"The Todd Letter" and how it was located and photographed.

At 2 P. M. April 14, 1865, the U. S. Monitor "Montauk", lying at her wharf in the Washington Navy Yard received an official visit from Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, accompanied by Mrs. Lincoln and several officers of high rank in the Naval service. The President was met at the gang plank of the vessel, and received on board with the appropriate ceremonies due him. After the official inspection had been completed, the President was introduced to the officers and crew on the "Montauk", and during a short speech of congratulation, he invited as many of the officers and crew, as could be spared, to be present at the evening performance of "Our American Cousin", to be given at old Ford's Theater, and then left the vessel for other duties.

In the evening, a great throng was in the theater, among which many of the officers and crew of the "Montauk" were scattered. Among them, in a seat directly opposite the Presidential Box, sat Dr. Geo. B. Todd, the Surgeon of the vessel, who witnessed the entrance of the Presidential party, and the terrible tragedy, that took place during the evening. The Commander of the "Montauk" was also present, and witnessed the assassination. He, at once, took charge of the theater, and ordered Dr. Todd to give the news to the people of the Nation and to the world generally. Dr. Todd carried out his orders, and in the early morning returned to the ship. While all of the details of the assassination were fresh in his mind, he sat down at his desk, and wrote to his brother, Mr. Henry P. Todd, a resident of the town of Spencerport, N. Y. The letter was carefully preserved and is now in possession of Mr. Harry S. Todd, a member of the Rochester, N. Y. Bar.

Mr. John Hoffman, a clerk in the Office of the Auditor Disbursements, at the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Building, Baltimore, Md., knew that a fellow clerk, Mr. E. L. Bangs, was a collector of Lincolniana, and mentioned the existence of this letter to him. Mr. Bangs, at once, suggested that it would be well to get the letter and have photo. negatives made of it, so that if anything happened to the original, the copies would still be in existence and the subject matter of the letter be available. Mr. Hoffman's wife, who before her marriage was Miss Florence Todd, a daughter of Dr. Geo. B. Todd, the author of the letter, was told to secure the loan of the letter from her cousin, Mr. Harry Todd, of Rochester, with a portrait of Dr. Todd and a view of the gun-room of the "Montauk", and in due time, the negatives were made and the letter and pictures returned to their custodian. The thanks of all concerned in studying the life of Lincoln and those who collect Lincolniana are gratefully extended to Mr. and Mrs. Hoffman for their work in securing the loan of the letter, as it is undoubtedly a valuable addition to the facts concerning the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

Since the copies were made, it has been found that the gun room of the "Montauk" as shown in the print, is the room where the body of John Wilkes Booth was taken after his capture and death, and the autopsy on his body performed, with Dr. Todd as one of the surgeons who performed the autopsy.

I Certify that the facts as related concerning the locating and copying of the letter and pictures are correct in every detail, and I have the negatives as described in my possession at this time.

Baltimore, Md
June 22. 1925.

Signed ---------- E. L. Bangs