

FIND ACTOR'S STORY OF LINCOLN'S DEATH

**Trunk Stored for Fifty Years
Reveals Account Written
by E. A. Emerson.**

LATTER WAS ON THE STAGE

**Declares His Belief That Booth
First Intended to Capture
and Hold the President.**

QUOTES ASSASSIN'S WORDS

**Writer Records Booth Exclaimed
"Sic Semper Tyrannis!" After
the Shooting.**

Special to The New York Times.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 13.—After being stored in an old trunk for more than half a century in the home of his descendants, a paper containing a vivid description of the assassination of Lincoln, written by E. A. Emerson, an old-time actor and friend of John Wilkes Booth, has been found in a small brick house in a side street in Alexandria, Va.

Emerson played the rôle of Lord Dundreary in the cast of "Our American Cousin," in Laura Keene's company at old Ford's Theatre in Tenth Street, the night Lincoln was shot, and witnessed the assassination of the great emancipator. He was the father of Charles O. Emerson of 313 North Royal Street, Alexandria, who found the paper giving Emerson's version of the tragedy, with other heirlooms, including photographs of his father in the rôle of Lord Dundreary and of John Wilkes Booth in a Scotch rôle.

Most of the members of the company in which Emerson was playing were arrested, and he had to report to the police daily until the matter was finally cleared with the capture of Booth and the execution of Mrs. Surratt and the other alleged conspirators. That was the last play in which Emerson ever took part.

The most prized relic found by Emerson in the old trunk is a faded and crumpled program of the cast of "Our American Cousin," with a small blood spot in the upper corner. This program is declared to have been found on the floor to the right of Mr. Lincoln's chair when Mr. Emerson hur-

ried up to the stage box after the shooting. Whether it is the blood of Mr. Lincoln, or that of Major Rathbone, who was in President Lincoln's party the night of the tragedy, and whose son is Henry R. Rathbone, now a member of Congress from Illinois, is not known.

The paper giving the version of Emerson, found in the Alexandria trunk, reads:

Emerson's Story.

"I knew John Wilkes Booth well, having played with him in dozens of cities throughout the East and Middle West. He was a kind-hearted, genial person, and no cleverer gentleman ever lived. Everybody loved him on the stage, though he was a little excitable and eccentric.

"The day before President Lincoln was shot I was standing in front of Ford's Theatre when John walked up, evidently in an agitated state of mind. He grabbed the cane from my hands and said:

"Ned, did you hear what that old scoundrel did the other day?"

"I asked him who he was talking about, and he answered:

"Why, that old scoundrel, Lincoln. He went into Jeff Davis's house in Richmond, sat down and threw his long legs over the arm of a chair and squirted tobacco juice all over the place. Somebody ought to kill him."

"I said, 'For God's sake, John, stop where you are! I am going to quit you.'

"With that he pulled my cane down over his shoulders with such force that it broke in four pieces. I still have that cane.

"Of course, I was afraid of becoming involved in any trouble he might get into, and that is the nearest he ever came to saying anything to me about conspiracy.

"It never dawned on me that he had any intention of doing any bodily harm to the President, for had I known it, even though I was his friend, I should certainly have done all in my power to prevent it.

Believes Kidnapping Was Intended.

"I feel confident that at first his idea was not to kill the President, but to capture him and carry him South to force an exchange of prisoners by holding him as a hostage. Realizing the hopelessness of this, however, I think he then conceived the idea of assassinating him.

"I was standing in front of the theatre on the day of the murder when a messenger from the President rode up and asked for a box for the President's party for the performance that evening.

"Replying that the theatre was at Mr. Lincoln's disposal, Mr. Ford, owner of the theatre, took a pencil and wrote across the box of the stage: 'The President and his party will be at the theatre tonight.'

"A few minutes later Booth walked in and, observing the notice, said: 'What, that old scoundrel is going to be here tonight?'

"Mr. Ford said: 'Yes, John; but I would not speak of him in that way if I were you.'

"With that Booth walked rapidly away and disappeared. I do not know where he went, but my idea is that his plan of killing the President and the heads of the Cabinet was formed at that time.

"On Friday night, April 15, 1865, the theatre was crowded and the performance was going along smoothly. Mr.

Lincoln's party was late in arriving, and we were in the midst of the second act when they arrived and went up to the box that had been saved for them.

"After some difficulty in quieting the audience the President seated himself and requested me—I was on the stage at the time—to go on with the play.

When the Shot Rang Out.

"After the scene was over, it being the first night that I had played my part, I stood near a gas jet on the stage, just under Mr. Lincoln's box, reading over my lines.

"Suddenly a shot rang out, apparently coming from the audience. It startled me, and everything was confusion out in front. I walked out to the centre of the stage, and while standing there I was amazed to see Booth, his hair in wild disorder, leap from the upper box.

"He caught his spur in a flag draped under the box and fell heavily, but this did not prevent him from rushing frantically down to the footlights, brandishing a large bowie knife in his hands, and crying 'Sic semper tyrannis!'

"Turning, he rushed directly across the stage to the right and up the side wall to the back of the theatre, where he had a little stable in which he kept his horse and buggy. There was a boy holding the horse in the alley.

"Booth mounted the horse, struck the boy in the chest, and galloped down the alley to F Street and out F, I presume, to the Anacostia Bridge and across the bridge into Maryland.

"In the pandemonium which followed no one seemed to know just what to do, and it was nearly twelve hours later before any pursuit of the assassin was gotten under way.

"In attempting to grapple with Booth as he leaped from the box, Major Rathbone, a member of the President's party, was severely cut on the arm.

Laura Keene Rushes to Box.

"Laura Keene, one of the leading members of our company, was one of the first to reach the box, and when I saw her she was holding the President's head in her lap and the handsome yellow satin dress she wore in her part was stained all down the front with his blood.

"After a great deal of hauling around and tearing off of the President's clothes in search of the fatal wound, he was placed on a shutter and carried from the theatre out into the street.

"As no one seemed to know what to do with him, he was taken into a house across the street and carried into a small hall bedroom and placed on a little cot. There, surrounded by his family and his Cabinet, he died the next morning."

To the student of Lincolniana one of the most interesting parts of the

Emerson version is his statement that Booth, brandishing a large bowie knife, shouted, "Sic Semper Tyrannis!" There has always been controversy over the question whether Booth uttered such a cry.

William J. Ferguson, the famous old-time actor, and who was until recently known to be alive, always declared very positively to his friends that the assassin did not exclaim, "Sic Semper Tyrannis!" Ferguson played the rôle of Lieutenant Vernon, R. N., in the "American Cousin" the night of the tragedy.