

ENID STORY OF BOOTH'S DEATH BOBS UP AGAIN

State Historian Says Body Of
Slayer of Lincoln Was
Identified by Friend.

U.S. REWARD NOT PAID

Implication of Andrew John-
son Is Doubted as Being
Too Far-Fetched.

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MINNEAPOLIS, Minn., Feb. 21.—
John Wilkes Booth escaped. This was
admitted here Saturday by his niece,
Blanche Booth, breaking the sixty-
year silence of the Booth family re-
garding the fate of Abraham Lincoln's
slayer.

In an interview given exclusively to
the Minneapolis Daily Star and Inter-
national News Service, Miss Booth re-
futed the statement made on Feb-
ruary 17 by Edward Harper Sampson
of Moline, Ill., one of the guards sup-
posed to have killed Booth, that with
his death, the secret of the burial
place of Booth's body would be lost.
She believed Sampson knew that
Booth was not killed by his pursuers.

Long Debate Settled

After fighting off interviewers for
years, Miss Booth finally revealed
that the story of Finis L. Bates was
true, thus settling a controversy that
has raged for years since it was an-
nounced Booth was killed in a barn
on the Garrett plantation near Bowl-
ing Green, Va.

"Wilkes Booth met his mother a
year after the assassination and told
her all about the plot, its execution
and his carefully planned escape,"
Miss Booth said.

"They met in San Francisco after
he had gone from Canada to Mexico
and had arranged for a meeting
there. She repeatedly told members of
the family she had seen her son and
that he had told her all about it."

She Lived With Uncle

Miss Booth was for a considerable
period a member of the company of
her uncle, Edwin Booth.

She has lived for many years in
Minneapolis and was out of touch
with other members of the family un-
til the recent visit of a relative who
continues to follow the stage tradi-
tion.

John Wilkes Booth lived thirty-
eight years after the death of Lin-
coln and his own supposed death and
died by his own hand in 1903 in Enid,
Okla., at the age of 65 years.

Visited His Mother

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Dr. Clarence True Wilson, retired
lobbyist for the Methodist Episcopal
church, in Washington, D. C., spent
years looking over records pertaining
to the death. His conclusion, as will
soon be published in a volume of his
own, is that secret service guards
under Colonel Baker missed their man
at the Garrett barn and that David E.
George, who died in Enid, Okla., was
the true assassin of Abraham Lin-
coln.

Body Was Identified By Old Acquaintance

The foregoing story from Minne-
apolis was shown to Secretary J. B.
Thoburn, of the Oklahoma Historical
society and he was asked as to his
opinion concerning the identity of
John Wilkes Booth and David E.
George. Like most men who follow
historical research as a pursuit, Tho-
burn, is cautious and conservative in
regard to forming hasty conclusions
concerning matters of popular inter-
est over which there is ground for
dispute or difference of opinion. Tho-
burn is far from being credulous con-
cerning sensational stories, such as
that of the alleged suicide of John
Wilkes Booth at Enid, twenty-two
years ago. In reply to the inquiry,
he made the following statement:

Thoburn's Statement

"For years I was skeptical concern-
ing the story of John Wilkes Booth
having spent his last years in Okla-
homa and ending his own life at Enid.
I paid little or no attention to the
matter for I did not regard it as
worthy serious consideration. The
late W. P. Campbell, founder and cus-
todian of the Oklahoma Historical so-

ciety, who had personally met David
E. George several times, took a great
deal of interest in the story and, dur-
ing the last years of his life, conduct-
ed extensive researches into the de-
tails of the amazing story of the al-
leged escape and subsequent career of
the assassin of Abraham Lincoln.
Most people who knew Campbell dur-
ing this period regarded the whole
matter as a vagary of an old man.
The fact remains, however, that
Campbell accumulated a lot of mighty
interesting data which tended to cor-
roborate the story. Among the letters
which he left in his accumulated cor-
respondence were several from Miss
Blanche Booth of Minneapolis, who
certainly did not take issue with him,
and who was evidently much interest-
ed in his effort to gather up the
threads which would enable him to re-
construct the story in detail.

Dr. Wilson Is Interested

"Dr. Clarence True Wilson of Wash-
ington, D. C., mentioned in the Minne-
apolis story, paid two visits to Okla-
homa City to see Campbell, the last
being less than a year ago and only
a few weeks before Campbell's death.
In his youth, Doctor Wilson taught
school in the neighborhood where
Booth had made his escape and he
said it was a matter of common
knowledge among the people of that
vicinity that the man who was killed
by Colonel Baker's pursuers was not
John Wilkes Booth. I spent an hour
with Doctor Wilson on the occasion of
his last visit to Oklahoma City. He
told me that he had carefully inspec-
ted the embalmed cadaver of the Enid
suicide, at Memphis, only a day or
two before, and that he had positive-
ly identified it by scars and other
marks which were known to have
been on the person of John Wilkes
Booth.

Reward Never Claimed

"The fact that the reward which
was offered by the federal government
for the apprehension of John Wilkes
Booth, dead or alive, was never
claimed is certainly significant of a
possible escape.

"I have never followed the story
out in its details but, from what has
come to my knowledge, I am con-
vinced that it is not merely plausible
but also entitled to consideration if
not credence. The one phase concern-
ing which I would have serious
doubts would be the insinuation con-
cerning the implication of Vice Pres-
ident Andrew Johnson in the plot.
This did not sound reasonable to me."

Enid People Were Skeptical of Claim

With a few exceptions, the people
of Enid, where David E. George took
his life, never believed the man's

claim to being John Wilkes Booth.
At the time of George's death his pre-
tension received scant attention, but
some time later a man came to Enid,
investigated the case and declared to
the world that the deceased was John
Wilkes Booth. This was Finis L.
Bates.

Bates spent much time on the sub-
ject and delivered a series of lectures.
When he lectured in Enid, he was not
very well received, for most of those
present disbelieved his story.

George's body was embalmed by W.
B. Pennimana and remained in Penni-
man's possession many years. Penni-
man placed the body in an open
wooden box, and it stood in a corner
of his undertaking establishment at
Enid for many years. The body was
not claimed, so far as is known, by
any relatives of John Wilkes Booth.
It was viewed by thousands of per-
sons.

When Pennimana sold his business,
a dispute arose with the new owners
over possession of the body. A short
time afterwards the body disappeared
from the undertaking establishment.
It is reported now to be stored in a
garage in Memphis, Tenn.

he had gone from Canada to Mexico and had arranged for a meeting there. She repeatedly told members of the family she had seen her son and that he had told her all about it."

She Lived With Uncle

Miss Booth was for a considerable period a member of the company of her uncle, Edwin Booth.

She has lived for many years in Minneapolis and was out of touch with other members of the family until the recent visit of a relative who continues to follow the stage tradition.

John Wilkes Booth lived thirty-eight years after the death of Lincoln and his own supposed death and died by his own hand in 1903 in Enid, Okla., at the age of 65 years.

Visited His Mother

He was seen by his mother in San Francisco a year after his escape. He revealed his identity twice, once when he believed he was dying and once on his death bed.

He produced a photograph proving his identity that was identified by Edwin Booth and Joseph Jefferson.

He left behind him a sworn statement declaring that Andrew Johnson, vice-president who succeeded Lincoln not only suggested the crime but arranged for his escape.

Wrong Man Was Killed

The man killed in the barn at the Garrett plantation near Bowling Green, Va., was named "Ruddy," Miss Booth declared.

Booth had escaped from the Garrett place nearly five hours earlier.

The story of Finis L. Bates, greatest authority on the subject is true, Miss Booth said.

At the time of his death Booth was known as David E. George and he pointed out physical characteristics that answered the description of Booth.

Body Is Embalmed

The body has been embalmed so that it will remain intact for 100 years. It was examined in 1922, nineteen years after his death, according to the story Miss Booth has admitted is true.

"John Wilkes Booth, the man who assassinated President Lincoln at Ford's theater on the eve of April 14, 1865, died by his own hand of poison in the Grand Avenue hotel at Enid, Oklahoma, on January 13, 1903," Miss Booth said Saturday.

"Authentic photographs of John Wilkes Booth are in the possession of authorities that were taken of him at the ages of 27 years, before he murdered the president, at 33 years, eleven years after the assassination and nineteen years before his death in Enid.

Took Two New Names

"Prominent men holding that Booth was not killed in the Garrett barn have exhausted the subject with their inquiries only to come to the conclusion that he lived to be 65 years old under the names of John St. Helen and David E. George.

"Finis L. Bates, probably the greatest authority on the subject, knew John Wilkes Booth as John St. Helen at Granbury, Texas.

"It was there when Booth was deathly ill, that he confessed to Bates his true identity and presented him with a tintype which was later identified by members of Booth's own family and by Joseph Jefferson, the actor."

Later, according to Blanche Booth,

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