

VOLUME ONE

LINCOLN-BOOTH

ST. HELEN-DeGEORGE

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*Booth died
at Garrettts*

LINCOLN'S ASSASSINATION

AND THE

BOOTH MYTHS

(OR)

THE ASSASSINATION OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

AND THE

WILKES BOOTH MYTHS

(OR)

LINCOLN'S DEATH

AND THE

BOOTH MYTHS

by Fred L. Black

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AND

WILLIAM CLARK

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THE PREFACE

Preface

Thanks are due Mr. Charles J. G. Doherty of New York City for furnishing me with the manuscript of the story written by his father Lieutenant Edward P. Doherty and a picture of Lieutenant Doherty and Boston Corbett taken together. Mr. Robert Gould Shaw, Curator, and Mrs. J. Dudley Hall, Custodian of the Theater Collection of the Harvard College Library gave me able assistance in connection with their Booth collection of manuscript, letters, pictures, and clippings.

Thanks are due also to Mr. Quincy Kilby, Brookline, Mass., for thirty years treasurer of the Boston Theater, for the use of his scrap books and old play bills ^{which dealt} ~~dealing~~ with the Booth family.

^{Oklahoma} William G. Shepherd, a war correspondent, who in 1924 investigated the Enid legends for Harpers Magazine made suggestions which greatly aided.

Open 2nd part

Preface

MR DAVIS: I SHOULD LIKE SOME SENATOR TO GIVE THE SENATE SOME ASSURANCE THAT ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S MURDERER WAS IN FACT KILLED. I HAVE NEVER SEEN MYSELF ANY SATISFACTORY EVIDENCE THAT BOOTH WAS KILLED.

MR HOWARD: IN ORDER TO PROVE IT DEMONSTRATIVELY, PERHAPS WE SHOULD BE COMPELLED TO SEND FOR BOSTON CORBETT, WHO SHOT HIM. I SUPPOSE THE HONORABLE SENATOR IS SPEAKING OF BOOTH.

MR DAVIS: YES.

MR JOHNSON: I SUBMIT TO MY FRIEND FROM KENTUCKY THAT THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT WE MUST TAKE JUDICIAL NOTICE OF, JUST AS WELL AS THAT JULIUS CAESAR IS DEAD.

MR DAVIS: I WOULD RATHER HAVE BETTER TESTIMONY OF THE FACT. I WANT IT PROVED THAT BOOTH WAS IN THAT BARN; I CANNOT CONCEIVE, IF HE WAS IN THE BARN, WHY HE WAS NOT TAKEN ALIVE AND BROUGHT TO THIS CITY ALIVE. I HAVE NEVER SEEN ANYBODY OR THE EVIDENCE OF ANYBODY THAT IDENTIFIED BOOTH AFTER HE IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN KILLED. WHY SO MUCH SECRECY ABOUT IT? WHY WAS NOT HIS BODY BROUGHT UP PUBLICLY TO WASHINGTON CITY AND EXPOSED TO THE GAZE OF THE MULTITUDE, THAT IT MIGHT BE IDENTIFIED? IT MAY BE THAT HE IS DEAD; BUT THERE IS A MYSTERY AND A MOST INEXPLICABLE MYSTERY TO MY MIND ABOUT THE WHOLE AFFAIR. HE MAY COME BACK SOME OF THESE DAYS AND MURDER SOMEBODY ELSE. (LAUGHTER.)

I MERELY GOT UP TO MAKE THIS SUGGESTION. I SUPPOSED THAT SOME GENTLEMAN WAS IN POSSESSION OF FACTS GOING TO SHOW THAT BOOTH WAS IDENTIFIED. * * * * * IF GENTLEMEN WILL REFER ME TO WHERE I CAN GET A NARRATIVE OF FACTS TO PROVE THE IDENTITY OF BOOTH, I WILL AT MY LEISURE READ IT WITH MUCH

INTEREST. I WANT TO BE ASSURED OF THE FACTS, NOT WITH A VIEW TO VOTE ON THIS BILL BUT WITH A VIEW TO THE HISTORY OF THE TRANSACTION.

I DO NOT SEE WHY, IF BOOTH WAS IN THE BARN, HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN SHOT. HE COULD HAVE BEEN CAPTURED JUST AS WELL ALIVE AS DEAD. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH MORE SATISFACTORY TO HAVE BROUGHT HIM UP HERE ALIVE AND TO HAVE INQUIRED OF HIM TO REVEAL THE WHOLE TRANSACTION, TO HAVE IMPLICATED ALL WHO WERE GUILTY AND TO HAVE EXCULPATED ALL WHO WERE INNOCENT. I DO NOT SEE ANY REASON WHY THE MATTER HAD NOT TAKEN THAT COURSE. BRING HIS BODY UP, CARRY IT TO THE CITY HALL, EXPOSE IT THERE TO PUBLIC GAZE, LET ALL WHO HAD SEEN HIM PLAYING, ALL WHO ASSOCIATED WITH HIM ON THE STAGE OR IN THE GREEN ROOM OR AT THE TAVERNS AND OTHER PUBLIC PLACES, HAVE HAD ACCESS TO HIS BODY TO HAVE IDENTIFIED IT. THAT WAS THE WAY, WHERE \$100,000 WAS OFFERED AS A REWARD FOR CAPTURING THE MAN. I AM CERTAIN I WAS AS INNOCENT OF THAT MURDER AS THE CHILD THAT IS YET UNBORN; BUT I SHOULD HAVE DISLIKED TO HAVE \$100,000 OFFERED FOR ME AS AN ACCOMPLICE IN THAT MURDER; IT WOULD HAVE CAUSED ME TO BE HUNG OR SHOT JUST AS CERTAIN AS FATE. (LAUGHTER.)

MR ANTHONY: I AM HAPPY TO RELIEVE MY FRIEND FROM KENTUCKY BY INFORMING HIM THAT A SMALL PART OF THE SKELETON OF BOOTH IS IN THE ANATOMICAL MUSEUM OF THE SURGEON GENERAL.

MR JOHNSON: WHO KNOWS THAT?

MR ANTHONY: I DO NOT KNOW HOW IT IS IDENTIFIED, BUT IT IS CERTIFIED TO BE THAT

The Place! ^{was} - The United States Senate

The Time: ^{was} - July 28th, 1866

The Characters! - The Senator from Kentucky - Mr Garret Davis
 " " " Michigan - Mr Jacob Howard
 " " " Maryland - Mr Reverdy Johnson
 " " " Rhode Island - Mr Henry Anthony

The Occasion - Discussion of H R Bill No. 801 providing for payment of rewards for the capture of Abraham Lincoln's assassins ^{in the United States Senate} ~~in the United States Senate~~. Although this occurred more than three score years ago, the statements made by Senator Davis still agitate the public mind ^{a part of}

It was on the night of April 14, 1865, after committing his appalling crime, that John Wilkes Booth escaped from Washington with David Herold, an accomplice. Together they worked their way down through Southern Maryland into Virginia, where Booth was shot in a barn, about ninety miles south of Washington, eleven days after the assassination. Although few facts in history are more firmly fixed than that this fate overtook the slayer of Abraham Lincoln, yet rumors began to spread at once over the country that the man shot in the burning barn was not John Wilkes Booth, and that the officers in charge had wilfully deceived the government that they might procure the immense reward offered for the capture. It was said, and by many believed, that the real John Wilkes Booth had escaped to the Island of Ceylon, to Mexico, to Palestine.

It was declared that Andrew Johnson, Lincoln's successor in the Presidency, was the instigator of the assassination and that his motive was personal ambition; ^{an alleged} that it was plotted by ^{the knights of the Golden Circle, a secret} Copperhead organization of which Booth was a member; ^{that it was} none of these, ^{but the results of machinations of Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary} Instead of dying out, these rumors finally broke into print, and many newspaper and magazine articles, as well as several books, have been published from time to time in an attempt to prove them true.

Scores of impossible stories of the escape, subsequent life and lonely death of Booth have been printed with a wealth of circumstance to support them, and thousands of persons may be found, especially in the South, who will never believe that Booth perished in the Garret barn.

The Government charged that Abraham Lincoln's murderers acted under orders of Jefferson Davis and other Confederate leaders.

of War and the Radicals in Congress

During 1920-21-22, the mummified body of a man who committed suicide at Enid, Oklahoma, in 1903, was exhibited in many eastern and southwestern towns as the body of John Wilkes Booth. With it were pictures of the Booth family, copies of affidavits, and other supporting "evidence" to prove that the mummy was in reality that of the country's most abhorred assassin.

This alleged body of Booth has been offered for sale several times since 1920. A real estate firm which claimed to be acting as brokers for the owner ~~was~~ sent out circulars describing the mummy. They offer ^{ed} with it a large number of copies of a sensational book purporting to give the true story of John Wilkes Booth's life.

In 1920 I made a thorough investigation for The Dearborn Independent into every phase of the matter and gathered first hand ~~and~~ documentary evidence touching every question and incident involved. The territory of the flight and capture was thoroughly covered, the identical sites examined, the living witnesses were interrogated, the contemporary evidence was again weighed, many forgotten records were ^{checked} ~~rechecked~~, and the mute gruesome relics of the crime were made to yield their testimony.

The accumulated material was laid away as of no timely interest until a ~~recent~~ fresh revival of the myth brought it to mind again. In Harper's Magazine for November, 1924, and in Collier's for December 27, 1924, articles on the question appeared. More recently newspapers all over the country have carried International News Service stories purporting to be exclusive interviews with the surviving relatives of Booth who allegedly identified the body; ^{of the Enid suicide as John Wilkes Booth} and a much advertised novel repeating the preposterous legends ^{was} ~~is now being~~ offered the public - ^{in 1926(?)} all of which provides amusing reading for anyone in possession of the facts.

I offer the following chapters that the candid reader may determine the question with finality for himself and I believe that it fully serves this end.

Mrs J. Sudby Hall, Custodian
of the Theatre Collection of the Harvard
College Library -

Mr. Robert Gould Shaw the
Curator of the Collection

The late Dennis Kilby, Brookline, Mass

The late Harry Handini - N.Y.

The late Dr Wm Barton - Lincoln author
Freddie Starnje " "

Ady Lewis Oppie War Dept.

~~W.F.~~ Cameron - Editor

~~Ch~~ Oldroyd

J.B. Daley - Lincoln author &
collector.

or others

FOREWORD

By

Charles J. Finger

Foreword

If a man writes a book, especially a book about some historical character, there are at least two things that should be made clear to his readers. First, why he writes: second, what authority or authorities he has for the statements that he makes. For at the best, when a man writes history, seeing that he cannot leap backward in time, his work is a kind of sifting process, a task that involves much comparing and rejecting, selecting and weighing, enlarging and narrowing, according to his superior knowledge, or according to some special light he may have gained by close study in the effort to get at foundation truths. Now Mr. Black is in the position of a man who saw a growing belief that struck him as peculiar, perhaps inaccurate, and decided that now or never was the time to clinch matters, before the last actors disappeared from the scene. So he went to work, saw straight, and set down without any trimmings what he saw and what he heard. And having seen, he brought a judicial mind to the weighing and sifting process.

When you come to consider, what is known as history must necessarily be a mass of inaccuracies, what with that unfortunate habit we all have of giving a cap and a stick to a plain tale before sending it on its way. When I say that, I have in mind other unfortunate habits; the habit of idealizing, not only those who achieve greatness or fame, but also those with the criminal tendency, by which characters presently appear theatrical and insincerely posed, sometimes misshapen, always super-normal or sub-normal; also that other trick of sickly sensationalism which distorts matters according to sectional or national or class view points so that some idolize the slayer and others the slain; also that trick of brute lying whether the lying be done around the winter stove of a cross-roads grocery, in the administrative office of some newspaper whose aim seems to be little more than the providing of readers some new sort of mental dissipation, or in exalted places where those in power distort for diplomatic or political reasons; in short, there are so many springs of inaccuracy, more or less potent, that it is folly to attempt to list them. At any rate because of

them, much of what is called history comes very, very close to fiction.

I spoke of bias, national and sectional, and had in mind the remark of one of my sons who exclaimed at the different view points gained from school histories as used in the north and the south, especially in the period of the Civil war. And another thing was in my mind. It was the recent receipt of a letter from a lady who is very active in southern patriotic societies, whose novels have approached the best-selling class; in that letter she wrote that the slayer of Lincoln was not killed, as some of us hold, but lived to a ripe old age. That belief is not uncommon in the southern states, for that heroes or semi-heroes die like ordinary men is hard to believe, apparently. Thus Kitchener, and Parnell, and Lenin, and Oscar Wilde were all reported to be living after their deaths. But with the belief in Booth's walking the earth under ^{an assumed} another name went ^{belief} another, that the slayer was a high-souled enthusiast and patriot who carried out ^a his plan with logical consistency and who has not received justice at the hands of historians.

But she struck a tangle

Now observe, the lady was no amateur. She had studied Lincoln material closely, for the most of her books had to do with that character. To be sure, because of force of numbers opposed to her view, the opinion she held might be set aside as not worth serious consideration. But then majorities hardly count, accepting as they do what is told them openmouthed and without question. And to hold a statement to be true because it is widely believed, is, to say the least dangerous. For example, as a boy, like countless thousands of others of my age, accepting things taught by well meaning but inaccurate history teachers, I grew up holding Samuel Adams in high esteem as a man of rectitude, of motive, of delicacy of responsibility, and it came to me with a shock when I read, in Hosmer's Life of Samuel Adams that he was a careless and rather thriftless malster, short in his accounts as tax-collector, and, in spite of his fiery eloquence, not at all the sort of man I would hail as hero. Nor did I suspect that the early patriots were given to tarring and feathering, putting their opponents into rooms in which there was a fire on the hearth and then stopping up the chimney, stoning suspected

people, to leave unmentioned other acts of hooliganism, all of which you may verify for yourselves if you will take the trouble to go through the American Archives, fourth series. Nor was there any hint that the patriots were so barbarous, so unjust and unfair, that John Adams exclaimed against those on his own side, in a letter to his wife, saying: "A mind susceptible of the feelings of humanity, a heart which can be touched with sensibility for human misery and wretchedness must relent, must burn with the resentment at such outrageous injuries." (John Adams' Familiar Letters to His Wife, page 20.) That was written when Richard King, seeking legal redress against the mob, was assailed, had his property and books and papers destroyed by patriots disguised as Indians. And every student of American literature knows how James Rivington, the publicist, was treated and how for his life's sake he had to flee to a war ship. Or coming to more recent times, we recall statements made in the United States Senate by the Hon. R F Pettigrew of South Dakota, having to do with water cures, whipping torments, sun punishments and other atrocities in connection with the Phillipine campaign, all of which were kept out of history books. So it would seem that we are as busy as ever in distortion and falsification and the manufacture of inaccuracies, and are leaving enough to occupy the minds and engage the activities of posterity.

It is into one of those tangles that Mr Black has plunged, setting himself to thoroughly investigate one little incident in history, though not for a moment suspecting the ramifications that he found. But, once suspecting them, he rolled up his sleeves and went to work. His authorities were everything and anything. He went wherever there was a clue, read every possible piece of printed matter and looked at every get at-able photograph. He visited places and took measurements, and incidentally collected a vast amount of material. On all that he brought to bear an admirably trained intellect, and, as a side issue he gave careful consideration to Booth's motives. As a result, he came to question the slayer's sanity; not that Booth was a raving lunatic, shouting and tearing and smashing and foaming at the mouth - had he been that he would have been less dangerous. But he was on the border line, one of those fellows of supreme egotism

playing the part of reformer, as also was Guiteau who killed Garfield, and Czolgosz who slew McKinley.

From that mass of information Mr Black has selected that which is salient, expanding considerably, though by no means unnecessarily the story that appeared serially in The Dearborn Independent. That the book is one of special interest is true, ^{and probably because of that} ~~therefore~~, it can expect no sky rocket career. But other books of special interest, lightly regarded in their time of publication, have been found tremendously valuable by posterity as supplying definite starting points for later investigators and students - the Saewulf record for instance, or Holinshed's England, or Sewall's diaries. For the essential qualities in all of them were truth and accuracy and pains-taking investigation, which qualities are most certainly in the present volume. And in the writers named there was sound commonsense which meant not only a collection of facts, but a scientific habit of mind in the presentation of them. Mr Black's work commends itself to me because of evidence of those very qualities.

Charles J. Finger
Gayeta Lodge
Fayetteville, Arkansas

Joseph?
1901

"The Memoirs of Colonel John S. Mosby." Edited by Charles Wells
Russell. Boston. Little, Brown & Company. 1917

"William H. Seward, An Autobiography" from 1801-1872 with a memoir
of his life, and selections from his letters by Frederick W. Seward, In three volumes.
New York. Derby and Miller. 1877 and 1890.

"In the days of My Father, General Grant" by Jesse R. Grant in
collaboration with Henry Francis Granger. Harper & Brothers, publishers. New York
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"A Rebel War Clerk's Diary at the Confederate States Capital" by
J. B. Jones, clerk in the War Department of the Confederate States Government, In two
volumes. Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott & Company. 1866.

"The Life of Abraham Lincoln" by William E. Barton, in two volumes.
Indianapolis . The Bobbs-Merrill Company, publishers. 1925.

"Abraham Lincoln, a History" by John G. Nicolay and John Hay, ten
volumes. New York. The Century Company. 1886 and 1890.

”

Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist. His letters, Papers and Speeches, collected and edited by Dunbar Rowland LL.D., director of the Department of Archives and History of the State of Mississippi, Secretary Mississippi Historical Society, in ten volumes. Jackson, Mississippi. 1923. Printed for the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

"The Every-Day Life of Abraham Lincoln" by Francis Fisher Browne.

Chicago - Brown & Howell Company - 1913

"The Escape and Wanderings of J. Wilkes Booth Until Finding of the Trail by Suicide in Oklahoma - The Way of the Transgressor is Hard. Copyright 1922. By W. P. Campbell. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

"Lincoln in the Telegraph Office", Recollections of the United States Military Telegraph Corps during the Civil War by David Homer Bates, manager of the War Department Telegraph Office and cipher-operator 1861-1866. New York - The Century Company 1907.

Trial of John H. Surratt in the Criminal Court for the District of Columbia. Two volumes. Washington Government Printing Office 1867. Referred to as "S. T."

History of the United States Secret Service by General L. C. Baker, Chief National Detective Police 1867. King & Baird, 607 Sansom Street Philadelphia.

"J. Wilkes Booth." An account of his sojourn in Southern Maryland after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, his passage across the Potomac, and his death in Virginia - by Thomas A. Jones. Laird & Lee, Publishers - 1893, Chicago.

"Perley's Reminiscences of sixty years in the National Metropolis by Ben Perley Poore, Volume II Hubbard Brothers, Publishers, Philadelphia, Pa. 1886.

Perley?

Lincoln Scrap Book, in Lincoliana Department Congressional Library, Washington, D. C. Contains clippings from principal American Newspapers 1865-1869 on conspiracy plot, assassination of President Lincoln, Booth and Herold's flight from Washington, Conspiracy Trial, the execution of the conspirators and the trial of John H. Surratt. Many of these clippings do not give the name of the papers in which they appeared or the date.

" The Wallet of Time, containing personal, biographical, and critical reminiscence of the American Theater, ^{and} by William Winter pages 84-92. Junius Brutus Booth ^{-no!}
Moffat, Yard & Company, 1913.

" The Death of Lincoln, // by Clara E. Laughlin. The story of Booth's plot, his deed, and the penalty. Doubleday, Page & Company. 1909.

// Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant, // volume II. Charles L. Webster & Company 1886. Pages 507-509.

History of Hood County, Texas, From its earliest settlement to the present together with biographical sketches of many leading men and woman among the early settlers. Also History of Somerville County, by Thos. T. Ewell. Frank Gaston, publisher, Granbury, Texas. 1895.

" The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln and its Expiation, by David Miller De Witt. The Macmillan Company. 1909.

" Passages, Incidents, and Anecdotes in the Life of Junius Brutus Booth (The Elder). By his daughter. Carleton, publisher, New York 1866.

"The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln." Flight, Pursuit, Capture, and Punishment of the Conspirators, by Osborn H. Oldroyd. Washington, D. C. 1908.

"Edwin Booth's Recollections by His Daughter, Edwina Booth Grossman and letters to her and to his friends. The Century Company, New York. 1902.

(Referred to as C.T.)

The Assassination of President Lincoln and the Trial of the Conspirators ~~(C.T.)~~
Compiled and arranged by Benn Pitman, recorder to the Commission. Publishers, Moore, Wiltach & Baldwin, 25 West 4th Street, Cincinnati. 1865.

The Conspiracy Trial for the Murder of The President, and the attempt to overthrow the Government by the assassination of its principal officers. Edited, with an introduction, by Ben Perley Poore. Boston - J. E. Tilton & Company. 1865.

"The Assassination of Lincoln. A History of the Great Conspiracy, Trial of the Conspirators by a Military Commission and a review of the Trial of John H. Surratt, by T. M. Harris, late Brigadier-General, U.S.A., and Major-General, by Prevet, A Member of the Commission. American Citizen Company, Boston, Mass. 1892.

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captivity, particulars concerning his health and habits, together with many conversa-
tions on topics of great public interest, by Bvt. Lieut. Col. John J. Craven, M. D.,
late surgeon U. S. Vols., and physician of the prisoner during his confinement in Fort-
ress Monroe, from May 25, 1865 up to December 25, 1865. G. W. Dillingham Co., publishers,
New York. 1905.

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Committee of the House of Representatives in the Investigation of the charges against
Andrew Johnson, second session thirty-ninth Congress, and first session fortieth Con-
gress 1867, also majority and minority reports of the Committee November 25, 1867.
Washington: Government Printing Office. 1867.

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cenes of Major-General Benj. F. Butler. A review of his legal, Political, and Military
career. 1892. A. M. Thayer & Co. Book publishers Boston.

* "The Spy of the Rebellion: Being a true History of the Spy system of the
United States Army during the late rebellion. Compiled from official reports prepared
for President Lincoln, General McClellan and the Provost-Marshal-General, by Allan Pin-
kerton, who (under the non-de-plume of Major E. J. Allen) was Chief of the United States
Secret Service, New York. G. W. Carleton & Co., Publishers. 1883.