

The Assassination and Death of
Abraham Lincoln, President of the
United States

by Chas. A. Leake, Asst. Surgeon Regt. Vol.
Executive Officer, Armoury Square
U.S. Genl Hospital Washington D. C.

Having been the first of our profession
who arrived to the assistance of our late
President, and having been requested by
Mrs Lincoln to do what I could for him
I assumed the charge until the Surgeon
General and Dr Stone, his family physician
arrived, which was about 20 minutes
after we had placed him in bed in
the house of Mr Peterson opposite the
theatre, and as I remained with him
until his death, I humbly submit the
following brief account.

I arrived
at Ford's Theatre about 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ P.M. April 14⁶⁵
and procured a seat in the dress circle
about 40 feet from the Presidents Box,
over

The play was then progressing and in a few minutes I saw the President, Mrs Lincoln, Mayor Rathbone and Miss Harris enter; while proceeding to the box they were seen by the audience, ^{whom} which was reciprocated by the President and Mrs Lincoln by ^a smile and a bow.

The party was preceded by an attendant who after opening the door of the box and closing it after they had all entered took a seat near by for himself.

The theatre was well filled and the play of "Our American Cousin" progressed very pleasantly until about half past ten, when the report of a pistol was distinctly heard and about a minute after a man of low stature, with black hair and eyes, was seen leaping to the stage, beneath holding in his hand a drawn dagger. While descending his heel got entangled in the American flag, which was hung in front of the box, causing him to stumble when he struck the stage, but with a single bound he regained ^{over}

5

the use of his limbs and ran to the
opposite ^{side} of the stage, flourishing ^{in his hand a drawn} dagger
and disappearing behind the scene.

I then heard cries that the "President
had been murdered", which were
followed by those of "Kill the murderer,
"Shoot him" etc. which came from
different parts of the audience. I
immediately ran to the President's
box and as soon as the door was opened
was admitted and introduced to Mrs
Lincoln, whom she exclaimed several
times "O Doctor, do what you can for him,
do what you can!" I told her we would
do all ^{that} we possibly could.

When I entered the box the ladies were
very much excited. - Mr Lincoln was seated
in a high backed arm-chair with his
head leaning towards his right side
supported by Mrs Lincoln, who was
weeping bitterly. Miss Harris was near
her left and behind the President.

While approaching the President I sent
a gentleman for brandy, and another for water.

over

When I reached the President he was in a state of general paralysis; his eyes were closed and he was in a profoundly comatose condition, while his breathing was intermittent and exceedingly stertorous. I placed my finger on his right radial pulse but could perceive no movement of the artery.

As two gentlemen now arrived, I requested them to assist me to place him in a recumbent position, and as I held his head and shoulders, while doing this my hand came in contact with a clot of blood near his left shoulder. Supposing that he had been stabbed there I asked a gentleman to cut his coat and shirt off from that part, to enable me if possible to check the haemorrhage, which I supposed took place from the subclavian artery or some of its branches.

Before they had proceeded as far as the elbow I commenced to examine his head (as no wound near the shoulder was found) and soon passed my fingers over a large firm clot of blood, over

5
situated about one inch below the superior
curved line of the occipital bone and
an inch and a half to the left of the
median line of the same bone. The
coagula I easily removed and passed the
little finger of my left hand through the
perfectly smooth opening made by the bone
and found that it had entered the
encephalon. As soon as I removed my
finger a slight oozing of blood followed
and his breathing became more regular
and less stertorous. The brandy and water
now arrived and a small quantity was
placed in his mouth, which passed into
his stomach where it was retained.

6. Dr. C. S. Taft and Dr. A. F. A. King
now arrived and after a moments consul-
tation we agreed to have him removed
to the nearest house, which we immediately
did, the above named with others
assisting. When we arrived at the
door of the box, the passage was found
to be densely crowded by those who
were rushing towards that part of the
over

theatre. I called out twice "Guards clear the passage", which was so soon done that we proceeded without a moments delay with the President and were not in the slightest interrupted until he was placed in bed in the house of Mr Peterson, opposite the theatre, in less than 20 minutes from the time that he was assassinated. The street in front of the theatre before we had left it was filled with the excited populace, a large number of whom followed us into the house. As soon as we arrived in the room offered to us, we placed the President in bed in a diagonal position; as the bed was too short a part of the foot was removed to enable us to place him in a comfortable position. The windows were opened and at my request a Captain, present made all leave the room except the medical gentlemen and friends. As soon as we placed him in bed we removed his clothes and covered him with blankets. While covering him I found his lower extremities

over

7

very cold from his feet to a distance several inches above his knees. I then sent for bottles of hot water and hot blankets which we applied to his lower extremities and abdomen. Several other Physicians and Surgeons about this time arrived among whom was Dr. R. K. Stone who had been the President's Physician since the arrival of his family in the city. After having been introduced to Dr. Stone I asked him if he would assume charge (telling him at the time all that had been done and describing the wound), he said that he would and approved of the treatment. The Surgeon General and Surgeon Crane in a few minutes arrived and made an examination of the wound. When the President was first laid in bed, a slight ecchymosis was noticed on his left eyelid and the pupil of that eye was slightly dilated, while the pupil of the right eye was contracted. About 11. P. M. the right eye began to protrude which was rapidly followed by an increase

over

of the ecchymosis until it encircled the orbit extending above the supra orbital ridge and below the infra orbital foramen.

The wound was kept open by the Surgeon General by means of ^a silver probe, and as the President was placed diagonally on the bed, his head was supported in its position by Surgeon Cram and Dr Taft.

(relieving ~~relieving~~)
About 2. A. M. the Hospital Steward, who had been sent for a Nelatons probe, arrived and an examination was made by the Surgeon General, who introduced it to a distance of about 2 1/2 inches, when it came into contact with a foreign substance, which laid across the track of the ball. This being easily passed the probe was introduced several inches further, when it again touched a hard substance, which was at first supposed to be the ball, but as the bulb of the probe on its withdrawal did not indicate the mark of lead, it was generally thought to be another piece of loose bone. The probe was introduced a second time

intermission, when not the slightest movement
of the artery could be felt. The inspirations
now became very short and the expirations
very prolonged and labored; accompanied by
a guttural sound. 6.50. A. M. The respirations
cease for some time and all eagerly look at
their watches until the profound silence
is disturbed by a prolonged inspiration,
which was soon followed by a sonorous
expiration.

The Surgeon General
now held his finger to the carotid artery,
Col. Brown held his head, Dr Stone,
who was sitting on the bed, held his left
pulse, and his right pulse was held by
myself. At 7.20. A. M. he breathed his
last and "the spirit fled to God who gave it."

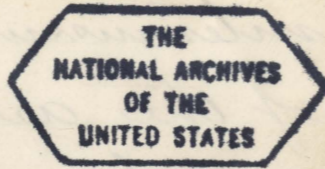
During the course of the night the room
was visited by many of his friends.

Mrs Lincoln with Mrs Senator Dixon came
into the room three or four times during the night.

The Presidents son, Captm P. Lincoln, remained
with his father during the greater part of the night.
Immediately after death had taken place, we all
bowed and the Rev Dr Gurley supplicated to God in behalf
of the bereaved families and our afflicted country.

True Copy

Chas. J. Seale M.D.



1877

9
and the ball was supposed to be distinctly felt by the Surgeon General, Surgeon Crane and Dr Stone. After this second exploration nothing further was done with the wound except to keep the opening free from coagula, which if allowed to form and remain for a very short time, would produce signs of increased compression; the breathing becoming profoundly stertorous and intermittent and the pulse to be more feeble and irregular. His pulse which was several times counted by Dr Ford and noted by Dr King, ranged until 12 P. M. from between 40 to 64 beats per minute, and his respiration about 24 per minute, were loud and stertorous. At 1. A. M. his pulse suddenly increased in frequency to 100 per minute, but soon diminished gradually becoming less feeble until 2.54 A. M. when it was 48 and hardly perceptible. At 6.40 A. M. ^{his} pulse could not be counted, it being very intermittent; two or three pulsations being felt and followed by an ^{over}

D No 776

Charles A. Leale.
Asst. Surgeon U.S.A.

Report of the Assassina-
tion of Abraham Lincoln
President of the United
States.

3676

ASSISTANT SURGEON GENERAL'S
OFFICE

1871

2

2 Enclosures

Sung Harty Vol 1 p. 305

Box 22

M

over

D. Seales Report sent
to Secretary Lincoln
War Dept. July 11, 85,
with a personal note
by the Surgeon General
Reid back July 11, 85

