

THE MYSTERIOUS SUICIDE AT ENID, OKLA.

18
18th

"D. E. George" Confesses He Is John Wilkes Booth --Extraordinary Resemblance to Lincoln's Assassin--Strange Facts About "George"--His Broken Leg and Theatrical Knowledge--Did Booth Escape at Garrett's Farm?

IS IT possible that the mysterious man who committed suicide in Enid, O. T., a few days ago was, as he confessed upon his deathbed, John Wilkes Booth, the murderer of Abraham Lincoln? Is it possible that during all the years since the tragedy in Ford's Theater, Washington, the assassin has been at large and the world wholly mistaken regarding his end?

Is it possible that only now, in the great Southwest, the justice which "treads with a leaden heel but strikes with an iron hand," has at last claimed the murderer for its own and that "Daniel E. George," when he killed himself in the Grand Avenue Hotel at Enid, was expiating the terrible crime that has stamped the name of John Wilkes Booth with infamy?

These are questions which the people of Enid, Guthrie and El Reno have been asking themselves during the past few days as they have discussed the startling confession of "George" upon his deathbed and have endeavored to probe the mystery to the bottom.

Pictures of Booth have been studied in the presence of the corpse, disclosing a striking resemblance. The handwriting of the two men was found to be identical. "George" exhibited the anatomical characteristics of Booth when studied by Enid physicians. Equally extraordinary was the moral resemblance between the two men, so alike physically. And when in the Enid morgue the legs of the suicide were critically examined there was found the fracture in the identical spot where Booth's leg was broken when he leaped from the President's box to the stage after his terrible crime.

Reluctant as were the people of Enid to believe that history was wrong and "George" was right, they were yet deeply impressed by these extraordinary coincidences:

Facial resemblance.....	Striking
Handwriting.....	Identical
The broken leg.....	Exactly similar
"George's" income.....	From mysterious sources
"George's" moral character.....	Same as Booth's
Head and forehead.....	Same in both
Ears of suicide.....	"Satanic," like Booth's
Eyes of "George".....	Small, sunken, unequal, like Booth's
Nose.....	Same in both
Undeveloped upper jaw.....	Characteristic in Booth and "George"
V-shaped dental arch.....	Found in both
Well developed lower jaw.....	Same in both
"George's" history.....	Unknown
Complexion.....	Similar
Age of Booth and "George".....	The same

GUTHRIE, O. T., Jan. 29.
PEOPLE here are wondering whether Daniel E. George, who committed suicide at Enid, O. T., was in reality John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Lincoln, as he confessed upon his deathbed. Some scoff at the idea, saying Booth was shot by Boston Corbett and that the facts surrounding his death are a part of history.

Others, more conservative, have been piecing together the many mysterious circumstances connected with this strange suicide, and the more they have investigated the extraordinary story the more inclined they are to believe it in spite of an apparent effort to hush the matter up or to make it appear that George could by no

possibility have been Booth. George had been a resident of the territory for several years, and he had always been well supplied with money, the origin of which no one knew. From some mysterious source he received regular remittances. He was a familiar figure in Guthrie, El Reno and Enid, and his confession on his deathbed that he was John Wilkes Booth, to whom it is now discovered he bore a remarkable resemblance, created a profound sensation in those localities. He announced that he had eluded the officers after the assassination of Lincoln and had since remained incognito, traveling much, but always under an assumed name.

"George's" first confession that he was Booth was made to Mrs. Harper, wife of the minister of the First Methodist Church of Enid. He told her—"I killed the best man that ever lived—Abraham Lincoln."

Mrs. Harper states that she met George in El Reno, where he was boarding with a family named Simmons, with some members of which she was intimate. She says her acquaintance with him would lead her to believe him a different person from what he represented himself to be. He was eccentric. Although he claimed to be only a painter of houses, yet he was of far more than the ordinary intelligence, and in conversation would discuss subjects of moment with the greatest ability and skill.

He told frequently of his visits to Jerusalem, of his travels through Europe, Asia and Africa.

There were few people with whom he cared to have anything to do. Generally he was gloomy, though at times he would brighten up, sing snatches of stage songs and repeat scenes from Shakespeare in an admirable manner. He was well versed in Shakespeare, so much so that often he would answer questions with quotations.

At one time the young people of El Reno had a play of some kind, and one of the actors becoming ill, George filled the place. He said he had acted in plays when he was a young man, and in that way he was induced to take the part. "He told me," says Mrs. Harper, "he had played in Dallas, Tex."

"Regarding his people," says Mrs. Harper, "he told different stories. One time he said his father was a doctor, and that he and a brother were the only children; that his mother married again, and two half-brothers were living in Indian Territory, their name being Smith, and that he had property in that territory. He was subject to fits of melancholy. He was extremely sensitive, quick-tempered, rather excitable.

"He seemed very lonely and said at another time he had not a relative in the world. He said he had never married. There seemed to be something continually on his mind, about which he studied, and it made him miserable. He longed to have one understand he was in trouble, and appreciated sympathy. He remained with the Simmons family three weeks, and people he had never been before treated him so kindly.

"Never do I remember hearing that he of his past life and insisted that he was other than D. E. George."

time he thought he was going to die. That was about the middle of last April.

"George had gone uptown and returned shortly, entering a room where Mrs. Simmons, Mrs. Beers and myself were seated. He made a remark regarding the weather, then went upstairs; in about 15 minutes he called for us and said: 'I feel as if I am going to be very sick.' He was lying on his bed. Finally, he asked me to get him a mirror. For some time he gazed at himself in the mirror. Mrs. Beers said she could see the pupils of his eyes dilate and believed he had taken morphine. Becoming uneasy, she went down stairs, made him a cup of coffee, and insisted until he drank it. He made her promise not to send for a doctor. She went down stairs to make some

Clipping

Clippings & Letters

found in F.L. Bates box of proofs"

in the Bank at Memphis - 1920.

more coffee.
"It was then that he called me to his side, saying: 'I have something to tell you; I am going to die in a few minutes, and I must tell someone. I believe you are a friend and I don't believe you would do anything to injure me. Did it ever occur to you that I was anything but an ordinary painter? I killed the best man that ever lived.' I asked him who it was and he answered, 'Abraham Lincoln.'

"I couldn't believe it. I thought probably he was out of his head. He said: 'Don't doubt it; it is true; I see you cannot believe it, but it is true. I am going to die in a few minutes.' He told me he was rich and had written his life and left it in book form, and that after his death it would be published. He said he was J. Wilkes Booth, and taking pencil and paper wrote it down—a large, peculiar hand. He seemed to be perfectly rational when talking with me; he knew me and knew where he was, and really thought he was about to die. He asked me to keep his secret until after he was dead, adding, 'If anyone would find out now that I was J. Wilkes Booth, they would take me out and hang me, and the people who love me so well would despise me.'

"George told me that men in high official life hated Lincoln and promised him a great reward if he and another man would kill Lincoln, Seward and others.

"George said the suspense of possibly being detected all the time was something awful. He said he traveled since all over Europe, Africa and in Asia. He said his life was miserable, that Mrs. Surratt was innocent, and he was responsible for her death and that of several others.

"George said he was devoted to acting, but had to give that up because on the stage he would be detected. The fact that he must remain from the stage, when he so desired to act, made him restless. He remained abroad, he said, until he became an old man, then returned, doing painting, carpentering, bookkeeping and at times even venturing on the stage. He said he had plenty of money, but was compelled to work to keep his mind occupied."

Mrs. Simmons, according to Mrs. Harper's story, became anxious regarding George when he first attempted suicide, and called a physician, a Dr. Arnold, by whom he was restored.

"He was very anxious for weeks regarding what he had told me," says Mrs. Harper. "I answered him that he had told me nothing of importance, although he seemed to know better. He saw me looking at a picture of Lincoln and asked me why I was looking at it. I told him I had always admired Lincoln. He regarded me with such a fierce look, saying: 'Is that the only reason that you have for looking at it?' A peculiar expression came over his face, he turned a little pale, his eyes flashed, he turned around and walked away.

"George told us he was 58 years old, but we thought him older. He dyed his hair and eyebrows a jet black. The natural color of his hair seemed to be of a reddish tint; he said it was curly when he was young; he had a way of raising

one of his eyebrows higher than the other. I noticed him limp frequently, but he always laid it to rheumatism."

That George had a past was known by all acquainted with him, but the secret of that past was not known. After his dying statement became known, an investigation was commenced, but without much success in unraveling the mystery. The friends who knew him best, state that so far as they know he might have been Booth, that he talked little of the past.

When the surgeons examined him they found his leg broken in the same manner and in the same place as was Booth's after the actor jumped from the President's box in Ford's Theater, having murdered the nation's head. They also stated that George was practically the age that Booth would be at this time, were the latter living. The entire surgical investigation backed up the statement of the dying man.

The authorities then began to look around for some one who could identify the remains, to ascertain if possible if the man was Booth. The first man to attempt to get hold of in such a case was, of course, Boston Corbett, who always has had the credit of killing Booth in the burning barn near Port Royal, Va., soon after the assassination.

George had evidently determined to die, for he made more than one attempt before succeeding. In El Reno, several days prior to killing himself in Enid, he took poison, but physicians were called in time to save him. The story of his suicide in Enid at the Grand Avenue Hotel is told by a citizen of that place as follows:

"George had been in Enid, off and on, for about six weeks. He arose as usual on the morning of his suicide and came down to breakfast, going out immediately afterward, presumably for a stroll. He returned shortly, wrote a letter at the desk and started upstairs to his room. Turning, he informed the clerk that he would go to his room for a nap and to call him if he did not awaken in time for dinner. About a half hour afterward a wild cry startled the entire hotel and the people ran to George's room, locating the scene of the trouble. He expired soon afterward and it is supposed that he took poison."

In the will left by George he named George E. Smith of Colfax, Ia., as one of the legatees and executor. Mr. Smith was summoned, but upon his arrival seemed to be as much at a loss as to the identity of the dead man as was everyone else.

Regarding George being Booth, Smith said he was in possession of no secrets and would only draw an inference from the statements he had heard.

"He may be Booth," answered Smith. "I don't know. A man of his experience

could have been. I have known him only about a year and a half and can say that he was an extensively traveled man, unusually well posted. To me he confided but little of his past."

Smith held conferences with the county authorities and left for home without making any disposition of the body. Friends of the dead man state that he had received money regularly from unknown sources.

A search for a facsimile of Booth's handwriting was rewarded by finding it in a copy of Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War. The resemblance between that and the handwriting of the Enid suicide is startling.

By friends of the dead man the picture I send you is said to be an excellent likeness of him several years ago, supposedly the last one taken. C. M. SARCHET.

ENID EDITOR CONVINCED

"If George Was Not Booth He Was His Double," Says the Wave.

(From the Wave, Enid, O. T.)

THE WAVE editorial and reportorial force has been searching closely for data, and evidence to sustain, or obliterate, the report that the remains lying in the Enid morgue, under the name of D. E. George, could possibly be those of J. Wilkes Booth.

While the history at hand leaves but little doubt as to the demise of Booth in attempting to escape from the burning barn in Virginia, that he was shot by Boston Corbett upon his first appearance from the barn, contrary to orders, and that he died on the porch of that Virginia farmhouse; was taken to Washington, identified and ordered buried secretly; that a diary found on his person detailing the plot to assassinate Lincoln and its purpose, etc., the fact still remains that a doubt did exist with the government at that time as to the positive identity of the man killed.

The Wave is still of the opinion that the possibility of the dead man being all that is mortal of J. Wilkes Booth is based on a theory of 16 to 1 that it is not Booth, but it must admit that the evidence goes to show that if George was not Booth he was his counterfeit or double, which in connection with his voluntary confession to Mrs. Harper and Mrs. Simmons, makes the case interesting and worthy of the attention of the attorney-general's department of the government.

Doctors Baker and Way unearthed the December 1901 number of the Medicinal Monthly Journal, in their office, which number was almost wholly devoted to the consideration of murderers of presidents of the United States and European potentates. In this pamphlet we found a portrait of J. Wilkes Booth with anatomical description. It says:

"The head and forehead of J. Wilkes Booth was kephalonoid, the ears excessively and abnormally developed; inclined to the so-called satanic type. The eyes were small, sunken and unequally placed. The nose was normal. The facial bones and jaw were arrested in development and there was a partial V-shape dental arch. The lower jaw was well developed. He developed an insanity in manner, creating a certain amount of fear among children."

Yesterday the editor of this paper, in company with Dr. McElrath, visited the corpse and compared it with the above description of Booth and we must acknowledge that the dead man shows all the marks credited to Booth

above in every particular. The "satanic ear" is not much larger than the ordinary ear, but the lower lobe thereof clings close unto the side of the head instead of projecting outward like the ordinary ear. The corpse has that kind of an ear.

The eyes of the dead man are not mates in appearance. The frontal bone of the left eye comes down further and is more prominent than the right, which fits the description of Booth. The Booth chin, mouth, upper lip and general description is almost perfect in the corpse.

The Wave has been searching for a fac-simile of Booth's handwriting. It was found today in a copy of Harper Bros. Pictorial History of the Civil War. We were really startled when we compared it with the large round lettered schoolboy writing of D. E. George.

We placed the very last words George wrote by the side of the fac-simile writing of Booth and it really seemed to us that one and the same man had written both. Booth's fac-simile signature shown in Harper's Pictorial indicates the same large, irregular handwriting of George.

D. E. George first registered at the Grand Avenue Hotel Dec. 3, 1902, and was a guest of the hotel until he died.

Hundreds of the citizens of Enid are well satisfied that the remains of J. Wilkes Booth are here under the name of D. E. George.

PRINCETON, Mo., Jan. 29.

THE statement has been made that Daniel E. George, who committed suicide in Enid, O. T., and confessed to being John Wilkes Booth, came from this place. Inquiries have been made

about him in Princeton, but the man is unknown here. R. W. STREKMAN.

"A BOGUS BOOTH"

Strange Story About the Body Identified in Washington.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 29.

WHILE it is believed here that the body brought to Washington, April 27, 1865, as that of John Wilkes Booth, was in fact the body of the assassin, statements have been heard from time to time that it was that of another. Booth was said to be alive more than once during recent years.

It is pointed out that the records in the case show some strange inconsistencies. Booth and Herold were wandering together for more than a week before the capture, with a reward of \$100,000 out for the former, and the neighborhood of the Rappahannock was being scoured by the federal cavalry seeking him. From before that time until the body was brought to Washington nobody personally acquainted with Booth, except Herold, ever saw him. Those who met the fugitives did not recognize Booth, but were informed of his identity either by himself or by Herold. Neither Capt. Doherty nor Boston Corbett nor any of their company knew Booth by sight.

It is assumed, however, that Booth was with Herold at the Garrett home, the claim being that the substitution of another man for Booth was made there, while the assassin escaped. The fugitive pretended to be asleep inside a padlocked barn when Capt. Doherty with a detachment of the Sixteenth New York cavalry surrounded the barn in the night and began a long parley with them. The padlock and the conversation with the troops are supposed to have been intended to gain time for the real Booth to escape.

Instead of being surprised by the arrival of the troops Booth had ample warning of their coming to perfect plans for escape, at which he was an adept. Lieut. Bainbridge, formerly of Mosby's command, has put on record (see vol. 39 Century Magazine) the following:

"Just before reaching Port Royal, I met a soldier of my command who told me that if we had not got our paroles and did not want to be captured, to turn back. 'For,' said he, 'the town is full of Yankees in search of Booth, who, they say, crossed the river yesterday.' We turned immediately and rode back to Garrett's."

"As we approached the front gate Booth was lying on the lawn in front of the house. As soon as he recognized us he arose and hobbling toward us, said, 'Well, boys, what's in the wind now?' We told him the enemy was upon his trail and advised him to seek shelter in the woods. I

July 1 to Dec 2

Booth's Secret Book

lu