

# News from the Stow Historical Society

*A newsletter for all friends of Stow history. Please feel free to pass it along to others who might be interested!*

May 10, 2015

Below is an update on the varied and exciting events that the Stow Historical Society will be participating in this spring. At the end of the events listing is the promised pictorial history of the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln, the second momentous event whose 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary we celebrated in April.

**May 11 -15, 2015**

## ***Stow during the Civil War: Its Soldiers and the Home Front***

As part of Stow's commemoration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of end of the American Civil War, the Historical Society will be teaming up with Hale Middle School's 8th grade Social Studies teacher Kevin Keaveney, to bring to the students Stow's response to the Civil War – Stow's soldiers who went to war and home front activities. The 8th grade social studies classroom will be set up as a museum to feature Stow's participation during the Civil War years using primary sources from the town vault. The 8th grade students will act as docents for visits to their "museum" by the 6th and 7th grade classes. The culminating event of this week will be a concert for the entire school on Friday, May 15th, presented by *The Hardtacks* (<http://civilwarfolkmusic.com/>), and funded by the Stow Cultural Council. The concert will be tailored to middle school students and should be a rousing end to a marvelous learning experience for our Hale School students.

**May 16, 2015, 10 AM - 3 PM**

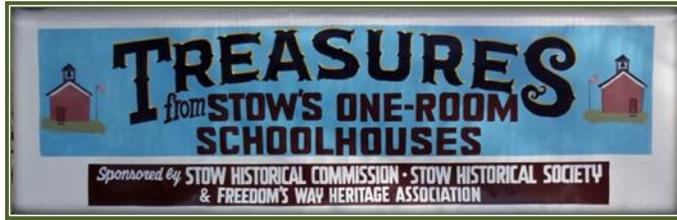
## ***Treasures from Stow's One-Room Schoolhouses***

**In the Upper lobby of Center School**

**All ages from preschoolers to those young-at-heart**



As part of Freedom's Way Heritage Area's celebration: "Hidden Treasures Weekend," the Stow Historical Commission and the Stow Historical Society will present ***Treasures from Stow's One-Room Schoolhouses***. All are invited to tour this extensive exhibit featuring Stow's School District #1 Scholar Roster from the town vault, which will be coupled with scholars' stories. These scholars'



homes have been located on the Stow 1830 Map. How many school districts did Stow have in 1829? What school stories and school artifacts have been passed down through the generations? In which district is your present home located? While sitting

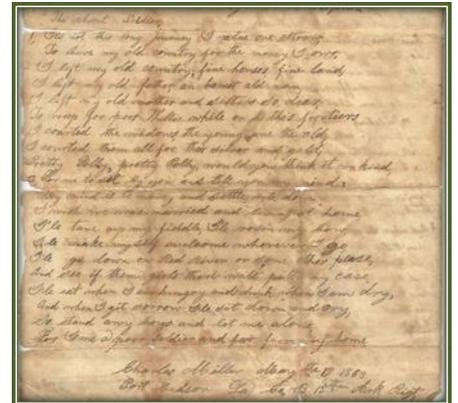
at a vintage desk, take your photo in front of the 4' x 5' photo of Stow West School, Stow's surviving 1825 school house - one of only a few such schoolhouses in our state. Come, connect and experience the mesmerizing display of documents, photos, artifacts and interactive exhibits from Stow's treasured educational past.

Freedom's Way "Hidden Treasures Weekend" is an exciting two-day regional celebration. On Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015, communities across the 994-square-mile Freedom's Way area, home to over 750,000 people, will offer free, public programs featuring a "hidden treasure" in their town. (<http://www.freedomsway.org/>)

Stow's Hidden Treasure's program is sponsored by the Stow Historical Commission, Stow Historical Society and Freedom's Way Heritage Area in conjunction with Stow's Springfest Committee.

**Sunday, May 17, 2015, 4 PM**

***Music of the Civil War - Sounds of Stow***  
***Spring Concert with the Hardtacks***  
**First Parish Church**  
***Stow During the Civil War***  
**First Parish Church Community Room**



Before and after the **Sounds of Stow** concert, please visit the Stow Historical Society exhibit: ***Stow During the Civil War*** in First Parish Church's Community Room. One featured document will be a facsimile of the Confederate poem, "Come All True-Hearted Southern Boys," which was found in 1863 on the battlefield in Port Hudson, Louisiana by Stow's Private Samuel A. Lawrence, 53rd MA Infantry Regiment, Company D. The wounded Private Lawrence brought back this double-sided, hand-written document and at some point this document was added to Stow's vault.

The Sounds of Stow commissioned the multifaceted local composer Dorothy VanAndel Frisch to write a musical score for this poem. Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, this special treasure from Stow's town vault will be premiered in song along with Civil War song selections to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conclusion of the American Civil War. The Civil War folk musicians, **The Hardtacks**, will be participating with the **Sounds of Stow**. If you enjoyed The Hardtacks at our concert last year or maybe regretfully missed it, here is another opportunity to see them perform.

Sounds of Stow <http://www.soundsofstow.org/>; The Hardtacks <http://civilwarfolkmusic.com/>



**June 4, 2015**

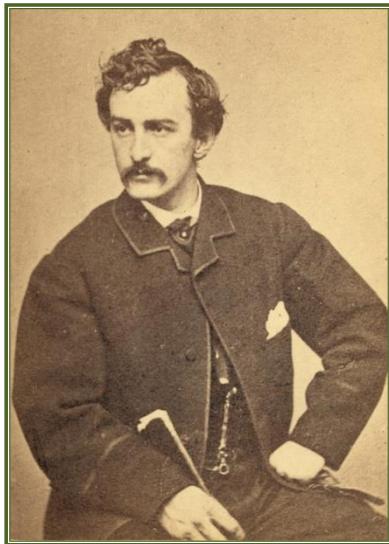
### ***Center School's 3rd Graders and Stow History At Stow Town Hall***

The five 3rd grade classes will be walking to Stow's Town Hall to learn more about Stow's history. The multifaceted program features projected photos with discussion, reenactment by students, and several smaller-group, hands-on activities for the students.

Extra hands from the community are very welcome. The SHS sets up numerous tables with "vintage" artifacts that are fascinating to 8-9 year-olds. Examples of artifacts which are unfamiliar to these students include a typewriter, a coffee grinder, *old* telephones, old cameras, and *old* (yet sturdy) toys.

## ***The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln***

President Abraham Lincoln, the 16<sup>th</sup> president of the United States, was assassinated on Friday, April 14, 1865 at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C., near the end of the American Civil War. Lincoln was the first U.S. President to be assassinated.



**John Wilkes Booth (ca. 1865, Library of Congress)**

The assassin, John Wilkes Booth, a Southerner and Confederate sympathizer, had originally planned to kidnap President Lincoln and hold him until General Ulysses S. Grant, commanding general of the Union forces, rescinded his order to stop the exchange of prisoners. Grant had concluded that the exchanged Confederate soldiers just returned to the ranks of the manpower starved Confederate army, prolonging the war.



**Ford's Theatre in 1865 (Library of Congress)**

March 17, 1865 was the date set for the kidnapping, but Lincoln's plans for the day changed. So the attempt by Booth and his fellow conspirators, Samuel Arnold, George Atzerodt, David Herold, Michael O'Laughlen, Lewis Powell (also known as Lewis Payne), and John Surratt did not come to pass.



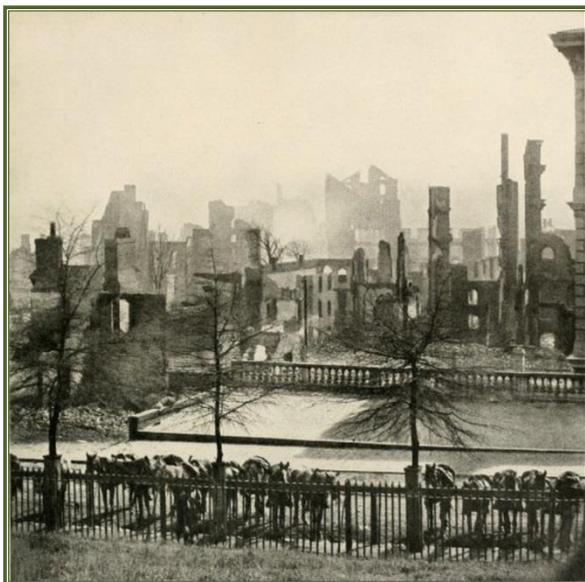
David Herold, conspirator (April, 1865, Library of Congress)



Lewis Powell (Payne), conspirator (April, 1865, Library of Congress)



George Atzerodt, conspirator (April, 1865, Library of Congress)

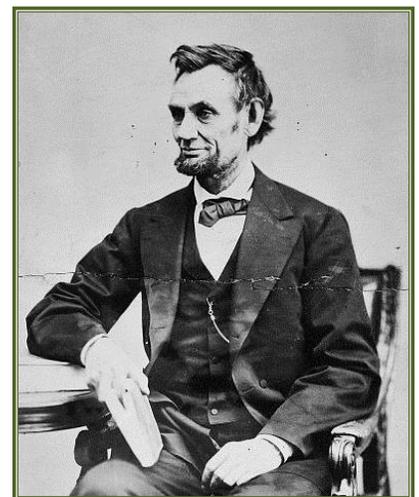


Smoke rising over the capital, Richmond, Virginia, on April 3, 1865 (Library of Congress)

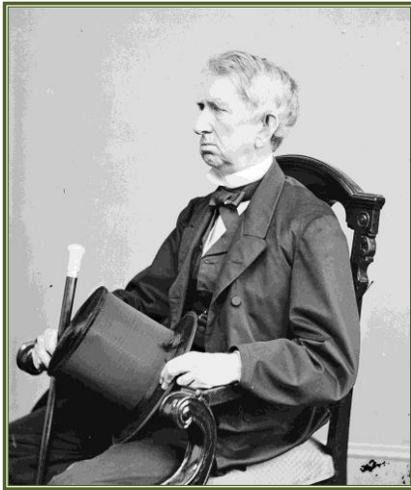
In the meantime, the war continued rapidly deteriorating for the Confederacy. On April 3, Richmond, Virginia, the capital of the Confederacy, was captured by Grant's Army of the Potomac, leaving it in ruins. General Robert E. Lee's Army of Virginia fled west, but to no avail. His retreat was cut off and on April 9, 1865 Lee surrendered to Grant.

Two days later Lincoln gave a speech endorsing enfranchising the recently freed slaves. Enraging Booth, he decided assassination was what was needed to stop the Union juggernaut and

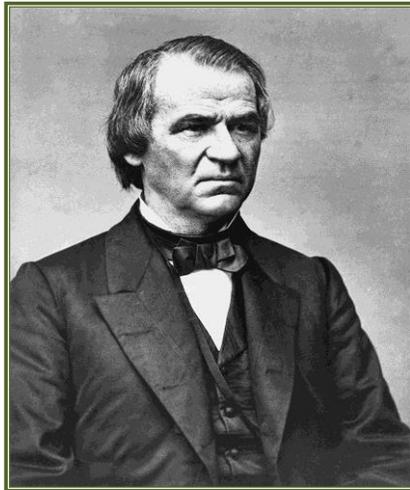
restore the Confederacy's hopes. Booth wrote in his diary, "Our cause being almost lost, something *decisive* and great must be done."



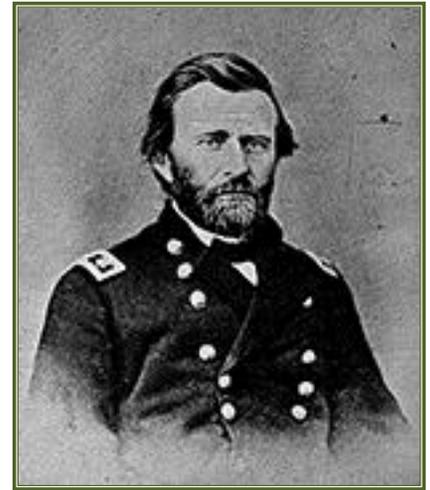
President Abraham Lincoln (Feb. 5, 1865, photo by Alexander Gardner, Library of Congress)



Secretary of State William H. Seward (between 1860 and 1865, Libr. of Cong.)



Vice President Andrew Johnson (Between 1855 and 1865, Library of Congr.)



Gen. Ulysses S. Grant (between 1860 and 1865, Library of Congress)

Booth's new plan was that he would shoot Lincoln and stab Gen. Grant, while they were attending a play at Ford's Theatre, a venue Booth was very familiar with, having performed there many times. Powell and Herold were to kill Secretary of State Seward and Atzerodt would kill Vice President Johnson. Luckily for Gen. Grant, he declined Lincoln's invitation to the play due to ill feelings between their wives.

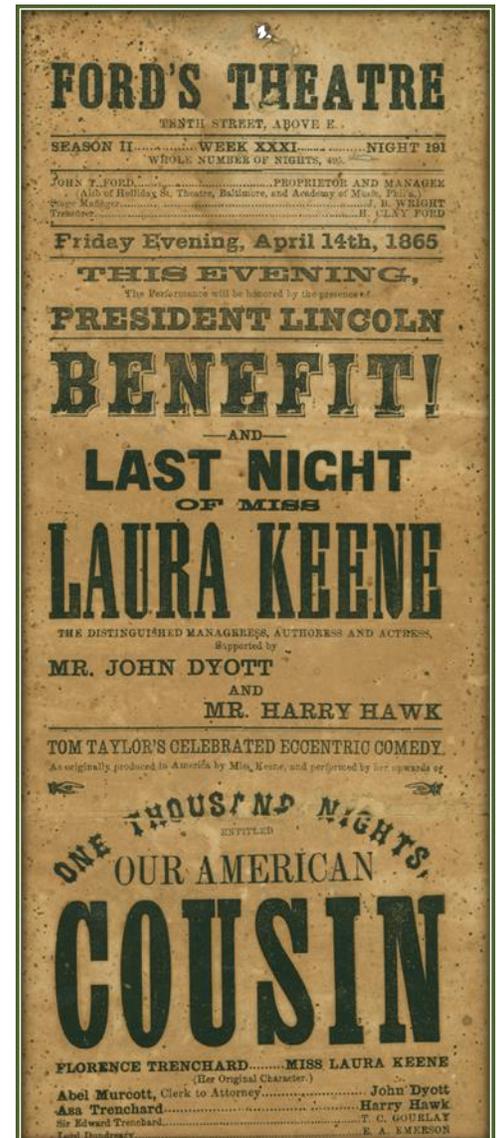


Presidential Box at Ford's Theatre, note the portrait of George Washington in front. (April, 1865, Library of Congress)

Lincoln and his company arrived late at Ford's Theatre that evening, but the play stopped and the band played "Hail to the Chief," while the large crowd of 1,700 gave him a rousing standing ovation. The play that evening was a very popular farce, *Our American Cousin*. It was written in 1858 by the English playwright Tom Taylor.

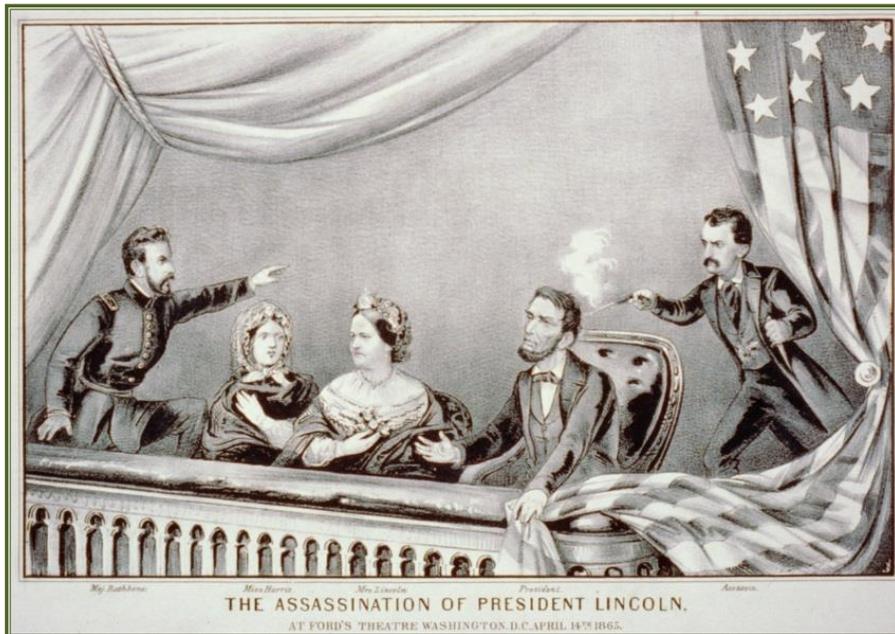
Booth gained admittance to the outer room of the box, possibly because of his fame.

Lincoln's body guard was not present, supposedly gone to a nearby tavern. Interestingly, Lincoln was a fan of Booth, having seen him in several plays. He would have been very happy to greet the accomplished actor. Booth was familiar with the play and he waited for just the right time to strike. Harry Hawk, playing the lead role of the "cousin," uttered



Playbill from April 14, 1865 (U. of Delaware Library)

this line to a departing character, "Don't know the manners of good society, eh? Well, I guess I know enough to turn you inside out, old gal; you sockdologizing old man-trap!" As the audience and Lincoln erupted in



Currier and Ives print of the Assassination (1865, Library of Congress)

uproarious laughter, Booth leapt into the inner room and shot Lincoln in the back of the head from point-blank range.

Lincoln's guest, Major Henry Rathbone, attempted to restrain Booth, suffering deep wounds on his arm and chest from Booth's knife. He succeeded in disrupting Booth's leap to the stage, causing him to suffer a broken leg. Booth supposedly shouted "*Sic semper tyrannis!*" the Virginia state Latin motto, "*Thus always to tyrants!*" as well as something like, "the south is avenged!" before he exited to the rear of the stage. Initially the

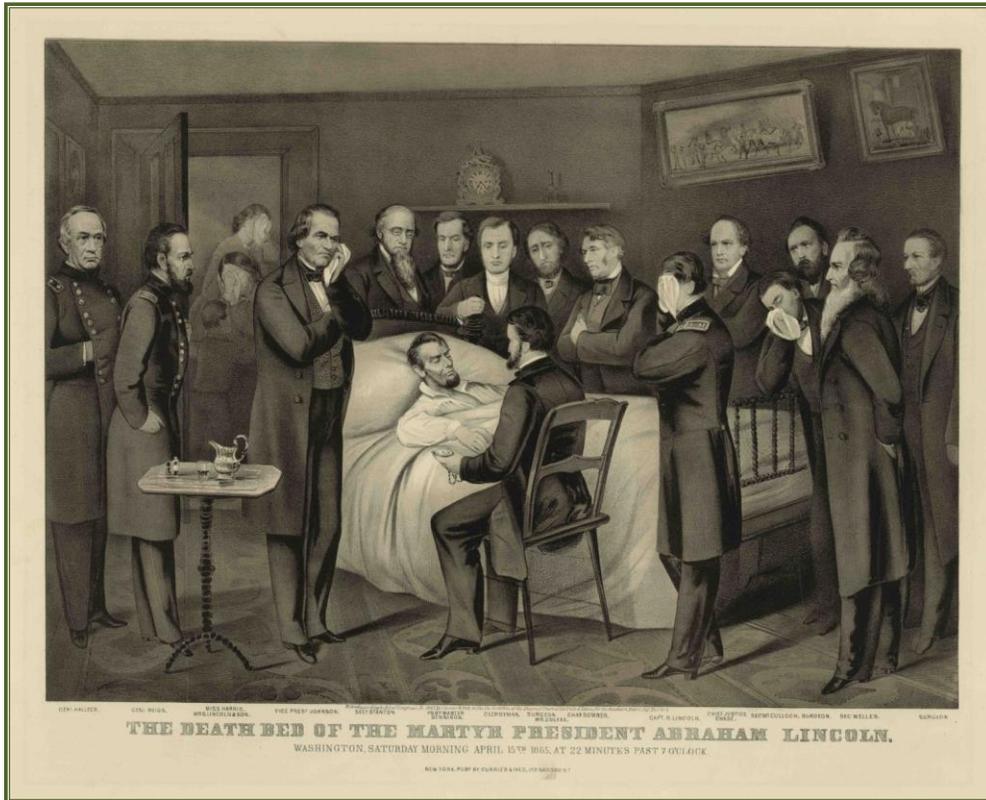
audience thought Booth was part of the play, but as shouts erupted from the presidential box, chaos broke out. Some audience members chased after Booth, but he made his escape on horseback.

Around the same time, Herold and Powell made their way to Seward's house. Powell gained admittance to the house on a ruse of carrying medicine for Seward, who was recently injured in a carriage accident. He attacked Seward and several others in the house, but did not succeed in killing Seward, most likely because of a neck brace that Seward wore for a broken jaw caused by his accident.

Atzerodt went to the Kirkwood House where Vice President Johnson was staying. Instead of carrying out his assassination mission, he got drunk at the bar and wandered through the streets of Washington, finally renting a room at another hotel.



Powell attacks William Seward (April 22, 1865 issue of the National Police Gazette)



Currier and Ives deathbed scene (1865, Library of Congress)

Lincoln was carried across the street to a rooming house, where he died early the next morning. The bullet had passed through almost his entire skull; there was no hope of treatment or recovery in 1865.

The conspirators and many, many others (most unconnected with the affair and later released) were rounded up in the massive manhunt following the assassination. Booth and Herold had escaped to Maryland and then across the Potomac to Virginia.

They were eventually surrounded while hiding in a barn on the farm of Richard Garrett. Herold surrendered, but Booth refused. The barn was fired and Booth tried to escape out of the rear but was killed by Sgt. Boston Corbett. Sgt. Corbett had adopted the name Boston when he was rescued from a period of drunken despondency, caused by the deaths of his wife and newborn baby, by a preacher in Boston, MA.

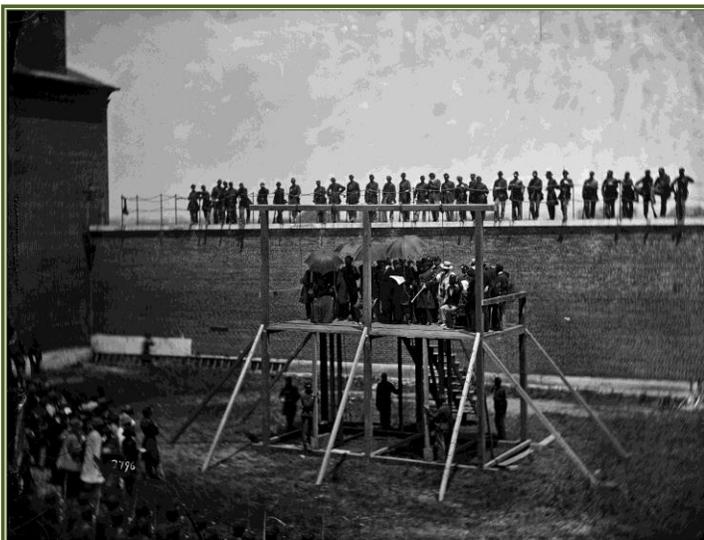
Eight conspirators were put on trial before a controversial military tribunal. Four were sentenced to death: Herold, Powell, Atzerodt and



Mary Surratt (Indiana Historical Society)

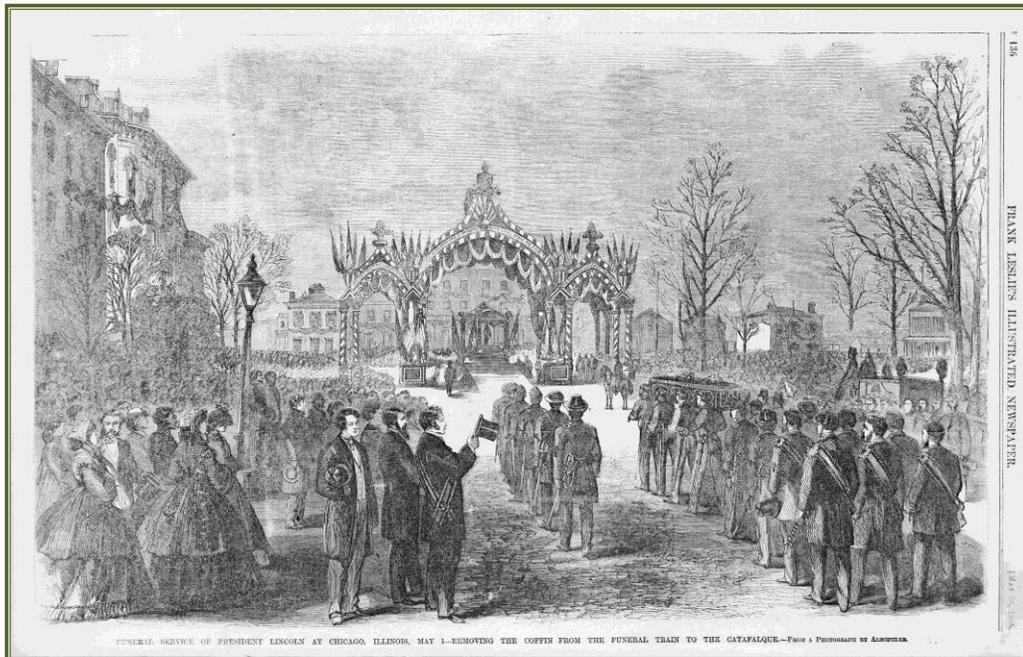
Mary Surratt, the mother of conspirator John Surratt, who had aided Booth

and his allies. The executions were carried out on July 7, 1865. Mary Surratt was the first woman executed by the United States government. Five of the nine judges evidently regretted their decision to condemn Mary to death since they asked President Johnson for clemency. But the execution



Reading the Death Warrant at July 7, 1865 execution of the conspirators. (Library of Congress)

was not halted. Later Johnson claimed he never saw the request for clemency.



Funeral in Chicago, Illinois (1865, Library of Congress)

The funeral for President Lincoln was elaborate and extensive. After ceremonies in Washington, D.C. he was transported by a nine car funeral train over an extensive route through Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, and Indiana to Springfield, Illinois. The train made many stops

for additional services and viewings and millions of Americans viewed the train as it passed. In Springfield he was interred at the rural Oak Ridge Cemetery at the insistence of Lincoln's wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, because Lincoln had expressed a desire to be buried there.

His assassination at the beginning of his second term and at the end of the Civil War had immense impact on the reuniting of the states as well as our country's future history. Lincoln intended to welcome the Confederate states back with open arms. How different would our history have been if he had not been assassinated?

The above article was based on various Wikipedia articles on the assassination and related topics.

Poster broadcasting the hunt for John Wilkes Booth (Artifact in the museum collection, National Park Service, Ford's Theatre National Historic Site, Washington, D.C.)

