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How the Almanac "Forgery" Was Discovered.

(For private information, and
not for publication in this
form)

I have a suspicion that John Husted remembers nothing of the alleged discovery of the almanac "forgery" by "Tubby" Smith, detailed in his letter. Sept. 21, 1888, a few days after Husted claims to have found the almanac, the Beardstown "Star of the West" published a long article on the Armstrong case. It contains the substance of an interview with H.B. De Sollar, who describes "Tubby" Smith's discovery; and the language used by Husted in his letter is so much like the language of this article that I think it very probable this is Husted's source of information. De Sollar is now dead. Mr. Allard, the editor of the "Star of the West", who got the story from him, assures me that he was a reliable man. Here is the story, as found in this article:

"On the night previous to the day on which the almanac was produced Mr. Lincoln stepped into the office of Drs. Parker and Sprague, and inquired of Dr. Parker if he had an almanac of 1857. After diligent search none could be found, and Mr. Lincoln remarked that if he could not produce an almanac of that year, in which the night of the killing was given as in the dark of the moon, Armstrong would be convicted. In looking over almanacs at hand, it was found that one for 1855 would answer the purpose, provided the figures three in it could be changed to seven, and that night the changes were made; but what printer, or just who did the work, Mr. De Sollar never learned. The next morning Mr. Lincoln carried the almanac in his pocket to the court room. He inquired of the clerk, James Taylor, if he had among his books an almanac of 1857, and upon his failing to find one he produced the one in his possession, saying that he thought

he might not have one handy and he had brought one with him,and requested the clerk to place it at easy access,as he might have use for it before the trial was ended. The case proceeded,and all the evidence had been heard when Mr.Lincoln rose to his feet and told the clerk that if he had an almanac of 1857 he would like to look at it. The almanac was produced,and with its unimpeachable evidence the testimony of Allen,the witness for the prosecution,was thrown out,and as a result Armstrong was set at liberty. Of the points in regard to the changing of dates in the almanac,Mr.De Sollar is positive,as Dr.C.E. Parker repeated them to him several times,once just a short time before his death,which occurred about six years ago. . . . . The manner in which the discovery was made that the almanac was a forgery may be of some interest to our readers,and we give it as it was told us by Mr.De Sollar: "Tubby" Smith,a lawyer then living at Jacksonville, had a case in court here,and a day or two after,having occasion to use an almanac of 1857,he picked up in the court room the one produced in the Armstrong case. To his great surprise,all his dates were wrong according to it,and he was in much trouble about the matter,when he got hold of another almanac and upon comparison discovered the changes made. 'The cat was out of the bag',but it was then too late. Armstrong was a free man.

"The almanac was lost sight of soon after,and nothing more has come to light regarding it until a few days since,when John Husted claims that whilst looking over old books in his possession belonging to J.Henry Shaw at the time of his death he ran across the almanac, and being familiar with the facts regarding it (he being a deputy sheriff under Jim Dick at the time) he made a critical examination of it and discovered that it was the identical almanac."

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3--Almanac forgery.

It seems likely that the whole story of the forgery of the almanac and the discovery of the forgery by "Tubby" Smith originated with Dr.C.E.Parker. From what I am told of Dr.Parker he was fully equal to the task of forging both the almanac and the story concerning it. He is described as a "bright" man,but not an overscrupulous one. At Beardstown the story of the "forgery" of the almanac is familiar to everybody,but Dr.Parker is the ultimate authority given in every case. Dr.Parker has now been dead fourteen years. Professionally his standing was good. But he delighted in doing something "sharp"; and either to have played a "sharp" trick with the almanac,or to have appropriated the credit for having done so, would have been quite characteristic.

Husted's claim that,after a lapse of thirty years,he was able to identify the almanac "from having seen it at the trial",is preposterous. After finding the almanac in 1888,he had it in his possession for five years; yet he is unable to recall whether it was Goudy's or Jayne's or whose almanac it was.

J.McCan Davis.

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(Note for Jayne's Almanac)

August Calendar of Jayne's Almanac for 1857.

According to the recollection of the two surviving jurors, it was Jayne's almanac for this year that Lincoln used in the Armstrong trial. {See note at the end of this article.}

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