

The Surratt Courier

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President's Message

When you think of spiders and a holiday, your thoughts would most likely associate them with Halloween. But what if I told you these arachnids and their webs are also associated with Christmas.

Have you ever heard of *The Legend of the Christmas Spider*? According to one version of this Eastern European folktale, there was once a poor widow, who lived with her children in a cold, cramped hut. One day, the family found that a pinecone, from a tree outside their window, had dropped inside on the dirt floor and taken root. Seeing the seedling, the children started caring for it with visions of it becoming their Christmas tree.

Unfortunately, as Christmas drew nearer, the family soon realized they didn't have money to buy decorations for their tree. So on Christmas Eve, the family went to bed with the branches of the tree bare, and the children sobbing in disappointment, as they tried to go to sleep.

It just so happened that in a corner of the hut's ceiling lived a family of spiders, who felt sorry for the family. That night, after the family had gone to bed, the spiders crept out and covered the tree with the best decorations that they could make—beautiful, fancy spider webs. An angel looking down from heaven was so impressed with the spiders' generosity that she turned the webs into silver and gold, making the tree beautiful and, as the story goes, from that time on the family wanted for nothing.

Today, the Legend of the Christmas Spider is still being celebrated. How you may ask? If you use tinsel on your tree, some say that you are mimicking the spiders' contribution to the Christmas tree's decorations. Of course, in some cases, there can be found among the tree's Christmas ornaments one of a spider on its web. There is also the superstition that if you find an actual spider in your Christmas tree, it's supposed to bring good luck.

That's not the only role spiders have played in the celebration of Christmas. Have you ever heard of a *Christmas Cobweb Party*? This originated in Germany and became a popular parlor game in the Victorian era. On Christmas Eve, after the children had gone to bed, mother and father would attach a variety of family gifts, both large and small, to yarn. Each child would have a different color. After breakfast on Christmas morning, the fun would begin as the children are given the end of their yarn and proceed to untangle the "web" to find their gifts. The "webs" could be contained in one room or more rooms, go up and down a staircase, over or under furniture, thread

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through the ceiling lamp, or even crisscross other color yarns. As each child worked his or her way along the string, they would arrive at other small gifts before they came to the bigger gift or gifts awaiting them at the end of the yarn.

I don't know about you, but I can envision the chaos this game would cause. I am one of five children and can imagine my parents' reaction to playing this game. Dad's technical mind would start figuring

out how to construct the webs, and Mom would immediately announce "that's not going to happen here." The statement would also be accompanied by the "look."

Whatever holiday or holyday you and your family celebrate, I hope it's a happy and safe one.

Louise Oertly
President, Surratt Society

The Confederate Plans to Abduct President Lincoln

By John C. Brennan

Reprinted from the *Surratt Society News*, March 1981

[2022 EDITOR'S NOTE: This article consists mostly of a strong suspicion, backed up by very little concrete evidence, that the Confederate high command was behind John Wilkes Booth's plan to kidnap, **not murder**, President Abraham Lincoln. It is a rewrite of an article that appeared in the Nov/Dec 1974 issue of the St. Mary's County Historical Society's newsletter, *Chronicles*. Emphasis added in boldface by Mr. Brennan.

Mr. Brennan asked that "If any reader of these words has ever come across any instance in which Booth's name, his kidnap attempt, his stage appearance in the South, or his murderous deed was ever put to paper by any Confederate of stature, will he/she please furnish the details to this scribe? The same request is also made with respect to any mention by any bigwig Confederate of the names of the alleged conspirators or that of Secret Service agent Thomas A. Jones." Mr. Brennan is no longer with us, but it's always great to learn of new information. So if you have any information or leads you would like to share, please feel free sent it to *The Surratt Courier* at surratt.society@gmail.com.]

The suspicion began when Father Robert Keesler of Laurel, Maryland, discovered an account written by Maryland's Bradley Tyler Johnson, Brigadier General, CSA, indicating that in late 1864, with the enthusiastic concurrence of General Jubal A. Early, he had planned to "raid" the Soldier's Home area with 200 carefully picked horses and men, take President Lincoln captive, and then "send" (not take) him back into Virginia with **five men**. The similarity of this Confederate proposal with the abduction plan actually attempted by Booth and his **five** assistants—Messrs. Surratt, Atzerodt, Arnold, O'Laughlen, and Paine—a short time after General Johnson's preparations had to be aborted because of military developments, is quite marked. Father Keesler, in addition to turning up what General Johnson had written about his plan in Vol. II of the 1899 *Confederate Military History*,¹ then ferreted out the fact that the

General's aide, admirer, and cousin, Major W.W. Goldsborough, had even earlier, in 1869, revealed substantially the same information that Johnson had put in his 1899 account.² However, a peculiar aspect of Major Goldsborough's version of the kidnapping plans is that he introduced it with a completely unnecessary and irrelevant reference to the name of General Robert E. Lee, who was alive and well in 1869.

Why had these two Maryland stalwarts, Johnson and Goldsborough, now buried close to each other and surrounded by their compatriots in the Confederate section of Baltimore's Loudon Park Cemetery, chosen to place in imperishable print this top secret, but perfectly honorable, military kidnap plan? And why, for crying out loud, did Major Goldsborough bring the name of General Lee into the picture? The only possible answer to the question just raised is that the conscientious Lee, always insistent on accepting responsibility for unhappy actions of subordinates, **directed** that Goldsborough include his name.

If the theory mentioned in the opening paragraph is correct, and if Booth's plan to **kidnap** had the blessing of the Confederacy, then what responsibility did the Confederacy bear when its agent, without consultation or notification, decided on his own to murder rather than abduct the selected victim?

Did General Bradley Johnson, a lawyer and scion of a prominent Maryland family, know John Wilkes Booth, an actor and the scion of another prominent Maryland family? Was Major Goldsborough, or were generals Jubal Early or Wade Hampton (Goldsborough's book mentions Hampton as well as Lee), or Lee or Jefferson Davis, or the distaff members of their families acquainted with the handsome, popular, personable, "captivating," John Wilkes Booth—who his sister, Asia, in her memoir discloses as a spy, a blockade runner, and a rebel?

Is it possible that no Confederate in the higher echelons had anything of interest to say in his autobiography or written reminiscences about the climactic world-shaking happening of April 14, 1865? Unbelievable as it seems, this appears to be the case.

Thomas A. Jones, head of the Confederate Secret Service in Maryland, avoided identifying Booth as the principal in or the originator of the March 1865 abduction try. In his 1893 book on Booth,⁴ Jones—without naming names—simply states that, "Sometime in December 1864, I heard that there was a big scheme afoot to abduct President Lincoln." In Jones's circa 1891 conversation with Captain William Williams, according to J.E. Buckingham's *Reminiscences and Souvenirs*,⁵ Jones says, "I did know that plans were laid to kidnap the President and to take him to Richmond, and, if the public roads had not been in such an awful condition in the fall and winter of '63 and '64, the plans would have been carried out.... Everything for this scheme was in readiness all the time. **Booth was in it**...I did not [know that Booth was going to kill Lincoln]."

As in the case of Booth, it is impossible to draw firm conclusions from the evidence now available whether or not Surratt, Arnold, O'Laughlen, Paine, and Atzerodt ever knew, conversed with, or conferred with Confederate officers Johnson and Goldsborough. The following two paragraphs offer suggestions as to who could have known whom.

Samuel B. Arnold and his brother, Frank, and Michael O'Laughlen and another, so-far-unidentified, John O'Loughlin served as infantrymen in Virginia in Confederate units closely identified with General Johnson and Major Goldsborough (Goldsborough began his soldiering as a private).⁶ Historian/authors Johnson and Goldsborough are not known ever to have mentioned an Arnold or an O'Laughlen in any of their post-war chronicles; nor did they have anything to say about one Henry Atzerodt, another Marylander in an infantry fighting unit in Virginia, this fellow being George ("Port Tobacco") Atzerodt's brother.⁷ Reciprocally, Samuel B. Arnold

omitted to mention any Johnson or Goldsborough in his 1902 serialized newspaper reminiscences; but Arnold does supply almost the precise date in 1864 on which he and Michael O’Laughlen were introduced to each other by Booth⁹—thus negating the suspicion that he and O’Laughlen, each of whom was a friend of Booth in different periods of Booth’s boyhood, could have become involved in a plan to abduct President Lincoln while in units commanded by Johnson or Goldsborough.

The Maryland Confederate fighting units were composed entirely of volunteers and, as such, they were entitled to elect their own officers up through the rank of colonel.¹⁰ Thus it would seem an absolute certainty that Colonel, and then General, Johnson and Captain, and then Major, Goldsborough would have had to be known to all the men in the ranks who from time to time had voted them into various positions of leadership.

Before leaving Messrs. Arnold and O’Laughlen and their acquaintanceships with Johnson and Goldsborough, if any, let us see whether these two young Baltimoreans deserved being characterized as shabby and faithless, impecunious hangers-on, as they were labeled by topnotch writers on the Lincoln assassination. One very topnotch writer named Theodore Roscoe, in his most recent book¹¹ seems to have had some second thoughts in the matter, because Arnold has now become “reputedly” a deserter, and O’Laughlen “presumably” dismissed from Confederate service as an incompetent, is now “may have been ordered into civilian garb to serve with Booth—such orders were not uncommon in the Confederate Secret Service.”

Samuel Bland Arnold’s postwar memoirs¹² testify to the fact that he was a clearheaded, articulate, intelligent fellow whose loyalty to Jefferson Davis’s Confederacy was no whit diminished as the result of the inhumane punishments that had been visited upon him. Arnold was keenly aware of what he could say or write without involving others—what “could do no harm to us, neither the living nor the dead” as he put it. The closest he came to skating on thin ice was when he alluded to, but made no effort to explain, the injudicious, trusting note he wrote Booth on March 27, 1865, agreeing or suggesting that Booth should check with “R____d” before proceeding further with any abduction plans.

According to Dr. Samuel Mudd, Michael O’Laughlen was a keen, forbearing, warm, intellectual conversationalist “away from his family and friends by whom he was most tenderly loved.” The 27-year-old man’s dying request, “Doctor, Doctor, you must tell my mother all,” was put in direct quotes by the good Doctor Mudd—who was indeed a **good** Doctor Mudd—without any hint as to what O’Laughlen meant.¹³

So as to remove the name of another “conspirator” from the obloquy that has been heaped upon it, let it be mentioned that Dr. Mudd characterized Edman Spangler as being witty, faithful, tenderhearted, and solicitous. “. . .he [Ned Spangler], in conjunction with Mr. Arnold watched over me in my illness [of yellow fever] as attentively as if their own brother, and I owe my life to the unremitting care which they bestowed.”¹⁴

Now as to Lewis (Powell) Paine, another of the five men allied with Booth in the abduction attempt and a fellow whose loose association with the sophisticated, cultured, natty Booth the writers have all had difficulty explaining. Without again reciting the known biographical facts about the impulsive and mercurial, but thoroughly soldierly Paine, let it be remembered that there is reliable evidence that Paine “insisted” to the Rev. A.D. Gillette, before going to the scaffold that he (Paine) was a Confederate soldier in the Secret Service.¹⁵ Who other than Paine could have been more appropriately detailed to Booth by the Confederacy, if it did so for the purpose of overcoming the resistance of 6’4” ex-railsplitter and forcing the shackled man up into the saddle of a horse or the cab of a vehicle headed for Richmond?

As to George Atzerodt, whose knowledge of ferrying tactics was vital to success if a captive was to be smuggled across the well-patrolled Potomac River, his directive by Booth to assassinate Vice President Andrew Johnson was either not clearly understood by Atzerodt or was misunderstood by Thomas A. Jones, who talked with Booth on a daily basis for about a week after Lincoln’s death. Jones, in his 1893 book, indicates that “Payne and Azerodt, acting under Booth’s instructions, were to dispatch Secretaries Seward and Stanton, while Booth himself undertook to kill the President and General Grant.”¹⁶

John H. Surratt, Jr., and Samuel Bland Arnold both felt impelled to disclaim and deny any involvement on the part of the Confederacy in the kidnap attempt. And, as already stated, both of these intrepid men doubtless knew exactly what Booth had in contemplation when he wrote in his diary that he had “almost a mind to return to Washington, and in a measure clear my name—which I feel I can do.” Would the temptation to place some of the blame elsewhere than on himself have been unthinkable to an injured, feverish, painful man “hunted like a dog...wet, cold, starving...in despair [who] knew no private wrong...[who] struck for my country and that alone”?¹⁷ [See page 8 for the full “diary” entry.]

In contrast to his failure even to mention Lincoln’s assassination in either of the two editions of his history book, *The Maryland Line*, Goldsborough, in both versions, furnishes full details of Union Colonel Ulric Dahlgren’s abortive attempt to “assassinate President Davis and his cabinet.”¹⁸ A thoroughly aroused Goldsborough, while totally ignoring one side of the coin, the Lincoln assassination, brand the March 1864 Kilpatrick-Dahlgren Raid, the other side of the coin, “one of the most diabolical rimes ever conceived by human mind.”

To bring this guessing game to a halt without further ado, let it be set forth here as a punchline that in Baltimore in 1871, there was formed the “Society of the Army and Navy of the Confederate States, in Maryland,” one of whose rules prescribed that “no unworthy soldier or deserter is permitted to become a member,” and another that “applications for membership [must] be accompanied by satisfactory proof of honorable service.”¹⁹ There are listed below the names of a few of the more than one thousand veterans, who were admitted to the enviable status of membership in this top-flight confraternity:

Arnold, Samuel B.	Private, Company A, 1 st Md. Inf.
Atzerodt, Henry	Private, Company F, 2 nd Md. Inf.
Goldsborough, W.W.	Major, 2 nd Md. Inf.
Johnson, Bradley T.	Brig. Gen, Md. Line
Jones, Thomas A.	Chief Agent, Secret Service in Md.
Marshall, Charles	Lt, Col., Staff of Gen. R.E. Lee
Surratt, John H.	Messenger, Secret Service Bureau
Surratt, Isaac	Private, 33 rd Texas Cavalry

Honorable Members

Hon. Jefferson Davis
Lieut. Gen. Wade Hampton²⁰

Final question: Did the actual and alleged conspirators charged in the murder of Lincoln, with the possible exception of Atzerodt, go to and endure their respective punishments, including death in four cases, with lips sealed against revealing the identity of the principals in Booth’s attempt to **kidnap**?

The author's answer: He thinks they did!

Afterword

Admittedly, little that is concrete can be garnered from all the unconnected occurrences and statements that have been set forth above. But there are quite a few strands of suspicion that, when twisted together, form a thin line leading straight in the direction of “R____d.”

Arnold's failure in his memoirs to explain what was meant in his letter to Booth when he wrote: “Go and see how it will be taken at R____d” is the strongest negative evidence we have that the Confederacy was in on the scheme to kidnap Lincoln.

That the Confederacy, as represented by General Bradley T. Johnson, had a derring-do proposal, not unlike the one played out in mid-March 1865 by Booth, Surratt, Arnold, Paine, et al., to capture Lincoln, is beyond dispute.²¹ Whether Booth and his subordinates took over the project from the Confederacy is a subject of speculation, as is the two Confederate officers' reasons for revealing the existence of the plan and their purpose in name-dropping Generals Early, Hampton, and Lee in telling it.

A tight-lipped silence, perhaps a conspiracy of silence, has been maintained in the published memoirs of the Confederate hierarchy as to their knowledge of Johnson's plan to kidnap—if indeed the plan was Johnson's.

Except for Paine, all the activists in Booth's kidnap attempt, like General Johnson, were Marylanders—i.e., “a band of brothers, and native to the soil/Fighting for our Liberty with treasure, blood, and toil.” [2022 Editor's Note: Quote from the song, *The Bonny Blue Flag*] There would have had to be confraternity and socializing, to a greater or lesser degree, both during and after the War, but proof along these lines at this late date obviously would be impossible to establish.

The one-shot categorical denials made by John Surratt²² and Samuel Arnold²³ to the effect that the Confederacy was in no way implicated in Booth's kidnap attempt were never thereafter repeated, amplified, or even referred to by them. And, so far as is known, no Confederate of stature ever buttressed or confirmed these men's patriotic disavowals of Confederate complicity.

Baltimorean Arnold's assertion that he did not know Baltimorean O'Laughlen until August 1864, even though both men had enlisted in expatriate Maryland units at the outbreak of the war, could and may be 100% true. But then again, in line with Arnold's disclaimer of Confederate participation in the kidnap attempt of March 1865, this introduction by Booth of one boyhood friend to another in late 1864 could have been placed on the record to negate Johnson's having tapped the two to do a Secret Service job with a boyhood chum, Booth, who was now a celebrity.

The rather well-authenticated statement Paine made to Rev. Gillette before his death that he was in the Secret Service and that, up to the morning of April 14, 1865, nothing more serious than kidnapping had ever been contemplated:²⁴ (1) definitely involves the Confederacy in Booth's kidnapping plot and (2) definitely absolves “R____d” from Booth's **assassination** plot.

It is to be remarked, that the incorruptible Thomas Jones, who was with Booth and Herold for a week after the assassination, did not see fit to credit Booth with being the mastermind in a kidnap plan.

Booth's statement in his diary about returning to clear his name gives grounds for limitless imaginings. The kind of defense he would have offered, had he been captured alive and

permitted to make one, was probably known to his secretive associates, as well as to his loyal sister, Asia. In her posthumous *The Unlocked Book*, Asia tells of her brother having handed her a large packet of papers a few months before his death with instructions of what to do with them if anything happened to him. She faithfully complied, but twice states she burned to dust an envelope bearing the name of a man who died “that I would have suffered death rather than expose.”²⁵

It is strange that Major Goldsborough, in his preoccupation with the unspeakable crimes the Kilpatrick-Dahlgren Raiders were poised to accomplish in Richmond, omitted to point any finger of suspicion at the Union President, who certainly would have been *particeps criminis* in their bloody mission, had it succeeded. It doubtless occurred to Goldsborough that holding one president responsible for military coups undertaken against the other president was a two-edged sword.

According to Harold A. Manakee’s *Maryland in the Civil War*, Bradley Johnson was “active in Confederate veteran societies” and in the only immediately available roster of the officers of the Society of the Confederate Army and Navy, in Maryland (1894), Johnson stand out as its president. Could it have been he who sought John and Isaac Surratt, Arnold, and others and persuaded them that their “honorable service” was known to and cherished by a grateful, though silent, Confederate hierarchy?

Sources:

¹ Bradley T. Johnson, *Confederate Military History*, (Atlanta, 1899), pp. 123-4.

² W.W. Goldsborough, *The Maryland Line in the Confederate States Army*, (Baltimore, 1900), pp 246-8.

³ Asia Booth Clarke, *The Locked Book*, (Chicago, 1938), p. 117.

⁴ Thomas A. Jones, *J. Wilkes Booth*, (Chicago, 1893), p. 39.

⁵ J.E. Buckingham, Sr., *Reminiscences and Souvenirs of the Assassination*, (Washington, 1894), p. 68.

⁶ Capt. George W. Booth, *Illustrated Souvenir, Maryland Line, Confederate Soldiers’s Home*, (Baltimore, 1894), p. 60.

⁷ *Census Record 1850*, Montross, Westmoreland, Virginia, shows George A. Atzerodt, 14 and Henry Atzerodt, 5. (Courtesy of James O. Hall).

⁸ Samuel B. Arnold, *Baltimore American*, (December 1902).

⁹ *Ibid*, Chapter IV.

¹⁰ George P. Kane, printed circular *To All Marylanders in the Confederate States*, attached to Gen. Orders #38, (Richmond, 1971), p. 19.

¹¹ Theodore Roscoe, *The Lincoln Assassination*, (New York, 1971), p. 19.

¹² Arnold, *Baltimore American*, (December 1902). Chapter V.

¹³ Nettie Mudd, *The Life of Dr. Samuel A. Mudd*, (New York, 1906), p. 265.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 293.

¹⁵ Amy (Gillette) Bassett, *Red Cross Reveries*, (Harrisburg, Pa., 1961), p. 89.

¹⁶ Jones, *J. Wilkes Booth*, p. 46.

¹⁷ John T. Lissimore, *The Diary of John Wilkes Booth*, (National Park Service, 9/28/70), p. 5

¹⁸ Goldsborough, p. 231 in 1869 edition, p. 189 in 1900 edition.

¹⁹ Capt. Booth, *Illustrated Souvenir*, pp. 93-4, 97.

²⁰ *Ibid*, pp 98-133.

²¹ *John H. Surratt’s Rockville Address*, *The Evening Star* (Washington, 12/8/1870).

²² *Ibid*.

²³ Arnold, *Baltimore American*, (December 1902), Chapter XIV.

²⁴ Amy (Gillette) Bassett, *Red Cross Reveries*, p. 89.

²⁵ Asia Booth Clarke, *The Unlocked Book*, pp. 124, 127, 135.

²⁶ Harold R. Manakee, *Maryland in the Civil War*, (Baltimore, 1961), p. 150.

Booth's Diary

By Laurie Verge

From the *Surratt House Museum Docent Manual*

When John Wilkes Booth was shot early on the morning of April 26, 1865, in Richard Garrett's barn in Caroline County, Virginia, he had on his person a little memorandum book. The book measured about six inches by three and a half inches and Booth had purchased it in St. Louis. It was for the year 1864—not 1865. Each page had three dates, with space to write between the dates. All the dated sheets before the one beginning June 11, 1864, had been cut out of this memorandum book, as well as several scattered further along, for a total of 31 sheets or 62 pages missing, counting front and back. Apparently, Booth had a habit of writing notes and letters on pages torn from the book, such as the two notes to Dr. Stuart dated April 24, 1865. [2022 Editor's Note: Booth spelled his name "Stewart" and only sent one of the notes.]

During his flight into Virginia, Booth made three separate pencil entries in this memorandum book, beginning on the page bearing the 1864 date June 11, and running through the page ending June 16. Two of the entries bore Booth's own 1865 dates: 'April 13th; 14, Friday the Ides; and Friday 21. A third entry was a little hand-drawn calendar, roughly laid out, on the page ending June 16, 1864. Booth started this calendar on Monday, April 17 (1865), and ran it through Sunday, June 18. Each day beginning with the 17th and running through the 25th had been crossed out. Because he was shot on the 26th, he did not live to cross out this date.

The little memorandum book is now in Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C., and a replica can be found in the James O. Hall Research Center.

Many people on the Surratt Society's Booth Escape Route Tours have asked what Booth actually wrote in the memorandum book. Here is the printed wording as taken from the transcript of the 1867 trial of John H. Surratt, pages 310-311:

"Te amo."

April 13th

14, Friday the Ides

Until to-day nothing was ever thought of sacrificing to our country's wrongs. For six months we had worked to capture. But our cause being almost lost, something decisive & great must be done. But its failure was owing to others who would not strike for their country with a heart. I struck boldly, and not as the papers say. I walked with a firm step through a thousand of his friends; was stopped, but pushed on. A colonel was at his side. [2022 Editor's Note: Rathbone was a major.] I shouted "sic semper" before I fired. In jumping broke my leg. I passed all his pickets. Rode sixty miles [it was actually 30] that night, with the bone of my leg tearing the flesh at every jump.

I can never repent it, though we hated to kill. Our country owed all our troubles to him, and God simply made me the instrument of his punishment.

The country is not what it was. This forced union is not what I loved. I care not what becomes of me. I have no desire to out-live my country. This night (before the deed) I wrote a long article and left it for one of the editors of the National Intelligencer, in which I fully set forth our reasons for our proceedings. He or the gov'm't

[2022 Editor's Note: Booth stops writing at this point.]

Friday, 21.

After being hunted like a dog through swamps, woods, and last night being chased by gunboats till I was forced to return wet, cold, and starving, with every man's hand against me, I am here in despair. And why? For doing what Brutus was honored for—what made [William] Tell, a hero. And yet I, for striking down the greater tyrant than they ever knew, am looked upon as a common cut-throat. My action was purer than either of theirs. One hoped to be great. The other had not only his country's, but his own wrongs to avenge. I hoped for no gain. I knew no private wrong. I struck for my country and that alone. A country that groaned beneath this tyranny, and prayed for this end, and yet now behold the cold hand they extend to me. God cannot pardon me if I have done wrong. Yet I cannot see my wrong, except in serving a degenerate people. The little, the very little, I left behind to clear my name, the gov'm't will not allow to be printed. So end all. For my country I have given up all that makes life sweet and holy, brought misery upon my family, and am sure there is no pardon in the Heaven for me, since man condemns me so. I have only heard of what has been done, (except what I did myself,) and it fills me with horror. God, try and forgive me, and bless my mother. To-night I will once more try the river with the intent to cross. Though I have a greater desire and almost a mind to return to Washington, and in a measure clear my name—which I feel I can do. I do not repent the blow I struck. I may before my God, but not to man. I think I have done well. Though I am abandoned, with the curse of Cain upon me, when, if the world knew my heart, that one blow would have made me great, though I did desire no greatness.

To-night I try to escape these blood-hounds once more. Who, who can read his fate? God's will be done.

I have too great a soul to die like a criminal. O, may He, may He spare me that, and let me die bravely.

I bless the entire world. Have never hated or wronged any one. This last was not a wrong, unless God deems it so, and it's with Him to damn or bless me. And for this brave boy with me, who often prays (yes, before and since) with a true and sincere heart—was it crime in him? If so, why can he pray the same?

I do not wish to shed a drop of blood, but "I must fight the course." 'Tis all that's left me.

Were the War Department Rewards Ever Paid?

By Steven G. Miller

Reprinted from *The Surratt Courier*, February 1994

There are several "unsinkable sinister stories" about the Lincoln assassination that continue to make the rounds in spite of serious scholars' attempts to counter them with evidence and logic. One that has received prominence recently is the odd claim that the War Department never paid any of the \$100,000 reward offered for the capture of the assassins. Some "Booth escape" proponents offer this notion up as proof that the War Department knew that Booth wasn't really killed at Garrett's Farm.

The simple truth is that the War Department reward **was** paid, just like the reputable history say. One only has to look through the papers of two of the Garrett's Farm troopers to verify this. These documents clearly show how they applied for and got their shares and how much money they actually received. Here's their story:

In 1865, John William Millington and Emory Parady were privates in Company H, 16th New York Volunteer Cavalry. Both were 21-year-olds from the North Country of New York State. On April 24th, they responded to the bugle call "boots and saddles" and became part of the Garrett's Farm Patrol. They were present when Booth was killed two days later.

Afterwards, like all of the other members of the patrol, they applied for the share of the \$75,000 reward for the capture of Booth and Herold. (\$50,000 had been offered for the capture of Booth, and \$25,000 each for the apprehension of Herold and John Surratt.)

In 1984, several documents belonging to the families of these two men were combined into the Millington-Parady Papers, which are now in this author's possession. These Papers contain letters from their agents detailing how and when they got their share of the reward. Portions of these documents are presented below for the first time.

In the summer of 1865, Millington and Parady were mustered out of the service and returned home. At that time, there was much discussion as to who would be entitled to shares of the Booth-Herold reward. Some of the officers of the regiment told their men that all members of the 16th New York Cavalry would be entitled to a portion, since a 27-man detail of that regiment made up the majority of the patrol which captured Booth.

On November 24, 1865, the Adjutant General's Office of the War Department issued General Order No. 64. It notified everyone who claimed a part of the reward for the apprehension of Booth, Herold, Lewis Paine, Atzerodt, or Jefferson Davis to file their claims by January 1, 1866. It announced that a Special Commission would "determine upon the validity of such claims." It stated that "by order of the President of the United States...the rewards offered for the arrest of Jacob Thompson, Beverly Tucker, George N. Sanders, William G. Clearly, and John H. Surratt are revoked."

Most of the people claiming a share of the reward obtained the services of an agent to file the necessary legal forms and correct paperwork. Many of these were attorneys, but some were "bounty or claims agents," usually ex-military officers who were familiar with the nuances and pitfalls of getting money promised by the Federal government.

In May of 1865, Private Parady returned home to Chestertown, New York, but moved on to western Michigan by fall. Probably before he left Washington, and the army, he chose a Washington law firm: Corwin, Owen & Wilson, Attorneys at Law and Solicitors of Claims, to look after his interests. The senior partner, Hon. Thomas Corwin, was an ex-Governor of Ohio, one-time Secretary of the Treasury, as well as a former U.S. Senator, and member of the House of Representatives. He was a close friend of President Lincoln and the U.S. Minister to Mexico during the Mason-Slidell Affair. [2022 Editor's Note: It was an international diplomatic incident that occurred November 1861. The *USS San Jacinto* intercepted the British mail packet *Trent* and removed two Confederate diplomats.]

Parady scanned the newspapers for information about the reward. He also corresponded with Corwin, Owen & Wilson and exchanged a couple of letters with Sergeant Boston Corbett. These letters, also in the Millington-Parady Papers, reflect the progress of the reward settlement case.

Writing from Washington on August 11, 1865, Corbett told Parady: "I hope to get discharged soon and intend to go to N.Y. as soon as I can. But I have to stop here a short time to

give evidence against that Rebel Captain that had us in the Andersonville Prison.” Speaking of the reward, he predicted a positive outcome: “I think they will do Justice when they get ready.”

Parady’s attorney, the Hon. Thomas Corwin, died suddenly in December 1865, but the case proceeded smoothly. The firm continued as Owen & Wilson. On February 15, 1866, they informed Parady that “The awards were made by the Commissions a month since & only await the action of the Sec. of War.” They also cautioned, “We cannot tell when they will act...”

On July 25, 1866, Corbett, who was living in New York City, sent Parady a newspaper clipping about the proposed reward distribution bill and said, “This morning’s Paper contained the enclosed article in which you as well as myself are interested.”

This clipping, headlined “The Assassination Rewards,” said: “Mr. Hotchkiss, from the Committee of Claims, reported a bill authorizing the payment of the rewards offered by the President and the War Department.” Under the Committee of Claims plan, Layette C. Baker and E.J. Conger would each get \$17,500. Luther B. Baker \$2,000; Maj. James R. O’Beirne \$2,000; other members of O’Beirne’s force a total of \$3,000; Doherty \$2,500; and Sergeant Corbett and each sergeant, corporal, and private of the party that captured Booth \$1,000, and other sums.”

Corbett was still hopeful about the division of the reward. He told Parady, “I expect it will be debated and perhaps altered some, at all events it must go to the Senate next and then to the President before it is finally disposed of.”

He was correct about the debates and alterations by Congress. The bill would finally be approved, but the division would be radically changed. Under the Hotchkiss Plan, the troopers would only receive a \$1,000. However, Congressional wrangling would substantially increase the soldiers’ shares.

The stumbling block to final agreement by the House of Representatives concerned how much to give Col. Layfette C. Baker. The Committee of Claims recommended that Baker and Conger both get \$17,500. But Congressmen, who didn’t like Col. Baker, objected to that high an amount going to a man who hadn’t even left Washington with the patrol.

At what Owen and Wilson would call the “eleventh hour,” a compromise was worked out. Congressman Rutherford B. Hayes, who just happened to be from Conger’s hometown of Fremont, Ohio, proposed a change. Under Hayes’s plan, Conger would get the largest amount, \$15,000, while Col. Layfette C. Baker’s share would be reduced to a mere \$3,750. Lt. Doherty would get the second largest share, \$5,250, and detective Luther B. Baker would get \$3,000. Major O’Beirne and his detectives would get shares, too. The remaining \$43,000 was to be divided equally among the 26 troopers. This plan raised their share from \$1,000 to \$1,653.84.

The bill passed quickly and was rammed through the Senate with relative ease. This was aided by the fact that they took up the matter on the last day of the session.

Owen & Wilson reported to Parady again on July 30, 1866: “Congress has passed a bill appropriating to you & others \$1,653.84 for the capture of Booth and Herold. It was passed the last day & took almost herculean efforts. You can never know the work it took.”

They assured Parady that, “We shall progress towards drawing the money as rapidly as possible...” On this document someone, using a pencil—probably Parady himself—has subtracted \$165.38 from the amount. This undoubtedly represents the commission due to Owen & Wilson.

On August 16, 1866, Owen & Wilson had even better news; they had Parady’s money in hand. “We have succeeded in obtaining the warrants (for Parady’s share of the reward money) & send yours by Adams Express. You can endorse it & take it to any bank & get the money on

it. Or you can endorse it & return to us by Adams Express & we will get the money here. We have made it C.O.D. for the amount of our fees which is ten per cent.”

Their letter ends with the following comment: “In the conclusion of the business you will permit us to thank you for the kind and amicable as well as gentlemanly disposition & conduct you have displayed...It is & shall always be a pleasure to deal with such men as yourself.”

After clearing the Congress, the distribution bill went to President Johnson for signature. He signed Public Law 185, “An Act authorizing the payment of the rewards offered by the President of the United States and the officers of the War Department, in April and May, 1865,” into law on July 28, 1866.

So, despite the necessity for “almost herculean efforts” on the part of his attorney, Emory Parady was able to get his share of the Booth and Herold reward in a timely manner.

His comrade, John Millington, had a little more trouble.

As detailed in the Millington-Parady Papers, Millington’s agent was the United States Sanitary Commission, Army and Navy Claims Agency, a well-known humanitarian organization based in Washington, D.C. *The Sanitary Commission Bulletin*, June 1, 1865, spells out their mission: “The agency is established to prosecute the claims of those who have been in the service of the United States, in the Army and Navy, and their dependents, for Pensions, Arrears of Pay, Bounty, Prize-money, and all other Army and Navy claims on the government WITHOUT CHARGE OR EXPENSE OF ANY KIND WHAT EVER TO THE CLAIMANT.”

There was a local office in Plattsburgh, New York, near Millington’s home. His claim was overseen by Rev. Orren C. Gregg, a well-known local minister. This arrangement didn’t last long, however. The Sanitary Commission sought assistance of “the Cosmopolitan Army and Navy Claim Agency” of Washington. Their business card lists the principals as ex-army officers. Millington’s case was turned over to Ernst Von Woyna, late 1st Lieutenant of the 9th New York Battery. Assisting him was Casper Keller, former Lieut. Colonel of the 7th New York Volunteers. In their correspondence, this firm is called “Von Woyna & Co.”

In December 1865, Von Woyna wrote: “All necessary evidence in your case is filed by us.” On February 20, 1866, the Sanitary Commission gave Millington a progress report. They cautioned that while these claims are “speedily adjusted,” they will still “take their turn.”

By June 13, 1866, the final decision on the distribution of the reward hadn’t been made, so the Sanitary Commission (or John Millington) tried another tactic. They filed a claim through the Paymaster General of the Army, who simply returned the claim telling Millington to contact the War Department. By now David F. Noble II, Justice of the Peace of Weavertown, N.Y, was handling Millington’s case for the local Sanitary Commission office.

On August 23, 1866, Casper Keller was in Plattsburgh. He wrote to Millington, “...Please come at once and you will have the money a few days afterwards.” But a snag developed before Millington could meet up with Keller. Von Woyna and Co. had gotten in over their heads and had had to hire lawyers to help them settle the claims they were pursuing. Progress on Millington’s case now slowed to glacial speed.

Poor Millington had to deal with three layers of representatives: the local attorney for the Sanitary Commission; the Washington-based claims agents; Von Woyna & Co.; and Stewart & Riddle, Von Woyna’s attorneys.

By March 16, 1867, when Millington still didn’t have his money, he took matters into his own hands. He notified Von Woyna & Co. after the fact: “I have been writing to the U.S. Treasury for information as to the Reward Money due me for the Capture of the Presidential

Assassins. Mr. Francis Spinner [2022 Editor's Note: He was Treasurer of the United States, not the same as the Secretary of the Treasury] says that Aug. 9, 1866, a Treasury Draft No. 6419 was issued for \$1,653.84 in my favor & Aug. 15th 1866 was delivered to A.G. Riddle of the firm of Stewart, Riddle & Co. who it was represented had authority from me to collect it. Having heard nothing from you in relation to it, please inform me how it stands." One of Millington's representatives had gotten the Treasure draft seven months before and he had to write to the Treasury Department to find that out!

Albert G. Riddle was a prominent Washington attorney, who represented various claimants during the Reward Distribution process. He also was the attorney for the State Department during the John Surratt Trial and the lawyer for Col. L.C. Baker during his various legal hassles.

Attorney Noble wrote Millington on May 7, 1867, informing him of more news: "I have written again to Von Woyna & Co & to A.G. Riddle of Washington. Riddle says that Woyna & Co. have failed & that the Reward claims came into his hands, that he carried them through & that the Government checks were deposited with Maury & Co. Bankers of Washington.

"Riddle says that it was represented to him that advances had been made by Maury & Co. upon some of those claims—as to yours he did not know whether you got any advance or not as he has no papers to show anything about the matter.... If you got anything advanced to you on that Claim let me know it.... I will write to Maury & Co. Washington & find how it stands."

Noble seemed to be making some headway at last. On May 13, 1867, he wrote, "I have at last got track of your Reward Money. It is deposited with the Bankers Maury & Co. Washington. They say they will forward the same upon the receipt of \$300—which they say will cover all Expenses.... \$300 seems a heavy charge for doing the business if you got no advances from them at Washington when you applied for your claim. I want to see you before I go any further with it."

The matter wasn't settled by June 20, however. Noble wrote: "I wrote to Maury & Co.... Mr. Maury says that they made advances to Van Woyna & Co. on the strength of a certain contract made by the men who captured Booth to Von Woyna to give them one half of the Reward Money if they would get it. Mr. Maury says that Mr. A.G. Riddle has those contracts—and that he hold one signed by you on the same terms.

"Maury says every soldier has refused to pay the half as they agreed, which is \$800 & he has lost a pile by it.

"The Government Certificates were left with him as security for advances he made. Probably Von Woyna & Co. have got all they could on those contracts."

In that same letter, Noble wrote that he had gotten a promise of help from the Hon. Mr. Orange Ferris, the newly-elected U.S. Congressman from the North Country. Noble wrote optimistically, "It is probable that Congress will be in session again in a few weeks & I can get Mr. Ferris to look after that matter. I think that will be the best course to take & the cheapest."

On July 11, 1867, Noble told Millington that Congressman Ferris was going to review the papers in Millington's case. He told Millington, "I think we will soon wind it up."

A week later, July 18th, Noble had good news for Millington, "I received last night from Washington your Reward Certificate—\$1,653—from the Bankers who held it. They say Mr. Ferris had called on them & examined the claim & was satisfied of its correctness & would write to me. I wish you to come down immediately & execute it. We have got it now."

Whether Millington had to pay a portion of his reward share as commission to the “Cosmopolitan Army and Navy Claim Agency;” Steward, Riddle and Company, or Maury & Co. Bankers is unknown. It appears that he got the full amount.

Millington used the services of the Sanitary Commission, which may have saved him having to pay a commission, but it greatly increased his level of anxiety and paperwork. He had to go deal with a claims agency, a high-priced law firm, the Paymaster General, the Secretary of the Treasury, Washington bankers, and finally, his member of Congress. At one time he was told he owed 50% to these agents and to another \$300.

Parady dealt with only one group of lawyers and managed to get his money nearly a year before Millington. He only had to pay them a 10% commission. From these documents, several things are clear:

- Both of these soldiers got their share of the reward money.
- They got them in a “timely” manner.
- The delay that John Millington experienced was caused by the method he used to pursue his claim, not by any sinister governmental conspiracy.
- The payment of the reward followed normal procedures.
 - A Commission was set up to handle claims.
 - A deadline was announced for submission of these claims.
 - Documents were submitted and adjudged by the Commission.
 - The Commission reported their findings to the proper authorities.
 - A recommendation was sent to Congress.
 - Congressional Committee examined the recommendations.
 - The Committee’s proposals were sent to Congress.
 - Congress waited until the last minute to deal with them.
 - Just when the issue seemed dead, a compromise was reached.
 - Representatives voted on the compromise bill.
 - It was approved and sent to the Senate.
 - Passed by the Senate, signed by the President, and sent to the Treasury to pay.
 - The agents of the claimants handled the claims and got their commissions.
 - Whatever was left over was paid to the claimants.

[Editor’s Note: If you are wondering if Boston Corbett received any of the reward money, he did. As one of the troopers at the Garrett Farm the night Booth was killed and Herold captured, his portion of the reward was also \$1,653.84. How much he actually received, (less commissions) is unknown. There are rumors that he was robbed shortly after receiving the reward money.]

Last Lincoln Suspect

Reprinted from the *Surratt Society News*, September 1984

The following article was contributed by member W.F. Chesson from Newport News, Virginia. The item about Mrs. Weeks is undated and appears to have been clipped from a Washington paper quite a few years ago. Mr. Chesson found the clip in a copy of Izola Forrester's *This One Mad Act* (published in 1937) found in a used bookstore in Boston five years ago.

Death of Mrs. Weeks, Who Was Held for Conspiracy

-In Prison with Mrs. Surratt

-Last of all in Washington who remembers exciting days of close of Civil Strife

**-Arrested on L Street because of remark she made about
"President going to Theater on 'Good Friday'"**

The death on Tuesday last of Mrs. Amanda Weeks, 90 years old, who lived for 70 years at 223 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W., marks the passing of the last survivor of those arrested on suspicion of complicity in the assassination of President Lincoln. Mrs. Weeks and her second husband, French Graham, were taken in those old days to the Capitol prison, where they were placed in confinement along with Mrs. Surratt, her daughter, and a number of others being held in connection with the crime. Mrs. Weeks gained her release ten days later through the assistance of a Southern physician in the prison, who had known her for many years. Her husband was held only a few hours.

It is alleged that Mrs. Weeks was a party to the Lincoln conspiracy. She was arrested on L Street, between Eighteenth and Connecticut Ave., by a squadron of soldiers sent by the provost marshal after it had been reported to the military officers that Mrs. Weeks had remarked, when told of the shooting of Lincoln, that the President "should have been shot for going to a theater on Good Friday." Relatives of Mrs. Weeks say her only remark was a criticism of the President for going to a theater on a "holy day."

After her arrest it was brought out that Mrs. Weeks had been seen with Mrs. Surratt and the latter's daughter shortly before the President was shot. It developed, however, that Mrs. Weeks knew nothing of the conspiracy at the time.

Mrs. Weeks had been married three times. She is survived by a son, James H. Houston, employed at the Capitol, and her third husband, who is at the Soldiers Home. The funeral of Mrs. Weeks will be held today, interment at Congressional Cemetery.

[2022 Editor's Notes: After some research, I found another death notice for Mrs. Weeks in *The Evening Star* on September 9, 1914, which stated that she died on September 8, 1914. The following article, which clarified the information in the above article, appeared in the September 13, 1914, edition of the *Star*.]

MRS. WEEKS ARREST

Due to a Merely Casual Remark Her Son Explains

To the Editor of *The Star*:

As the son of the late Mrs. Amanda Graham Weeks. I wish to correct the statement in Wednesday's *Star* regarding her confinement in the Old Capitol Prison, especially the headline, which was so damaging to her. All her old friends at that exciting time of Lincoln's assassination have died and she had since lived all these years at her home, 223 Pennsylvania Avenue northwest, and was well-known as a person of goodness and kindness to all with whom she came in contact and should not be misrepresented at her death.

She was not, as stated, visiting at the home of Mrs. Surratt, not even being then acquainted with her. She met Mrs. Surratt while in the prison, which was three days and not ten as published. Her confinement in the prison was the result of a casual remark made in regard to the President having attended the theater on so sacred a day as Good Friday, and not through any knowledge of the circumstances or acquaintance with anyone connected with the crime. Her statement, which was the cause of her arrest, was: "Had he not been at the theater on Good Friday night, he would not have been assassinated." This remark was overheard and she was held like many others until a satisfactory explanation was given.

J.H. HOUSTON

[2022 Editor's Note: Nineteen years before Mrs. Weeks' death, she was featured in another series of articles of a more scandalous nature.]

Reprinted from *The Evening Star*, September 3, 1895

BOTH AFTER MYRON WEEKS

He Married Them Consecutively and Then Disappeared

The Wives Meet by Singular Chance and Pool Their Issues To Prosecute the Once Loved One.

Myron Weeks is the name of an old pensioner, who has only one arm, but complaint was made at police headquarters this morning that he has more than one wife. The two females who claim to have been legally tied to the old man, were both in headquarters, and to make matters

doubly certain each had a picture of him. The fact of his alleged second marriage came to light in a singular way, and the second wife seems much more aggrieved than does wife No. 1. When they appeared at headquarters and related the story of their troubles, the circumstances proved amusing as well as interesting to the officers, and thinking the alleged bigamy had been committed here the officers made arrangements to have the pension agency watched tomorrow, when the old pensioner will probably appear to get his allowance from Uncle Sam.

[2022 Editor's Note: The article continued, but there were more details in the following article.]

Reprinted from The Morning Times, September 4, 1895

BOTH WIVES OF ONE MIND

Mesdames Weeks No. 1 and No. 2 Are Hunting an Aged Bigamist. They Are Resolved That He Shall Suffer for Deceiving and Deserting Each of Them —Is in the City.

The appearance of two women, each named Mrs. Myron Weeks at the police headquarters yesterday afternoon in quest of a warrant for Myron Weeks, an old one-armed pensioner, on the charge of bigamy, brought to light a curious matrimonial complication.

Mrs. Weeks No. 1 was the spokeswoman and all she said and did was cheerfully and emphatically endorsed by her namesake No. 2.

As the old soldier's alleged second marriage took place in [Anne] Arundel County, the two wives were informed that in order to begin criminal proceedings against him they would be obliged to go to Annapolis, it being the county seat of Arundel County.

It appears from their story that in May 1890, Mrs. Amanda Graham, a widow, who then and now resides at No. 233 Pennsylvania Avenue, was married to Myron Weeks at the Metropolitan M.E. Church. They lived together at Mrs. Graham's residence only three weeks, when Weeks, after getting what little money his wife had, deserted her and left the city. She has never heard from him since, but says that she has often seen him on the street cars.

About two years later, Weeks made his appearance in Odenton, Md., and became acquainted with a Miss Zink. It was there on September 1, 1892, the two were made man and wife. They lived happily together in that way-back Maryland town for nearly three years. On May 25 last, the two took a trip to Baltimore and, it being near pension day, the old soldier left his wife, saying that he was going to Washington to get his money and would return the next day. Nothing has since been seen or heard of him by the woman.

About a week after his disappearance, becoming alarmed, Mrs. Weeks No. 2 put a personal in a Baltimore paper in order to ascertain, if possible, something of his whereabouts. No response to the advertisement was ever received, and the Maryland wife concluded to let the matter drop.

In looking over an old copy of the Baltimore paper some time ago the Washington wife, No. 1, happened to see the personal regarding the disappearance of Myron Weeks and noticing

that it was his wife who sought information about him, became alarmed and suspicious that he had deceived her.

She wrote to the Mrs. Myron Weeks in Maryland, and after a short correspondence the two women came to the conclusion that they had both been married to the same man. Wife No. 1 invited wife No. 2 to come to this city, and about 10 o'clock yesterday morning the latter arrived here.

After talking the matter over, the Washington wife concluded that as she was Weeks' first and legal wife, she would take the initiative in the matter of prosecution. They will leave for Annapolis this morning. [As the second marriage had taken place in Annapolis, the alleged wives were referred to the authorities of the city on the Severn River.]

Myron Weeks is about fifty-five years of age. It is supposed that he is at present somewhere in the city, as his first wife says that she saw him the other day on a street car. When seen last night by a *Times* reporter, both wives, who were together at No. 1's residence, positively refused to speak for publication. The Washington wife appears to be anxious to have her guilty husband punished, and the Maryland wife, although of the same opinion, seems much distressed over the whole affair.

WANTED FOR BIGAMY
Maryland Authorities Are After Much-married Mr. Weeks

Reprinted from The Evening Times, September 13, 1895

Sheriff Thomas J. Linthicum, of Anne Arundel County, Md., appeared before Judge Cox this afternoon with a requisition from Governor Brown for the arrest of Myron Weeks.

Weeks is wanted for bigamy. The original warrant against him was sworn out by Amanda Graham Weeks, who was married to the accused man in June 8, 1890.

She alleged that he married Elizabeth Zink, of the same [Anne Arundel] county, on September 1, 1892. It was stated that when the warrant for Weeks was issued, he skipped out and came to Washington. [*The Evening Star's* edition on the same day said Weeks went to Cumberland, Maryland.]

A bench warrant for his capture has been issued.

[2022 Editor's Note: Unfortunately, there were no further articles on Myron Weeks, so we don't know if he was ever found.]