

Dr. Clarence Wilson Says Booth Went West After Assassination

The body of John Wilkes Booth, perfectly preserved, is in Memphis, Tenn., Doctor Clarence True Wilson, general secretary of the Methodist Episcopal Board of Temperance, declared this afternoon.

"I saw the body several months ago," he said. "I found on it many marks of identification which prove conclusively the man is Booth."

Doctor Wilson said he had just completed an investigation of the Lincoln shooting. He has spent thirty-eight years in this work.

"When I was a boy in Maryland, I was told the story of Booth's escape by several persons who were in the plot," Doctor Wilson said. "Since that time I have been spending much time gathering proof that Lincoln slayer was not killed by soldiers as generally believed."

"I have scores of affidavits from Booth's family and others who were in a position to know everything."

"At the time soldiers from Washington were searching for Booth in lower Maryland, near here, the slayer was riding horseback on his way West."

"The soldiers went to the Garrett home in Virginia on a tip that Booth had gone there. Mr. Garrett met them at the gate. They asked to see his new boarder. That same day a confederate of Booth's, who had just made a trip some miles north to get some papers for the slayer, had asked permission to sleep in the barn."

"The soldiers searched the barn and found this man. His last name was Ruddy. I think his first was Gerald, but I am not sure. Ruddy was shot and killed. His body was taken to the old penitentiary and four years later turned over to the Booth family. It was buried in Baltimore."

Booth Was Never Caught

"But Booth was never caught. I am sure of that. I followed his trail from the time he left Washington until his death. I have affidavits from people who saw him on the trip, people who knew Booth intimately."

Doctor Wilson said that a dozen or more persons who knew Booth gave him a description of the man, together with tell tale marks. "One mark in particular identifies him," Doctor Wilson said, "that is a cut over his left eye. I saw that mark on his body several months ago."

The body of Booth was em-

balmed by the family for perpetual care.

"It was never buried," he said. "The body was turned over to an old couple in Memphis. The man died several months ago. His wife has been so bothered with people that I do not think it right for me to give the exact address in Memphis."

Doctor Wilson said Booth's lawyer, the man who served him for more than twenty-five years, took charge of the body when it first came to Memphis.

The story of Booth's escape in detail, a history of his life after his escape, together with details of his death, will be revealed, Doctor Wilson says, in a book just completed for publication. The title will be "The Trail of John Wilkes Booth" or "Did Lincoln's Murderer Escape?"

In his inquiry, extending over nearly four decades, Doctor Wilson said he travelled thousands of miles.

"I investigated all sorts of rumors and reports," he said. "I soon learned that what I was told when a boy was true; Booth escaped."

His Family Knew It

"Everyone in his family knew about it. Most of them saw him and talked with him. His niece's story is true. She saw her uncle before he died."

"I have talked with hundreds of Booth's friends, with several of his co-conspirators. I know the whole story of the plot to kill Lincoln and its execution."

The man in Moline, Ill., who died several days ago, taking with him, as he said, the secret of the story of the burial of Booth is made out of whole cloth.

"I have investigated the man's story and I don't find his name mentioned," Doctor Wilson said. "There was no secret about the burial of the body believed to be Booth's. The Government turned it over to the family of Booth four years after Lincoln's assassination."

CITES RECORDS OF BOOTH'S END

Ample Historic Evidence, in His
Opinion, That Slayer Died in
Burning Barn, as Reported

DIFFERENCES OF OPINION

Story Told by Actor's Sister
Confirmed by C. T. Wilson;
Denied by O. H. Oldroyd

Robert Todd Lincoln does not credit the story that John Wilkes Booth escaped and lived thirty-eight years after assassinating Abraham Lincoln in Ford's Theater here sixty years ago.

He and Mrs. Lincoln believe it was Booth who died in the lurid glare of the burning barn on the Garrett plantation, shot down by one of the troopers surrounding the place.

This was learned last night from inquiries at the Lincoln mansion, No. 3014 N street northwest, relative to the remarkable story told in Minneapolis yesterday by Blanche Booth, niece of the assassin, after sixty years of silence.

MISS BOOTH'S STORY.

Miss Booth vowed that Booth rode West on horseback after the tragedy and did not die until 1903, when he committed suicide at Enid, Okla., aged sixty-five years.

Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Lincoln could be seen at their Georgetown home. The son of the Great Emancipator, eighty-two, and infirm, sees no one. Mrs. Lincoln is in bed with the grippe, it was said.

Mrs. Lincoln sent out a pad of paper and asked the newspaper caller to write out his inquiries. The questions and a clipping of Miss Booth's story were sent in to her.

The answer is returned:

"Mr. Lincoln believes that Booth was killed shortly after the tragedy in which his father lost his life. He thinks there is ample historical evidence to bear this out."

"He thinks it is too well proven that it was Booth's body that was taken from the Garrett plantation near Bowling Green, Va. Of course many strange things can happen, Mr. Lincoln says, but he and Mrs. Lincoln think the story in the papers was gotten up to make a sensation."

TWO OPINIONS HELD.

The statements of Miss Booth started a lively controversy in Washington circles among persons credited with being authorities on Lincoln and his death.

Doctor Clarence True Wilson, who has spent years in investigating Lincoln's death, confirmed Miss Booth's statement in every respect.