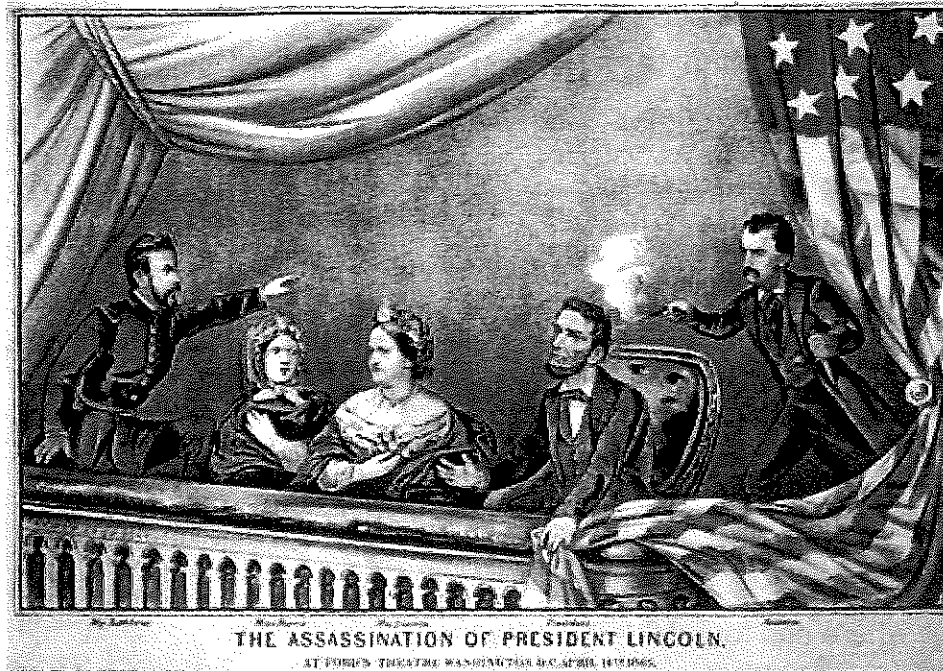


Star-Spangled Relic



"Assassination of Abraham Lincoln" lithograph

In 1998, Kelly Nolin stumbled across a lost piece of American history. Neatly folded in a glass-topped box in a storage room at the Connecticut Historical Society lay an American flag.

This was no ordinary flag. Stitched on the flag's faded, star-filled blue field were these words: "Presented to the Treasury Guard Regt. by the Ladies of the Treasury Dept. 1864."

"I just got real quiet, and my heart skipped a beat," said Nolin, the Historical Society's head librarian in 1998.

Nolin had uncovered one of five American flags that workers at Ford's Theatre had placed in Abraham Lincoln's theater box on the night of his assassination, April 14, 1865.

After an exhaustive three-year study to prove the flag authentic, the Connecticut Historical Society displayed the banner with other Civil War relics.

Five American flags surrounded Lincoln; his wife, Mary Todd; and two guests on that fateful night as they watched a comedy called *Our American Cousin*. Historians say the flag hung on a pole to the left of the president. In fact, they believe, Lincoln might have clutched the flag immediately after John Wilkes Booth shot him in the back of the head.

How did a flag from one of the darkest moments in American history wind up in a basement in

Hartford, Connecticut?

After the shooting, the flag went back to the U.S. Treasury Department. Sometime in the 1870s, a Treasury Department captain gave the banner to a Connecticut Civil War veteran. Years later, the veteran gave the flag to his son. The son then presented the flag, in 1922, to the historical society, where it remained for 76 years.

"The flag makes history real," said Susan Schoelwer of the historical society.

QUIZ

1. When she found the flag, Kelly Nolin said she got quiet and her heart skipped a beat. We can guess that

- A. she knew the flag was very important.
- B. the Civil War made her excited.
- C. her work at the Historical Society was secret.
- D. the place where she found the flag was scary.

2. Since the flag was kept in a storage room for probably most of the 76 years it was owned by the Connecticut Historical Society, the society probably

- A. had no room to display it.
- B. doesn't use the storage room often.
- C. thought that the flag was too valuable to display.
- D. forgot they had the flag or did not know it was so important.

3. The flag was located _____ first and _____ next.

- A. in Lincoln's box at Ford's Theater / at the U.S. Treasury
- B. at the U.S. Treasury / in Lincoln's box at Ford's Theater
- C. with a Civil War veteran / at the U.S. Treasury
- D. at the Connecticut Historical Society / at the U.S. Treasury

4. Which of the following is an opinion?

- A. Workers placed five flags in Lincoln's box at Ford's Theater.
- B. The flag hung on a pole to the left of Lincoln.
- C. After the shooting, the flag went back to the U.S. Treasury.
- D. The flag makes history real.