

Story That Assassin Booth Was Not Shot Down Bobs Up Again; One Says Body Was Never Buried

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21 (U.S.).—The body of John Wilkes Booth, assassin of Abraham Lincoln, is at Memphis, Tenn., in a "perfect state of preservation," Dr. Clarence True Wilson, who has made an exhaustive investigation of the Lincoln shooting, said today.

"I saw the body several months ago," said Dr. Wilson, "finding on it many marks of identification which prove conclusively that the man was Booth.

"When I was a boy in Maryland, I was told the story of Booth's escape from his pursuers by several persons who were themselves in the plot. Since that time I've been gathering proof that Lincoln's

slayer was not killed by soldiers as generally believed.

"At the time soldiers from Washington were searching for Booth in lower Maryland, near here, the slayer was riding horseback and on his way west.

WRONG MAN SHOT

"Gerald Ruddy was the man shot and killed. His body was turned over to the Booth family and was buried in Baltimore."

One of the marks by which he identified the body in Memphis as that of Booth, Dr. Wilson said, was a cut over his left eye.

"Booth's body was never buried," Wilson continued. "It was turned over to an old couple in Memphis.

The man died several months ago and his wife now cares for the body."

He declined to give this woman's name or her address in Memphis.

"In investigating the circumstances of Booth's escape, I talked to all members of his family," Dr. Wilson said. "They all knew about it. Most of them saw and talked with him after he fled from Washington. The story told by his niece in Minneapolis is true. She saw her uncle just before he died.

Dr. Wilson characterized as "absurd" the story of the man in Moline, Ill., who said he was the only one who knew where Booth was buried.

"That man's name is not men-

tioned in any of the stories concerning Booth," Dr. Wilson said. "There was no secret about the burial of the body believed to be that of Booth. The government turned it over to the family of Booth four years after Lincoln's assassination."

NIECE BREAKS SILENCE

MINNEAPOLIS, Feb. 21 (U.S.).

—John Wilkes Booth escaped! This was admitted here today by his niece, Blanche Booth, breaking the 60-year silence of the Booth family regarding the fate of Abraham Lincoln's slayer.

In an interview Miss Booth re-

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futed the statement made Feb. 17 by Edward Harper Sampson of 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 that Sampson knew that Booth was not killed by his pursuers.

After fighting off interviewers for years, Miss Booth finally revealed 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 Garret plantation near Bowling Green, Va.

MEETING WITH MOTHER

"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."

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 who continues to follow the stage tradition.

Here are the high lights of her amazing interview:

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

JOHNSON ACCUSED

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.

"The man killed in the barn on the Garret plantation near Bowling Green, Va., was named Ruddy," Miss Booth declared. "Booth had escaped from the Garret place nearly five hours earlier."

The story of Finis L. Bates, greatest authority on the subject, is true, 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 Abra-

ham Lincoln at Ford's theatre on the evening of April 14, 1865, died by his own hand of poison in the Grand Avenue hotel at Enid, Okla., on Jan. 13, 1903," Miss Booth said today.

Authorities possess authentic photographs of John Wilkes Booth that were taken at the ages of 27—before he murdered the president—at 38, 11 years after the assassination, and 19 years after his death in Enid, she said.

BARES 'BURIAL PLACE'

CHICAGO, Feb. 21 (A.P.).—Col. James Hamilton Davidson, former commander of the 122nd infantry, today revealed what he said was the burial of John Wilkes Booth, assassin of President Abraham Lincoln, considered as a secret for 60 years.

Col. Davidson now living here believes he is the only living man who knows. Recently Edwin Harper Sampson, one of the seven men who disposed of Booth's body, died in Moline, Ill., without revealing what had been done with the body.

Col. Davidson was in command at Portsmouth, Va., the night of Booth's burial and was told of it by Col. Baker, head of the secret service of the army. Since then, Davidson says, he has kept secret the information given him. Davidson has been blind for 12 years.

Booth's body was buried in the basement of a warehouse at Portsmouth, in a deep grave, and covered with acid, Davidson says Col. Baker told him. The grave then was filled with limestone and dirt.

"Just after the shooting of Booth at Bowling Green by Sergt. Boston Corbett," says Col. Davidson, "a report came to me about a group of men acting mysteriously in the middle of the night around one of the warehouses.

"I didn't have to wait long for my information. The head of the secret service in the army, Col. Baker, came to me the next morning and said he wanted to see me in strict privacy.

"This is what he said:

"Last night I brought into Portsmouth the body of Booth, the man who killed the president. Six of my men carried it on a stretcher to the first warehouse to the north. We took it into the basement where we dug a grave.

"The body was placed in there and covered with acid. Then the

grave was filled with limestone and dirt."

"That was 60 years ago. There can't be any harm in telling it now. The country ought to know."