

Identification of J. Wilkes Booth

Proofs That Man Shot in Garrett Barn Was Booth—Disposal of Body

By F. L. BLACK

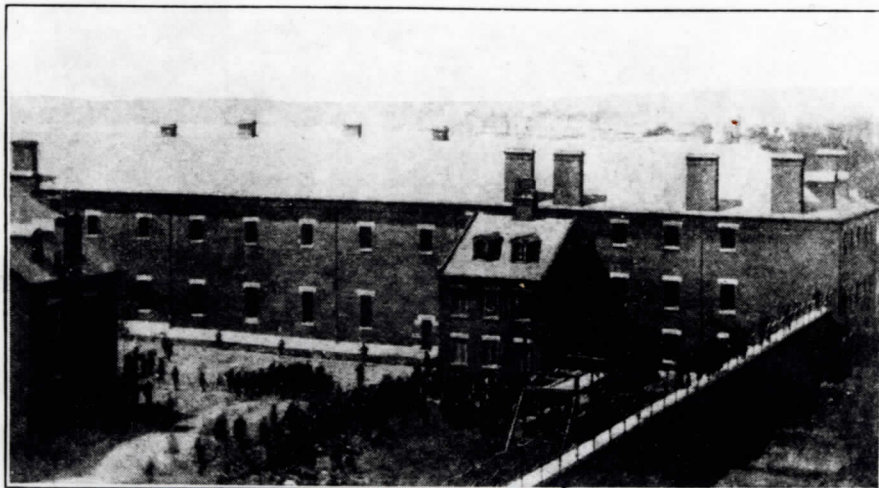
ABOUT the time of the Lincoln Birthday celebration this year, the Booth Myth was reviewed in the public press. Among the numerous articles which appeared was one in the Minneapolis *Daily Star*. It was an interview with a Minneapolis woman who claimed to be the daughter of Junius Brutus Booth (known as "the younger"), a brother of Edwin and John Wilkes. This would make her a niece of Lincoln's assassin. Unfortunately for the interest of the story, reference to the listed histories of the Actor-Booth family fails to corroborate her claim of relationship.

In the newspaper stories sent broadcast by the International News Service, Miss Booth claimed that her uncle, John Wilkes Booth, called on her in St. Louis in the late eighties or early nineties and although she considered him at that time an imposter, he finally convinced her of his identity by recalling various events of their childhood.

Then follows a recital of parts of Finis L. Bates' book and a statement by Miss Booth that the body of David George is indeed that of her uncle. THE DEARBORN INDEPENDENT has in its files an affidavit, dated March 29, 1922, given by Blanche Booth to Mr. Bates in which she states:

"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 theater 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."



The old penitentiary building located in the arsenal grounds where the conspirators were tried, executed and buried. It was also in this building that the body of John Wilkes Booth was first interred.

When interviewed for THE DEARBORN INDEPENDENT in March, 1925, Blanche Booth stated that two years before the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, John Wilkes Booth called for the last time at her home and that she was then seven or eight years of age. She stated that she did not know positively that John Wilkes Booth escaped, but that she had accepted the theories of Finis L. Bates, who she claimed had gone into the matter very thoroughly and had frequently consulted her in connection with the matter. When, however, the differences between her story as given to the press February 21, 1925, and the affidavit as given to Mr. Bates March 29, 1922, were pointed out, Miss Booth claimed that her 1925 story was correct.

The only pictures in her possession were a copy of Bates' tintype of St. Helen, a copy of a picture of David George taken after his death, which had been given her by Mr. Bates, and a copy of a very common picture of John Wilkes Booth taken before the assassination. She could produce no documentary or other proof to substantiate her statements.

Miss Booth's value as a contributor to the matter is somewhat depreciated by the fact that in each of the three statements she has contradicted herself on some point. In the story re-

cently given the newspapers, she says that the only time she saw her uncle after the assassination was in St. Louis in the "late 80's or early 90's." In the affidavit given Mr. Bates the date is 1902, and the place is Enid. She states in the affidavit, "When I had grown into young womanhood I met again my uncle, John Wilkes Booth, who had come to play a theatricalstarengagement in my Uncle Ben De Bar's theater, St. Louis . . . I went on the stage the same year that John Wilkes Booth assassinated President Lincoln." This does not tally with her statement that she was seven or eight years of age two years before the assassination.

We now present a summary of all the facts disclosed by our investigation, which will probably be accepted as final by the majority of readers.

The Payment of the Reward

In recent newspaper accounts the statement has been made that the government was not satisfied that the man shot in the Garrett barn was Booth and consequently had never paid the reward.

This is not only untrue in fact, but is a fair sample of the unreliability of numerous statements dealing with the assassination, which THE DEARBORN INDEPENDENT has checked and found worthless.

The matter of reward for the capture of Booth was placed before a Committee on Claims of the House of Representatives, which, according to the *Congressional Globe* Part 5—1st. Session, 39th Congress, made their report on July 26, 1866. The appropriation was made by the act of July 28, 1866 (14 stat. 341). The amounts were considered by many to be unfairly distributed. The sums finally paid and the persons receiving them are as follows:

E. J. Conger, detective.....	\$15,000
Lafayette C. Baker, detective	3,750
Luther B. Baker, detective	3,000
Lieutenant Edward P. Doherty, in command of the cavalry	5,250
James R. O'Beirne, detective	2,000
H. H. Wells, George Cottingham, Alexander Lovett, each	\$1,000
	3,000

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Sergeant Boston Corbett, Sergeant Andrew Wendell, Corporal Charles Zimmer, Corporal Michael Uniac, Corporal John Winter, Corporal Herman Newgarten, Corporal John Walz, Corporal Oliver Lonpay, Corporal Michael Hornsbey, Privates John Myers, John Ryan, William Byrne, Philip Hoyt, Martin Kelley, Henry Putnam, Frank McDaniel, Lewis Savage, Abraham Genay, Emery Parady, David Baker, William McQuade, John Millington, Frederick Dietz, John H. Singer, Carl Steinbrugge, and Joseph Zisgen, each \$1,653.85.....43,000

\$75,000

The captors of Atzerodt were paid \$25,000 and a \$5,000 reward was paid for the capture of Payne.

The payments were made by separate draft of the Treasury Department of the United States, issued August 9, 1866, on Treasury Warrant No. 7724 and each of the paid drafts aggregating the total sum appropriated is now in the archives of the Government at Washington and may be seen by permission of the Secretary of the Treasury.

Identity of Man Shot—John Wilkes Booth

As to the identity of the man shot in the Garrett barn, Colonel Everton J. Conger, who, it will be remembered, was one of the detective officers present at the death of John Wilkes Booth, testified at the conspiracy trial in 1865 that he had seen John Wilkes Booth in Washington and recognized the man who was killed as the same. Colonel Conger, Lieutenant L. B. Baker, and Lieutenant Doherty, the three officers who were in command of the pursuing party, declare in their various statements and reports that while searching for Booth and at the time they found him they were carrying pictures of John Wilkes Booth for identification and used them for this purpose.

Colonel Conger testified that the man in the barn stated that he was lame. The three

Confederate officers and the Garretts say the man who came was lame. Even Mr. Bates did not question the identity of the lame man taken to the Garrett place by Jett, Ruggles, and Bainbridge.

W. H. Garrett's statement that the man who came to his place was the man who was shot is in evidence. It will also be remembered that Booth while dying asked if Jett had betrayed him. A natural question for Booth but not for someone else.

At the Surratt trial, Lieutenant L. B. Baker testified that "there was a pin which Colonel Conger took from his undershirt after we tore open his collar." Baker then identified the pin, compass, diary, and knife which had been taken from Booth's body. Then Colonel Conger was called to the stand. He testified that after Booth was shot and before he died, he took a pin with a stone set in jet from Booth's person on which was engraved, "Dan Bryant to J. W. Booth." Colonel Conger stated that he had given these articles to Mr. Stanton, the Secretary of War. The pin referred to was exhibited and identified by the witnesses. Dan Bryant was the father of the minstrel show and a friend of the Booth family.

There has never been any question about the handwriting of Booth's diary. It was identified by a great many witnesses.

At the Surratt trial and the impeachment investigation of Andrew Johnson it will be remembered that testimony showed that Captain Jett saw Booth at the Garrett place after he was shot and before he died. Jett did not question, in the stories he gave for publication later on, that the man was actually the assassin. While Herold, when first taken from the barn, claimed that he

knew nothing of "that man in there," maintaining that his name was Boyd (this was the name under which Booth and Herold were traveling) he did not afterward deny Booth's true identity. Boston Corbett, in a letter written to a friend and which was published in the New York papers, a few days after the capture, said, "When Herold spoke of Booth he called him Boyd, and told us that he had first met him but three days before. Nevertheless, on our way to Washington, he spoke of Booth by his real name."

On April 27, 1865, the day following Booth's death, an order was issued by the Secretary of the Navy permitting Surgeon-General J. K. Barnes and his assistant, accompanied by Judge Advocate-General Holt, John A. Bingham, Major Eckert, Assistant Secretary of War; William C. Moore, Colonel L. C. Baker, chief of the Secret Service; Lieutenant L. B. Baker, Lieutenant-Colonel Everton J. Conger, Charles Dawson, chief clerk, National Hotel; J. L. Smith, Mr. Gardiner, the photographer, and an assistant, to go on board the *Montauk* to identify the body of John Wilkes Booth.

Dr. J. Frederick May, whose story, "The Mark of the Scalpel," appeared in THE DEARBORN INDEPENDENT February 7, 1925, was brought on board by Surgeon-General Barnes and testified before seeing the body that if it were that of John Wilkes Booth there would be a scar upon the muscle of the left side of his neck, three inches below the ear, occasioned by an operation performed by Dr. May for the removal of a tumor some months previous to Booth's death. Surgeon-General Barnes testified at the conspiracy trial that he then examined the body and found the scar as described by Dr. May. Surgeon-

General Barnes then cut from Booth's neck a section of the vertebrae through which the ball had passed and this was placed in the Army Medical Museum.

Charles Dawson, chief clerk at the National Hotel, where Booth had roomed, positively identified the body on board the gunboat, at the time of the autopsy on deck, according to Dr. G. L. Porter, army surgeon, by the initials "J. W. B." which had been tattooed in India ink on the right hand.



A contemporary picture from *Harper's Weekly*.
The autopsy on board the *Montauk* April 27, 1865.

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Dawson swore that he had frequently observed the letters on Booth's hand while he was signing the hotel register, and on one occasion had said, "Booth, what a fool you were to disfigure that pretty hand in such a way."

It also will be remembered that Thomas K. Jones, who took care of Booth for Colonel Cox, stated that Booth identified himself by the initials "J. W. B." tattooed on his hand. Captain Jett at the conspiracy trial swore Booth had on his hand the initials "J. W. B." which Booth had shown the three Confederate officers at Port Conway for the purpose of identification. Sergeant J. M. Peddicord, the guard in charge of Booth's body on board the *Montauk* in a letter to the Roanoke, Virginia, *Evening News*, June 6, 1903, described the details of the post-mortem examination witnessed by him April 27, 1865, and states that he remembered the J. W. B. on Booth's hand.

In 1869, when the body of John Wilkes Booth was removed from the old arsenal building and turned over to Edwin Booth for burial in the Booth family lot, assurance that the right body had been obtained was given by John Wilkes Booth's dentist who identified it from fillings he had put in some time before the death of Booth.

Blanche Chapman, an actress who had known the assassin, stated in a story carried in the *Baltimore Sun* in 1903, that she was present with the Booths at the burial after the exhumation of John Wilkes' body and cut off a lock of his curly black hair and handed it to his mother who divided it and gave back half to Miss Chapman.

While Booth, as Mr. Bates' book suggests, might have lost his diary, compass, knife, carbine, and pistols, and that miraculously all these things might have been picked up by an unknown man who was shot in the barn, it strains the probabilities to expect that the pin bearing Booth's name and fastened to his undershirt, the initials "J. W. B." tattooed on his hand, the broken leg which Booth sustained in his fall, the scar on his neck, which Booth had by reason of a surgical operation, and his dental work were all likewise transferred to the unknown.

The disposition of John Wilkes Booth's body has occasioned a separate outburst of controversy due to the varying stories told by General Lafayette C. Baker for the express purpose of misleading people as to the exact location of the first burial place of the assassin. Even after the truthful story was told, considerable confusion resulted because one writer would state that the body was buried

in the "old arsenal grounds," while another would say that the burial took place in "the old penitentiary building," and unless the reader happened to know that both names designated the same place, it was naturally assumed that one or the other statement was untrue.

According to the testimony of General Baker given at the impeachment investigation of Andrew Johnson, he was ordered by the Secretary of War on April 27, 1865, after the post-mortem was made, to take the body of John Wilkes Booth from the gunboat late in the afternoon and convey it to the arsenal grounds and there turn it over to Colonel Benton, in charge of the



The Booth Burial Ground.

This is marked by a monument of white marble, set upon a base of gray granite which was erected by Edwin Booth, brother of John Wilkes. The father and mother of John Wilkes are buried on the west side of the monument. This is marked by two headstones of white marble. On the east side close to the monument, beneath the ivy, is the grave of John Wilkes Booth, unmarked, in accordance with a stipulation of the authorities that the "actual location of the remains should not be marked by monument or mound." In the northwest corner of the lot is the grave of Asia Booth Clarke, a sister. At the south of the monument and next to the grave of Richard Booth, the grandfather of John Wilkes, is Rosalie, another sister. The remains of Frederick, Elizabeth, and Mary Ann Booth are buried under the monument. On the monument are the following inscriptions:

South Side:

Junius Brutus Booth, Born May 1, 1796, Died Nov. 30, 1852.

West Side:

In the same grave with Junius Brutus Booth is buried the body of Mary Ann, his wife, who survived him 33 years.

East Side:

TO THE MEMORY OF THE CHILDREN OF JUNIUS BRUTUS AND MARY ANN BOOTH

John Wilkes, Frederick, Elizabeth, Mary Ann, Henry Byron.

arsenal, and General Eckert, the Assistant Secretary of War.

The following questions were asked General Baker (formerly Colonel Baker):

Q. Was it in the arsenal building, or in the penitentiary?

A. I call it the arsenal building, because it was used for arsenal stores. It was properly the old penitentiary, though it had not been used for a penitentiary for some time. It was occupied at that time for arsenal stores for fixed ammunition.

Q. Did you ever represent to anybody that you or some of your assistants took the body of Booth out into the ocean, tied stones to it, and sunk it?

A. I do not know that I ever did directly. I have been questioned a great deal in reference to that matter, and used to reply to the reporters somewhat at random. Very likely I did make such a statement. I do not recollect.

Q. Why do you say very likely you did?

A. I say that because, at the time the body was disposed of, I was beset by correspondents and others who wanted to ascertain where it was buried. The Secretary did not want anybody to know.

Q. Did you ever represent that you alone, with one other man, disposed of the body, and that no other persons on earth knew where it was?

A. My previous answer applies to this question.

Q. You will answer this question if you please.

A. I might have made that representation.

Q. Did you represent to anyone that the head of Booth was taken off and the body buried without the head?

A. Never in my life.

Q. Is it a fact or not?

A. It is not, so far as I know.

Q. Was the head buried with the body?

A. The last I saw of the body it was whole, excepting a section of the spinal bone where the bullet entered, taken by Doctor Barnes, Surgeon-General, and which, I believe, is now in the Medical Museum.

According to the testimony of Lieutenant L. B. Baker, he, General L. C. Baker, and two of the *Montauk's* sailors took the body from the gunboat, placed it in a row boat, carried it down the eastern branch to a little wharf attached to the arsenal, and then turned it over to Colonel Benton. The body was actually buried under the floor of a large room, the door to the room was locked and the key turned over to the Secretary of War.

In the *Columbian Magazine* for April, 1911, there is a story by George L. Porter, Assistant Surgeon of the United States Army, in 1865 and stationed then at the arsenal, that he and four enlisted men were the only persons present at the time the body was lowered into its grave.

Dr. Porter states that those present when the body was buried were sworn to secrecy regarding the happenings of the night until such time as necessity for secrecy had passed. That the body was carried to a large room 50x40 feet, which was being used for general storage quarters, buried under the floor and the door locked. He states that the reason for the attempted secrecy "may be found in the turbulent condition of public affairs, the general consternation and almost universal suspicion. The departments in Washington were demoralized; the clerks were not trusted to copy official orders that were written by the chief personally and transmitted directly by messenger." The Govern- (Concluded on page 31)

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Mr. Ford's Page

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has a more comprehensive view of world policies than had the great statesmen of a few decades ago.

But to allege this as the source of nervous disturbance is rather extravagant. For these things are not new to all. The generations overlap, and boys today are accepting as their natural daily companions—as natural as the clouds and trees—marvels which their fathers never guessed. A generation born with these things to hand will grow up naturally with them; these wonders will be the common daily tools of the new era, with probably still greater tools to accompany them, and the use of them will be no more a nervous strain than was the use of the stagecoach or the sailing ship generations ago.

It seems perfectly reasonable to say that the charge that newness causes nervous strain may be pushed too far, much too far. All this newness is itself *the normal march of mind*. Fast as the world may be moving, it is not moving any faster than human minds have moved. Everything we have is the work of some human mind. The pace of the age is the pace set by men like ourselves. It is not as if we were being pushed by cosmic forces that are not geared to our gait; this vast panorama of modern progress is our gait. Else we should not be going it. It is human. It is natural. It is the product of our living contemporaries.

If we were being dragged in the wake of brilliantly blazing stars of genius whose brightness blinded and whose heat shriveled plain folk, that would be different. But what we have is the result of the most sane and commonplace processes, the result of the most calm and sober setting of plain fact against plain fact. Indeed, it may be said that we have nothing new, amid all our wonders, but a new combination of old things. Why, then, should the newness be charged with being a nervously destructive force in our life?

It is not the onmarch that hurts, but the backpull. There is, unfortunately, a queer quirk of the mind by which it feels that it cannot be loyal to the old without being antagonistic to the new. And there the antagonism begins, and there also is the source of the disjointedness of life which leads to nervous irritation. The voice of wisdom says to us: *Keep the Old and Accept the New*. What was good and useful in the old can never pass, what is worthless in the new cannot remain. The very creators of the new are but preserving the old in more enduring forms.

Sapiro's Peach and Fig Growers

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the wheat-producers, is merely a subsidiary to what he is pleased to call "an international pool."

There are a score of other and somewhat minor factors of failure in the Sapiro Plan associations, the majority of which are inherent in the plan itself. It is doubtful if the most honest, competent, and careful business man in this country could make a success of the operation of a coöperative marketing association if he followed the Sapiro Plan. Certainly no sane business man, intrusted with the direction of the operations of a firm of several partners would undertake to direct those operations on this plan. The farmers of the United States are beginning to realize, as the grain-growers of Canada apparently did realize immediately when Mr. Sapiro appeared on the scene, that they are in business for themselves, and are not sheep producing wool for alien shearers. Having arrived at this point of view, they are rejecting in ever-increasing numbers the plan offered by the enterprising and industrious, but strictly non-agricultural Mr. Sapiro. In this early part of 1925, after a disastrous decade of Sapiro Plan "coöperative" experience, there is a large and apparently permanent rainbow in the sky of agricultural marketing. It points directly away from the Sapiro Plan, from Jewish influences, and from internationalization of American agriculture to the comparatively simple system of business methods applied to the nation's greatest business.

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ment feared that the body of Booth, if secured by Southern sympathizers, might be used as a rallying point to revive the war. Fear was the motive behind the false reports.

In 1867 it became necessary to tear down the building in which the body was buried and it was moved to one of the large storehouses on the arsenal grounds, the bodies of the four conspirators, Mrs. Mary Surratt, Louis Payne, George Atzerodt, and David Herold, who were executed on July 7, 1865, were also dug up and placed beside it.

Edwin Booth, to please his mother, requested that the body of John Wilkes be turned over to the family. This was done February 15, 1869, and it was taken to Baltimore, identified, as already has been described, then reburied in the family plot in Greenmount Cemetery, Baltimore, Maryland.

The trio of contenders for the assassin's infamy, James Glasgow Armstrong, John St. Helen, and David George, may now rest peacefully, undisturbed by myth makers. They were indeed romantic rascals, ego-maniacs, who have enjoyed their precarious places in history. They are now in the category of historical fiction and there let us trust they will remain.

What Is an Intellectual?

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Intellectual, except by those who are unaware of her fine spiritual qualities, which, in her writing, are always duly restrained. Here again we are on delicate ground. One can scarcely read the essay, "The Idolotrous Dog," in her latest volume, "Under Dispute," without on the one hand admitting and admiring her literary technic, and at the same time being sorry for the didacticism which makes her declare that—speaking of vivisection—"None but the supremely ignorant can deny its usefulness."

The truth is that the mere cultivation of our intellects carries an enormous risk. If we make this an exclusive process and fail to keep in the thick of our ordinary occupations, such as marrying and having children and playing games and being generally foolish—then we are bound to lose out in the long run, just as Henry James lost out. Nothing is so important to our intellectuals—whoever they may be—as themselves and their daily utterances. And nothing is so unimportant to everybody else.

As an experiment, last year, I wrote an anonymous letter to a man whom I selected as the biggest high-brow (I still like that word) in England. He was the editor of a very exclusive periodical, a real literary Brahma of the highest caste, and the author of books which had attained world-wide celebrity. I wrote him frankly that I was just an ordinary dub American without any particular education except what I had picked up, and that I was writing to him to ask him why, just because he was British, he considered himself so superior. Of course, I did this because I wanted, so to speak, to get a rise out of him. Then I asked him certain questions about religion and philosophy. To my astonishment he wrote back a long personal letter, one of the most charming letters I ever read, saturated with genuine humility, and, quite ingenuously taking me to task for harboring for a moment the thought that he, or any other "Britisher," should think himself superior to an American. Here, undoubtedly, was a man whose intellect had not warped his spirit. And that is the way it ought to be.

(To be continued)