

I. "What is History and Why Does it Matter?"

In this session we will examine what history is, and how the study of historians' methods can help us to sort through the overload of information, "alternative facts", and conflicting interpretations of current and past events. We will explore the purpose and role of history in society, and its importance in the creation and preservation of an informed citizenry.

Readings

- McMillan, Margaret, *Dangerous Games: The Uses and Abuses of History*, NY: Random House, 2008. 1-2.
- Soll, Jacob, "The Long and Brutal History of Fake News," *Politico Magazine*, December 16, 2016. 1-4.
- Goni, Uki, "Blaming the Victims: Dictatorship Denialism is on the Rise in Argentina," *The Guardian*, August 26, 2016. 1-3.

In-Class Exercise

In this part of the discussion we will look at some responses to Abraham Lincoln's assassination with a historian's eye. Some of the questions a historian might ask –

- What are the different viewpoints and motivations of the writers? What light do they shed on the possible views of the American people during and after the war.
- What do they tell us about the brutality of war, and its impact on the sensibilities of a nation. How did these views possibly influence the direction of our country, and shape how it is today.
- What about the sources themselves? Are they reliable? What is the difference between those written at the time and those written later?
- Consider why these particular excerpts were chosen, their strengths and weaknesses? What questions would you ask about the viewpoint of the person who chose them.
- What more would we need to do know to come to a well rounded, accurate conclusion about our questions?

Readings

- Response to Abraham Lincoln's in selected excerpts from diaries, memoirs, newspapers. 1-3.
- Letter from 1st Lt. William Heagerty to Julia and Willie Heagerty, April 18, 1865.

From Margaret MacMillan, *Dangerous Games: The Uses and Abuses of History*, NY: Random House, 2010.

History is something we all do, even if, like the man who discovered he was writing prose, we do not always realize it. We want to make sense of our own lives, and often we wonder about our place in our own societies and how we got to be here. So we tell ourselves stories, not always true ones, and we ask questions about ourselves. Such stories and questions inevitably lead us to the past. How did I grow up to be the person I am? Who were my parents? My grandparents? As individuals, we are all, at least in part, products of our own histories, which include our geographical place, our times, our social classes, and our family back- grounds. . . . We use history to understand ourselves, and we ought to use it to understand others. If we find out that an acquaintance has suffered a catastrophe, that knowledge helps us to avoid causing him pain. (If we find that he has enjoyed great good luck, that may affect how we treat him in another way!) We can never assume that we are all the same, and that is as true in business and politics as it is in personal relations. . . If we know nothing of what the loss of the Civil War and Reconstruction meant to Southern whites, how can we understand their resentment toward Yankees that has lingered into the present day? Without knowing the history of slavery and the discrimination and frequent violence that blacks suffered even after emancipation, we cannot begin to grasp the complexities of the relationship between the races in the United States. . . .

History is bunk, Henry Ford famously said, and it is sometimes hard for us, perhaps especially in North America, to recognize that history is not a dead subject. It does not lie there safely in the past for us to look at when the mood takes us. History can be helpful; it can also be very dangerous. It is wiser to think of history not as a pile of dead leaves or a collection of dusty artifacts but as a pool, sometimes benign, often sulfurous, that lies under the present, silently shaping our institutions, our ways of thought, our likes and dislikes. We call on it, even in North America, for validation and for lessons and advice. Validation, whether of group identities, for demands, or for justification, almost always comes from using the past. You feel your life has a meaning if you are part of a much larger group, which predated your existence and which will survive you (carrying, however, some of your essence into the future). Sometimes we abuse history, creating one- sided or false histories to justify treating others badly, seizing their land, for example, or killing them. There are also many lessons and much advice offered by history, and it is easy to pick and choose what you want. The past can be used for almost anything you want to do in the present. We abuse it when we create lies about the past or write histories that show only one perspective. We can draw our lessons carefully or badly. That does not mean we should not look to history for understanding, support, and help; it does mean that we should do so with care.

..... Historians, the great philosopher of history R. G. Collingwood wrote in his autobiography, examine the past with a careful eye, even if it means exploding cherished myths. . . That can often be intensely irritating when the historians raise qualifications and point to ambiguities. Do we really want to know that our great heroes, such as [George Washington], made silly mistakes? . . . I think we do, not for prurient reasons, but because a complex picture is more satisfying for adults than a simplistic one. We can still have heroes, still have views on the rights and wrongs of the past, and still be glad that it turned out in one way rather than another;

but we have to accept that in history, as in our own lives, very little is absolutely black or absolutely white.

History, by giving context and examples, helps when it comes to thinking about the present world. It aids in formulating questions, and without good questions it is difficult to begin to think in a coherent way at all. Knowledge of history suggests what sort of information might be needed to answer those questions. Experience teaches how to assess that information. As they look at the past, historians learn to behave rather like the examining magistrate in the French judicial system. What happened and why? the historian asks. History demands that we treat evidence seriously, especially when that evidence contradicts assumptions we have already made. Are the witnesses telling the truth? How do we weigh one version against another? Have we been asking the right or the only questions? Historians go further and ask what a particular event, thought, or attitude from the past signifies. How important is it? The answers in part will depend on what we in the present ask and what we think is important. History does not produce definitive answers for all time. It is a process.

History can help us to make sense of a complicated world, but it also warns of the dangers of assuming that there is only one possible way of looking at things or only one course of action. We must always be prepared to consider alternatives and to raise objections. We should not be impressed when our leaders say firmly, "History teaches us" or "History will show that we were right." They can oversimplify and force inexact comparisons just as much as any of us can. Even the very clever and the powerful (and the two are not necessarily the same) go confidently off down the wrong paths. It is useful, too, to be reminded, as a citizen, that those in positions of authority do not always know better. Because history relies on a skeptical frame of mind, whether toward evidence or comprehensive explanations, it can also inculcate a healthy propensity to question our leaders. They are not always right, indeed often the opposite.

Humility is one of the most useful lessons the past can provide the present. As John Carey, the distinguished British man of letters, puts it, "One of history's most useful tasks is to bring home to us how keenly, honestly and painfully, past generations pursued aims that now seem to us wrong or disgraceful." Slavery once had its defenders. Think of the arguments over the position of the earth and the sun, of the conviction, apparently supported by science, that so many Victorians had that there were superior and inferior races, or the calm assumptions even a few decades ago that women and blacks could not make good engineers or doctors.

History also encourages people in the present to reflect on themselves. "The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there," the English novelist L. P. Hartley once wrote. . . . That is not to say that all values are relative; rather, we should be prepared to examine our own and not merely take them for granted as somehow being the best. . . . If the study of history does nothing more than teach us humility, skepticism, and awareness of ourselves, then it has done something useful. We must continue to examine our own assumptions and those of others and ask, where's the evidence? Or, is there another explanation? We should be wary of grand claims in history's name or those who claim to have uncovered the truth once and for all. In the end, my only advice is use it, enjoy it, but always handle history with care.

Jacob Soll, “The Long and Brutal History of Fake News,” *Politico Magazine*, December 18, 2016.

The fake news hit Trent, Italy, on Easter Sunday, 1475. A 2 ½-year-old child named Simonino had gone missing, and a Franciscan preacher, Bernardino da Feltre, gave a series of sermons claiming that the Jewish community had murdered the child, drained his blood and drunk it to celebrate Passover. The rumors spread fast. Before long da Feltre was claiming that the boy’s body had been found in the basement of a Jewish house. In response, the Prince-Bishop of Trent Johannes IV Hinderbach immediately ordered the city’s entire Jewish community arrested and tortured. Fifteen of them were found guilty and burned at the stake. The story inspired surrounding communities to commit similar atrocities.

Recognizing a false story, the papacy intervened and attempted to stop both the story and the murders. But Hinderbach refused to meet the papal legate, and feeling threatened, simply spread more fake news stories about Jews drinking the blood of Christian children. In the end, the popular fervor supporting these anti-semitic “blood libel” stories made it impossible for the papacy to interfere with Hinderbach, who had Simonino canonized—Saint Simon—and attributed to him a hundred miracles. Today, historians have catalogued the fake stories of child-murdering, blood-drinking Jews, which have existed since the 12th century as part of the foundation of anti-Semitism. And yet, one anti-Semitic website still claims the story is true and Simon is still a martyred saint. Some fake news never dies.

Over the past few months, “fake news” has been on the loose once again. From bogus stories about Hillary Clinton’s imminent indictment to myths about a postal worker in Ohio destroying absentee ballots cast for Donald Trump, colorful and damaging tales have begun to circulate rapidly and widely on Twitter and Facebook. In some cases they have had violent results: Earlier this month a man armed with an AR-15 fired a shot inside a Washington, D.C., restaurant, claiming to be investigating (fake) reports that Clinton aide John Podesta was heading up a child abuse ring there.

But amid all the media handwringing about fake news and how to deal with it, one fact seems to have gotten lost: Fake news is not a new phenomenon. It has been around since news became a concept 500 years ago with the invention of print—a lot longer, in fact, than verified, “objective” news, which emerged in force a little more than a century ago. From the start, fake news has tended to be sensationalist and extreme, designed to inflame passions and prejudices. And it has often provoked violence. The Nazi propaganda machine relied on the same sorts of fake stories about ritual Jewish drinking of childrens’ blood that inspired Prince-Bishop Hinderbach in the 15th century. Perhaps most dangerous is how terrifyingly persistent and powerful fake news has proved to be. As Pope Sixtus IV found out, wild fake stories with roots in popular prejudice often prove too much for responsible authorities to handle. With the decline of trusted news establishments around the country, who’s to stop them today?

Fake news took off at the same time that news began to circulate widely, after Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press in 1439. “Real” news was hard to verify in that era. There were plenty of news sources—from official publications by political and religious authorities, to

eyewitness accounts from sailors and merchants—but no concept of journalistic ethics or objectivity. Readers in search of fact had to pay close attention. In the 16th century, those who wanted real news believed that leaked secret government reports were reliable sources, such as Venetian government correspondence, known as *relazioni*. But it wasn't long before leaked original documents were soon followed by fake *relazioni* leaks. By the 17th century, historians began to play a role in verifying the news by publishing their sources as verifiable footnotes. The trial over Galileo's findings in 1610 also created a desire for scientifically verifiable news and helped create influential scholarly news sources.

But as printing expanded, so flowed fake news, from spectacular stories of sea monsters and witches to claims that sinners were responsible for natural disasters. The Lisbon Earthquake of 1755 was one of the more complex news stories of all time, with the church and many European authorities blaming the natural disaster on divine retribution against sinners. An entire genre of fake news pamphlets (*relações de sucessos*) emerged in Portugal, claiming that some survivors owed their lives to an apparition of the Virgin Mary. These religiously inspired accounts of the earthquake sparked the famed Enlightenment philosopher Voltaire to attack religious explanations of natural events, and also made Voltaire into an activist against fake religious news.

There was a lot of it in that era. When, in 1761, Marc-Antoine Calas, the 22-year-old son of a respected Protestant merchant in Toulouse, apparently committed suicide, Catholic activists spread news stories that Calas' father, Jean, had killed him because he wanted to convert to Catholicism. The local judicial authorities posted signs calling for legal witnesses to corroborate the account, successfully turning rumors into official facts, and, in turn, official news.

Jean Calas was convicted on the rumor-fueled testimony and was publicly and gruesomely tortured before being executed. Horrified at the atrocity, Voltaire wrote his own counterattacks dissecting the absurdity that young Calas would have a full understanding of the meaning of conversion and that his peaceable father would hang him for it. The Calas story eventually sparked outrage against such fake legal stories, torture and even execution. It became a touchstone for the Enlightenment itself.

Yet even the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment could not stop the flow of fake news. For example, in the years preceding the French Revolution, a cascade of pamphlets appeared in Paris exposing for the first time the details of the near-bankrupt government's spectacular budget deficit. Each came from a separate political camp, and each contradicted the other with different numbers, blaming the deficit on different finance ministers. Eventually, through government leaks and more and more verifiable accounts, enough information was made public for readers to glean a general sense of state finance; but, like today, readers had to be both skeptical and skilled to figure out the truth.

Even our glorified Founders were perpetrators of fake news for political means. To whip up revolutionary fervor, Ben Franklin himself concocted propaganda stories about murderous "scalping" Indians working in league with the British King George III. Other revolutionary leaders published fake propaganda stories that King George was sending thousands of foreign soldiers to slaughter the American patriots and turn the tide of the War of Independence to get people to enlist and support the revolutionary cause.

By the 1800s, fake news was back again, swirling around questions of race. Like Jewish blood libel, American racial sentiments and fears were powerful in producing false stories. One persistent “cottage industry” of fake news in antebellum America was stories of African-Americans spontaneously turning white. In other instances, fake news reports of slave uprisings or of crimes by slaves, led to terrible violence against African-Americans.

Sensationalism always sold well. By the early 19th century, modern newspapers came on the scene, touting scoops and exposés, but also fake stories to increase circulation. The *New York Sun*’s “Great Moon Hoax” of 1835 claimed that there was an alien civilization on the moon, and established the *Sun* as a leading, profitable newspaper. In 1844, anti-Catholic newspapers in Philadelphia falsely claimed that Irishmen were stealing bibles from public schools, leading to violent riots and attacks on Catholic churches. During the Gilded Age, yellow journalism flourished, using fake interviews, false experts and bogus stories to spark sympathy and rage as desired. Joseph Pulitzer’s *New York World* published exaggerated crime dramas to sell papers. In the 1890s, plutocrats like William Randolph Hearst and his *Morning Journal* used exaggeration to help spark the Spanish-American War. When Hearst’s correspondent in Havana wired that there would be no war, Hearst—the inspiration for Orson Welles’ *Citizen Kane*—famously responded: “You furnish the pictures, I’ll furnish the war.” Hearst published fake drawings of Cuban officials strip-searching American women—and he got his war.

One silver lining in this long and alarming history of fake news is yellow journalism and its results—from civil violence to war—caused a backlash, and sent the public in search of more objective news. It was this flourishing market that sparked the rise of relatively objective journalism as an industry in turn-of-the-century America. For the first time, American papers hired reporters to cover local beats and statehouses, building a chain of trust between local, state and national reporters and the public.

While partisan reporting and sensationalism never went away (just check out supermarket newsstands), objective journalism did become a successful business model—and also, until recently, the dominant one. In 1896, Adolph Ochs purchased the *New York Times*, looking to produce a “facts”-based newspaper that would be useful to the wealthy investor class by providing reliable business information and general news. Ochs showed that news did not have to be sensationalist to be profitable, though the paper was accused of being a mouthpiece for “bondholders.”

Of course, the objective journalism consensus had its hiccups. With the advent of World War II, there was concern about the U.S. government’s wartime involvement in producing news propaganda. In the 1950s, Joseph McCarthy was accused of manipulating reporters like “Pavlov’s dogs,” but a *New Yorker* article from the period insisted that reporters should report and not “tell readers which ‘facts’ are really ‘facts’ and which are not.” By the 1960s, a new generation of reporters signed on to report on “non establishment” stories. Many of these reporters questioned the very ideal of objectivity, yet, nonetheless, hewed to the basic guiding principle of reporting based on verifiable and reputable sources.

It wasn’t until the rise of web-generated news that our era’s journalistic norms were seriously challenged, and fake news became a powerful force again. Digital news, you might say, has brought yellow journalism back to the fore. For one, algorithms that create news feeds and

compilations have no regard for accuracy and objectivity. At the same time, the digital news trend has decimated the force—measured in both money and manpower—of the traditional, objectively minded, independent press.

The Pew Research Center’s “State of the Media 2016” paints a grim picture for most serious news organizations. Advertising revenue is down; staffs continue to get cut; the number of newspapers has declined by 100 since 2004. Between 2003 and 2014, with the decline of the printed press, the number of professional statehouse reporters dropped 35 percent. Professional local beat reporters are also a dying breed. These figures, trained in basic journalistic principles, were locally known and trusted. They could be found in bars and local schools and acted as the human link between statehouses, Washington, D.C., and the U.S. population. They were seen as local heroes. (Jimmy Stewart often played truth-obsessed newspaper reporters in films, like the 1948 thriller *Call Northside 777*.) But today, these popular role models and societal links are gone, and with them, a trusted filter within civil society—the sort of filter that can say with authority to fellow local citizens that fake news is not only fake, it is also potentially deadly.

Real news is not coming back in any tangible way on a competitive local level, or as a driver of opinion in a world where the majority of the population does not rely on professionally reported news sources and so much news is filtered via social media, and by governments. And as real news recedes, fake news will grow. We’ve seen the terrifying results this has had in the past—and our biggest challenge will be to find a new way to combat the rising tide.

Goni, Uki, “Blaming the Victims: Dictatorship Denialism is on the Rise in Argentina,” *The Guardian*, August 26, 2016.

Almost uniquely among nations that have suffered mass killings under brutal dictatorships, Argentina was able not only to put a large number of its former torturers behind bars, but to establish a consensus across all political sectors that its 1976-83 military regime had executed a lower-intensity Nazi-style genocide that lacked any moral justification.

The country’s dictator Jorge Videla was tried barely two years after the return of democracy, and since then more than 1,000 other former officers have been sentenced, making the country a standout among former South American dictatorships. Chile has attained a similar number of convictions, but its dictator Augusto Pinochet died without ever facing a day in court. In Brazil and Uruguay, where wide-ranging amnesties remain in place, a free pass was given to torturers to ensure a smooth democratic transition. But Argentina’s consensus on the gravity of dictatorship-era crimes has suddenly shattered under centre-right President Mauricio Macri.

Earlier this month, Macri rattled nerves in the human rights community when he appeared to doubt the long-accepted historical understanding that 30,000 people died under the dictatorship. Asked in an interview with BuzzFeed how many people had been murdered, he testily replied: “I have no idea. That’s a debate I’m not going to enter, whether they were 9,000 or 30,000.”

Some sympathisers with the former regime have long raised doubts over the number of *desaparecidos*, but Macri’s words marked the first time that such denialist rhetoric gained admittance to mainstream political discourse.

Mario Ranaletti, professor of history at Tres de Febrero university, has specialized in the mindset of Argentinian denialist groups. “They consider military repression was a good and morally unquestionable act,” he says. “To them the cold war was a religious war.” Even today Ranaletti overhears Argentinians who argue that “they should have killed them all.”

Macri’s 9,000 number refers to a list of names compiled in the first years of democracy by the National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons (Conadep). Long touted by denialists as the only valid accounting, the list was never meant to be final. The military themselves reported 22,000 killings to Chilean intelligence in mid-1978. Five months later, the dictatorship informed the papal nuncio in Buenos Aires that it had killed 15,000 people, declassified US documents show.

Work still continues today on the identification of human remains in clandestine unmarked graves. And the Conadep list did not include non-disappeared victims whose bodies were returned to their families – or the undoubtedly vast number of unreported victims.

Taken together, such factors make the 30,000 estimate by human rights groups a reasonable assumption; perfectible by academic research perhaps, but never questioned before by an acting president.

Macri’s use of the term “dirty war” also chimed with denialist thinking, which holds there was no genocide – only an internal battle between the dictatorship and terrorists.

Partly to stop such creeping denialism, Argentina's supreme court ruled in 2009 that the dictatorship's killings between 1976 and 1983 constituted "crimes against humanity within the framework of [a] genocide".

The fracture over dictatorship-era crimes exploded into verbal abuse last Thursday in the central city of Córdoba, after judges handed down 28 life sentences to former officers found guilty of 365 killings at the city's La Perla death camp.

Outside the courtroom, pro-military activist Cecilia Pando hurled abuse at Estela de Carlotto, the 85-year-old head of Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo, a group of heroic grandmothers who over almost four decades have recovered 120 of their grandchildren from the families they were given to by the military once their mothers were murdered after giving birth.

"They were not young idealists, they were terrorists," Pando yelled at the ageing grandmother, referring to the "disappeared" children of Carlotto and thousands of other mothers.

Possibly emboldened by recent meetings with Macri's justice minister, Germán Garavano, Pando was giving vent to a belief fervently held among regime sympathisers that none – or few – of those murdered by the military were innocent victims.

But the US embassy in Buenos Aires at the time knew otherwise: Argentina's military quickly eliminated the few hundred guerrillas who had been involved in lethal action, before they began to murder thousands of other young people unconnected to any violent activity. "Few who have disappeared since about mid-1977 could be considered terrorists or security threats," reads a US state department cable recently declassified by Barack Obama after his visit to Argentina in March.

The killing numbers also refute any notion of a war. In a 1980 report titled "Terrorism in Argentina", the dictatorship estimated that guerrillas killed only 687 people during the entire 1970s, compared with the 22,000 people the dictatorship told Chilean intelligence it had killed by 1978 alone.

At the Esma death camp in the capital city of Buenos Aires at least 3,000 civilians were murdered by the dictatorship. But only one Esma officer, Lieutenant Jorge Mayol, perished in a skirmish with guerrillas in 1976.

The military had a much wider target than just the guerrilla groups, which by 1976 were already in disarray. The regime openly vowed to defend "western and Christian civilization" by turning Argentina into "the moral reserve of the western world."

To do that, thousands of young people with ideas borrowed from America's hippie culture, the Paris of May 1968 and the Cuban revolution had to die. "Our Christian identity was in danger," police commander Miguel Etchecolatz testified during his trial, kissing his white rosary before the judges.

But men like Etchecolatz are “political prisoners” who should be amnestied, say the pro-dictatorship activists who now have the ear of Macri’s government. Victoria Villarruel believes it was the guerrillas, not the military, who committed crimes against humanity.

She represents CELTYV (Centre for Legal Studies on Terrorism and its Victims), a group pressuring to reopen trials against former guerrillas even though the supreme court has conclusively ruled that guerrilla actions constituted ordinary crimes that have long fallen under the statute of limitations.

Those opinions appear to have found a sympathetic hearing from Macri’s administration. “What they seek is very valid, the recognition of civilians killed by terrorist groups,” said Claudio Avruj, the human rights secretary who has met with Villarruel.

Alejandro Rozitchner is Macri’s speechwriter and a longtime personal friend of the president. A philosopher who speaks openly about his marijuana use, he feels Argentina has dwelt long enough on the 1970s. “It has to do with keeping open a past that recedes increasingly further into the past,” he said.

Such words draw low, painful sighs from grandmother Carlotto. “It’s not the past to me or the other mothers, grandmothers and children of missing people,” she said.

Carlotto was united with her grandson only two years ago, 36 years after the military murdered her daughter after she gave birth in one of their death camps. She estimates 280 missing grandchildren remain still to be found.

“What do they pretend with this new language they’ve invented for human rights?” Carlotto asks. “Why do they meet with representatives of groups who claim that convicted murderers are political prisoners? They’re not political prisoners, they are genocidal killers, abominable assassins who refuse to confess who they gave our grandchildren to.”

Chestnut, Mary Boykin, *A Diary from Dixie, 1859-1861.*

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/chesnut/maryches.html>

April 19th. - Just now, when Mr. Clay dashed up-stairs, pale as a sheet, saying, "General Lee has capitulated," I saw it reflected in Mary Darby's face before I heard him speak. She staggered to the table, sat down, and wept aloud. Mr. Clay's eyes were not dry. Quite beside herself Mary shrieked, "Now we belong to negroes and Yankees!" Buck said, "I do not believe it."

How different from ours of them is their estimate of us. How contradictory is their attitude toward us. To keep the despised and iniquitous South within their borders, as part of their country, they are willing to enlist millions of men at home and abroad, and to spend billions, and we know they do not love fighting *per se*, nor spending money. They are perfectly willing to have three killed for our one. We hear they have all grown rich, through "shoddy," whatever that is. Genuine Yankees can make a fortune trading jack-knives.

While the Preston girls are here, my dining-room is given up to them, and we camp on the landing, with our one table and six chairs. . . . Night and day this landing and these steps are crowded with the *élite* of the Confederacy, going and coming, and when night comes, or rather, bedtime, more beds are made on the floor of the landing-place for the war-worn soldiers to rest upon. The whole house is a bivouac. As Pickens said of South Carolina in 1861, we are "an armed camp."

We are to stay here. Running is useless now; so we mean to bide a Yankee raid, which they say is imminent. Why fly? They are everywhere, these Yankees, like red ants, like the locusts and frogs which were the plagues of Egypt.

April 22d. - It has been a wild three days, with aides galloping around with messages, Yankees hanging over us like a sword of Damocles. We have been in queer straits. We sat up at Mrs. Bedon's dressed, without once going to bed for forty-eight hours, and we were awearry.

Colonel Cadwallader Jones came with a despatch, a sealed secret despatch. It was for General Chestnut. I opened it. Lincoln, old Abe Lincoln, has been killed, murdered, and Seward wounded! Why? By whom? It is simply maddening, all this.

I sent off messenger after messenger for General Chesnut. I have not the faintest idea where he is, but I know this foul murder will bring upon us worse miseries. Mary Darby says, "But they murdered him themselves. No Confederates are in Washington." "But if they see fit to accuse us of instigating it?" "Who murdered him? Who knows?" "See if they don't take vengeance on us, now that we are ruined and can not repel them any longer."

The death of Lincoln I call a warning to tyrants. He will not be the last President put to death in the capital, though he is the first.

Tri-Weekly Telegraph, Houston, April 25, 1865, front page.

From now until God's judgement day, the minds of men will not cease to thrill at the killing of Abraham Lincoln, by the hands of Booth, the actor, in the theatre at Washington, on the night of April 14th, 1865. . . .Some will regard it with all the horror of the most wicked assassination, others will feel it to be that righteous retribution which descends direct from the hand of God upon the destroyer of human liberty, and the oppressor of a free people. . . . [W]hilst we often condemn the human instrumentality, the death it inflicts is recognized to be a doom of that awful Nemesis which avenges wrong in dark and cruel fate. . . . Not a soldier, nor a woman, an old man nor a lisping child with true heart to this Southern land but feels the thrill, electric, divine, at this sudden fall in his own blood of the chief of our oppressors. "Sic Semper Tyrannis," so say we, a

thousand and a thousand times, *Sic Semper Tyrannis*. Whoever should impose the fate of servitude and slavery on this Confederate States, whatever fatal Providence of God, shall lay him low, we say, and say it gladly, God's will be done."

Myrta Lockett Avary, *Dixie After The War, ; an exposition of social conditions existing in the South, during the twelve years succeeding the fall of Richmond. 1906.*

"I remember how one poor woman took the news. She was half crazed by her losses and troubles; one son had been killed in battle, another had died in prison, of another she could not hear if he were living or dead; her house had been burned; her young daughter turned out with her in the night, had died of fright and exposure. She ran in, crying, "Lincoln has been killed! Thank God!" Next day she came, still and pale: "I have prayed it all out of my heart," she said. "That is, I'm not glad. But, somehow, I *can't* be sorry, I believe it was the vengeance of the Lord."

Twice Sold, Twice Ransomed: Autobiography of Mr. and Mrs. L.P. Ray, 1925.

"It was not long until my brothers came home and we were all gathered together. Soon after that came the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. That brought great sorrow over all the land, and especially to the blacks. I remember the village of huts where the negroes lived; every one would have a little piece of black cloth hung on it. They could not afford crepe, but it was merely a piece of old black pants, or coat, or anything in order to show their bereavement and their sorrow, that one so great had been taken from them; they loved him as their friend and deliverer. I heard them speak so much about "Marse Abraham" in their prayers, and sermons, and talk, and about "resting in Abraham's bosom" that I thought for a long time that Abraham Lincoln, and Abraham in the Bible, were the same man, until I began to go to Sunday-school and learned the difference."

"The Murder of the President," Sermon delivered at Zion Temple Chicago on 19 April 1865. by Rabbi Bernhard Felsenthal

In this same hour, dear friends, as we are gathered in this house, thousands of houses of God are open for the same purpose – hundreds of thousands of people are gathered for the same purpose. Just as this temple of ours is furnished with the symbols of sorrow and the emblems of grief, innumerable public and private buildings are clothed in the garb of mourning. The same feeling of deep pain which permeates the souls of all who are present here lives in the breast of millions. . . . His righteousness goes before him! In the language of the Bible, "righteousness" means none other than what we now call greatness of spirit and a powerful morality, the sum of glorious and noble works. And Lincoln was great. He was great in that he 1. Undertook to complete the task that fell to him – the restoration of the union – with wisdom and steadfastness, and truly completed it; 2. In that he made the glorious principle of the emancipation proclamation – "all men are free and equal!" – a reality; and 3. In that he paired justice and steadfastness with clemency and love in every undertaking."

Speech, Frederick Douglass, late December 1865.

This declaration [Emancipation Proclamation] on his part though it seemed to mean little, meant a great deal. It was like Abraham Lincoln. He never shocked prejudices unnecessarily. Having always learned statesmanship while splitting rails, he always used the thin edge of the wedge first and the fact that he used this at all meant that he would, if need be, use the thick as well as thin.

He was a progressive man, a human man, an honorable man, and at heart, an anti-slavery man. He had exhausted the resources of conciliation upon rebel slaveholders and now looked to the principles of Liberty and Justice, for the peace, Security, Happiness and prosperity of his Country. I assume therefore, had Abraham Lincoln been spared to see this day the negro of the South would have more than a hope of enfranchisement and no rebels could hold the reins of Government in any one of the late rebellious states. Whosoever else have cause to mourn the loss of Abraham Lincoln, to the colored people of this country, his death is an unspeakable calamity.”

[From Demopolis Herald, 19th.]

GLORIOUS NEWS.

Lincoln and Seward Assassinated!

LEE DEFEATS GRANT.

Andy Johnson Inaugurated as President.

We have been favored with the following private dispatch, which we hasten to lay before our readers, with the hope that it may prove true:

DEMOPOLIS, April 18, 1865 – To Col. Garner: – Sir – The operator at Meridian has just telegraphed me that Memphis papers state, over the signature of Secretary Stanton, that Lincoln and Seward were both assassinated the same night at Washington City. Lincoln was shot through the head in the theatre; Seward slain while sick in bed.

Andy Johnson was inaugurated President of the United States on the 15th.

This is said to be true beyond a doubt.

I in queried particularly from the operator as to whether there was anything more in regard to Lee’s capitulation, and he said nothing at all from Northern papers. A gentleman just from Selma says it is believed in Selma that Lee and Johnson had effected a junction and whipped Grant soundly. Passengers, wounded soldiers and officers confirm this.

This s given on the authority of the operator at Meridian.

John W. Henley, Operator.

It is to show this letter

Wm. Ross, Co. A, 11th Mass. Vol.
Rock Ark. Apr. 17th 1863
(Dear Julia (and) Miller,

I am well, (and)

hope you see the same. Two letters
from your hand are recievd, Also one
from your Father informing me that he
had moved (and) had slept sound for once
in four years without dread of rebels, or
Bushwhackers, Also one from Julia McFall
(and) one from James Harvey Willhoar
he is Sergeant of Battery I, 2nd Artillery
and was at Johnsonville Tennessee at the
time of writing he writes that he was in all
of the great battle at Nashville,

We have news of the great Victories, the fall
of Richmond, Surrender of Beers army,
Surrender of Joe Johnston's army, Captain
of Mobile, and the capture of the great chief
of Guerrillas, "Hornet" of Tennessee, And now
in the midst of all our successes (and)
joyicings, we were notified this morning



Julia E. Neagarty

Mt. Vernon
Missoury

LITTLE ROCK
ARK
APR 18 1863
A

at the rising sun, by the heavy dull
booming of Cannon that some sad
event had occurred, and in a few more
minutes we received the awful news
announcing the assassination of the
President and Secretary of the United
States. (And in an almost incredible space
of time a dead Gloom over spread all, (And
when we had put upon us the Badge of
Mourning, (And I had the Company to fall in
line. I then in an official manner made
known to all, the sad news. Many were the
braving cheeks that were bitterly washed
with tears of deep heart-felt sorrow, then
many were the wails of Bengalia. (And deep
(And horrid curses against traitors, treason
(And rebellion, All business of every kind
was suspended, all men requested to stay
in camp, (And the stillness of death (And
the most mighty reverence has remained
uniform throughout the entire day
(And men propose to enter as Veterans)
(I do not.)

" I thought we are done with the Old
Corporal. he resigned,
I wrote to Julia McCall last night (And
I must write to your father tomorrow, (And
I must send the money that Jack gave
me right away, I have not time to
letter from him for several days, (I shall
either send you some money or come
and bring it before long,
Stem, Tom, Slakey, (And Henry are
well, My own health is very fair at
present.

I must now close for I am
not in condition to write, but hope
to write soon again, (And Alleg expect
to hear from you. Give my kindest
regards to all, while I remain as
ever, Your affectionate husband,

William Waggoner
St. L. (Mo.) Co. A. 11th Ind.

To
J. E. Waggoner,
W. E. Waggoner,