

LINCOLN LORE

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THE FATE OF THE LINCOLN CONSPIRATORS

Time and time again there comes to the Lincoln Foundation requests for information about the fate of the conspirators who were tried for some part in Lincoln's assassination, its preliminaries, and its aftermath. A brief statement is here available with reference to the occupation followed by each prisoner, the judgment of the court and the serving of the penalty.

THE ARCH CRIMINAL

John Wilkes Booth

John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of Abraham Lincoln, was captured after having been shot while resisting arrest on Richard Garrett's plantation, three miles from Port Royal, Virginia. He died about dawn on the morning of April 26, 1865, twelve days after he fired the fatal bullet at the President. His remains lie buried in Greenmount Cemetery at Baltimore, Maryland.

FOUR DEATH PENALTIES

George A. Atzerott

Atzerott was born in Prussia in 1835 and came to the United States in 1844. He was a man of about thirty years of age when the assassination took place. In private life he was in the coach-making business at Port Tobacco. His part in the crime was to kill Johnson, but he lost his nerve at the last moment and fled from the city. He was captured in the home of his cousin, a man named Richter, who lived in Montgomery County, Maryland.

The military commission which tried the suspects on June 30, 1865 pronounced the sentence which called for Atzerott and three others to "be hanged by the neck until dead." The sentence of Atzerott and his associates was carried out on July 7, 1865, on a scaffold in the penitentiary yard. All four were buried within the enclosure of the penitentiary wall.

David E. Herold

Herold, a pharmacist's clerk, accompanied Booth on his escape flight. He finally surrendered to Baker's detachment at the Garrett barn. Herold's sentence was similar to Atzerott's and he likewise was buried at the foot of the scaffold. Later his body was removed to the arsenal warehouse along with the other bodies and where the remains of Booth had been buried. Later friends of Herold claimed the body and by them was properly interred.

Lewis Payne

Lewis Payne, whose real name was Lewis Thornton Powell, was the conspirator who attempted to kill Seward. After his attack he hid for two days in a woods near Washington and upon returning to Mrs. Surratt's home he was arrested. He was only twenty years old and was one of the four to die for his part in the conspiracy. He was executed along with the other three on July 7, 1865.

Mrs. Mary E. Surratt

Mrs. Surratt was the only woman tried in connection with the assassination. She was forty-five years of age at the time of her conviction and prior to this time kept a Washington boarding house. It was here that the conspirators met to form their detailed plans. The military commission found her guilty along with the other conspirators and she received the death penalty which was consummated with the other conspirators on July 7. Her body

was at a later date removed from the penitentiary grounds to a private grave.

FOUR PRISON SENTENCES

Samuel Arnold

Arnold was a boyhood friend of Booth's and about the time of the assassination had returned from the Confederate Army. He was arrested on his brother's farm at Old Point Comfort, Virginia being traced there through the aid of a letter found in a trunk belonging to Booth. His sentence was "imprisonment at hard labor for life."

He was sent to Dry Tortugas prison where he served but four years of a life sentence, having been pardoned by President Johnson on March 2, 1869, and released on March 8.

Dr. Samuel A. Mudd

Dr. Mudd, of Charles County, Maryland, was a physician who gave surgical aid to Booth at the time of the assassin's escape. Mudd was a man of about thirty-five years of age at the time of the tragedy. He was sentenced to life imprisonment at Dry Tortugas where later he made an attempt to escape. Because of his valuable services during an epidemic at the prison he obtained a pardon on February 13th, 1869. He served but four years of a life sentence and lived for thirteen years after his release.

Michael O'Laughlin

O'Laughlin, another boyhood friend of Booth's, was about twenty-eight years of age, at the time of his arrest. He was found at the home of a friend in Baltimore. He also received the sentence of life imprisonment and was the only one of the three convicted to complete the sentence. He died of yellow fever on September 23, 1867 at Fort Jefferson.

Edman Spangler

Spangler was a stage carpenter at Ford's theatre and was a man about forty years old, heavily built and slovenly in appearance. He received a sentence of six years at hard labor, but was pardoned along with two other conspirators on March 2, 1869. However, he served four years of a six year sentence.

THE FUGITIVE

John Surratt

John, the son of Mrs. Mary Surratt, was a Confederate "runner," although on the Federal pay roll in connection with the Surrattville Post Office. He was arrested in Veroli, Italy, but escaped and was later apprehended in Alexandria, Egypt. He was returned to the United States for his trial which lasted from June 10 to August 11, 1867. The jury stood four for conviction and eight for acquittal. Later when he was arraigned for a second trial, he was discharged by the court.

SUSPECTS

Several other suspects were detained for short periods. One was James Pumphrey who was a well-to-do proprietor of a livery stable from whom Booth hired a horse for his escape. Another of the suspects was a certain Thomas A. Jones who supposedly aided Booth across a river when he was escaping. The Ford brothers, owners of the Theatre where the assassination took place, were also detained.