

History 217

Re: The Lincoln Assassination

Wm. Hanchett, The Lincoln Murder Conspiracies
Wm. Tidwell, et. all., Come Retribution

I. Overview of theories of Lincoln's assassination:

A. A Selective listing:

1. the one we are most familiar with and that graces our high school and college texts books, is the "simple conspiracy" theory about Booth and his small-time hangers-on who conspired to kill the president. Generally this is regarded as the act of a madman who was able to attract a small circle of disreputable characters who were willing to do Booth's bidding.

2. There have been some who involved Andrew Johnson somehow in the murder.

3. There is a substantial assassination literature that sees the conspiracy as the machinations of the Catholic Church; a Catholic conspiracy.

4. Other sources over the years have points variously to the head of the Secret Service (L. Baker) and Lincoln's Secretary of War, Edward Stanton with possible complicity w/ Secretary of State Seward.

Mrs. Lincoln had it done for the insurance - Lincoln shot himself because bored by the play.

B. The Case for a Grand Confederate Conspiracy

It has to be said that the general acceptance by the public, especially the triumphant Northern populace, that Booth and his cohorts were the responsible parties was essential at the time. If Lincoln's murder had interpreted as an act of war committed or in some way planned by a desperate Confederate Government or elements of the CSA, this would have ignited such a determination for revenge in the North that the spirit of Appomatox would have been impossible. The likely emotional Northern response would have been such that all prospects for early reunion would have been dashed in a flood of bitterest cries for vengeance. The very reason for fighting the war--reunion--could have been invalidated.

Note: Show any photos to Ann from Raleigh N.C.