

HOW BOOTH'S BODY WAS HIDDEN

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(Burial of the Conspirators)

In about ten minutes more the bodies were cut down, placed in the pine boxes by a squad of soldiers and lowered in the graves prepared for them. It has been said and very generally believed that the conspirators were all, or very nearly all, Catholics. Such is not the case. Of the ten, four were of that faith - Mrs. Surratt, here son, John H. Surratt, Dr. Mudd and Michael O'Laughlin. Payne was a Baptist; Booth and Herold were Episcopalians, as was Mrs. Surratt before her conversion; Atzerodt claimed to be a Lutheran and Arnold was also a Protestant.

When the main part of the old penitentiary building was torn down in 1867, the body of Booth was removed from the place in which we had secreted it to one of the large storehouses situated on the eastern side of the arsenal grounds, together with those of the four who had been executed. There it remained until February, 1869, when President Johnson gave Edwin Booth permission to remove it to Baltimore, Md., where it now reposes in the Booth lot in Greenmount Cemetery.

After receiving permission from the President to remove his brother's body, Edwin Booth ordered a Baltimore undertaker, J. H. Weaver, to do the work. Mr. Weaver called upon Harvey & Marr, of Washington, to assist him, who went to the arsenal grounds for the remains.

Edwin Booth accompanied Messrs. Weaver and Harvey to the arsenal. W. R. Speare, at present an undertaker at 640 F. Street, then a boy, drove the furniture wagon that brought the remains of the assassin to the alley in the rear of Ford's Theatre, almost to the very door from which he started on the night of April 14, 1865.

The wagon backed up to the door of the stable that Booth had formerly used. The box was somewhat decayed, but the lettering on it was legible. When the box was opened

and the body taken from the army blanket which enshrouded it, it was seen that four years had brought decay. The skull was detached, and when lifted out, a dentist identified his work, thus proving the identity of the body beyond a doubt.

Edwin Booth, who was in the front office of the theatre, was informed of the identification of the remains, expressed his satisfaction and directed Mr. Weaver to take the body to Baltimore. A plain coffin was taken out to the stable, the remains placed in it and taken to Baltimore.

The following letter shows the final disposition of the body of the assassin of Abraham Lincoln:

"Office of Supt. Greenmount Cemetery,

Baltimore, May 25, 1892.

The remains of J. Wilkes Booth were interred in this cemetery in February or March 1869, being brought from Washington, D. C., by Jno. H. Weaver, undertaker, since deceased.

Alex. Russell,

Foreman."

This copy of the undertaker's bill, together with the burial permit number, should settle, for all time, all controversy as to the final resting place of Booth:

"Permit 16821.

Baltimore, Md., Feb. 18, 1869.

Mr. J.H.Weaver for J.W.Booth.

For digging one lot 9-10 area
Dogwood\$4.00
250 bricks at \$2.00 per 100 6.25
Seven feet stone slab to cover same,
75c per foot..... 5.63
Depositing in vault 5.00
Second bill June 26, 1869 5.00

\$25.88"