

Booth Killed Lincoln To Avenge A Friend, Old Clipping Records

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Actor Was Never Citizen Of Any Seceded State, Editorial Writer Says

THE following rare sidelight upon the story of John Wilkes Booth and its tragic climax on the night of April 14, 1865, is reproduced from any old family scrap book, for the use of which the *Atlanta Journal* says it is indebted to Dr. Marion McH. Hull. The article, which first appeared in the *Christian Observer*, begins by quoting a bitterly prejudiced statement from a church publication in Ohio. Commenting thereon, the editor of the *Christian Observer* wrote:

"Such paragraphs as the above, which is taken from the *Religious Telescope*, of Dayton, Ohio, have repeatedly appeared in Northern religious papers. They do the Southern people a great injustice. No citizen of the Southern Confederacy had anything to do with the assassination of Mr. Lincoln; nor was slavery in any way responsible for it, except in so far as slavery was an occasion of the Civil War. These writers have evidently forgotten the facts which led to the commission of this crime—facts which are not stated in many histories.

BOOTH NOT OF SOUTH.

"John Wilkes Booth, who assassinated Mr. Lincoln, was a citizen of the United States—not of the Confederate States. He was at no time a resident of any of the seceded States. His Southern sympathies did not lead him to come to the South and make common cause with the South. It was not an ardent love of the South, or of the Southern cause, that prompted Mr. Booth's crime; but rather a spirit of revenge for the personal wrong that Mr. Lincoln had done in having Capt. John Young Beall, one of Booth's friends, executed unjustly.

"The editor of the *Christian Observer* was acquainted with Captain Beall. He was a native of Virginia, a member of a good family, a college graduate, a brave young man of attractive personality. In Richmond, Va., we boarded at the same house, ate at the same table, and we learned to appreciate his sterling worth. He possessed traits similar to those which during the Spanish-American War made Richmond Pearson Hobson the idol of the American people.

CAPTAIN BEALL'S HISTORY.

"And when, in the fall of 1864, a man was wanted to lead a hazardous enterprise and make a diversion on Lake Erie he promptly responded to the call of his Government. With a handful of brave seamen, he seized a steamboat on Lake Erie, made its crew prisoners, converted it into a war vessel, captured or sank one or more other boats, terrorized the commerce of the Great Lakes, produced a panic in Buffalo and the cities on the lakes, and thoroughly alarmed the Northern people. In due time he was captured. He was tried by a court-martial and sentenced to death as a pirate.

"John Wilkes Booth interested himself in his behalf, obtained from the Confederate Government at Richmond, Va., the evidence that he was a commissioned officer of the Confederate Navy; he obtained also evidence that his acts were only those of legitimate warfare, and that he was acting under specific instructions from the Confederate Government. Booth went to Washington armed with those documents and secured from President Lincoln the promise that Captain Beall should not be put to death, but should be treated as a prisoner of war. This promise of Mr. Lincoln gave offense to Secretary Seward, who persuaded him, in the face of it, to sanction Beall's execution. And Captain Beall was hanged at Governor's Island, N. Y., on February 24, 1865.

BOOTH GRIEVED BY DEATH.

"John Wilkes Booth was not a well-balanced man at his best. Doubtless he inherited a streak of insanity with which his father, though a great actor, was from time to time afflicted. Be that as it may, he was fearfully wrought up by the death of his friend in such circumstances.

"He denounced the killing in cold blood of a prisoner of war, after he had surrendered, as murder; and the doing it after the President had given his word that it should not be done as falsehood and treachery, and vowed vengeance against the authors of this wrong.

"At once he organized a conspiracy for the assassination of President Lincoln and Secretary Seward; and on the night of April 14, 1865, only seven weeks after Captain Beall was hanged, the plot was executed. Booth shot Mr. Lincoln at Ford's Theater, Washington, exclaiming, "*Sic semper tyrannis*," and on the same night, Paine, one of his fellow-conspirators, inflicted serious, but not mortal wounds, on William H. Seward, Secretary of State.

"The United States was fearfully aroused by the assassination of the President. At first it was suspected that the crime had been instigated by Confederates. Many prominent citizens of the Confederacy were arrested. The most thorough and searching examination was made. And it was conclusively proved that no representative of the Confederate Government, and no one in the Southern Confederacy had any part in it.

"It was as sincerely regretted and as severely condemned through the South as in the North. Mr. Lincoln was killed, not by a citizen of the Confederate States, but by a citizen of the United States—a partially deranged man, to avenge the wrong he claimed had been suffered by his friend at Mr. Lincoln's hands."