

The Lincoln Assassination:
Facts, Fiction and Frankly Craziness
Class 4: The Lincoln Assassination in
Culture

Jim Dunphy
dunphyjj@aol.com

This class

1. Books – fiction and non fiction
2. Movies/TV shows
3. Comic books (?)

Books

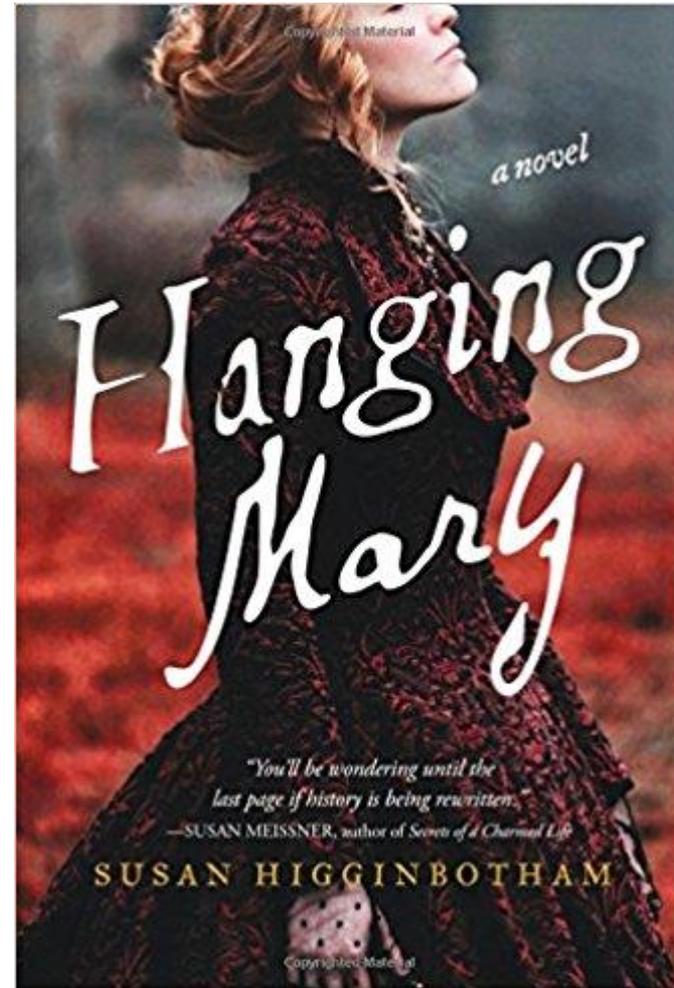
Make sure you picked
up the bibliography
available as a handout

Books – fiction



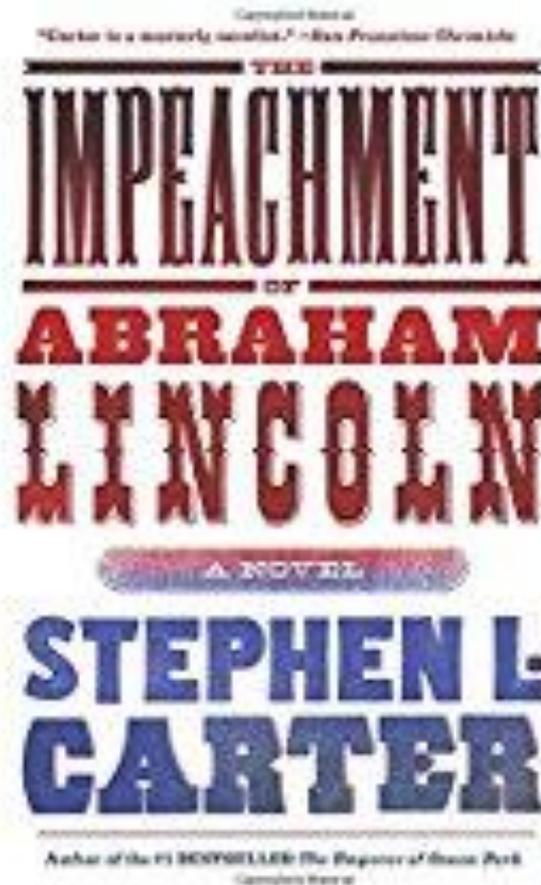
Hanging Mary

- Fictional account of Mary Surratt, told through the eyes of a fictional boarder
- Come away with the idea that the Surratt boarding house was the HQ of the plot, but Mary's guilt is a little more problematic
- If there is a villain in the piece, it is her son John for abandoning her.



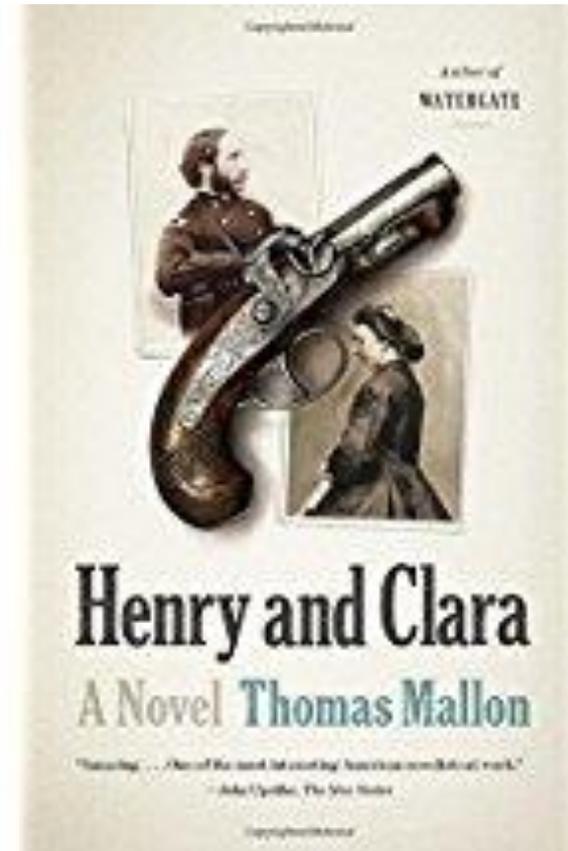
The Impeachment of Abraham Lincoln

- “What if” book in which Lincoln survives the assassination attempt
- His “let ‘em up easy” philosophy comes into conflict with the Radical Republicans (in a way like Andrew Johnson’s)
- As a result, he ends up being impeached, and the result is....
- (I guess you’ll have to read the book)



Henry and Clara

- Story of MAJ Rathbone and Clara Harris through their childhood and married life, with emphasis on the events of April 14
- Mallon makes the case that Rathbone was suffering from a 19th century version of PTSD, both from the war and the assassination
- To a large extent, their lives were “stranger than fiction” so the novel reads like a novel, even when true

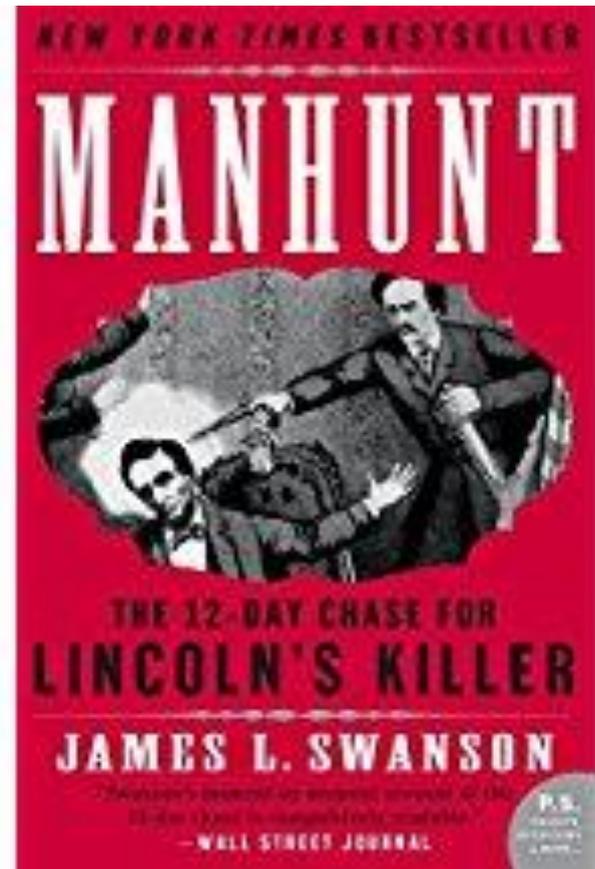


Books – non fiction



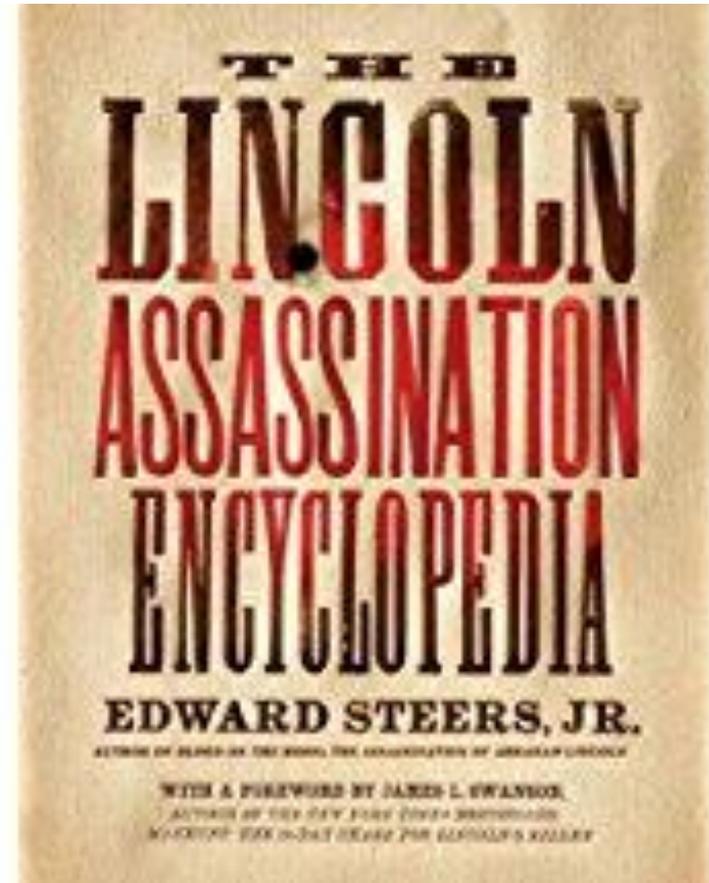
Manhunt

- Probably the best single volume on the assassination
- While mainly concerned with the escape and pursuit, does go into the assassination itself.
- Very easy read – as compared to other books which tend to be academic



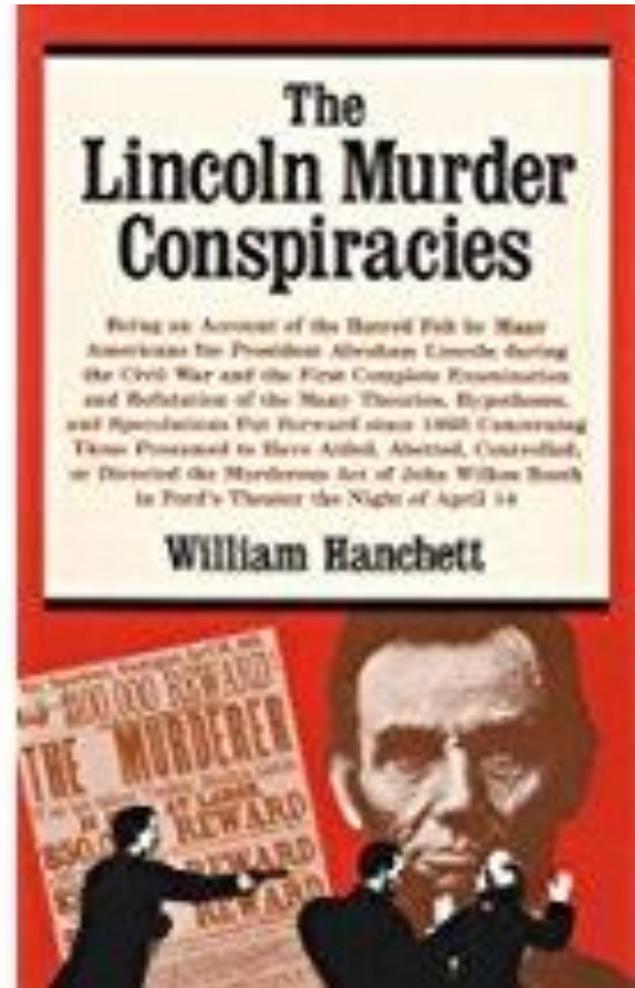
The Lincoln Assassination Encyclopedia

- The one book to have next to you while you are reading any of the other assassination books
- Copiously illustrated, all of the major (and a lot of the minor) characters in the story are here
- Only drawback – very limited before and after information about the people discussed
- Of course, if there were, the book might have reach a thousand pages.



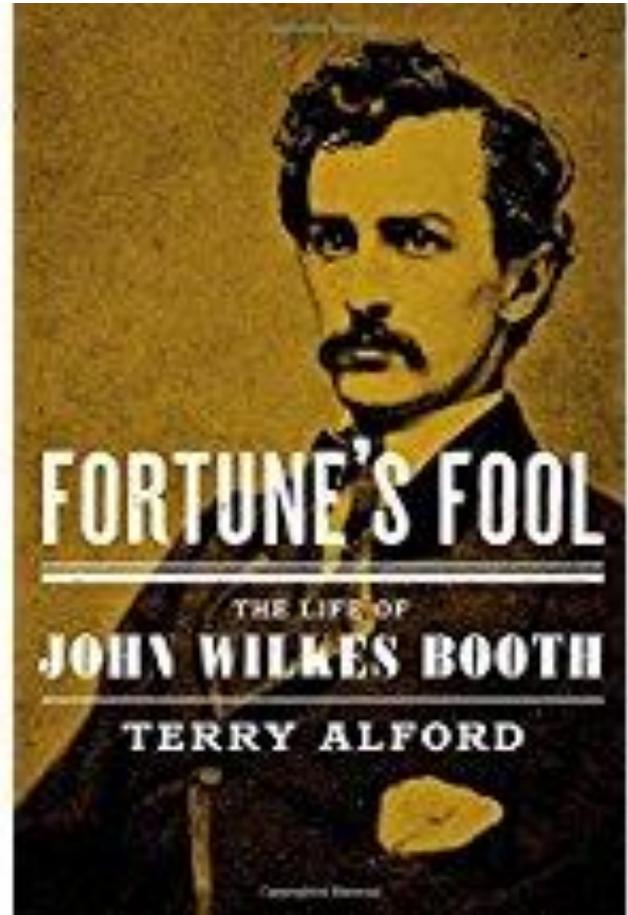
Lincoln Murder Conspiracies

- Effectively debunks all of the nonsense we discussed in Class 3, particularly the Stanton conspiracy
- Well organized and an easy read
- Although over 30 years old, remains the final word on the subject



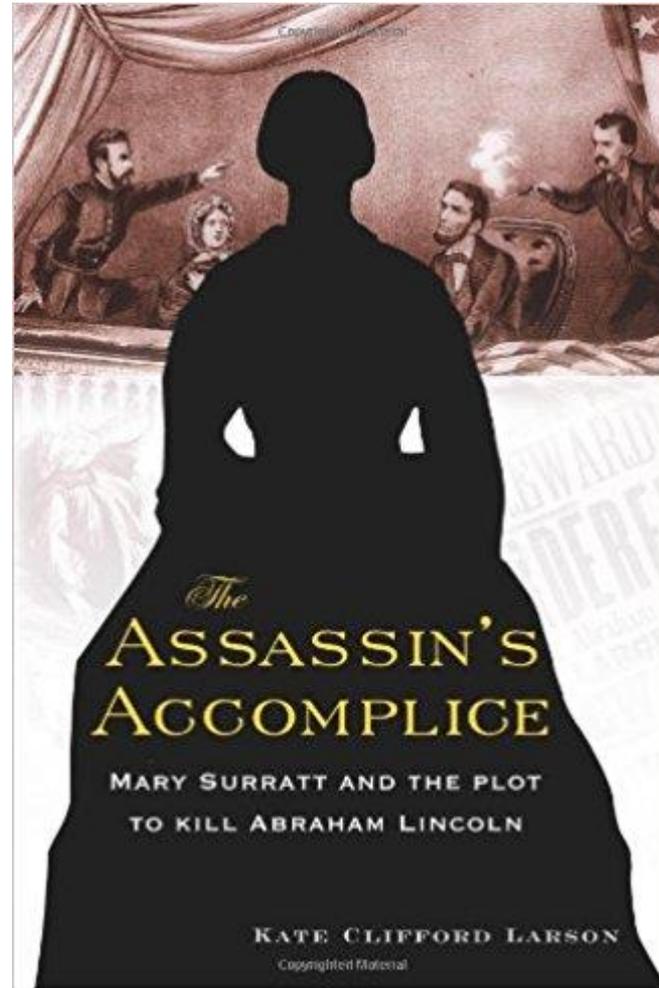
Fortune's Fool

- Alford is a Professor of History at NVCC
- His biography is probably the last word on a person who only lived to be 26
- In depth review of his acting career, which often gets short shrift in studies of the assassination
- Winner and finalist for a number of book awards



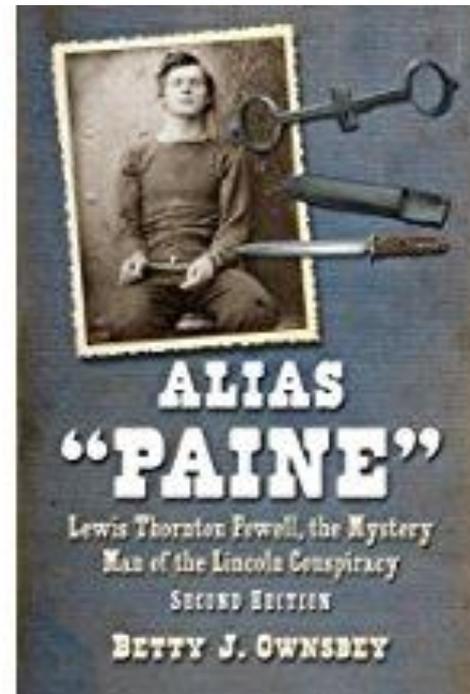
The Assassin's Accomplice

- Used as the basis for the movie *The Conspirator* (more about that later)
- Looks at the assassination through the lens of Mary Surratt
- Conclusion is that Mary Surratt was actively involved in the plot
- But it is less definitive that she deserved execution



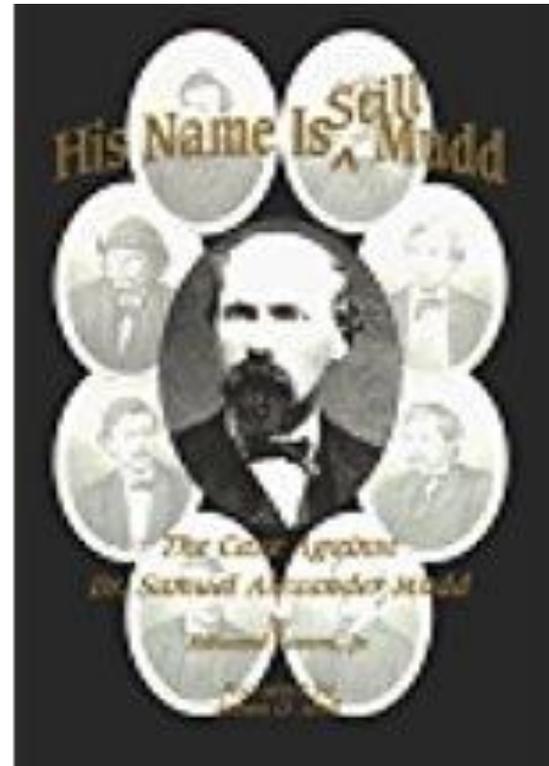
Alias Paine

- Ownsbey has created, in the absence of any other biography, what will probably be the last word on Lewis Powell
- While she does have a good deal of documentation, she does have to resort to conjecture on someone who, but for his part in the assassination, would have been long forgotten about.



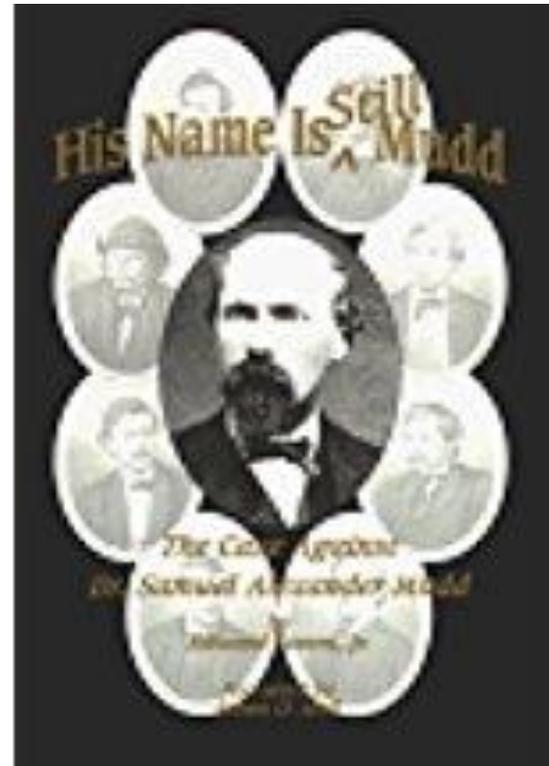
His Name is Still Mudd

Edward Steers, one
of the foremost
Lincoln
assassination
writers (see below)
clearly refutes the
“innocent doctor”
theory



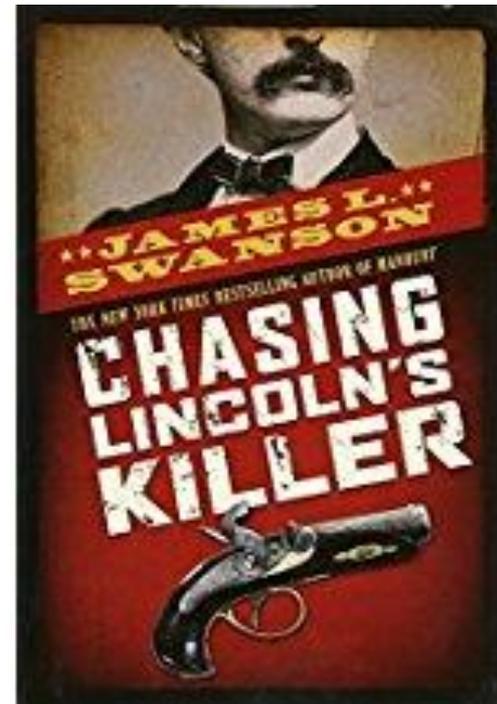
His Name is Still Mudd

- Steers concludes that Mudd
 - Knew Booth and was involved in the kidnap plot
 - Could not have failed to recognize him on the night of April 14-15
 - While might not have known of the assassination at that time, clearly did before Booth left and then lied to authorities to give Booth a head start
- Thus, Steers finds that Mudd's conviction was appropriate.



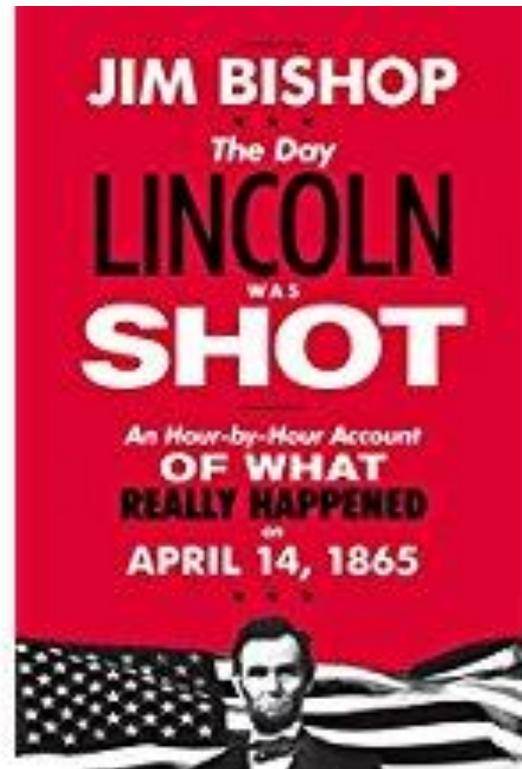
Chasing Lincoln's Killer

- Young adult version of *Manhunt*
- Good first book on the Lincoln Assassination for tweens



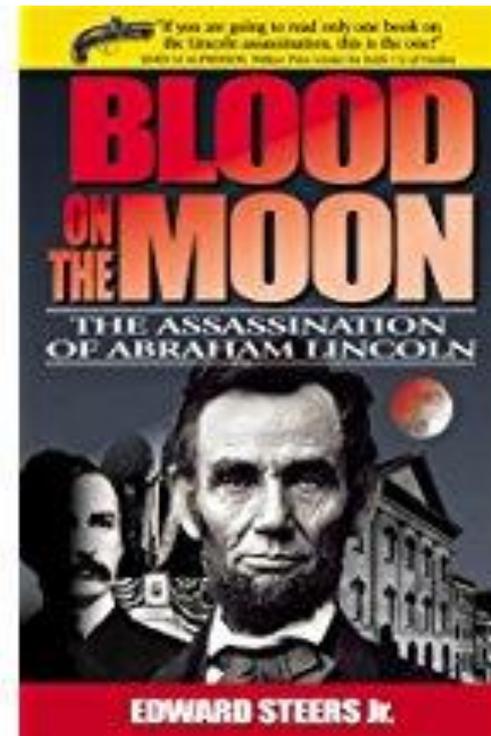
The Day Lincoln Was Shot

- By far the oldest book on the list – originally published in 1955
- Bishop was a newspaper reporter, and literally goes hour by hour on April 14, 1865
- More what and when than how and why.



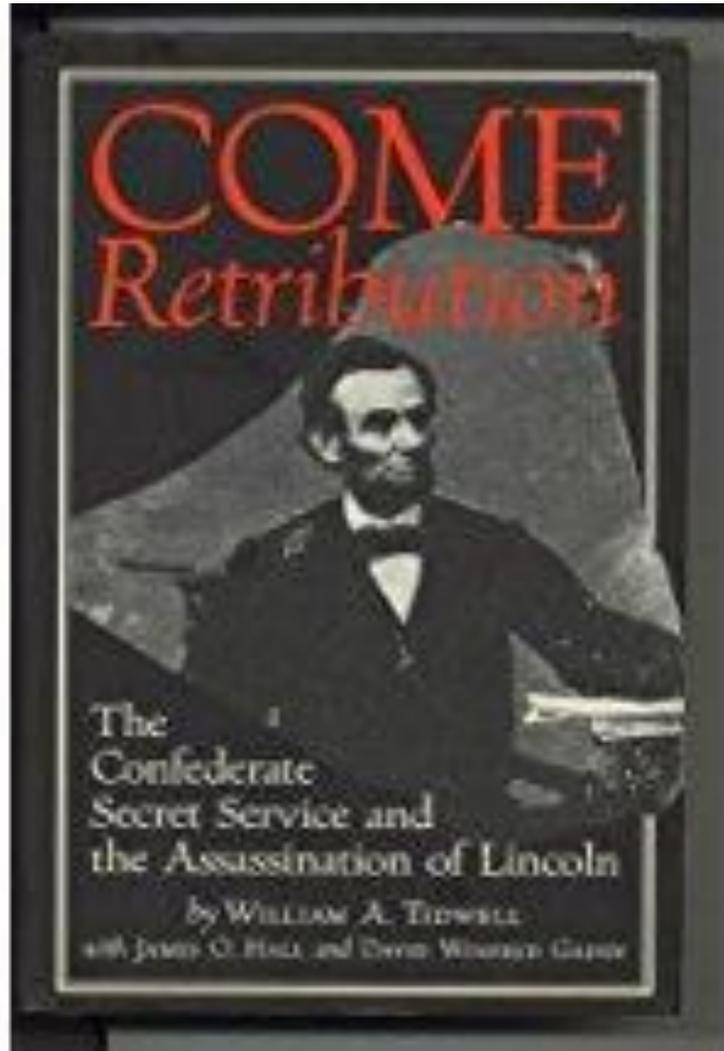
Blood on the Moon

- Steers, along with Swanson and Kauffman, are probably the leading contemporary writers on the Lincoln assassination
- Written before *Manhunt* and *American Brutus*, debunks some of the more out there conspiracy theories.
- Good on Mudd and the Confederate activity in MD



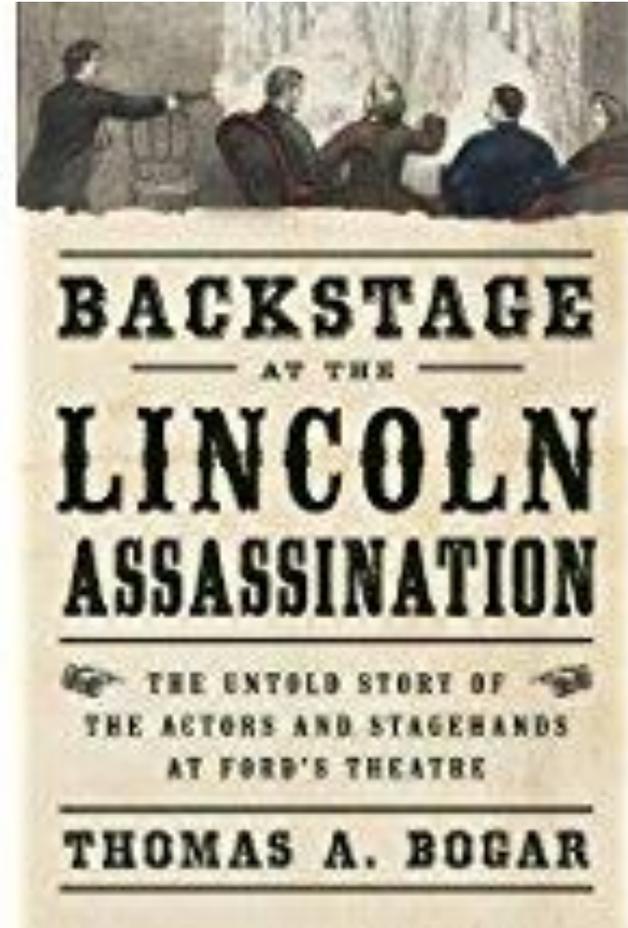
Come Retribution

- This volume revives the Confederate grand conspiracy
- It does prove that Booth was working with the Confederate Secret Service in Canada on the kidnap plot
- While there were interactions after the kidnap plot collapsed, the connection between the Confederates and the assassination still falls in the not proven category.



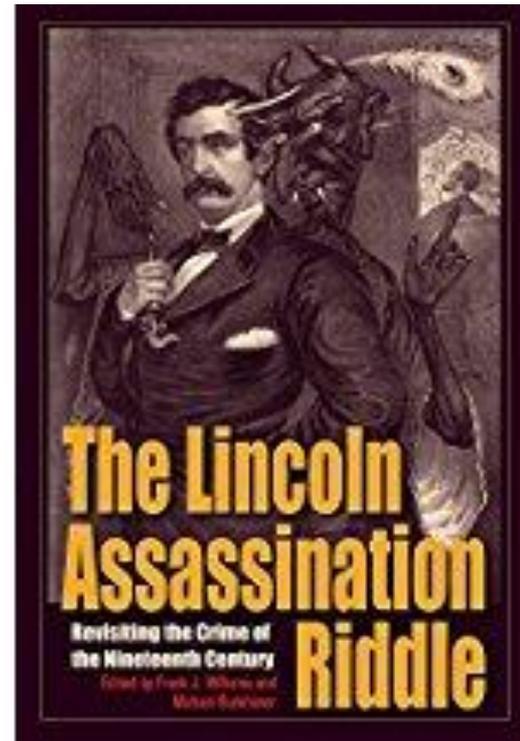
Backstage at the Lincoln Assassination

- An excellent introduction to the general world of theater in the mid 19th century and the events at Ford's
- All of the principal characters – Keene, Hawk, Spangler are here, along with the Ford brothers and countless others
- One finishes the book with an excellent understanding of how theater worked, and why Booth plotted the assassination for a theater.



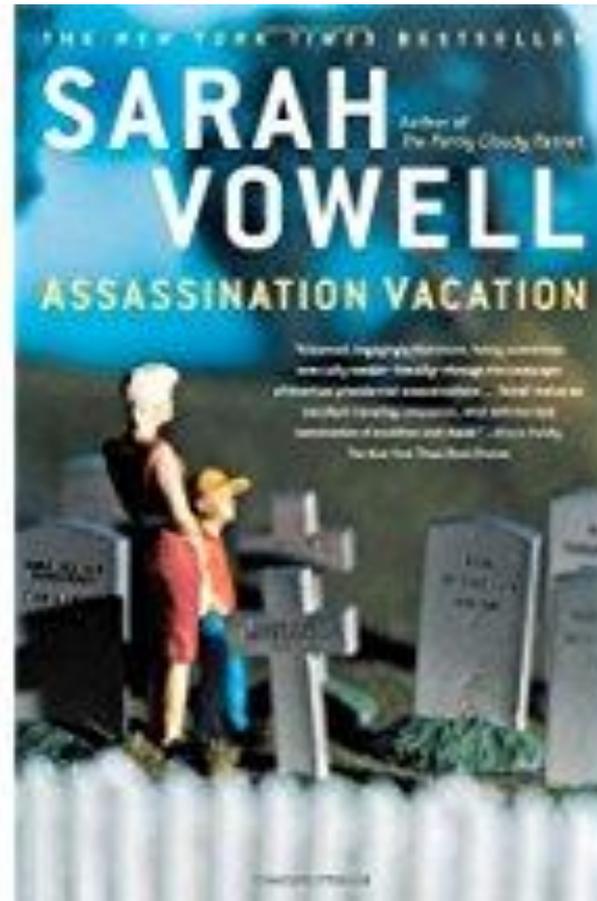
The Lincoln Assassination Riddle

- A series of essays about different aspects of the assassination, manhunt and trial
- Presupposes a basic knowledge of the assassination
- Most of the materials on the limitations of the defendants to testify in their trial came from here.



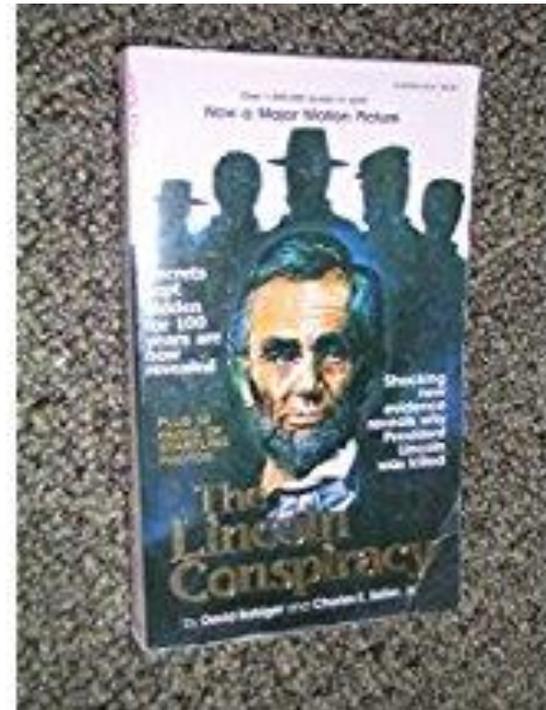
Assassination Vacation

- Last of the legitimate books – put here for a reason
- Plot is the author (along with her sister and nephew) visit sites from, among others, the Lincoln, Garfield, McKinley and Kennedy assassinations
- If you were going to bring one Lincoln assassination book to the beach, this would be the one
- Vowell has written a number of other books about American History which are all recommended.



The Lincoln Conspiracy

- The last book in this presentation and in actual historical usefulness
- As noted in Class 3, tried to revive the Stanton theory, only to put a final stake in its heart
- Useful reading only to show what bad history looks like.

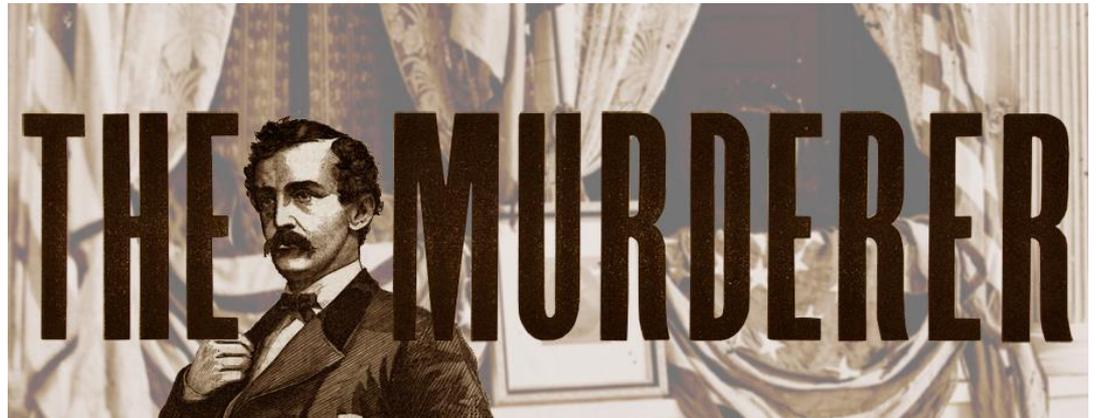


For the digitally inclined

- In this day and age, books are not the only source of information
- There are a gazillion websites out there with information about the Lincoln Assassination
- Let's look at the best of the best

Boothie Barn

- Run by a local husband/wife team
- Dave Taylor is a local elementary school teacher and tour guide
- His wife Kate is a docent at the Mudd House (where they had their reception!)
- Can be reached at boothiebarn.com



Roger J Norton

- There are two site Norton runs – the first is a more traditional historical research one
- There is a general Lincoln and one specifically on the assassination
- Reached at <http://rogerjnorton.com/Lincoln.html>

Roger J Norton

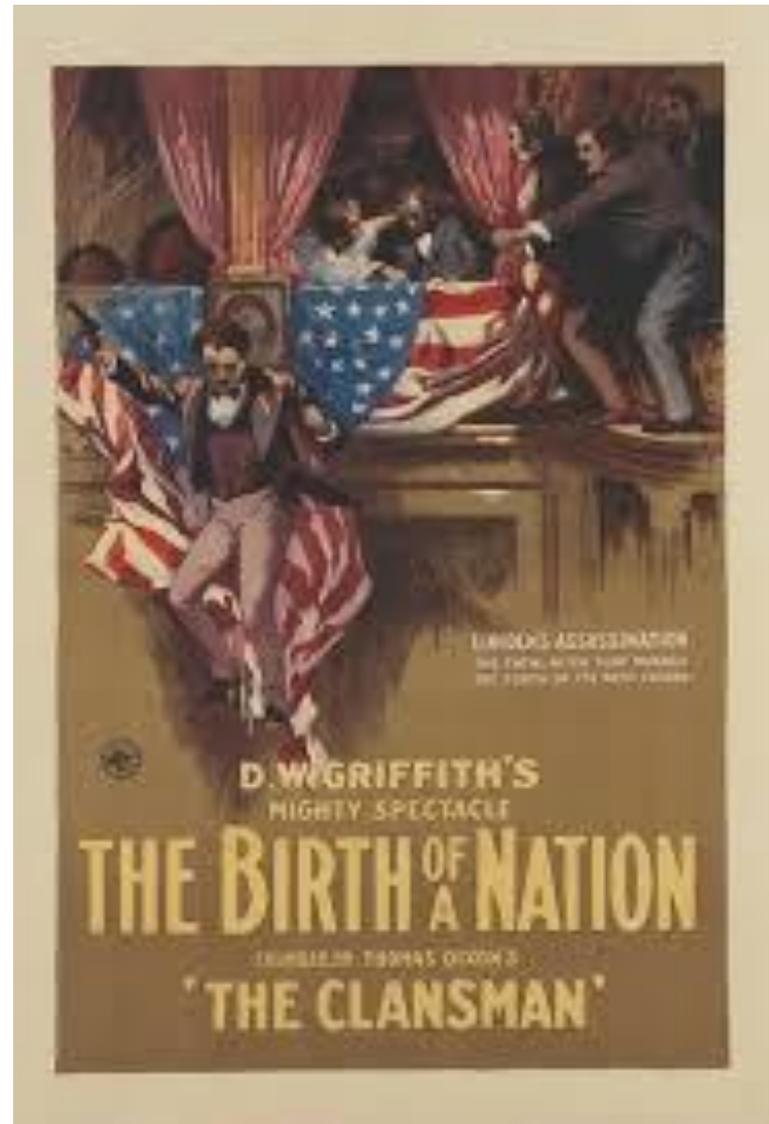
- The second is a discussion forum
- Again, there are general Lincoln forums and one specifically on the assassination
- Reached at <http://rogerjnorton.com/LincolnDiscussionSymposium/forum-5.html>

Movies/TV



Birth of a Nation (1915)

- One of the earliest depiction of the assassination in film
- Check out how Booth is portrayed
- Typical of silent movies, the scenery chewing is astonishing
- Of course, Birth is better known for its virulent racism than for its portrayal of the assassination



Birth of a Nation – Assassination

[https://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=JOe_s-zoMkE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOe_s-zoMkE)

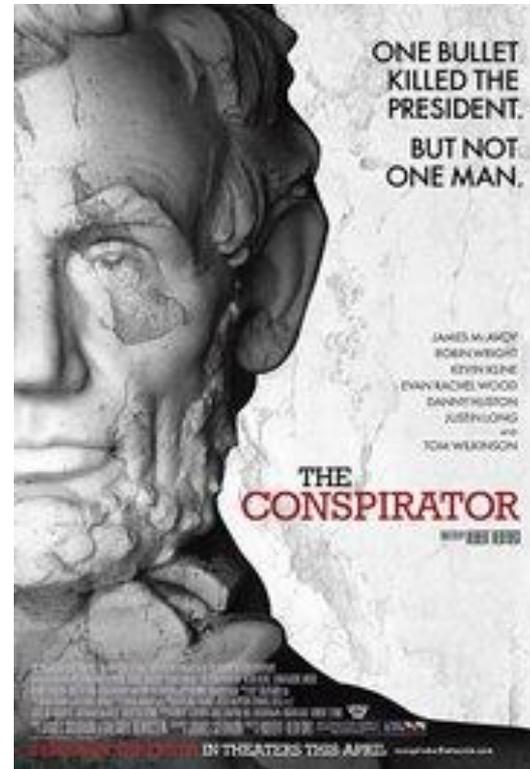
Birth of a Nation (1915)

- Not surprisingly, given Griffith's background in theater, the action on stage is historically accurate
- Lord Dundreary is correctly portrayed with his whiskers
- The action on stage is correct – Asa Trenchard saying.....



The Conspirator (2010)

- We will be showing two extended scenes from this movie
 - First, the assassination
 - Second, the hanging of the conspirators
- These scenes, helped by among others, the Surratt Society, are probably the most realistic and historically accurate examples of the events .



The Conspirator – The Assassination

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VI-k593OFtM>

The Conspirator – The Executions

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDJuv0x1wEo>

Dr. Mudd Movies

– *Shark Island*

- There are also a number of movies on Dr. Mudd, all of which are sympathetic (and I would argue wrong) on the history
- The first was the 1936 film *The Prisoner of Shark Island*, starring Warner Baxter as Dr. Mudd
- Not surprising the slant of the movie, since it was based on *The Life of Dr. Mudd*, by Nettie Mudd Monroe, the Dr.'s daughter



Dr. Mudd Movies

– *Shark Island*

- Starring Warner Baxter and Dr. Mudd and Gloria Stuart as his wife (what 1997 role would she be most remembered for?)
- The title card, to the tune of “Maryland, My Maryland” stated
As a nation we must acknowledge the injustice visited on one of the most unselfish and courageous men in American history
- And signed by George Radcliffe, US Senator from MD



Dr. Mudd Movies

– *Shark Island*

- The origin of the movie was when Darryl Zanuck read an article about the restoration of Ft. Jefferson, and asked writer Nunnally Johnson (r) if there was a picture there
- Johnson read Lloyd Lewis' *Myths after Lincoln*, and fixed on the Dr. Mudd story



Dr. Mudd Movies

– *Shark Island*

- Johnson would later state:

It was 50/50 whether Mudd was innocent or guilty, so I went with innocent

- Speaking as a screenwriter, and not a historian!



Dr. Mudd Movies

– *Shark Island*

- In 1938, two years after the movie came out, it was turned into a radio play
- Starring Gary Cooper as Dr. Mudd and Fay Wray (yes, that Fay Wray) as Mrs. Mudd



Dr. Mudd Movies

– *Shark Island*

- Since it was live radio, mistakes could not be corrected
- So when Coop referred to Booth as Lincoln's "assistant" not "assassin" that is what the radio audience heard.



Dr. Mudd Movies

– *Laramie*

- In 1962, on the TV program *Laramie*, Dr. Mudd made another appearance
- Played by Lew Ayres, the plot was Dr. Mudd moves west to start a new life (nope) and ends up treating a ranchers son, amputating an arm to save his life (nope again)



Dr. Mudd Movies

– *Laramie*

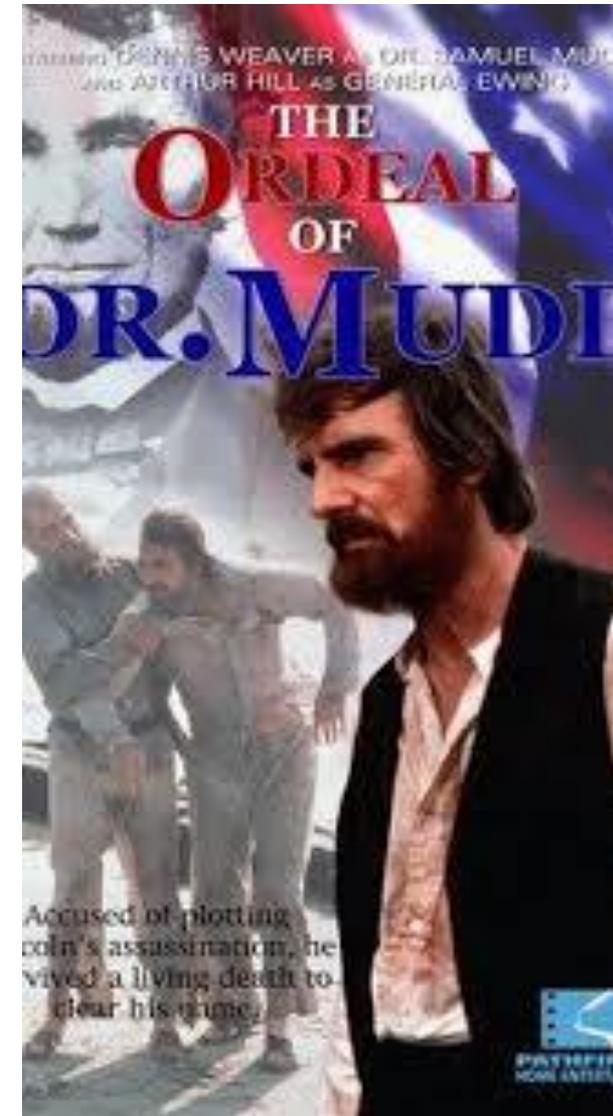
- In a coincidence only possible in TV, the father is the Union officer who arrested Mudd
- He and his cronies are about to hang Mudd when the good guys arrive
- The saved Mudd plans to move on to SF (nope, nope and nope!)



Dr. Mudd

Movies

- 40+ years later, in 1980, Dennis Weaver starred in *The Ordeal of Dr. Mudd* (and you can guess from the title the slant of the movie)
- The plot is that Dr. Mudd was only a simple country doctor doing his duty to an unknown patient, and was then railroaded into prison
- The title card states “What you are about to see is a true story.”
- NOT!



Television

Twilight Zone – Season 2 *Back There*

- Peter Corrigan, a college professor, gets into a discussion about whether events could be changed if time travel were possible
- He soon finds himself in DC on April 14, 1865
- Trying to warn people of the attempt on Lincoln's life, he is arrested as a drunk
- He is bailed out by a Mr. Wellington, who as he leaves Corrigan, drops a handkerchief with the initials JWB
- And then.....



Twilight Zone – Season 2
Back There

After his time travel, where then does Professor Corrigan (aka Russell Johnson) travel?

Timeless – Season 1

The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

- The time travelers return to April 1865 to find the bad guy
- Only to find the bad guy has teamed up with John Wilkes Booth
- They can't stop the assassination – but do they change history anyhow?



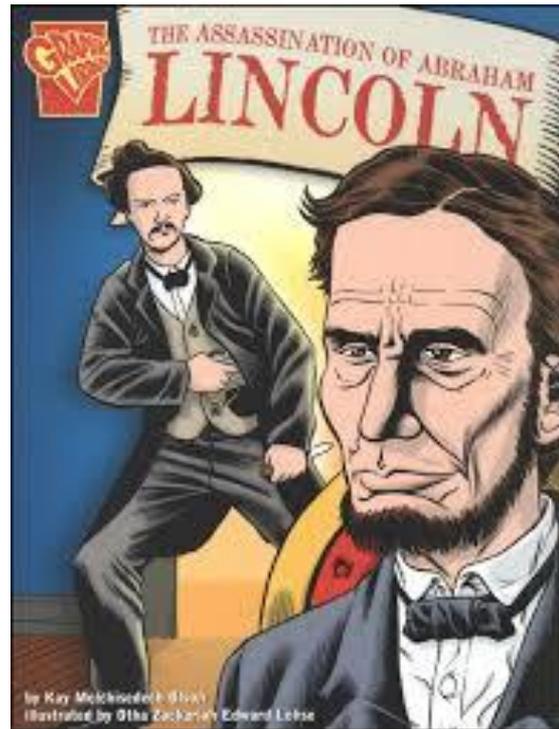
Comics



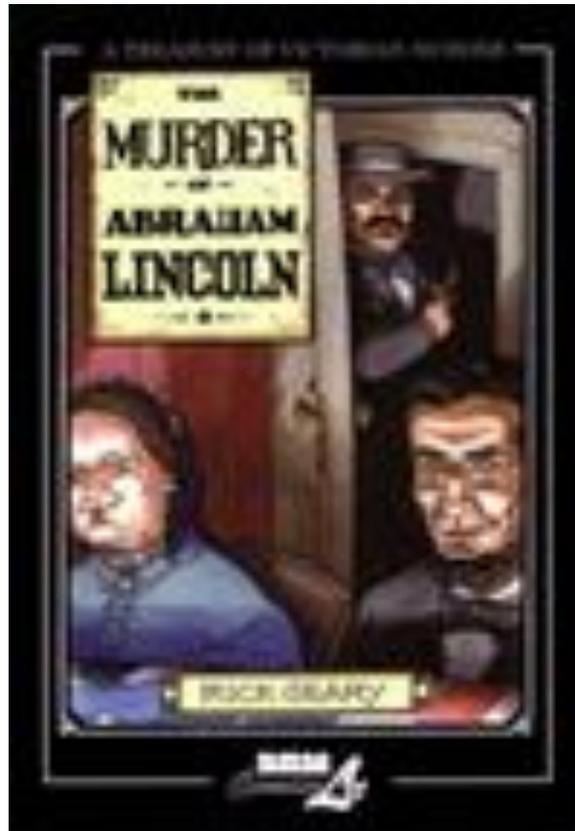
Comics

- Comics have provided both a illustrated version of the assassination
- And a fantastical version with superheroes from both DC and Marvel involved with the assassination
- So we have facts, fiction and (very much) frankly craziness

Graphic Library – The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

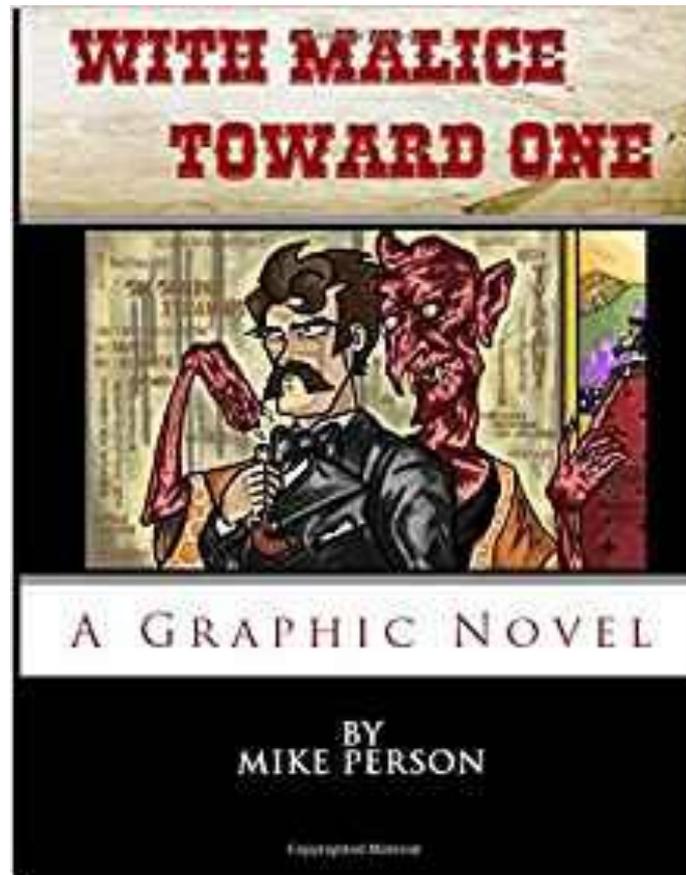


A Treasury of Victorian Murder— The Murder of Abraham Lincoln



With Malice Towards One

Detailed graphic novel



Treasure Chest of Fun and Fact – JFK/Lincoln parallels

12 TREASURE CHEST

1 WHILE IN THE WHITE HOUSE, EACH MAN HAD A FAMILY OF THREE CHILDREN. AND BOTH PRESIDENTS' CHILDREN RODE PONIES ON THE WHITE HOUSE GROUNDS...



2 THE TWO YOUNGER LINCOLN BOYS, WILLIE AND TAD, LIKED TO RIDE THEIR PONIES. BUT THE OLDER SON, ROBERT, WAS AWAY AT COLLEGE MUCH OF THE TIME.

3 CAROLINE KENNEDY SOMETIMES RODE HER PONY, "MACARONI," WHILE MRS. KENNEDY AND LITTLE "JOHN-JOHN" LOOKED ON. THE THIRD KENNEDY CHILD, BABY PATRICK BOWSER KENNEDY, DIED TWO DAYS AFTER HE WAS BORN.

4 EACH PRESIDENT HAD A NEXT-OF-KIN WHO WAS AMBASSADOR TO GREAT BRITAIN...




5 ROBERT TODD LINCOLN, THE ELDEST SON OF THE PRESIDENT, WAS U.S. MINISTER TO LONDON FROM 1889 TO 1893.

6 THE FATHER OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY—JOSEPH P. KENNEDY—WAS THE U.S. AMBASSADOR TO THE COURT OF ST. JAMES FROM 1938 TO 1940.

7 BOTH PRESIDENTS WERE SHOT ON FRIDAY—PRESIDENT KENNEDY DURING THE WEEK OF THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF LINCOLN'S FAMOUS GETTYSBURG ADDRESS. BOTH DIED OF BULLET WOUNDS IN THE HEAD. THE WIVES OF BOTH WERE AT THEIR SIDES, BUT UNHARMED. YET THE NEAREST MAN TO BOTH PRESIDENTS WAS WOUNDED BY THE ASSASSIN.



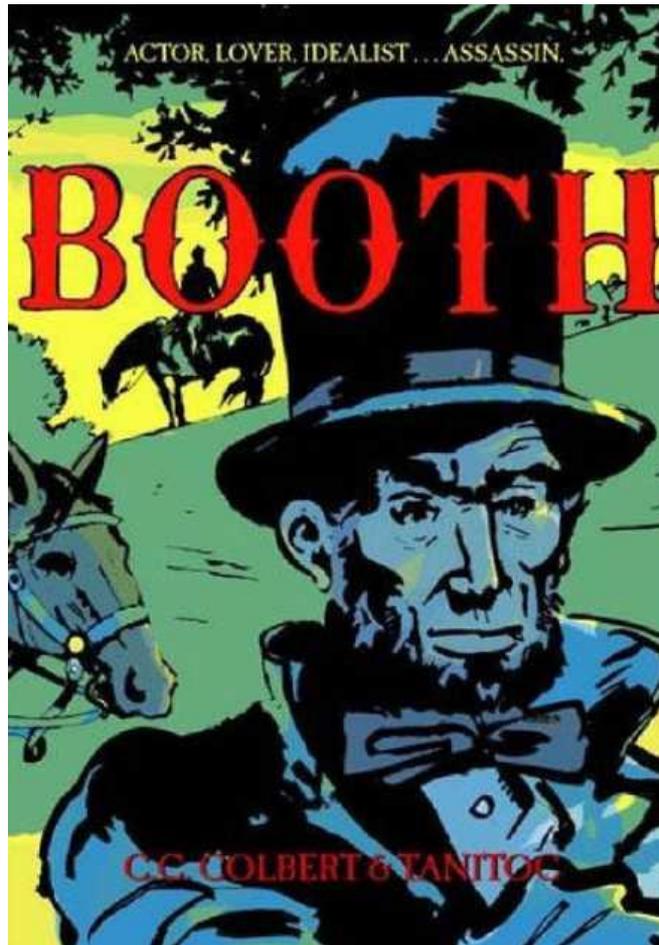

8 AFTER SHOOTING PRESIDENT LINCOLN WITH A SMALL PISTOL, THE ASSASSIN STABBED MAJOR HENRY RATIBONE IN TRYING TO ESCAPE FROM FORD'S THEATRE IN WASHINGTON, D.C., APRIL 14, 1865.

9 A SNIPER WITH A HIGH-POWERED RIFLE SHOT PRESIDENT KENNEDY FATALLY AND WOUNDED TEXAS GOVERNOR JOHN B. CONNALLY DURING A MOTORCADE THROUGH DALLAS NOVEMBER 22, 1963. THE ACCUSED WAS LATER CAPTURED IN A THEATRE.

Treasure Chest of Fun and Fact –

- This was a magazine that was put out by the Catholic Bishops of America
- In a later issue, they told the story of the Catholic Dr. Mudd
- Any guesses as to their take on Dr. Mudd's guilt or innocence?

Biography of JW Booth – obviously leading up to the assassination



To Transition

First, as we enter the world
of fiction, HORROR!

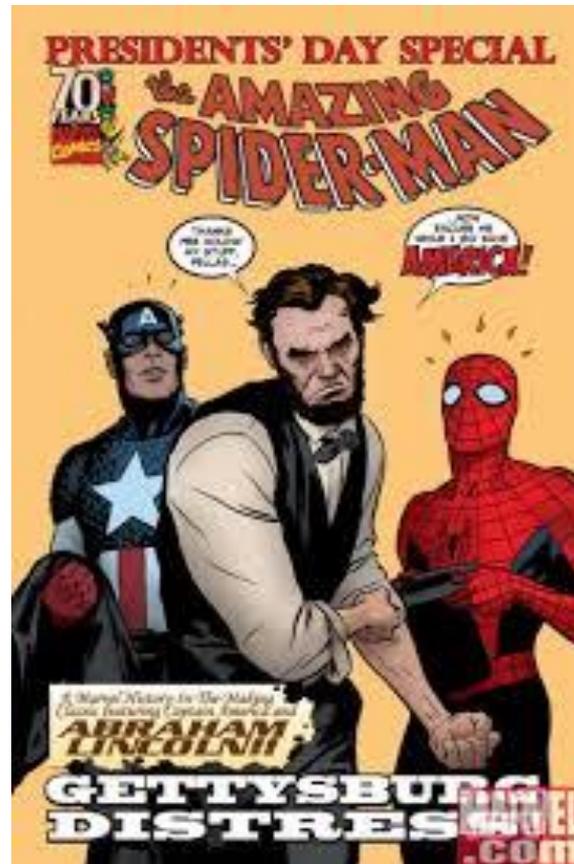
The why of the assassination – JW Booth born with a crimson claw!



And now....

We leave the realm of facts
(well, at least mostly facts)
and end up in the realm of
SUPERHEROES!

How Lincoln won the Battle of Gettysburg



Jimmy Olsen goes back in time and sleeps through the assassination



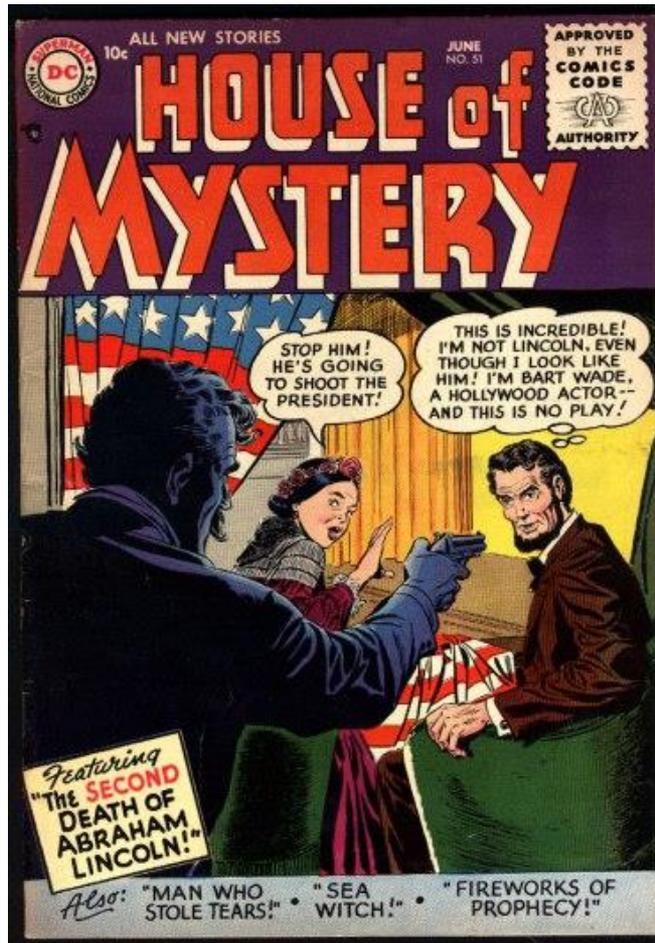
Superman saves Lincoln (but only in a parallel universe!)



Superman tries again!



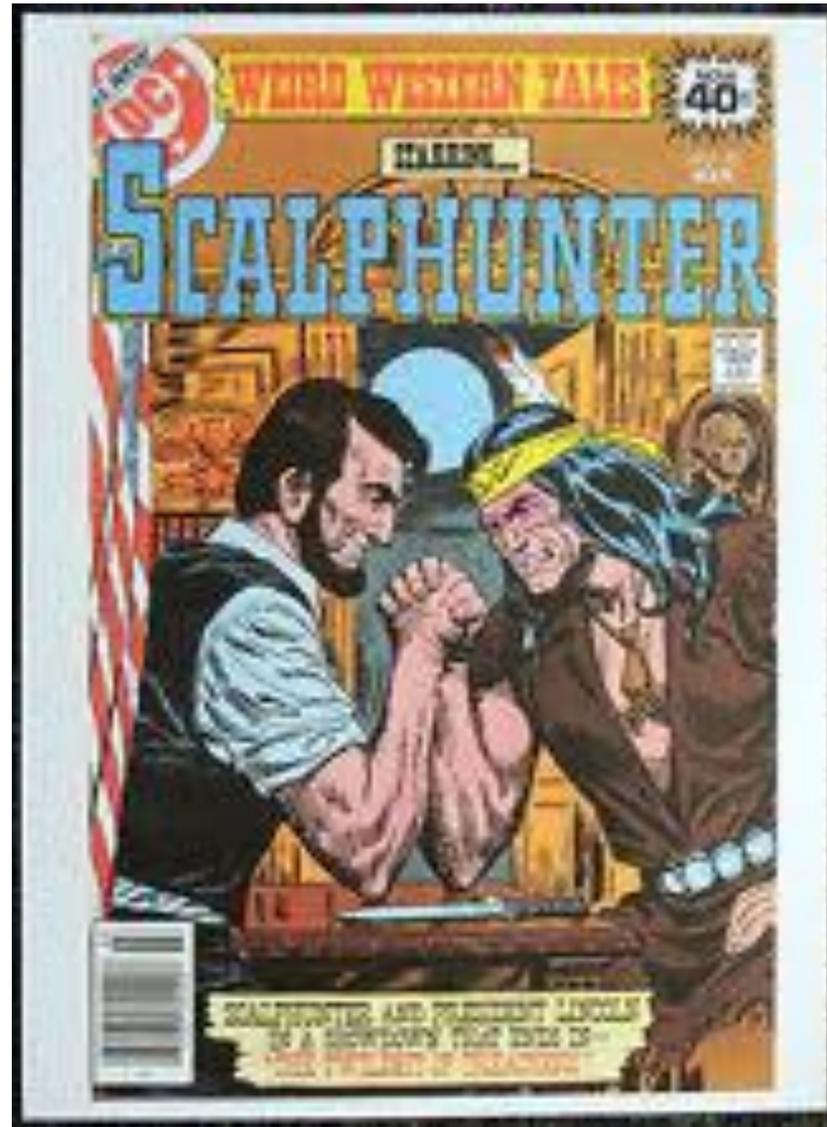
An actor (playing the wrong role) goes back in time



The Flash finds out Lincoln has been assassinated (in 2971)



Scalphunter prevents the assassination – and thwarts Stanton!



Well, maybe the assassination was justified

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4-KfGVsx_8

And as the grand finale – Batman (with an assist from Lincoln himself) thwart Booth

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUjG1HSSaGI>

Don't forget!

- Save the date: May 10, 2019
- OLLI Lincoln Assassination Field Trip
- Head to
 - Ford's Theater
 - House where Lincoln died/Center for Education and Leadership
 - Lunch at Lincoln's favorite burger joint, the Hard Rock café