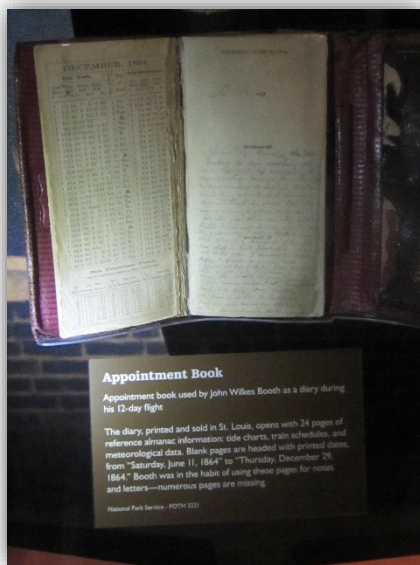


## Prologue

Mainstream history teaches that John Wilkes Booth made elaborate preparations before murdering the President but does not explain why Booth made no plans for life after his crime. Are we to believe that Booth and his entourage did not realize there would be a massive manhunt and bloody retribution for killing Lincoln?

It is safe to say that before killing Lincoln, Booth had no idea his life would end in the same gruesome manner as his victim. Nor did he consider that his legacy would go down as a common cutthroat. Booth did not see his wrong, viewed his crime as a failure by others. He expected to be honored as a Shakespearean hero who dispatched a tyrant killed for the good of the country.



*Booth's book on display in Ford's Theater*

Booth's thoughts are known with certainty because there is a book on display in Ford's Theater written in Booth's handwriting describing his astonishment at being hunted like a dog. Before crossing the river into Virginia, he contemplated returning to Washington and giving himself up. Booth twice wrote that he left evidence behind which could clear his name but believed the government would not allow it to be printed.

History cannot claim to know why Booth attacked Lincoln or who his assailants were because the reason for their proceedings, which he was about to fully set forth, stopped in midsentence, and the bottom half of the page is now a calendar drawn. The following sheet is entirely blank front and back. Two additional sheets or four pages became missing when his book was in the private possession of Edwin Stanton's War Department.

Much of the written records and physical evidence regarding people and events surrounding the Lincoln conspiracy investigation are missing, but not all were destroyed. A large volume of authentic documents, letters, telegrams, confessions, statements, and police reports, are now easily accessible to the public through the National Archives or shared by private individuals.

Yet, many historians, past and present, have chosen to omit anything that may challenge their Confederate conspiracy theory.

This article is a small example of collected evidence other authors deem unimportant.







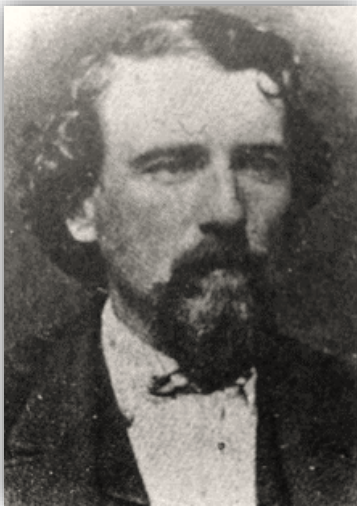






As for Confederate spy Sarah Slater, Stanton secretly ordered her to be released from War Department custody, and she quietly lived out the rest of her long life in Poughkeepsie, New York, where she died in 1920 [E&S, p. 869].

Marshal McPhail and his two deputies (who happen to be George Atzerodt's brother and brother-in-law) were also well acquainted with Jones, Harbin, and Samuel Cox. Still, despite abundant evidence and witnesses against them, Jones and Cox were set free. The excuse for releasing two well-known Confederate agents was that Mary Swann Kelly's statement contradicted Oswald Swann.



Both Thomas Harbin and Thomas Jones waited twenty-five years before selling their story to the public.

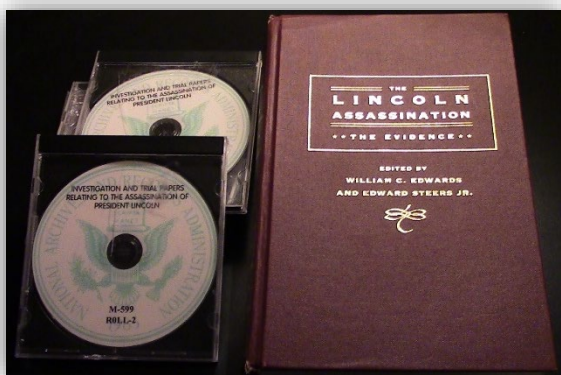
Many historians omit the same evidence Stanton withheld from the trial to accuse the Lincoln conspiracy on the Confederate government.

Today, only those free of political bias will admit that Stanton's abuse of power was a diabolical coverup

Further research on this topic can be found in related articles on this website, entitled:

- Did Jefferson Davis or Edwin Stanton Plot Lincoln's Murder?
- George Atzerodt's Confession
- How They Got Away with Murder

Also, see:



**National Archives documents from the book, The Lincoln Assassination, The Evidence, edited by William C. Edwards & Edward Steers Jr. [Listed as, E&S].**

In this book, anyone can read the Lincoln conspiracy trial evidence once withheld by the military prosecution. It is an edited collection of M599 National Archives documents and my most significant source for this article. Photographic images are also available on CD cassettes. The book is an absolute must-have for any student of the Lincoln assassination.



An interesting excerpt from George Atzerodt's lost confession but recovered in 1977 reads:  
(paraphrased)

*Booth said he had met a party in New York who would get the President [for] certain. They were going to mine [blowup] the end of the President's house, near the War Department. They knew an entrance to accomplish it through. Spoke about getting friends of the President to get up an entertainment and they would mix it in, have a serenade and thus get the President and party. These were understood to be projects. Booth said if he did not get him [the President] quick the New York crowd would.*

Stanton tried to destroy Atzerodt's confession because it revealed:

- Booth had a close association with a crowd from New York.
- The New York crowd had a plot to lure the President into a White House room and then blow up the room using a secret entrance near the War Department.
- The New York scheme was to entertain President Lincoln with a serenade and celebrate his death with a party afterward.

Minstrel entertainers (also referred to as the circus) had a long history of performing at the White House. An example being: in early 1844, the friends of President John Tyler arranged to have The Original Boston Serenaders give a special show at the White House for the President, his family, and friends. Tambourines, accordions, banjos, and bones were the instruments used for the serenade.

In 1865, a left-handed banjo-playing minstrel entertainer from Poughkeepsie, New York, assassination suspect William B. Donaldson was a longtime member of the American Ethiopian Serenaders. He was first to perform as the now infamous Jim Crow character.

The New York minstrels were in Washington before Lincoln's assassination spending their evenings at the Simpson House Saloon located just a few doors down from Ford's Theater. Suspect "Colonel" Lewis Mosby was the Simpson Saloon bartender, arrested but secretly set free.

Had the New York minstrels been invited to entertain Lincoln at the White House, William (Bill) Donaldson would have performed with them.

Immediately after Lincoln's murder, Bill Donaldson fled from Washington to Philadelphia so quickly that he did not even pack a bag.

- On April 18, 1865

Bill Donaldson's best friend, Daniel J. Cox of the Simpson House Saloon, revealed (in a letter) important information about suspects involved in Lincoln's assassination, including the arrest of "Colonel" Mosby, the Simpson House Saloon bartender **[E&S p. 395]**.

- On April 26,

War Department agent and spy Charles Cowlam investigated suspects mentioned in the letter from Cox to Donaldson, including "Colonel" Mosby **[E&S p. 394]**.

- On April 30,

More letters to Donaldson revealed more suspects, including Booth's prostitute mistress, Nellie Starr **[E&S p. 370]**. Lincoln's bodyguard, policeman John F. Parker spent the night of

Lincoln's assassination at the Simpson House with prostitute Lizzie Murtry, but that too was covered-up.

- On May 2,

Another friend of both Donaldson and Cox, Harry Bradford, also revealed those same suspects in his letter, along with "Colonel" Mosby and Nellie Starr [E&S p. 193].

- On May 4,

D. J. Cox writes Donaldson again, revealing even more suspects, and he too talked about Lizzie Murtry and "Colonel" Mosby [E&S p. 396].

- On May 6,

R.C. Morgan reported from Philadelphia to Special Commissioner Colonel H.S. Olcott (who had returned to his post in New York). Morgan said that William Donaldson is suspected of having a connection with the assassination [E&S p. 1009].

Morgan had been notified by two New York detectives, Captain Franklin, and Roach that William B. Donaldson fled Philadelphia on the late-night train back to Washington. Olcott issued Morgan orders to send his detectives after Donaldson, and once they reached Washington, confer with Provost Marshal Colonel Ingraham about arresting the New York circus performer [E&S pp. 916-917].

- On May 7,

During Bill Donaldson's arrest and search, incriminating evidence was confiscated from him [Ibid].

- On May 9,

Secretary of War Edwin Stanton ordered the superintendent of the Old Capitol Prison, William P. Wood, to discharge Donaldson from prison custody without reason or a statement. [E&S p. 261]. Soon after Stanton released William Donaldson, he returned to his New York home where he died in 1873, while proprietor of the Lockwood Saloon.

When Booth realized his accomplices set him up, he wrote, "So ends all."

Days later, while trapped in a barn on Garrett's Farm, a pistol bullet severed his neckbone killing him slowly. Booth never lived to reveal the letter he tried so hard to make public. A letter Booth wrote before killing Lincoln. The same letter containing evidence he believed could clear his name.

Twice Booth referred to his letter in the old diary book Stanton captured and kept secret during the two years before Congress learned that Booth had left a confession. The FBI forensic team examined Booth's diary confession and filed a report that proved someone unbound the original pages during the two years Joseph Holt had it secretly locked away in his home. Also, that the replacement pages in Booth handwriting are edited, transposed copies of the originals. Four replacement sheets were cut into single halves and glued into the book, out of chronological order after a forger traced them.

For more on this topic, visit: Don Thomas YouTube videos about Booth's Diary, or purchase [The Reason Booth Had to Die](#), @ this website heading, Buy A Copy.