

# Assassin Booth's Visit Is Detailed By Niece

## Was Undoubtedly Lincoln Slayer, She Says; Other Items Support Theory.

Minneapolis, Feb. 23.—Blanche Debar Booth saw her uncle, John Wilkes Booth, many years after he assassinated President Lincoln. This admission today followed that of Saturday when she pronounced true statements that Booth died in Enid, Okla., in 1903.

"He came to me at St. Louis," she said. "I thought he was an impostor even though he recalled many incidents of our common childhood together.

"But I was convinced. His visit had aroused my suspicions. I investigated and found that it was true, that his mother, my great aunt, had seen him herself in San Francisco a year after the announcement that he had been shot to death.

"This explains why the rewards, totalling more than \$100,000 for the capture, dead or alive, of John Wilkes Booth, were never paid to anybody."

"It was in the late 80s or early 90s," Miss Booth said, "that this man came to see me, declaring that he was John Wilkes Booth.

"I laughed when he was announced, for I believed the story of his death as it had been told to me. And then he came in. I sprang to my feet astounded. The man was Wilkes Booth to the life. Still I thought him an impostor. He smiled and greeted me by name. I looked him over and laughed in his face, yet doubts assailed me.

"Do you remember"—he asked me, and detailed an occurrence of our childhood together.

"Of course, I remember that," I told him—but how do you come to know about it? Still I would not believe. At this his smile faded. The hands he had held out to me dropped at his sides. I thought him a clever actor even though I denied him.

"He turned away: 'Perhaps it is just as well,' he said, 'but ask others of the family if what I say is not true. Mother was with me in San Francisco in 1867.'

"That was the only time I ever saw him after his disappearance from Ford's theater. I should like to look at the body of this man which Dr. Wilson, of Washington, says is preserved at Memphis. I believe it is the body of John Wilkes Booth."

Two other convincing elements were pointed out by Miss Booth today in the story told by Finis L. Bates, attorney of Memphis, Tenn., for the man who admitted he was John Wilkes Booth in Texas, the man who died in Enid, Okla., nearly 40 years after the assassination of Lincoln.

### Conflicting Tales of Burial.

One was that as many as five different stories have been told of where John Wilkes Booth was buried.

Here are some of the various statements as to where Booth is buried:

General D. D. Dana said: "After Booth was killed he was brought to the navy yard and I went on the boat and identified him. But the body was very much thinner and his features very much pinched up, as though he had suffered a great deal. He was buried near the old jail and a battery of artillery drawn over his grave to obliterate all trace of it."

General Lew Wallace, member of the military court that tried and convicted David E. Harold and Mrs. Surratt, who were hanged, said:

"To my certain knowledge John Wilkes Booth was buried under a brick pavement in a room of the old prison of Washington city. After he had laid buried there for a time, at the request of his friends, his remains were taken up and transferred to Baltimore, where they now lie under a very handsome marble monument erected to his memory by men of whom I have reason to think as little of as I did of Booth."

Colonel William B. Wood, member of the secret service at the time of the assassination:

"The body of Booth was taken off the steamer Ide, April 27, 1865, and sent down the Potomac river. From the steamer it was placed on a boat by a Captain Baker and his nephew, a lieutenant in the Seventy-First New York volunteers, and carried to an island 27 minutes from Washington and secretly buried there."

Captain E. W. Hilliard, of Metropolis, Ill:

"I was one of four privates who carried the remains of Booth from the old capital prison in Washington to a gunboat which carried them about 10 miles down the Potomac river, when the body was sunk in the river."

### No Official Evidence.

The statement is made by a former officer of the judge advocate general's office in Washington, that the government has no direct or positive evidence that the man killed was Booth.

In spite of the story generally credited at the time, that acid had been used to destroy the body in its grave, the actress, Blanche Chapman, tells the story of the supposed identification of Booth in 1872, after exhumation of the body

was made to quiet the rumors which even then had risen that Booth was not dead. The examination of the body was conducted under the direction of the owner of Ford's theater, John T. Ford.

Miss Chapman tells of going with members of the Booth family and others who looked at a body wrapped in an army blanket in a mouldy casket, and heard Junius Brutus Booth identify a filling in one tooth as that of the brother who is now revealed to have been in Mexico alive and well at the time.

She tells of the withdrawal of one of the boots revealing a broken bone as the ankle that Booth broke in leaping from the theater box on the night of the assassination.

And this at the time when Wilkes Booth's boot was in the archives of the government at Washington, where it had been taken by the federal troops after being cut off by Dr. Mudd, on April 15, 1865.

Basil Moxly, veteran doorkeeper of John T. Ford's opera house, who acted as pallbearer at the burial of this body later, declared that it was not the body of Booth and did not resemble him.

"He had brown hair, while Booth's was jet black; there was also a difference in their general appearance," he said.

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