

Wis. Milwaukee, Sept. 21st  
July 20, 1896.

## SAW WILKES BOOTH DIE

THE REV. R. B. GARRETT NOW  
IN THIS CITY.

LINCOLN'S SLAYER SOUGHT REFUGE  
IN HIS FATHER'S HOUSE.

Mr. Garrett Tells the Story of the  
Shooting of Booth by Sergt. Boston  
Corbett, of Which He Was an  
Eye Witness—Thinks That Booth  
Was Insane.

The Rev. Dr. R. B. Garrett of Chattanooga, Tenn., who is in the city in attendance on the B. Y. P. U. convention, was an eye witness of the tragic death of the slayer of Abraham Lincoln. He was 12 years of age at the time. He owns the homestead where the last moments of J. Wilkes Booth were spent, and he has since taken a great interest in the subject of his capture, has cleared up some debatable points with regard to it and has a large collection of relics pertaining to the subject. In giving his recollection of the event, yesterday, he said:

### Said He Was a Wounded Soldier.

"My home was about sixty miles from Washington, in Carolina county, Va. Lincoln was shot on April 14, and ten days after the shooting on the evening of April 24, three men rode up to my father's house one with crutches and two in the uniform of the Confederacy. One of the soldiers was Capt. Willie Jett, who was a son of an old friend of my father's, and he introduced the wounded man as James W. Boyd. He said he was a Confederate and was wounded at Petersburg and was trying to get home to his people in Maryland, but that his wound was too painful to allow him to travel. He asked my father to take care of the man a day or two until he was able to travel. At that time we hadn't heard of the death of the president. That night at supper a neighbor came in and told us of the assassination and the subject was discussed, the wounded man joining in. He agreed that perhaps it was only a rumor started by stragglers, but assented when my father said that if it was true it was an exceedingly unfortunate thing for the South. I remember the neighbor stated there was a big reward offered, \$100,000, and one of my brothers said that the assassin had better not come our way, for he would like to make such a sum of money about that time. Boyd turned round and said: 'Would you betray him for that?' and my brother laughed and said: 'They better not tempt me; I've not a dollar in the world.'

### Troops Passed Him By.

The wounded man slept in the house that night and I slept with one of my brothers in the same room. Next day he played with the children in the yard and about noon went into the house and asked me to take down a map from the wall. He put it on the floor and studied it, tracing a line from Norfolk to Charleston by water and from Charleston to Galveston, Tex. I asked him where he wanted

to go and he said to Mexico. So far as I know this was the only clue as to his intended escape. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon or later some men rode up and left one of their number at the gate. He came in and Boyd introduced him as Mr. Harris. Harris was in fact David E. Harold, who was afterward hung with Mrs. Surrat, and who had been a party to the attempt to assassinate Secretary Seward. Some little time later the men came hurriedly back and said that the troops were crossing the river at Port Royal. The two men became very much excited at this intelligence, and Boyd sent me up to my room for his pistols which he had left hanging on the bed post. By the time I got down a detachment of troops rode past on the road a quarter of a mile from the house. As a matter of fact they were after Jett, knowing that he had crossed the river with Booth and supposing that Booth was still with him. They got Jett twelve miles further on and made him tell where he had left Booth.

### They Fired the Barn.

"When the troops passed our house," he continued, "the two men walked down to a piece of woods back of the house and stayed there about an hour, returning to ask my brother if he would rent them a horse to take them to the nearest railway station. He refused, having become suspicious of them, but helped them make a bargain with a colored man who lived near by. The negro was to call for them early next morning. My father was not feeling well that evening and he retired early. The men sat out on the upper gallery and talked till quite late, after which they asked if they might sleep in the barn, fifty yards away, so as not to disturb my father when they got out in the morning. This explains why Booth was killed in a barn. That night about 2 o'clock my father was awakened to find the yard full of men with swords and pistols drawn. They demanded the wounded man that was left there, and my father told them he did not know where he was. They told him that lies would not ensue and that they would hang him if he deceived them. He protested his ignorance and their threat was about to be put into execution when some one called out that there were men in the barn. The barn was surrounded. I was a witness to all this, and Booth, or Boyd, began calling out to the men trying to find out if they were Federals or Confederates, without getting a satisfactory answer. The troops were in command of Col. L. B. Baker, who died recently in Michigan—I got a letter from him not three months ago. Booth finally said: 'There's a man in here wants to surrender,' and the doors opened and Harold put his hands out and they were handcuffed by the soldiers and pulled out. They tried to get Booth to surrender, but he would not. He said if they would call the men off a distance he would come out and fight them. The soldiers had built a brush fire and he could see them, but they could not see him. After a long parley Col. Conger told him if he did not come out he would burn the barn over his head. Booth's reply was that they could burn him with the barn, but he would never surrender. Conger then pulled out a whisp of hay and set fire to it. The fire finally blazed up so we could see Booth. He was standing in the middle of the barn, leaning on his crutch and with his carbine on his arm and his hat fallen to the floor.

### Message to His Mother.

"Just as the fire had almost reached him a shot was fired and he sank down where he was standing. The shot was fired by Sergt. Boston Corbett and was positively against orders, it being the intention to take him alive. Some of the men dragged the dying man out and placed him on the grass. At that moment he looked up and said: 'It's hard this man's property is being destroyed, as he does not know who

I am.' Those words saved my father's life undoubtedly, as there was a proclamation out promising death to the person who would harbor the assassin. When the fire got too hot Booth was moved to the front porch and a physician sent for. Booth sent this message to his mother: 'Tell my mother I died for my country; I did what I thought best.' He never moved after he was shot, being shot through the neck and paralyzed from that point down. He was then thoroughly identified by pictures and by persons who knew him personally, and this was the first inkling we had as to who he really was. His body was sewed up in a blanket and taken away."

### Thinks He Was Insane.

"As I remember him," continued Dr. Garrett, "he was a handsome fellow with black hair and drooping black moustache and a fair skin. He was very quiet while he was with us, and talked freely only with the children. The man was evidently insane. That is the view his relatives take of it. A letter I received from Edwin Booth, and which was published in The Century, said that he was so regarded by the family and that this act met with no sympathy from them. As to there being a conspiracy, I take little stock in the story, as the men he got to help him were not intelligent men, and if there was a conspiracy, Booth was the sum total of it, as he probably hired the others to help."