

December 7, 1939

Dear Mr. Burton:

It is a long time since I knocked at your door. I hope I ~~will~~ be welcome, even though what I am offering may not suit your program.

This is it - an article which Paul Reynolds tells me he has offered to you. I want to say a word about it.

In the first place it is not as I think Mr. Reynolds had in mind an article suited to Lincoln's Birthday. If you are interested in anniversaries it belongs in April - the seventy fifth anniversary of the assassination comes next April, (So much for timeliness.)

Booth
As for the theme the article offers unpublished material, a sketch of a period in John Wilkes' life which has been almost entirely overlooked by his biographers - an important period in my judgment for at that time he was under the almost daily influence of bitter opposition to Lincoln. In that period he first developed his idea of kidnapping Lincoln (note that he did not consider assassination until a short time before he resorted to it).

It was the bitter and vicious opposition to the administration which worked on Booth's tumultuous nature. He was of that opposition but if it had been reasoned, not shot through ^{with} murderous instincts, I doubt if he would ever have done what he did. There is a moral, a legitimate question to ask - are we making assassins today? *mitigation*

Forgive this long letter but I wanted to point up the article.

I hope everything is going well with you. Believe me

Very sincerely yours