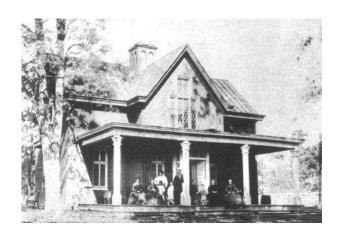
# AWESOME stories

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# JOHN WILKES BOOTH and HIS PLANS



In this image we see "Tudor Hall," the home of the Booth family, as it appeared in 1865. John Wilkes Booth himself lived in this place, with his mother and siblings, between late 1852 and 1856. Located near Bel Air, Maryland, the house is still standing. Image online via Wikimedia Commons.

By March of 1865, Booth's plans to kidnap President Lincoln had matured. He had even picked a date - March 16 - when the President was scheduled to be in his carriage, outside the city.

The conspirators allegedly met at Gautier's Restaurant on March 15th. John Surratt, the best horseman of the group, would chase-down Lincoln's carriage and take control of it. The others would assume their supporting positions along the routes of travel.

Nothing came of the detailed plan, however, because the President changed his mind. At the last minute, he decided to stay in Washington.

Kidnapping the President no longer seemed viable, so Booth's friends disbanded. Surratt continued as a Confederate courier, <u>Sam Arnold</u> and <u>Michael O'Laughlen</u> found work in Baltimore and <u>Lewis Powell</u> (also known as Lewis Payne/Paine) went to New York. George Atzerodt and David Herold remained in Washington.

Two days after the kidnapping plot fell apart, <u>Booth played the lead role</u> - Duke Pescara - in *The Apostate*. Booth determined the performance - at Ford's Theatre - would be his last, since he had another idea in mind. This time it involved killing, not kidnapping, Lincoln.

In Richmond, just before the fall of that city, John Surratt agreed to carry an important Confederate dispatch to Montreal. By the time he left Washington for Canada - on April 4th - Richmond was in Union hands.

<u>Booth</u>, meanwhile, spent his time thinking about how to end Lincoln's life. On the 14th of April, during a visit to Ford's Theatre - where he went to get his mail - he learned some unexpected news. That night, the President and his wife would attend a performance of *Our American Cousin*.

An assassination plot began to take shape in Booth's mind. Wandering through the theatre he knew so well, the actor could predict exactly where the President would sit. He could recite every line of the play Lincoln would see. He knew that in the second scene of the third act, the audience would erupt in laughter. The sound of laughter could obscure the sound of a shooting gun.

Because he wanted to strike down Lincoln to help the South, Booth thought he needed to do more than kill the President. To cripple the federal government, thereby allowing the Confederacy to regroup (despite General Lee's recent surrender), he would need two additional shooters.

One would kill the Vice President (Andrew Johnson) and the other would assassinate the Secretary of State (<u>William Seward</u>) at <u>his home</u>. Booth thought a coordinated attack would trigger instability and chaos at the highest levels of government.

Drilling a small hole into the <u>door of the State Box</u>, Booth created a vantage point for himself. <u>In position</u>, when the audience laughed at the punch line, he would pick the right moment to fire his gun.

At 8 pm, Booth met with Lewis Powell (Payne), George Atzerodt and David Herold. He assigned Powell the job of <u>attacking Seward</u> while Atzerodt would kill the Vice President. David Herold would coordinate the timing of the attacks so everyone would believe they were the product of a plot.

Lincoln - who'd had premonitions about his death - arrived late, while the performance was underway. At about 10:15, the play was reaching its climax. Two young friends were with the unguarded President (who was sitting

in a <u>rocking chair</u>) and First Lady (who was holding the President's hand) when Booth fired at Lincoln's head. <u>The ball</u> from <u>the deringer</u> lodged in the President's brain. It was a single, fatal shot.

Atzerodt, meanwhile, had decided not to follow-through with shooting Andrew Johnson, and Powell's attack on William Seward was <u>vicious but not fatal</u>. Neither <u>Booth</u> nor David Herold knew the status of those events as they fled the city.

Along their <u>escape route</u>, Booth and Herold stopped in Surrattsville. John Lloyd, the Surratt tenant running the tavern, gave them a pair of field glasses, whiskey and a carbine. (Weapons, among other things, had previously been hidden at the Surratt tavern while, it was alleged, someone else gave Lloyd binoculars for safekeeping on the day Lincoln was shot.)

How did John Lloyd know that anyone would stop by the tavern to pick-up those items on the night of April 14th? The answer to that question would play a key role in an upcoming trial.

# See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/JOHN-WILKES-BOOTH-and-HIS-PLANS-Conspirator-Mar v-Surratt

# See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/JOHN-WILKES-BOOTH-and-HIS-PLANS-Conspirator-Mary -Surratt

# Media Stream





# <u>Fall of Richmond, the Confederate Capital</u> Illustration from Harper's Weekly, April 22, 1865, of the fall of Richmond. Online, courtesy Library of Congress. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Fall-of-Richmond-the-Confederate-Capital

#### <u>Richmond - Capital of the Confederacy</u> Illustration from the April 22, 1865 issue of Harper's Weekly. Online, courtesy Library of Congress. View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Richmond-Capital-of-the-Confederacy</u>



John Wilkes Booth and a Gypsy's Prediction Image online, courtesy Library of Congress. Quoted passage, online courtesy <u>Roger Norton's Lincoln web site</u>. View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/John-Wilkes-Booth-and-a-Gypsy-s-Prediction1</u>



# Samuel Arnold - Conspiracy Trial Defendant

Photo of Samuel Arnold, online courtesy Library of Congress - CALL NUMBER: LC-B817-7778[P&P].

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Samuel-Arnold-Conspiracy-Trial-Defendant

# Michael O'Laughlen - Conspiracy Trial Defendant

Photo by Alexander Gardner, online courtesy Library of Congress. View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Michael-O-Laughlen-Conspiracy-Trial-Defendant</u>



<u>William Seward - Secretary of State</u> Photo of William Seward by Matthew Brady, online courtesy U.S. National Archives. View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/William-Seward-Secretary-of-State</u>





<u>Seward Home - Scene of Attempted Murder</u> Photo of Seward's home, the Old Club House, online courtesy the U.S. Naval Historical Center. View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Seward-Home-Scene-of-Attempted-Murder</u>

Powell Attacks Seward - April 14, 1865 This illustration, depicting the attempted assassination of William Seward by Lewis Powell (Payne), is from the April 22, 1865 issue of the *National Police Gazette*. View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Powell-Attacks-Seward-April-14-1865</u>



WASHINGTON, D.C. (April 14, 1865) – Secretary of State William Seward as he looked before he was attacked (right) by Lewis Thornton Powell. Seward survived but was disfu ured by the knife attack (left).











## William Seward - Impact of Powell's Attack

Photos of Seward from the National Archives (on the left) and the University of Rochester Library (online, courtesy Camden.com). View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/William-Seward-Impact-of-Powell-s-Attack1

# Abe Lincoln with His Son Tad

Engraving of Abraham and Tad Lincoln, based on a photo by Anthony Berger, from the May 6, 1865 issue of *Harper's Weekly*. Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

For more information about the original photo, see the information provided by the Library of Congress.

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Abe-Lincoln-with-His-Son-Tad

#### Rocking Chair Lincoln Used at Time of Assassination

Image of the rocking chair, in which President Lincoln was sitting at the time he was shot by John Wilkes Booth, online courtesy Library of Congress. View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Rocking-Chair-Lincoln-Used-at-Time-of-Assassination

## Derringer Used to Kill President Lincoln

FBI photo of the pocket pistol used to kill President Lincoln. Image online, courtesy FBI. View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Derringer-Used-to-Kill-President-Lincoln

## Lincoln Assassination - Booth Jumps to the Stage

Image from Stern Broadside v. 5, no. 1, from the Rare Books and Special Collections Division at the Library of Congress. Digitized image online, courtesy the American Memory Collection. View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lincoln-Assassination-Booth-Jumps-to-the-Stage

<u>Audience View of Stage - Night Lincoln was Shot</u> Image depicting a diorama of Ford's Theatre - as it appeared on the evening of April 14, 1865 online courtesy U.S. National Park Service. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Audience-View-of-Stage-Night-Lincoln-was-Shot



Lincoln Assassination - Door to the State Box Drawing of the State Box door, through which Booth entered just before shooting President Lincoln, online courtesy the U.S. National Park Service. View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lincoln-Assassination-Door-to-the-State-Box



John Wilkes Booth - Escape Route Image of Booth's escape route, online courtesy National Park Service. View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/John-Wilkes-Booth-Escape-Route</u>



# JOHN WILKES BOOTH and HIS PLANS

View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/</u>