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Cunningham Memorial Library  
Indiana State University

Neff-Guttridge Collection

**Letter from Andrew Potter to Edwin Stokes regarding Booth's flight and the actions of government officials. A carbon copy initialed by Potter. Undated.**

The following document is presented as found and without explanation. In addition to describing John Wilkes Booth's flight, his own actions and those of his brothers, the role of James W. Boyd. Also mentioned are Lafayette Baker and Conger. While the letter reviews these matters, its actual theme is a book that Stokes was either helping Potter write or to revise.

As will be seen, Potter is neither a grammarian or gifted typist. Many documents initialed by Potter or otherwise found in the Potter Papers were typed by his secretary and undoubtedly corrected on the fly for grammatical and spelling errors. This document, with its many mistakes, suggests that Potter himself typed it.

That a book was written and perhaps printed is without doubt. Some pages of it in typescript have survived and are held in the Neff-Guttridge Collection. Unfortunately, no complete copy of *The Trumpets of Jerico [Jericho]* has been found either in manuscript or as a published book.

David Vancil, PhD  
Curator & Department Head  
July 11, 2006

Mr. Stokes:

Once again you are expecting me at my age to recall from memory events which are minutely described in the material which you have and which you could dig out for yourself. I realize that to some degree what you say is true and that I hired you as a writer and not as an investigator but the distinction is not as clear as you try to make it. I also realize that the material is complex and that is the very reason you should have come here last summer so that we could have gone over the material at length and you could have set down the story as I told it to you after consulting the documents. As things now stand you have the documents and I am expected by you to comment on them from memory. This is totally unsatisfactory. Next summer we must get together and get this project completed or I will get someone else to do it.

Col. Baker did not write a book. It was written by a writer who got most of his material from documents Baker furnished him together with public print, mostly produced by Townsend. After what I have been through I can see how it happened. The man who wrote did just like you are doing and I do not want to produce a garbled mess of this type. Some things I can explain and will do so but you are going to have to fill in the details from the stuff you have.

You mentioned a letter to McKee Dunn from the Garrett boy who became the preacher. Garrett says that the man at his fathers farm sat on the porch, smoked his pipe, and wrote in a little black book. Then, from other sources we know that after the man was dead, the book was taken from his pocket, and along with the other things, brought to Washington by Conger, and that Conger made a copy of what had been wrote in the book. This is true. It should by now have occurred to you that there was not just one book but two (at least). The book Conger brought to Washington was the one Baker referred to when he testified that all the pages was there, and when he told about sleeping between the legs of a dead horse to keep warm, and all that stuff. Baker was trying to get Stanton to say there was two books or diaries, but Stanton stuck to his story and come through without letting the cat out of the bag.

Booths diary had been found by the scout on Sunday morning and brought to me at King George Court House while we was eating breakfast. He told me that he had found it along the creek where Booth and Henson had rested. This diary was immediately taken by two detectives to Washington and turned over to Col. Baker. He took it to Stanton that Sunday evening. When Boyd was killed at Garretts his diary was taken by Conger and immediately brought to Washington and took to Stanton at his office at the War Department. Boyds diary was more of a threat to Stanton and friends than Booths since Boyd had recorded details of his meetings with Stanton and Baker and had noted his many travels while he was supposed to be in solitary confinement in prison. He had told all about his activities in behalf of Stanton, Baker, Eckert, and others.

Boyd had made up several diaries of the type Booth had with him. Boyd had got the diaries in November, that is the reason they were for 1864 - and had made up a map for Booth along with a list of people he could contact for help, doctors, people who could supply horses, etc., all dealing with the abduction plot. He had also give Booth a map which had been marked for him. When Conger brought Boyds book back to Washington it was seen that it could never be released. Booths diary was less damaging than that of Boyd. Booths diary was an embarrassment while Boyds book showed the complicity of a lot of people in the abduction of Lincoln. It is my guess that Boyds book was destroyed but I am only guessing. Booths diary could not be destroyed but the story was arranged so that Booths diary was the only one mentioned and it was made to appear that it had been taken off the body at Garretts farm so as to definitely identify Booth. It was Stanton's desire that neither book be released but if one had to be seen it should be Booths.

You will recall that Colonel Conger posed as Boyd when he was inquiring about Booth. This makes sense only if it is realized that Boyd was in command of the abduction scheme and it was rational that he would be looking for Booth amongst the people who were to help him. What Conger did not realize was that Boyd had visited with those people and they immediately knew that Conger was not Boyd, so he got no information but only falsities.

I have previously outlined the route Booth took before crossing from Fort Conway to Fort Royal. I do not believe Henry Johnson caught up with them until they were across the river - that is Booth and Hensen. Johnson had pick up a Pamunky Indian scout when he had first landed in Caroline County. This scout furnished him with a horse and cart and had helped him find Booth and Hensen. When Conger and his troops got to King George County they received conflicting stories about two men that had been there. This led them to conclude that they were being given false information when in fact they were getting reports of two different sets of fugitives. When they had crossed from Fort Conway to Port Royal they had observed two men on fleet horses watching the troops unloading. Baker and Conger took to chase and went some five or six miles down a country road in pursuit before they gave up. They were lucky for these were Mosby scouts and Mosby was still at war. When Conger and Baker returned they found that the Lieutenant had dispatched a detail of a corporal and five troopers to follow two men and a darky who had been in a cart and headed towards Fredericksburgh. Conger was angry but ordered that the troop go on toward Bowling Green with one trooper left behind to direct the detail when it should return. When they returned they reported that the men neither had a moustache and that neither was David Herald. The black man was "certainly a field hand." For some reason or another Conger and Baker were looking for David Herald. At this time neither detective knew that Booth had shaved his moustache at Dr. Mudds and they seemed to have taken the reward posters serious since they believed that John Surratt was with Booth and Herald, the three headed for Richmond. This is impossible for me to understand, circumstances being what they were. Maybe you can explain it - if you read the material. I would be interested in your opinions.

Meanwhile, Luther Potter and I had gone to Fredericksburg from King George Court House and had stopped at a hotel for a night of much needed rest and a good meal. We had gone by way of Belle Plain Depot and had picked up fresh mounts and the latest information on the fugitives. We discovered that Conger and Baker had come down with cavalry and were going south toward Bowling Green. We figured that this would possibly flush the fugitives to the west so we went to Fredericksburg. Inquiry there did not disclose anyone answering Booths description going through there so we went to bed. The next morning we arose to news that Booth had been killed at Garretts and his companion took alive. Luther and I returned to Belle Plain where we discovered Baker with a body what had a moustache.

In later years we were to discover that Booth and Hensen had passed through Fredericksburg while Luther and I slept. Henry Johnson had Booth and Hensen in the cart and the Pamunky scouted the route. They come up the south side of the river and through Fredericksburg, to the farm of a Mrs. Howard where they staid for several days, were fed and rested.

From there they went to the home of a Dr. Almond in Orange County. A young Quaker doctor was there and attended Booth. He chloroformed him and redressed his leg, putting on a hard dressing after resetting the bone. In Green County they bought food from a widow woman and passed through Stanardsville. While they had rested at Dr. Almonds Johnson and the scout had made contact with partisans who took over the charge of the three men and led them to a cave on the west side of the Blue Ridge mountain, where they staid for several days. They were then moved to the home of Lewis Pence at Mt. Crawford where they staid for one night, possibly two. Pence took charge of them and took them to Harpers Ferry to the home of Booths ex-wife.

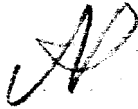
Pence had been a partisan and smuggler all during the war and had been a member of a partisan bank connected with Kosby and of his ilk. He was a wily fellow, older than most, in his fiftys, and he very cautiously took Booth, Hensen, and Johnson north, while the scout returned to the east. Pence took a route from Mt. Crawford through Hopkins gap, around the west side of Little North Mountain to Martins, north through Lost River country and through Bunker Hill to Bolivar Heights. He followed a route which would afford wagon travel but was not patrolled by troops and was free of unionists. He was a perfect one for the job since he knew the country like his own bedroom and had been over it frequently. Such caution really was not necessary since to all the world Booth was dead.

I talked with Pence some years later and you have a copy of the interview. He told me much off the record and I actually liked him. We sat and talked for a whole afternoon and I spent the night in the room and slept in the same bed where Booth had spent one or more nights. But Pence never admitted anything which I could have used against him and I doubt that I would have used it had he done so. I was beginning to learn that the past cannot be changed and after a few years no one cares any more. This is what concerns me about what we are doing. I have poured my soul out to you and not only are you not interested but I cannot seem to get anyone else to listen either. At this point I have began to doubt whetaer it will ever get published even if we get it

finished, which is doubtful. McKee Dunn tried and failed.  
and others who had the same facts and wrote of them have  
long since passed on to their reward without a word being  
set in type. It all seems so futile.

Please try, try, try to get it written, please.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be the initials 'AP'.

ANDREW POTTER