

CW/VFM-93: *Anna Surratt*

Letter to Linn Hartranft, 11 August 1897, thanking him for his kind treatment of her mother, Mary Surratt

General John Frederick Hartranft

In April of 1861, Hartranft raised a regiment of ninety-day volunteers (4th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry). On the eve of the Battle of Bull Run, his men deserted. However, he stayed and was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions on August 21st, 1862. After his first regiment turned out to be a failure, he organized another (51st Pennsylvania). This regiment had a lifetime of three years, and he was named the colonel. They fought in the later battles of Second Bull Run, South Mountain, Antietam, and Fredericksburg before being transferred to the Western Theater. There, the regiment fought in the battles of Vicksburg, Spotsylvania, Petersburg, and Richmond. Hartranft was promoted to brigadier general on May 12, 1864 and was made a brevet major general by Ulysses S. Grant when he defeated Lee in his last stand at the Battle of Fort Stedman.

At the end of the war, he was in charge of the Old Capitol Prison, and was appointed a special provost marshal during the trials of those accused of the Lincoln assassination. He was given special attention because of his kind treatment toward a woman named Mary Surratt, one of the accused for Lincoln's assassination, who was the first woman executed by the federal government. Later he would get involved in politics; even challenging Rutherford B. Hayes for the Republican Presidential nomination.

Mary Surratt

Mary Surratt was born in Southern Maryland, and remained in the South all of her life. Hence she and her family were Southern sympathizers during the Civil War. At the time of the Lincoln conspiracy, she was running a boarding house on H St. in Washington, D.C. This was the site of meetings between her son and Lincoln conspirators, including John Wilkes Booth. He claimed that while he had been involved in a plot to kidnap the President, he was never involved in the assassination. In fact, he had been on his way to Montreal at the time the President was shot. He denied that his mother had any part in the plot whatsoever. She found herself in a sticky situation, however, when her tenant (John Lloyd) testified against her in court. He claimed that she had told him to, essentially, get the guns she had set aside just for the purpose of the assassinating the president. In fact,

Booth and his accomplice stopped by the tavern after Booth shot Lincoln. He gave them a quick drink and pistols. They then began to head south with the aid of the same people who had aided Surratt's husband while he was a courier for the Confederacy.

Letter to Hartranft from Anna Surratt (Mary's Daughter):

7/9/1865: Anna wrote to Hartranft to ask that he send home a few things that had belonged to her mother. She specifically asked for her prayer beads and the pillow she used. Then she mentions that one of the prisoners (Powell aka. Payne) apparently told Hartranft that Mary was innocent of the crime she was accused of, and Hartranft confessed to believing that this man spoke the truth. She thanked him for the kind treatment of her mother during the time up to her execution.

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