

**THE ASSASSINATION OF
ABRAHAM LINCOLN: FLIGHT,
PURSUIT, CAPTURE, AND
PUNISHMENT OF THE
CONSPIRATORS**

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The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln: Flight, Pursuit, Capture, and Punishment of the
Conspirators by Osborn H. Oldroyd & T. M. Harris

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

THE
ASSASSINATION
OF
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

*Flight, Pursuit, Capture, and Punishment
of the Conspirators*

BY

OSBORN H. OLDROYD

AUTHOR OF "A SOLDIER'S STORY OF THE SIEGE OF
VICKSBURG," EDITOR AND COMPILER
"WORDS OF LINCOLN"

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

T. M. HARRIS

*Late Brigadier-General U. S. A., and Major-General by Brevet
A Member of the Commission*



WASHINGTON, D. C.
O. H. OLDROYD
MCMXVII

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PREFACE.

PRESIDENTS, kings, and emperors have not unfrequently become the innocent victims of private animosity, ambitious rivalry, treasonable conspiracy, and even ignorant, misguided patriotism. Dark, indeed, is the history of assassinations. But in its long and cruel records no crime has ever paralleled in atrocity the murder of Abraham Lincoln by John Wilkes Booth, whose name will forever stand out conspicuously on the roll of infamy as that of the arch-assassin.

Rome mourned the tragic end of Cæsar; France wept over the downfall, exile, and death of Napoleon; the Netherlands were inconsolable at the loss of the illustrious Prince of Orange; but no people of ancient or modern times ever felt a more profound sorrow over the death of their "foremost man," or ever paid to his memory a more sincere and universal tribute of veneration, love, and tears, than did the American nation on the occasion of the cruel, wanton assassination of their beloved President. Shocking to the civilized world as was his sudden taking off, the name of Abraham Lincoln has risen to shine as a star of the first magnitude in the galaxy of History's most influential characters, never to be eclipsed by the fame of a greater or a better man. William the Silent fell when his country could illy spare him, and his last words were, "Oh, my God, have mercy on this poor people!"

President Lincoln died in the hour of his country's

triumph, and could he have spoken after the assassin fired upon him, doubtless his kindly words would have been: "Forgive them, they know not what they do." It is but fair to state that men are not wanting who claim the assassination of President Lincoln was the result of a Roman Catholic conspiracy; or that the leaders of the Confederacy planned it. For one, I cannot believe that the Roman Catholic Church ever sanctioned that heinous crime. There were Roman Catholics among the conspirators, but it would be unjust to confound the innocent and the guilty; history cannot hold the Roman Catholic hierarchy responsible for this assassination. This is evident from the fact that the Pope hastened with unusual zeal to deliver up John H. Surratt, a fugitive in his dominions, the moment he heard that he was suspected of having participated in the crime. There was no extradition treaty with the Papal States at the time, but the crime with which Surratt was charged was so diabolical that the Pope and Cardinal Antonelli ordered the suspect's arrest without waiting for a formal demand from the Government of the United States. But whatever light the author of this book may be able or unable to throw upon this phase of the subject, he is confident that he is in possession of facts relating to the general subject that will be of interest to the reader.

During the last forty years I have made a very extensive collection of books, papers, medals, medallions, statuary, original photographs, autograph letters and documents, furniture from the old homestead in Springfield, Ill., and numerous other valuable articles relating to Lincoln. To many persons who have visited this collection I have made the promise that I would some day compile for future reference an authentic his-

tory of the assassination of President Lincoln, and the flight, pursuit, capture, and punishment of the conspirators. In turning back the leaves of history to that page on which is recorded that awful incident of April 14, 1865, I simply wish to give a faithful record of the plot, not only to destroy a noble human life, but the life of the nation and the life of liberty. Picture Mr. Lincoln, if you will, sitting in the private box of a theater, a *victor*. He is there in relaxation from the terrible strain that he had experienced in carrying the nation's burden for four long years. The very triumph that had come to him in the surrender of the Confederate army awakens no emotions in his heart save those of forgiveness and charity. The assassin's bullet pierced his brain at the moment when the South most needed his wise counsels. He would have been magnanimous to the foe. It would have pleased him better to pardon than to punish. He would have overcome his and his country's enemies and transformed them into friends.

The many accounts of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln that have been written make me hesitate to offer still another; but having lived for ten years under the roof that once sheltered him in Springfield, Ill., and eight years later in the house in which he died, and having met so many persons during the past thirty-six years who either assisted in the escape of the conspirators or took some official part in their capture, trial, and punishment, rare opportunities have been offered me for gathering much true and valuable historical data on this subject.

It is to be hoped that this work will answer the hundreds of questions that have been asked concerning the man and the accomplices of the man who destroyed the precious life of the good and great President, as many of the reports published at the time, and many of the stories

since told, have misled the people. As first impressions are the most lasting, the object of this book is to correct those first false impressions. The many questions that are asked by the younger generation who visit the "Oldroyd Lincoln Memorial Collection" in the house in which the President died, convince me that they do not possess the true history of that sad event, though eager to gain a knowledge of the facts.

To satisfy that desire, I present this book to the public, with the hope that the work, which has been performed with faithfulness, care, and "malice toward none," will meet its approval. A careful investigation of all the facts and circumstances connected with the assassination, as given by competent authority, tends to show that all the persons who were tried were actually engaged in the conspiracy to kidnap or murder the President. Had the military court reached out a little farther in its investigations, I believe it would have implicated many persons holding positions of power and authority in the service of the Confederate Government.

Whether Booth was the hired agent of a movement organized in Canada to murder the President, and approved at Richmond, I am unable to say, but we do know that the representatives of the Southern Confederacy, who abused the privilege of hospitality while in Canada, made that neutral point a basis of operation against the United States, by organizing plots to burn Northern cities. Many went to Canada to sneakily operate in the rear, too cowardly to stand in the front of the battle with the brave men they deserted.

There were many persons throughout the country who talked disloyalty, sympathized with the spirit of murder, expressed treasonable words, and said Mr. Lincoln ought to be killed, and they would like to shoot him or furnish