
**These eight people were not Booth's
assassination accomplices.**

**At worst, all but Mary Surratt were would-be
kidnappers who did nothing to help assassins
John Wilkes Booth and Lewis Powell.**



George Atzerodt



David Herold



Samuel Arnold



Michael O'Laughlin



Mary Surratt



John Surratt



Dr. Samuel Mudd



Ed Spangler

**Mainstream historians claim that Samuel Arnold was the first accomplice
arrested during the Lincoln conspiracy investigation, but they are mistaken.**

Secretary Stanton's Bait and Switch Cover-up

By Don Thomas

Who was Charles Lee, and what happened to him?

Charles Lee was the first conspirator captured as an accomplice to John Wilkes Booth. He was also a U. S. Government employee [E&S, p. 797].



Charles Lee alias, Charles Letz.

On Sunday morning, April 16, 1865, in a drugstore on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Charles Lee admitted, in front of five witnesses, that he was personally acquainted with John Wilkes Booth and that Booth told him four weeks earlier that Lincoln would be killed.

That same evening the Provost Marshal of Wilmington, Delaware, was informed of what Charles Lee said, and he immediately took steps to find him. Charles Lee was using the alias Charles Letz.

Charles Lee was arrested, and his arresting officer stated that all five witnesses against him were the most respected and reliable Union men in the District [E&S, p. 1349-50].

April 18: General John R. Kenly of Delaware sent Baltimore a message that Charles Lee should be examined in Wilmington before taking other steps in relation to him [E&S, pp. 764-65].

For some unknown reason, General Kenly felt that a U.S. Government employee capture in Booth's plot against the President should be concealed.

April 22: Major General Lew Wallace, from Baltimore, ordered his staff officer, Colonel Wooley, in Wilmington, to put Charles Lee in irons and keep him and his papers a carefully guarded secret. [E&S, p.764].

April 24: Colonel Wooley reported to General Wallace asking if he should send Charles Lee to Washington [E&S, pp. 764-65].

April 25: Wallace ordered Wooley to send Charles Lee to Washington at once. Put him in irons, keep him closely guarded, and deliver his papers to General Hardie [E&S, pp. 765-1148].



Standing is Major General Lew Wallace.

Major General Lew Wallace was just one of several military judges who presided over the conspiracy trial while also serving as a conspiracy investigator under Secretary Stanton.

By April 26, Charles Lee quietly remained securely locked inside the Carroll Prison.

No one outside of Stanton's War Department investigators and judges knew anything about the capture of Booth's first assassination conspirator.

All withheld military reports from the trial are now documented proof of a War Department cover-up. But keeping Charles Lee hidden from the public would become more complicated as other accomplices were being rounded-up.



George Atzerodt

On April 20, four days after the arrest of Charles Lee, George Atzerodt became the seventh conspirator arrested.

On May 1, during Atzerodt's last interrogation, he implicated many accomplices plotting with Booth, including conspirators he referred to as *friends of the President*.

George Atzerodt told the military Marshal of Baltimore, James McPhail, that many in Charles County knew of the kidnapping affair. One of the men named Charles Laytz knew all about it; he went to Richmond during the winter; he was to row the President and party across the Potomac River.

Atzerodt knew Charles Lee only by his alias, but the transcriber of his confession recorded "Laytz" as Charles Yates. George Atzerort spoke with a thick German accent and pronounced Charles Letz, as Charles Laytz and McPhail's deputy transcribed the name, Charles Yates.

The transcriber of Atzerodt's confession was not only McPhail's deputy but also George Atzerodt's brother-in-law, John L. Smith.

So, who was Charles Yates?

An old Port Tobacco newspaper article from December 2, 1858, tells of a Charles Yeates, from southern Maryland, along with a few of his friends who had an active role in Booth's escape from Washington.

briskly and thoroughly for a few moments, and then let the cider settle. The fermentation will cease at once. When, after a few days, the cider has become clear, draw off and bottle carefully, or remove the sediment and return to the original vessel. If loosely corked, or kept in a barrel on draught, it will retain its taste as a still cider. If preserved in bottles carefully corked, which is better, it will become a sparkling cider, and may be kept indefinitely long.

As the cool weather has now arrived, the following rules for lighting a coal fire, by which considerable time and labor may be effected, will doubtless be acceptable to all who have to perform that duty: Clear the grate well from ashes and cinders; then lay at the bottom of it a few lumps of fresh coal about the size of duck's eggs, so as not wholly to obstruct the air passing between the bars on which they are placed. This done, put a small quantity of waste paper or shavings next upon the coal: then a few sticks or pieces of split wood, placed carefully above it, so that they may not project between the bars; then a layer of the cinders you have before taken from the grate; and next a few small lumps of coal on the top. Take care to complete this process before applying the light, which may easily be done afterwards by means of a lucifer match, and you will seldom fail to have a good fire in a few minutes.

According to the recent advices from Japan, that country must be a very paradise of old maids. No single women are allowed there: every man is allowed one legal wife, and as many second wives as his means will permit him to support. The second wives are selected by law from the poorer classes of society, whose relatives are unable to maintain them, and the children are all adopted by the legal wife, who is the only acknowledged mother. The old rule is therefore reversed in Japan, where, instead of a boy not knowing his own father, hundreds do not know their own mother.

Dec. 2, 1858.

FOR SALE.

THE subscriber will sell SEVERAL YOKE of YOUNG OXEN, also some MILCH COWS and HEIFERS.

JOHN HAMILTON.

Dec. 2, 1858—31*

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WE, the undersigned, citizens of Charles county, feeling strongly inclined to engage in the social and invigorating exercise of field sports, and being perfectly satisfied our practice in gunnery is perfect, do earnestly and daringly tender to any ten gentlemen of the counties above named, a pitched battle in the valuable and useful science of Pigeon Shooting. We know our own consummate skill and the high degree of perfection to which we have attained in the science of gunnery, and we therefore confidently tender this challenge, for a Pigeon Shooting to any ten gentlemen of the above counties who dare accept it. When a single discharge of the French artillery at Waterloo had swept away nearly an entire English regiment, Wellington remarked—"This is better practice than they had in Spain." We think we have the better practice and we are willing and anxious to test it. We propose five shots for each man—the gun to carry not more than one and a half ounce of shot—the losing party to pay for a supper and trimmings, to come off at Mr. Z. V. Posey's Hotel. Each member of the shooting party shall invite one friend to the supper, and the rules of the Shooting Club of St. Mary's county to regulate and control this great shooting match of science, art and tried skill and prowess. The time and other terms to be agreed upon when the match is finally arranged. Address Mr. Z. V. Posey, Port Tobacco, Md.

SAMUEL COX,

WM. T. CAMPBELL,

WASHINGTON A. WARE,

S. P. M. HANSON,

ALFRED WILLS,

CHARLES YEATES,

WM. L. SHEIRBOURN,

RICH. M. SMOOT,

JOHN JOHNSON,

A. J. SMOOT.

December 2, 1858.

most distinguished of the day), who are compelled, from pre-existing engagements, or other causes, to withhold their names for the present, but who will, nevertheless, contribute to our pages. We would also announce that we shall add to our list of contributors the names of other distinguished authors, as soon as satisfactory arrangements can be completed.

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Samuel Cox, Thomas Jones, Thomas Harbin, and Dick Smoot each had an active role in Booth's plot against Lincoln.

David Herold told Judge Bingham that one of the 35 people who helped Booth with the assassination was named either Henson or Hanson [E&S, p. 677].



Samuel Cox



Thomas Harbin

McPhail's deputy, John L. Smith, knew Charles Yeates. Atzerodt's brother, John Atzerodt, was another deputy for McPhail, who also knew Charles Yeates.

If Atzerodt was genuinely talking about Charles Yeates from southern Maryland, the military investigators should have immediately called for his arrest.

However, on the same day, Atzerodt gave McPhail information about a co-conspirator in Booth's kidnapping plot named Charles Yates Stanton's Judge Advocate, Colonel Henry Burnett immediately realized that Atzerodt was talking about his prisoner Charles Lee.

Burnett quickly issued Major William H. Wiegel (also a staff officer for Lew Wallace) *verbal orders* to report the secret location the War Department was holding Charles Lee.

"A" 216 (JAO) 1865. (2: 0752)

[Not in E&S.]

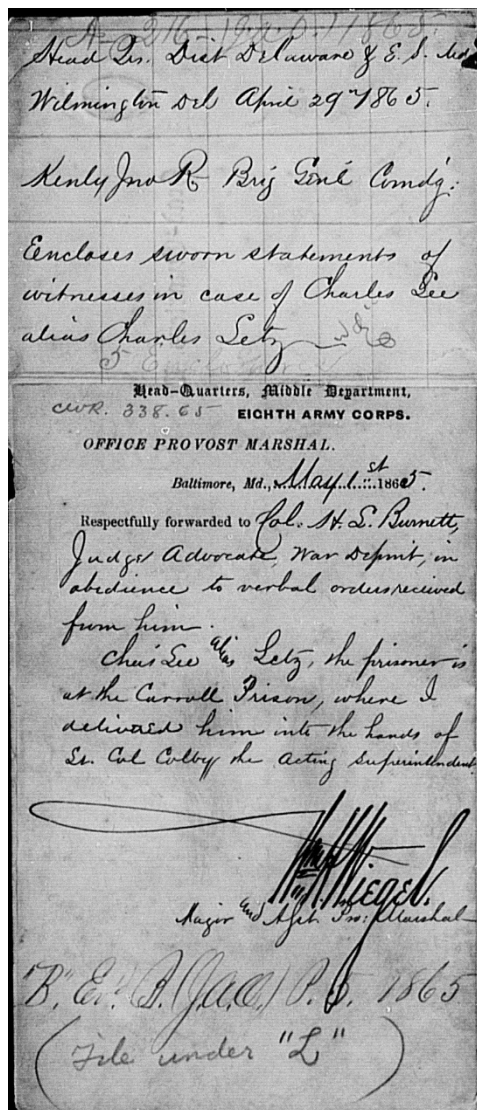
It reads:

May 1, 1865

Col. H. L. Burnett, Judge Advocate,
War Department, in obedience to verbal orders
received from him.

Charles Lee alias Letz, the prisoner, is
at the Carroll Prison, where I delivered him
into the hands of Lt. Col. Colby, the Acting
Superintendent.

Major William H. Wiegel



This document is the last of fifteen military reports about Charles Lee.

What happened to him after May 1, 1865?

My point is this: Whichever man George Atzerodt was speaking of, either Charles Lee or Charles Yeates, the fact is they both remained a War Department secret with no other purpose other than to cover-up Stanton's Washington conspiracy.



Stanton's bait and switch game was a tactic used by his investigators to hide any people or evidence that would expose the actual Washington plot to remove President Lincoln from office.

Secretary of War Edwin Stanton and his military investigators covered up many implicated suspects during the Lincoln conspiracy investigation, but Charles Lee was the first.



Secretary Edwin Stanton and his Military Commissioners

Stanton's conspiracy trial commissioners knew all about the military reports collected during the investigation but presented only evidence that would support Stanton's alibi that Lincoln's murder was a Confederate plot.

The motive to have so many War Department secrets was twofold. Had any government agents been convicted in Booth's plot against Lincoln, such Federal accomplices would have exposed the actual Washington conspiracy to remove the President from office by assassination.

Revealing U.S. Government accomplices in Booth's conspiracy would also destroy Stanton's assertion that Lincoln's murder was a Richmond plot.

But why did Stanton's prosecution cover-up conspirators connected to Richmond?



Left to right: John Bingham, Joseph Holt, and Colonel Henry Burnett

This War Department cover-up goes much deeper than just Charles Lee!

There are also three additional related documents about another bait & switch Confederate spy named Sarah Slater [E&S, pp. 811, 869, 871, 1318, 1321-24, 1327].

Stanton's investigators were provided total control over all the collected evidence and could easily cover-up anything that would expose a Washington conspiracy. Stanton's investigation team were all Federal officers under the Secretary of War. They had only two choices: honestly reveal their collected evidence, which would prove a Washington coup against the President, or hide any people or evidence that would expose Stanton's contrived declaration that Lincoln's murder plot originated from Richmond.

On the same day, George Atzerodt implicated the Confederate spy he called Kate Thompson; James McPhail quickly ordered the arrest of Sarah Slater. Still, no one ever bothered to look for Kate Thompson. Arresting Slater was just another bait and switch tactic used by Stanton's investigators to hide a Federal agent assigned to spy on Booth [E&S, p. 869].

On May 1, Sarah Slater was arrested and taken directly to Colonel Burnett. Stanton then ordered Colonel Ingraham to take charge of Mrs. Slater later that night and send her back to Burnett the next morning at 10 A.M [Not in E&S].

"Mc" 218 (JAO) 1865. (2: 0766)

The military report reads:

War Department May 1, 1865

[Respectfully] referred to Col. Ingraham who
will take charge of Mrs. Slater tonight
and send her to my office in the morning at 10 A.M.
By order of the Secretary of War.

Col. Burnett
Judge Advocate

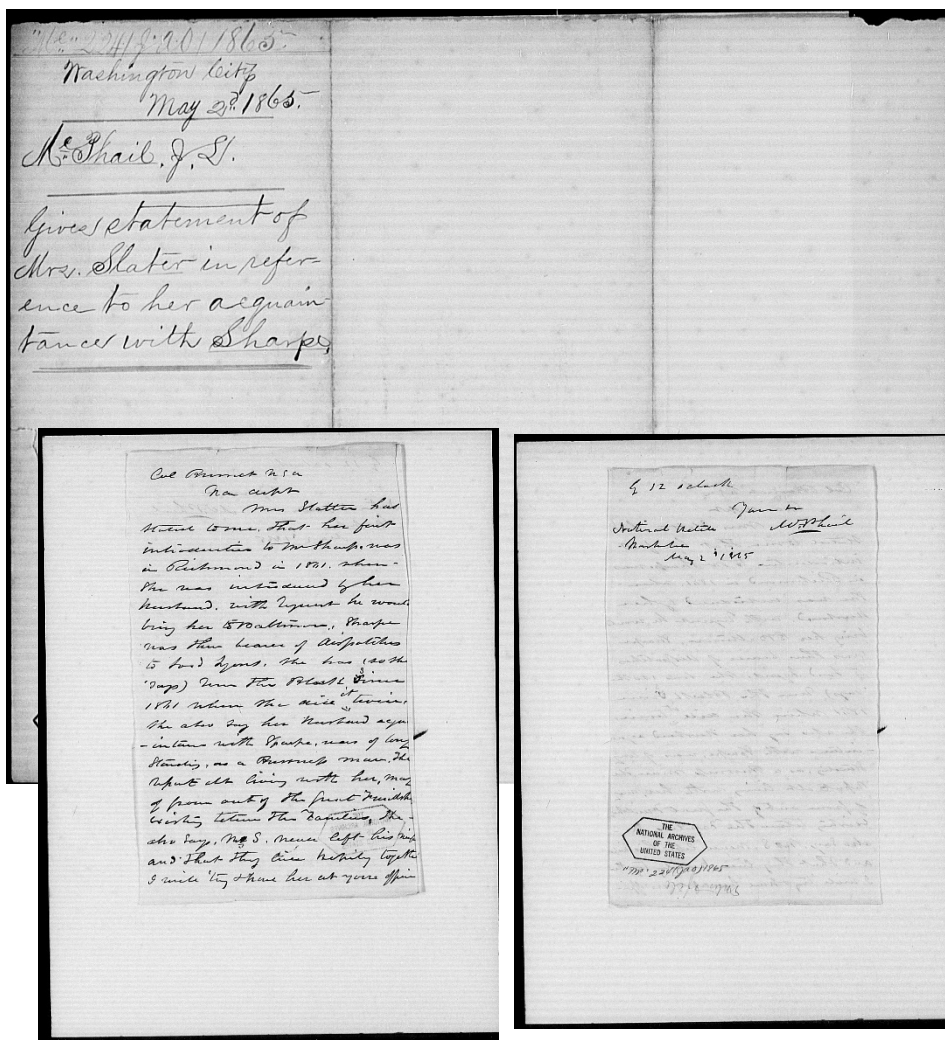
War Dept
May 1st 1865
Respy referred to
Col. Ingraham who
will take charge
of Mrs Slater tonight
and send her to
my office in the
morning at 10 A.M.
By order of the Secy
of War
W. H. Burnett
Judge Adv.

Early the next morning of May 2, James McPhail has Slater as his prisoner and sends word that he will deliver Slater back to Burnett by noon. However, the War Department kept Slater's arrest a military secret and said nothing about Kate Thompson [E&S, p. 871].

From that point on, Sarah Slater was never heard from again.

McPhail's May 2, report.

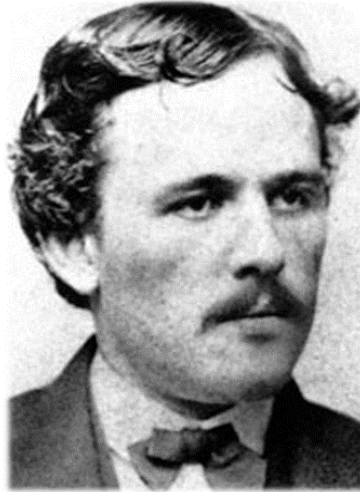
NARA-2: 775-777.



The woman accomplice in Booth's kidnapping plot, whom Atzerodt called Kate Thompson, was, in truth, a Pinkerton agent named Kate Warne. She had infiltrated Booth's kidnapping plot, and Atzerodt overheard Booth talking about a woman accomplice helping with Lincoln's capture. Atzerodt believed the woman Booth spoke of was Kate Thompson.

George Atzerodt went on to tell McPhail that young Wiechmann ought to know about Kate Thompson, but Atzerodt never mentioned the name, Sarah Slater.

Immediately after Atzerodt confessed to McPhail, Chief investigator, Colonel John A. Foster, interrogated "young" Louis Wiechmann, who admitted that he met Sarah Slater when she stayed at the Surratt House. That she was a Confederate spy, short, thin, but he never saw her face because she always wore a veil [E&S, p. 1327].



Louis Wiechmann

Wiechmann's ridiculous statement claiming that: *Sarah Slater always wore a veil* inspired the renowned history researcher James O. Hall to write the enduring legend about Sarah Slater, who he labeled, the mysterious lady in the veil.

Sarah Slater remained a historical enigma until recently when author John F. Stanton completed Sarah's life story, right up to her death in 1920. Slater never tried to hide from anyone after her secret release from the War Department and quietly lived out the rest of her life in New York, choosing never to talk about her days as a Confederate spy.

However, in May of 1865, Stanton's military investigators reported that Sarah Slater could not be found for a trial witness, vanishing without a trace. Yet, the military provided no reason for her release or history of her escape.

The fact is: the telegram from McPhail to Burnett proves that the army prosecution knew all along that Slater's last known location, two weeks before the conspiracy trial began, was in the custody of Stanton's War Department. Slater's bait and switch with Kate Thompson kept Kate Warne's true identity a military secret.

It is also a well-documented fact that Stanton knew Sarah Slater was friends with the fugitive John Surratt, a Confederate spy. Slater even knew a blockade runner named Gustavus Spencer Howell, arrested as a spy before Booth had a plot to kill Lincoln. McPhail had this information before interrogating Atzerodt, two weeks before the conspiracy trial began.



The conspiracy investigators also knew that the woman Atzerodt thought was an alias, Kate Brown, was not Kate Thompson nor Sarah Slater, but a third woman accomplice in Booth's plot named Fanny Brown. Fanny was a New York actress and a close friend of John Wilkes Booth.

Fanny Brown was never investigated even though detectives recovered a photograph of her from Booth's body after being captured.



Items found on Booth after his capture.



Atzerodt said that Kate Thompson was put-up at the National Hotel where Booth lived. He described Kate Thompson (and alias Kate Brown) exactly as Fanny Brown looked. A good-looking, well-dressed, round face woman with black hair and dark eyes.

Whereas, Sarah Slater was a small-framed woman with a thin face and blonde hair. Atzerodt mistook Fanny Brown for Thompson because she was the only woman he ever saw. He never realized that the many overheard conversations about a woman in the kidnapping plot were three separate women. The military investigators knew all about Fanny Brown, Kate Thompson, and Sarah Slater, but Stanton kept that from the public.



Fanny Brown

Sarah Slater was not Kate Thompson nor Fanny Brown!

George Atzerodt assumed that the good-looking woman conspirator in Booth's plot with a round face, well-dressed, black hair, and eyes, was Kate Thompson, sometimes called Kate Brown.

But Atzerodt was mistaken; he was unknowingly talking about Fanny Brown.

It is a well-documented fact that Kate Warne was assigned to spy on John Wilkes Booth. If the investigators revealed her true identity, it would prove Stanton knew all about Booth's kidnapping plot long before the assassination.

The only mysteries still to be solved:

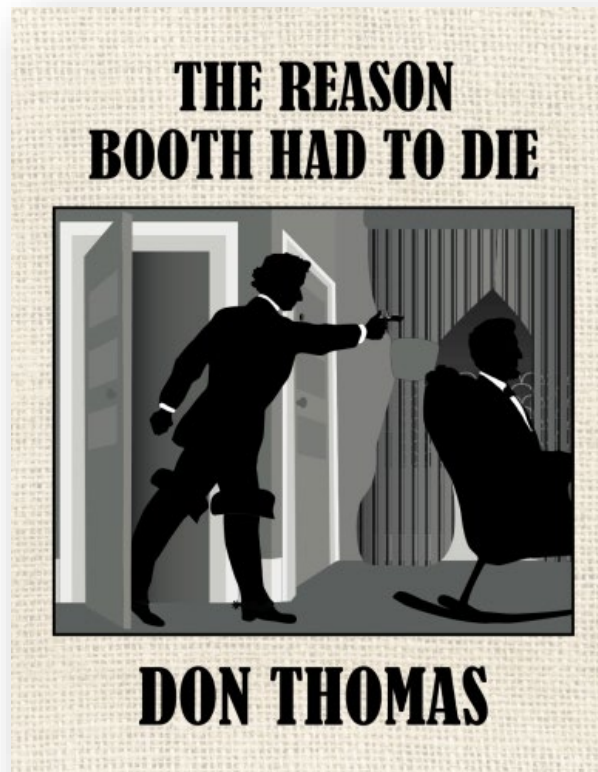
Why would the military prosecution cover-up Charles Lee, a Booth accomplice who had traveled to Richmond? Why would the War Department release Sarah Slater from custody if the army investigators believed she was a Confederate spy? A spy who had information that could help locate the hunted fugitive, John Surratt.

Why did the military investigators withhold evidence about a select group of Booth's implicated Southern sympathizers throughout the conspiracy investigation and trial?

To find the answer to those questions, and so much more, read: ***The Reason Lincoln Had to Die*** and its sequel ***The Reason Booth Had to Die***, and discover just how much of your opinion about the Lincoln conspiracy is based on what you don't know.

Purchase both books at Amazon.com. Visit Don Thomas on YouTube, along with all the articles posted on the web site: www.reasonlincoln.com.

Assassination suspects, Atzerodt implicated but were covered up: *[James Donaldson, William Donaldson, Col. Lewis Mosby, Samuel Thomas, Thomas Harbin, Nellie Starr, John F. Parker, Mollie Turner, Lizzie Murtry, John Matthews, Dan Bryant, Secretary William Seward's chambermaid Margaret Coleman, Fanny Brown, Kate Thompson, Charles Lee, and Sarah Slater.]*



Sources:

Listed are eighteen surviving microfilm National Archives documents about Charles Lee and Sarah Slater, edited by historian William C. Edwards:

E&S – Edwards, William C., and Steers, Edward Jr., editors. *The Lincoln Assassination: The Evidence*, University of Illinois Press Urbana, and Chicago, 2009. Microfilm Reels M599 1-7.

W- Edwards, William C. edited & transcribed, a companion volume to **E&S** -*The Lincoln Assassination: The Reward Files*, by William C. Edwards, 2012. E-book, A Transcription of the Microfilm file M619 from the National Archives.

All posted National Archives documents are from Reels No. 2,6 & 7: Files, 0212-0878.

E&S, p. 797, Doc. - 2: 0751-63. Charles Lee was a U.S. Government employee in Booth's kidnapping plot to capture Lincoln.

E&S, pp. 1349-50, Doc. - 2: 0216-18. The arrest of Charles Lee and five witnesses against him. Captain Thomas Wienie, "*What disposition shall I make of him*"?

E&S, pp. 764-65, Doc. - 2: 0212-152. Brigadier General John Kenly of Delaware, to General Wallace in Baltimore, "*Charles Lee is now in my custody and closely confined at the city jail [in Wilmington]. You might deem it better to cause him to be examined at Wilmington before taking other steps in relation to him*".

E&S, p. 1148, Doc. - 2: 0876-78. Major General Wallace to Colonel Wooley, "*put the prisoner in irons and send him to the Old Capitol Prison under a strong guard. Keep his paper carefully*".

E&S pp. 869, 871, Doc. - 2: 0765-77. are the three documents about Sarah Slater's arrest and interrogation, as well as Louis Wiechmann's statements. **E&S, pp. 1318, 1321-24, 1327. Doc. - 7: 0445-51. 6:0454-59. 6: 0499-507.**

Doc. - 2: 0752 is not listed in E&S. "A" 216 (JAO) 1865. May 1, Colonel. Burnett gives verbal orders to find out where Charles Lee is being held. The last known document on Charles Lee.

Doc. – 2:0766, is not listed in E&S. "Mc" 216 (JAO) 1865. General Ingraham, take charge of Mrs. Slater.

See Author Suzanne Adair, posted in Relevant History, March 29, 2016: The Veiled Lady: Sarah Slater, Courier for the Confederacy. Article from Author, Susan Higginbotham, "*Hanging Mary*." Permalink [<http://www.suzanneadair.net/2016/03/29/the-veiled-lady-sarah-slater-courier-for-the-confederacy/>]

James O. Hall, "*The Saga of Sarah Slater*." Reprinted in *In Pursuit of Continuing Research in the Field of the Assassination* (Surratt Society, 1990).

John F. Stanton, "*A Mystery No Longer: The Lady in the Veil*." *Surratt Courier*, August 2011, and October 2011.