commander-in-chief of the Northern troops that were concentrated about here, arrived rather late. Indeed, they were waiting for him, and on his entering the room, the President broke off in something he was saying, and remarked: “Let us proceed to business, gentlemen.” Mr. Stanton then noticed, with great surprise, that the President sat with an air of dignity in his chair instead of lolling about it in the most ungainly attitudes, as his invariable custom was; and that instead of telling irrelevant or questionable stories, he was calm and grave, quite a different man. Mr. Stanton, on leaving the council with the Attorney-General [James Speed], said to him, “That is the most satisfactory cabinet meeting I have attended for many a long day! What an extraordinary change in Mr. Lincoln!” The Attorney-General replied, “We all saw it, before you came in. While we were waiting for you, he said, with his chin down on his breast, ‘Gentlemen, something very extraordinary is going to happen, and that very soon.’ To which the Attorney-General had observed, ‘Something good, sir, I hope?’ when the President answered very gravely: ‘I don’t know; I don’t know. But it will happen, and shortly*

too!’” As they were all impressed by his manner, the Attorney-General took him up again: “Have you received any information, sir, not yet disclosed to us?” “No,” answered the President: “but I have had a dream. And I have now had the same dream three times. Once, on the night preceding the Battle of Bull Run. Once, on the night preceding such another (naming a battle also not favourable to the North).” His chin sank on his breast again, and he sat reflecting. “Might one ask the nature of this dream, sir?” said the Attorney-General. “Well,” replied the President, without lifting his head or changing his attitude, “I am on a great broad rolling river—and I am in a boat—and I drift—and I drift!—but this is not business”—suddenly raising his face and looking round the table as Mr. Stanton entered, “let us proceed to business, gentlemen.” Mr. Stanton and the Attorney-General said, as they walked on together, it would be curious to notice whether anything ensued on this; and they agreed to notice. He [Lincoln] was shot that night.

**Source:**

Charles Dickens, *The Letters of Charles Dickens, Volume Twelve 1868--1870*. Graham Storey, ed., The British Academy, The Pilgrim Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp 38-9.