

Blanche Booth Minneapolis, Mar. 29, 1922

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:-

I, Blanche Booth, a daughter of Junius Brutus Booth, Jr., he having married Clementina DeBar, sister of Ben DeBar, the well known actor and manager and owner of the St. Louis Theatre, St. Louis, Mo. and the historic St. Charles Theatre, New Orleans, am naturally the niece of Edwin Booth, John Wilkes Booth, Joseph Booth, Rosalie Booth and Asia Booth, children of my grandfather, Junius Brutus Booth, Sr. and my grandmother, Mary Anne Booth.

I acted in the capacity of leading lady with my uncle, Edwin Booth, in his New York Theatre in the early days of that playhouse, under the name of Blanche DeBar, having been adopted by my uncle, Ben DeBar, my father having deserted my mother and myself, my mother secured a divorce from him, the proceedings taking place in the City of Boston. After this my father went immediately to California, where he remained, I believe, a number of years. When I had grown into young womanhood I met again my uncle, John Wilkes Booth, who had come to play a theatrical star engagement in my uncle, Ben DeBar's theatre, St. Louis. My uncle John suggested to me that I go upon the stage and travel with him. John was playing at that time Alfred Evelyn in Bulwer's celebrated play, "Money" and I to play the leading juvenile character, Maria, but my uncle, Ben DeBar, did not give his consent, wishing me, when I did go upon the stage, to appear in leading characters. I went upon the stage the same year that John Wilkes Booth assassinated President Lincoln. Laura Keane, the English actress, failed to keep her contract of a star engagement with Uncle Ben DeBar, and Uncle Ben came to me, saying, "Blanche, do you think you could fill her time"? And my reply was, "Yes, Uncle"! Following the assassination one Sunday night, a big event in my life, sitting quietly in my bedroom, a maid of ours rushed into my room, crying, "Oh, Miss Blanche, there's two Federal soldiers coming into your room". They came into my room, searching my effects thoroughly, taking from me

a box containing some innocent girlish letters and papers, and a small picture of John Wilkes Booth, which he had given me, and also an innocent card addressed to me by John. I was then told by the soldiers that I was under arrest together with my Uncle Ben DeBar. While these two Federal Soldiers had their backs turned to me, rumaging through my new stage wardrobe, I rammed a certain very innocent letter belonging to me, into the pocket of a portfolio lying upon the table. They picked this portfolio up, shook it and the letter stuck. The soldiers went outside the door to wait for me to dress to go with them. When the door was closed, I leaped with delight, saying, "Oh, Mary, I fooled those Federal soldiers". I dressed very carefully, putting on my best bib and tucker, I was escorted between two soldiers down the stairway to join my Uncle Ben DeBar in his office. Then we were carried under arrest before Lieutenant Baker, to my best recollection, before whom we were questioned and finally released.

Afterwards I continued my stage career, coming in contact and acting with Edwin Booth, Joseph Jefferson, John McCollough, Tom Keene, Ben DeBar, with whom I played the leading character.

During my childhood I visited for two years with my grandmother and grandfather, Junius Brutus Booth, Sr. in Baltimore and their old farm at BelAire, Md., associating intimately with John Wilkes Booth, who was then growing into manhood, meeting and associating with him again, as I have stated above, I can say that I am one of, if not the one, person to identify pictures and the body of John Wilkes Booth.

During my residence in Minneapolis I joined the Sanford Dodge Company. During the tour the company acted in Enid, Oklahoma, where we know now that John Wilkes Booth had been living, under the name of David E. George. We were playing one night stands at Enid, Oklahoma, to the best of my recollection, during the month of December, 1902. I was in my room at a hotel in Enid, getting ready to take a needed rest, having to act that night, being dreadfully fatigued. A knock came upon my bedroom door; I went to the door and opened it; it was late in the afternoon, the shades were down,

a man was there who said "Blanche, would you like to see Johnny", in a quiet tone, and handed me a card; not realizing then the truth of what was transpiring, I said to this dark complexioned man, "I act tonight and must have my rest," and closed the door. Before going to the theatre that night I glanced at the card which I had thrown upon the table, on which was written "John Wilkes Booth". I did not realize then the truth of the chance I had of meeting face to face my uncle, John Wilkes Booth.) I remember distinctly a certain peculiarity of John's signature, and I have before me now this same signature of John Wilkes Booth, with its same peculiarity, as appeared on the card left by this person at the hotel in Enid.

I have carefully examined the pictures illustrating a book "The Escape and Suicide of John Wilkes Booth", written and published by Finis L. Bates, and I unquestionably identify those pictures of John Wilkes Booth. I have also examined the mummified body of John Wilkes Booth, now being exhibited by Finis L. Bates and lessees, is the true body of John Wilkes Booth, my uncle.

The pictures, papers and souvenirs which have this day been delivered to Mr. Finis L. Bates by me, and made exhibit to the foregoing statements, are correct as what they purport to be.

I wonder why it should be that these papers, pictures, and souvenirs of the Booth family and myself, should have clung to me so tenaciously through all the vicissitudes of my life, upon which I have bestowed so little thought.

Signed, executed and delivered in triplicate.

Blanche Booth

