

# BOOTH'S LETTER TO GRANT

## By H. H. KOHLSAAT

ON THE night of April 14, 1865, President and Mrs. Lincoln invited General and Mrs. Grant to accompany them to Ford's Theater; but General and Mrs. Grant wanted to see their children and left on the six o'clock train for Burlington, New Jersey. So the President invited Miss Clara Harris, daughter of Senator Harris, of New York, and Col. Henry R. Rathbone to go with them. As they entered the theater the audience arose and gave the President a great ovation. He bowed his acknowledgment and took his seat in the box.

During the performance of the play, Our American Cousin, John Wilkes Booth entered the theater. He was an extremely handsome man of twenty-six and was well known to the managers and employees of the theater.

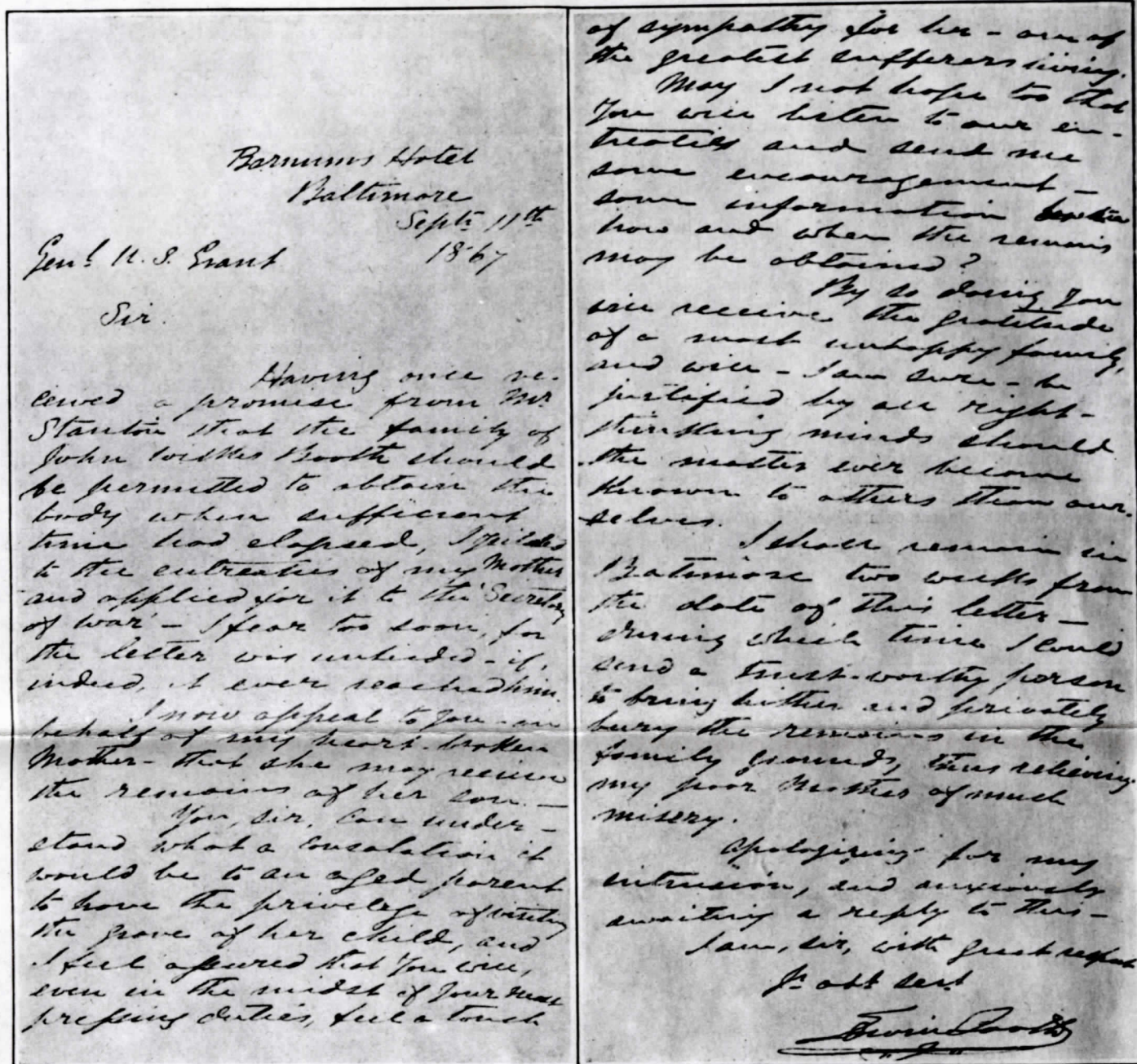
Ten minutes later he entered the presidential box. Creeping up behind the President, he shot him in the head just back of the left ear. Dropping his derringer pistol, he drew a long knife with which he slashed Colonel Rathbone, who tried to stop him. Leaping out of the box onto the stage, his legs passed between the folds of the flag decorating the box. His spur caught in the fringe, throwing him nine feet to the stage, breaking his ankle.

With a cry "Sic semper tyrannis"—Thus always with tyrants—he fled through a stage door, jumped on a saddled horse held by a boy, rushed out of the alley through the streets, crossing the Potomac over Anacostia Bridge into Maryland, arriving at Dr. Samuel Mudd's residence at Bryantown, Maryland, thirty miles from Washington, at four o'clock next morning.

### The Capture of Booth

DOCTOR MUDD set his broken ankle, and Booth, joined by one of his fellow conspirators, Herold, left that afternoon and hid in a thicket for five days. Finally crossing the Rappahannock River, they reached the Garrett residence near Bowling Green, Virginia, April twenty-fourth.

When a company of United States cavalrymen arrived, Booth hid with his confederate, Herold, in Garrett's barn. When he refused to surrender, Lieut. Col. Everton J. Conger, of Ohio, threw a rope of lighted straw into the barn and set fire to a pile of hay. As the flames made the interior brilliant, Sergeant Boston Corbett, through a crack, shot Booth with a pistol. As he sank down, the soldiers



opened the door, dragged him out and laid him on the grass. They finally carried him to the front porch of the house. He was apparently dead, but some water thrown in his face revived him. His lips moved. An officer put his ear to his lips and heard him say, "Tell my mother I died for my country. I did what I thought best." He said no more.

### Letters

HE WAS shot at 3:15 A.M. and died two hours later, April 26, 1865, twelve days after the assassination of President Lincoln.

Booth's body was sewed up in an army blanket and carried to the Rappahannock and placed on board the steamer Ide. At Alexandria it was put on board the monitor Montauk, with the conspirator Herold, who was in double irons.

After complete identification, Booth's body was put in a pine box and secretly buried under a stone

slab in a cell in the old Government Penitentiary, a part of the Government Arsenal, where it remained until February 15, 1869, when President Andrew Johnson gave Edwin Booth permission to remove it to the family burial plot in Green Mount Cemetery, Baltimore.

### A Historic Correspondence

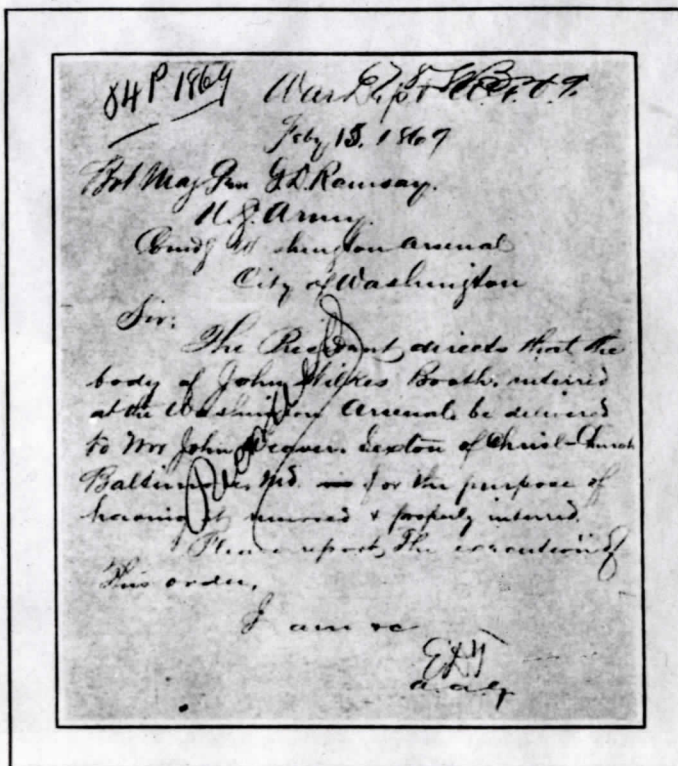
THE letter of Edwin Booth to General Grant, presented herewith, formerly belonged to Gen. Adam Badeau, who was on General Grant's staff. All of General Badeau's letters were left to Mr. George Corsa, of Ridgewood, New Jersey, for many years Badeau's private secretary.

Mr. Corsa died about two years ago and willed his estate to Mrs. Ella F. Cooper, of Ridgewood, New Jersey. Mrs. Cooper sold the letter at auction November 1, 1923, in the Anderson Galleries, New York, to Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach for one thousand dollars.

When I read of the sale I asked Doctor Rosenbach if he would give me a photographic copy of the letter; he did so, and I started hunting for a possible answer from General Grant. After diligent search through the New York Public Library and the histories of Lincoln's assassination and John Wilkes Booth's capture, I found no reference to it anywhere, and believe this is the first knowledge of its existence.

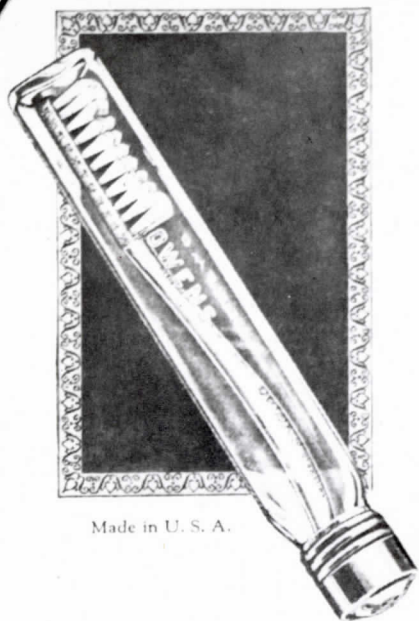
Failing to find any record of Booth's letter to Grant in New York, I went to Washington and

(Continued on Page 56)



BOOTH'S LETTER TO GRANT

Continued from Page 20



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Only the OWENS is made for you, personally

The Owens Staple tied Tooth Brush comes to you protected from careless, unsanitary handling. Each one is packed in a clean, transparent glass container. People can see it without thumbing or fingering.



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Each bristle tuft is permanently tied into the handle by a hidden staple, thus preventing the danger of bristles coming out in your mouth.

Improved in every way, and sold in the glass container, the Owens costs only 30, 40 and 50 cents each in child's, youth's, and adult's sizes. See it at your druggist's.

**OWENS**  
Staple tied TOOTH BRUSH  
THE OWENS BOTTLE COMPANY, TOLEDO

through the courtesy of Maj. Gen. Robert C. Davis, Adjutant General of the War Department, Mr. Jesse H. Powell was instructed to search the files of 1867 and after, but no reference to the letter to General Grant could be found; but Mr. Powell did find a copy of a letter written by Edwin Booth to President Andrew Johnson February 10, 1869, as follows:

NEW YORK,  
February 10, 1869.  
ANDREW JOHNSON, ESQ.,  
PRESIDENT UNITED STATES.

Dear Sir: May I not now ask your kind consideration of my poor Mother's request in relation to her son's remains? The bearer of this—Mr. John Weaver is Sexton of Christ Church, Baltimore, who will observe the strictest secrecy

*George D. Ramsey*  
February 15<sup>th</sup> 1869  
File with 112  
The Honorable the Secretary of War will please to be delivered to Mr. John Weaver, Sexton of Christ Church, Baltimore, the remains of John Wilkes Booth, for the purposes mentioned in the within communication.  
*Andrew Johnson*

Washington Arsenal,  
Washington, D. C. Feb 16<sup>th</sup> 1869.  
Maj Gen E. D. Townsend  
Asst Adjt General  
Washington D. C.  
Sir,  
I have the honor to report that the body of John Wilkes Booth, was on Monday afternoon the 15<sup>th</sup> inst. delivered to the person designated in the order of the President of the United States of the same date.  
I am, Sir,  
Very respectfully,  
Your Obedt. Servt.  
Geo. D. Ramsey  
Asst. Adj. Gen.

in this matter—and you may rest assured that none of my family desire its publicity.

Unable to visit Washington, I have deputed Mr. Weaver, in whom I have the fullest confidence, and I beg that you will not delay in ordering the body to be given to his care.

He will retain it—placing it in his vault—until such time as we can remove other members of our family to the Baltimore Cemetery and thus prevent any special notice of it.

There is also—I am told—a trunk of his at the National Hotel which I once applied for but was refused—it being under seal of the War Department; it may contain relics of the poor misguided boy—which would be dear to his sorrowing Mother and of no use to anyone. Your Excellency would greatly lessen a crushing weight of grief that is hurrying my Mother to

Sir: I have the honor to report that the body of John Wilkes Booth, was on Monday afternoon, the 15th inst., delivered to the person designated in the order of the President of the United States of the same date. I am, sir,

Very respectfully,  
Your Obedt. Servant,  
GEO. D. RAMSEY,  
BREVET MAJOR GENERAL,  
U. S. ARMY, COMMANDING.

Sexton Weaver conveyed Booth's body, wrapped in an army blanket and placed in a pine box, to a Washington undertaker, where it was put in a casket and carried to the Booth family burial lot in Green Mount Cemetery, Baltimore. I visited the cemetery and was told that under a plain marker of marble about sixteen by eighteen inches in a far corner of the lot, with no lettering of any kind on it, was the last resting place of John Wilkes Booth.

such time as we can remove other members of our family to the Baltimore Cemetery, and thus prevent any special notice of it.  
There is also (I am told) a trunk of his at the National Hotel— which I once applied for but was refused— it being under seal of the War Dept., it may contain relics of the poor misguided boy— which would be dear to his sorrowing Mother, and of no use to anyone. Your Excellency would greatly lessen the crushing weight of grief that is hurrying my Mother to the grave by giving immediate orders for the safe delivery of the remains of John Wilkes Booth to Mr. Weaver, and gain the lasting gratitude of  
Yr. Obedt. Servt.  
(Sgd) Edwin Booth.

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Yr. obt. servt.,  
(Sgd) EDWIN BOOTH.

February fifteenth, President Johnson gave the Secretary of War, General Schofield, an order directing him to surrender Booth's body. Maj. Gen. E. D. Townsend, Assistant Adjutant General, wrote the same day:

BREVET MAJ. GEN.  
GEORGE D. RAMSEY,  
COMMANDING WASHINGTON ARSENAL.

Sir: The President directs that the body of John Wilkes Booth, interred at the Washington Arsenal, be delivered to Mr. John Weaver, Sexton of Christ Church, Baltimore, Md., for the purpose of having it removed and properly interred. Please report the execution of this order.

I am, &c.,  
E. D. T.,  
A. A. G.

General Ramsey replied as follows:

MAJ. GEN. E. D. TOWNSEND,  
ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL, U. S. ARMY,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.