

Colder Tonight

Weather for Minneapolis and Vicinity—Mostly cloudy tonight and Sunday with snow probable Sunday; colder tonight; rising temperature Sunday.

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# LINCOLN'S ASSASSIN WAS NOT SHOT! LIVED UNTIL 1903, HIS NIECE ADMITS

## BOOTH FAMILY BREAKS SIXTY YEARS' SILENCE

Mother of Martyred President's Slayer Visited Him in San Francisco Year After Crime, Blanche Booth Says—Assassin Leaves Affidavit Accusing Vice President Johnson of Fostering Plot and Aiding in His Escape.

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John Wilkes Booth escaped.

This was admitted today in Minneapolis by his niece, Blanche Booth, breaking the 60-year silence of the Booth family regarding the fate of Abraham Lincoln's slayer.

She repudiated the statement made Feb. 17 by Edward Harper Sampson, Moline, Ill., one of the guards supposed to have killed Booth, that with his death the secret of the burial place of Booth's body would be lost. She believes he knew that Booth was not shot by his pursuers as history relates.

### Niece Settles Controversy

After fighting off interviewers for years, Miss Booth today finally revealed at her home, 1319 Yale place that the story of Finis L. Bates was true, thus settling a controversy that has raged for years since it was announced that Booth was killed in a barn on the Garrett plantation near Bowling Green, Va.

Bates tells of knowing St. Helen at Glen Rose Mills while he was a practicing attorney at Grandberry, Texas. Later he knew St. Helen at Grandberry, where Booth under the name of St. Helen, set up a whisky shop.

"Not only was St. Helen an orator, but he essayed the role of a critic of high class acting, showing a knowledge, to my mind, of a born genius of high cultivation, demonstrating that he was a master of the art of which he was speaking," said Bates of Booth in his Grandberry, Texas, days.

#### Confesses True Identity

Booth, or St. Helen, became ill not long after he went to Grandberry, and he called Bates to his bedside to hear a confession when he thought that his disease was killing him. He confessed his true identity—he had told Bates his true name was not St. Helen—and presented him with a tintype picture of himself.

"In my opinion, and in the opinion of the mother of John Wilkes Booth, Mrs. Junius Brutus Booth, that tintype picture was a true picture of John Wilkes Booth," Miss Booth said today.

"I am dying," St. Helen told me in his log house in Grandberry, as he handed me the tintype. "Send the tintype to my brother; tell him that the man whose picture this is has died, and tell him where you buried me."

"When I asked him the name and address of his brother," Mr. Bates recounts, "he told me: 'He is Edwin Booth—the actor of New York city.'"

Medical treatment brought the dying assassin back to health, and when he next visited Mr. Bates he made no secret of his identity. "He told me that what he had said had been in confidence to me as his attorney; that I should tell no one until he was dead, and then I should do as he had asked me to," Mr. Bates says.

#### Recounts Story of Escape

Booth, under the name of John St. Helen, told to Bates the story of his escape through the network of guards spread around Washington immediately after the shooting in the Ford theater.

"I owe it to myself, most of all to my mother, possibly no less to my other relations and the good name of my family, as well as to the memory of Mrs. Surratt, who was hanged as a consequence of my crime, to make and leave behind me for history a full statement of this horrible affair," John St. Helen told Mr. Bates.

"I was actuated by purely patriotic motives," said Booth or St. Helen, known before the assassination as a strong sympathizer with the cause of the Confederacy. "I was persuaded at that time that the death of President Lincoln and the succession of Vice President Johnson, a southern man, to the presidency, was the only hope for the protection of the South from misrule and confiscation," Booth continued in his sworn statement.

Mrs. Surratt, Booth completely cleared in this statement of the crime for which she was hanged.

#### Planned to Kidnap Lincoln

"On the morning of the day I killed President Lincoln, the taking of his life had never entered my mind. I intended to kidnap him, and through that day was laying plans with other members of the conspiracy to kidnap him," Booth continued.

"At the Kirkwood hotel, all the conspirators met with Vice President An-

drew Johnson to perfect their plans. Andrew Johnson told us of the complete impossibility of kidnaping the president, and asked me: 'Are you too faint hearted to kill him?'" Booth said.

"After I had been assured that General Grant would not be in the box with the president, I told Johnson that under these conditions and assurances I would dare to strike the blow for the helpless, vanquished people I loved," reads the statement.

"Make as sure of your aim as I have done in arranging your escape. For in your complete success lies our only hope," Booth says Johnson told him as he stepped into the theater.

"I will shoot him in the brain," I told Johnson.

#### Escaped Into Canada

After the assassination and escape, according to Miss Booth today, John Wilkes Booth made his way to Canada, where he drew from a bank \$20,000 in gold, the savings of his active stage life. Later he met his mother in San Francisco.

Bates, doubtful about the story that had been told him, later moved to Memphis, Tenn., where he became an active attorney. It was not until some years later that he took the tintype to New York city and showed it to members of the Booth family.

Not only did members of the Booth family identify the tintype as a picture of John Wilkes Booth, but Joe Jefferson, one of the closest friends Booth had had on the stage, declared himself certain that the Grandberry man was indeed John Wilkes Booth. Jefferson had played the part of the gravedigger to Booth's Hamlet for several years.

#### Identified by General

During the Grandberry days, General Albert Pike, a Civil war veteran, and a man who knew Booth well, identified him in the Pickwick hotel barroom at Village Mills, according to a story told by M. W. Connolly, a prominent Southern newspaper man. The identification took place in 1883.

Mr. Connolly tells of being in the bar when Booth came in.

General Pike, Mr. Connolly and several other men were sitting at a table when John St. Helen entered the room.

"My God! John Wilkes Booth!" General Pike cried as St. Helen came through the door. Pike trembled like an aspen, was much excited, and at my suggestion went to his room to recover from the shock," Mr. Connolly relates in his statement.

From Grandberry Booth went to Leadville, Colo., where he first began to use the name of David E. George. His life in Leadville is a closed book to the followers of his travels. He was lost to sight from the time he left Grandberry until he died under the name of George in the Grand Avenue hotel at Enid, Okla.

#### Again Discloses Identity

At the Grand Avenue hotel, after he had taken poison, David E. George, or John Wilkes Booth, again disclosed his true identity before he died. He called to his bedside B. B. Brown, S. S. Dumont and Guy S. Marrat, and there, before a notary public, again swore to his identity. The affidavit is sworn on Jan. 22, 1903.

Points of identification brought out in the affidavit made at Enid, came as near to confirming the story told by George as could be thought necessary.

The right thumb of David E. George was crushed near the joint—the same

resulted from a falling stage curtain before the assassination. The mismatched eyebrows—caused by a saber cut accidentally inflicted by McCullen while at practice for the play "King Richard," in which McCullen played Richard and Booth Richmond. The broken ankle bone that was received when Booth jumped from the box in Ford's theater to the stage after the fatal shot. Scar of an incision under the right jaw, which was the result of an operation performed for the removal of tubercular glands by Dr. John Fred May of Washington, D. C., before the assassination.

#### Family Silence Broken

All these points of identification were found on the dead David E. George; can still be found because the body of the man has been mummified to last 100 years.

Termining the account of Ray Stannard Baker, foremost exponent of the faction which declares that Booth was indeed killed at the Garrett plantation, prejudiced because of the fact that Baker's father commanded the troops which supposedly killed Booth in the Garrett barn, Mr. Bates sums up the huge bulk of evidence that Booth was not killed.

"The evidence, together with the fact that my uncle's mother saw John Wilkes Booth after the alleged killing in the Garrett barn, convinces me that

"Wilkes Booth met his mother a year after the assassination and told her all about the plot, its execution, and his carefully planned escape," Miss Booth said. "They met in San Francisco after he had gone from Canada to Mexico and had arranged for a meeting there. She repeatedly told members of the family that she had seen her son and that he had told her all about it."

#### Lived Here for Years

Miss Booth was for a considerable period a member of the company of her uncle Edwin Booth. She has lived for many years in Minneapolis and was out of touch with other members of the family until the recent visit of a relative.

Miss Booth declared that Wilkes Booth was always regarded by her and her family as the kindest of men, a sort of godfather to the younger ones, including herself. It was he, she said, who gave her little presents and encouraged her to go on the stage.

On the night of the assassination, she says, the shock of the news that the president had been shot was as nothing compared with the later information that Wilkes Booth had shot him.

#### Get News of Escape

A little later, she says, there came through secret channels the news that he had escaped.

Here are the high lights of the amazing story:

John Wilkes Booth lived 38 years after the death of Lincoln and his own supposed death and died by his own hand in 1903 at Enid, Okla., at the age of 65.

He was seen by his mother in San Francisco a year after his escape.

He revealed his identity twice, once when he believed he was dying and once on his death bed.

He produced a photograph proving his identity that was identified by Edwin Booth and Joseph Jefferson.

He left behind him a sworn statement declaring that Andrew Johnson, vice president who succeeded Lincoln not only suggested the crime but arranged for his escape.

#### Bates' Story True

"The man killed in the barn on the Garrett plantation near Bowling Green was named Ruddy," Miss Booth declared. "Booth had escaped from

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the Garrett place nearly five hours earlier."

The story of Mr. Bates, greatest authority on the subject, is true in every detail, Miss Booth said.

At the time of his death, Booth was known as David E. George, and he pointed out physical characteristics that answered the description of Booth. The body has been embalmed so that it will remain intact for 100 years. It was examined in 1922, 19 years after his death, according to the story Miss Booth has admitted is true.

"John Wilkes Booth, the man who assassinated President Abraham Lincoln at Ford's theater on the evening of April 14, 1865, died by his own hand of poison in the Grand Avenue hotel at Enid on Jan. 13, 1903," Miss Booth said.

#### Authentic Photographs Exist

'Authentic photographs of Booth, taken of him at the ages of 27—before he murdered the president—at 38, 11 years after the assassination, and both 11 days and 19 years after his death in Enid, are in the possession of authorities, she declared.

"Prominent men holding that Booth was not killed in the Garrett barn have exhausted the subject with their inquiries only to come to the conclusion that he lived to be 65 years old under the names of John St. Helen and David E. George," Miss Booth continued.

Finis L. Bates, probably the greatest authority on the subject, knew John Wilkes Booth as John St. Helen at Grandberry, Texas. It was there, when Booth was deathly ill, that he confessed to Bates his true identity and presented him with a tintype which was later identified by members of Booth's own family.

Later, according to Miss Booth, Dr. Clarence True Wilson, retired lobbyist for the Methodist Episcopal church in Washington, D.C., spent years in going over records pertaining to the death. His conclusion as will soon be published in a volume of his own, is that secret service guards under Colonel Baker missed their man at the Garrett barn and that David E. George, who died in Enid, Okla., was the true assassin of Abraham Lincoln.

At the present time Elbert H. Gary, president of the United States Steel corporation, is devoting his spare time to solving the mystery, Miss Booth said.

#### Was Exile for Decade

For the 10 years following the assassination Booth was an exile from the United States. He wandered through the Mexican deserts playing the part of a nomad Catholic priest.

Booth got into trouble with Mexican authorities, and, according to his account to Bates, 11 years after the assassination, he was released only because of his being presumably a Catholic.

From Mexico Booth's travels led to Glen Rose Mills, Texas, where at the age of 38 he established himself as the proprietor of a whisky shop. It was in Glen Rose Mills that Booth's histrionic talents—said to have been the equal of Edwin Booth's—drew attention to John St. Helen, the alias he used at that time.