

JOHN H TRAYLOR  
LIVE OAK STREET  
ROCKPORT TEXAS

July 14, 1921

Mr F L Black  
Dearborn Publishing Co  
Dearborn Mich

Dear Sir:

Replying to your communication as to John St. Helen, alias John Wilkes Booth, perhaps I, of all men living at Grandbury, Texas, in the Seventies, remember the least of the appearance of John St. Helen. I arrived in Grandbury in July 1871, and was elected Sheriff in February 1876, and was in office there for more than ten years consecutively. St. Helen in the early seventies resided at Glenrose eighteen miles distant.

While I remember all the parties well, you refer to, I don't even remember St. Helen's appearance, but only that a man going by that name resided at Grandbury for a short time about 1875 or 1876, and my impression is that he would have been a fit companion of John Reed, who was a sporting character.

About 1876 to 1879, a Mrs. Bell, a reputable woman, was visiting my home in Grandbury where she resided, and the subject of John Wilkes Booth arose, and she maintained he was still alive.

I thought so little of it that I did not participate in the discussion between her and my wife; who gave the accepted version of Booth's pursuit and death by the Federal authorities.

Mrs. Bell asserted most vigorously Booth was alive and one of her uncles had so told her, and all the family knew it, and that she was cousin of Booth; she was so earnest that my wife was convinced even up till now, but I still gave it no thought till after I saw and read the book entitled, "The escape and suicide of John Wilkes Booth," by Finis L. Bates; and after talking with truthful and conservative men who knew John St. Helen, so much

better than I did, I was ready to believe the preponderance of evidence and the circumstances were so overwhelming that John St. Helen was J. Wilkes Booth, especially when I recall the contradictory statements as to Booth's place of burial in the public press at the time of his reputed death, and the government's refusal to pay the \$100,000.00 reward because Booth's death could not be proven.

So in accordance with the premises I have so formed my opinion. General Taylor was a militia general in Florida during the civil war and a very garrulous man.

Mrs. George Bell if now living, resides in the Panhandle of Texas and Judge B. M. Estes and Lon Gordon of Grandbury can give you her address.

The State of Texas )  
County of Aransas )

Before me John B. Eddins, a Notary Public in and Aransas County, Texas, on this day personally appeared John H. Traylor, well known to me, and who being by me duly sworn deposes and says that all the matters, facts, and statements in the above and foregoing letter are true and correct to the best of his recollection and belief.

John H. Traylor

Subscribed and sworn to before me by Jno. H. Traylor on this the 14th day of July 1921.

John B. Eddins,  
Notary Public Aransas County  
Texas

My commission expires June 1st, 1923.