

Soldiers Slew Booth Michigan Vet Asserts

**Denies Another Man Was Shot
as Lincoln's Assassin;
Saw Victim's Body.**

Lansing, Feb. 28.—(By United Press.)—Assertions made recently by historical investigators that John Wilkes Booth, assassin of Abraham Lincoln, escaped pursuers and that an innocent man was mistaken for him and shot is vigorously denied by Edward T. Weale, local veteran, said to be the only surviving member of the party that captured Booth.

Weale, now in his eighty-seventh year, still vigorous in mind, remembers distinctly the eventful night in April, 1865, when a detachment of Union soldiers trailed Booth to his hiding place in a barn near Washington. He was a member of the famous Custer brigade and saw the assassin's body soon after Booth had been shot down by Boston Corbette, one of the pursuers.

"It was John Wilkes Booth who was shot—he and none other—for I saw him with my own eyes. I not only recognized Booth, having seen him act, but so did Captain Warner H. Pierson, in command of my company," Weale said. "I was first sergeant and was right up where I had an unimpaired view of the man."

The veteran recounts his experiences in the famous man hunt fol-

lowing Lincoln's shooting as follows:

"I was a member of Company D, First Michigan Cavalry, known commonly as the Custer brigade. We were stationed at Alexandria, across the Potomac from Washington. The night Lincoln was shot we received orders to proceed rapidly along the south bank of the river. While we were doing this, Lieutenant L. B. Baker, who afterward lived in Lansing, was following along the other bank.

"We pressed on rapidly all through the night. It was after day-break when we halted to rest our horses. A Negro came along, and, in answer to our questions, said the man who shot Lincoln had been captured not far beyond. We pressed forward at a gallop. Booth, by that time, had been shot by the man, Boston Corbette, and lay where he had been taken from the burning barn. Lieutenant Baker and his men had crossed the river and had found Booth hidden in the barn, just as history relates. As I have said, I was close with Captain Pierson, and we both recognized Booth. There never was any question as to who he was."

Weale, born in England, came to this country in 1859, and at the outbreak of the war, enlisted in the Union army from Ovid in Livingston county. After the war he did railroad work for a number of years, and later became a capitol employe. He was connected with the state department of labor for some time.

BOOTH'S NOTE TO COYLE.

The Veteran Editor's Explanation of Its Mysterious Disappearance.

Wilkes Booth's note, written on the eve of the assassination of Lincoln in Washington, sent to John F. Coyle, one of the editors of the National Intelligencer, was not received by the latter, who recently gave the following explanation of the affair:

The execution, with all its painful memories, was over, the dead laid away, when late in November of that eventful year my old friend, John Matthews, who had disappeared on that Good Friday night, came to the city to fill an engagement at the National Theatre and called on me at the office of the National Intelligencer, and for the first time I heard the history of the Booth letter, which had caused me a good deal of painful anxiety. Mr. Matthews said on the afternoon of that eventful day he was with some friends walking on the avenue opposite the National Theatre, when Wilkes Booth rode up to the curb and called him and handed him a letter to be given to me the next day. Matthews put the letter in his coat pocket, asked Booth to join him and his friends at Shoemaker's, which Booth declined, saying he was in a hurry, and rode off. Matthews was in the cast of "The American Cousin" that night as the "rascally Attorney Coyle," and when the assassination occurred he hurried to the dressing-room to change his costume, and in his nervousness knocked his coat from the hook and the letter fell out. He had forgotten it. Replacing it in his pocket, he went to his room, near the theatre, locked the door, opened the letter and read it, and after some consideration burned it. He remembered the contents sufficiently to repeat them to me at the time. The entry in Booth's diary was substantially the same, the letter being written more carefully. This passage Matthews remembered particularly: "I know I shall be condemned for my act at the present time, but I am willing to trust to history and posterity for the vindication of my name and motives."

—John F. Coyle in Washington Post.