

DAVID GEORGE AS JOHN WILKES BOOTH

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Chapter 19

DAVID E. GEORGE AS J. WILKES BOOTH.

A MAN known as David E. George asserted at El Reno, Oklahoma, in April, 1900, that he was John Wilkes Booth. This time a woman was the recipient of the "confession." When the confession was published three years later in the newspapers, it created an awkward

and Enid

situation for Finis L. Bates, chief author of the Booth myth, to have a David E. George make the same claim that John St. Helen had made, and as it was obvious that if one of them was Lincoln's assassin, the other could not be, Mr. Bates simply disposed of the difficulty by asserting that John St. Helen and David E. George were one and the same individual, and that individual was Booth. Thus the myth was apparently lifted over a fatal danger point. Mr. Bates simply says that St. Helen dropped out of sight at Fort Worth for a number of years, and was rediscovered again at Hennessey and El Reno, in Oklahoma, as George. If St. Helen were George, the same general characteristics would be evident, the same man would appear. With this in mind, the investigation was pursued in Hennessey, El Reno, and Enid, and because the reports received in these places would involve some repetition, only the El Reno and Enid phases will be presented at length. It was at Enid that David E. George's sordid life ended in suicide.

Bates located David George at Hennessey, Oklahoma, in 1899, under the name of George D. Ryan. This, however, is a needless attempt to increase the sense of mystery. George lived in Hennessey under his own name of George, and earned his living as a house painter. He was a drunkard and a morphine addict. It is during this Hennessey period that Bates begins to weave another web of mystery around the remittances which he says George received from the outside world. These "mysterious remittances" were used to establish the idea that "Booth's" relatives were secretly supplying him with funds. But the postmaster and paint merchant in sworn statements declare, the one that George never received remittances, and the other that George could scarcely meet his paint bills. Bates also has George purchasing a "\$3,500 cottage" at El Reno. The records at the courthouse show that on February 25, 1902, George paid John J. Davis \$350 and gave a mortgage for \$350—making only \$700 in all—for a small place in El Reno, which he sold again on July 3, 1902.

(1)

~~But Bates evidently raised the amount to corroborate his own unsupported statements of a secret source for large funds. (2)~~

It would appear that the amount was raised to \$3500 by Mr Bates in the hope that the reader would inferentially conclude that George had a secret source for large funds. (2)

But of this "mystery money" we shall hear more.

The George angle of the Booth myth is made by Mr. Bates to rest largely on the alleged statements of a Mrs. E. C. Harper.

He says, "Mrs. Harper makes the following statement:

"Mr. George (Booth) had been a resident of the Territory for several years. He had always been well supplied with money, the origin or source of which no one knew, for from some mysterious source he received a regular remittance. He was a familiar figure in Guthrie, El Reno, and Enid."

In conversation with Mrs. Harper (who had since become Mrs. Young) January 21, 1921, she denied any knowledge of D. E. George having received remittances from any source, and said that if he was a familiar figure in Guthrie and Enid she was ignorant of it; that she had known him but a few weeks and actually knew him but slightly.

From this point we shall refer to Mrs. Harper by her later name of Young.

Continuing, Mr. Bates claims that Mrs. Young said: "My acquaintance with Mr. George led me to believe him to be a very different person from what he represented himself to be as David E. George, the painter. He was eccentric, and though he claimed to be a painter of houses, yet he did no work."

In her sworn statement of January 21, 1921, Mrs. Young says: "During the time I knew Mr. George he was a house painter and worked quite steadily at this trade."

(3)

Mr. Bates, still claiming to quote Mrs. Young, says: "At one time the young people of El Reno had a play of some kind. One of the actors became ill and Mr. George (Booth) filled the place to the great admiration and entertainment of those who saw him. When surprise was expressed at his ability as an actor he replied that he had acted some when he was a young man."

Mrs. Young says in her statement of January 21, 1921: "I was told by a friend, whose name I do not remember, that at one time a traveling troupe of players was going through El Reno, and that Mr. George went to see them; that one of them who took the part of a drunken sailor was ill, and Mr. George offered to take the part and filled it very creditably."

Mrs. Young, in a statement made to Mr. Bates in 1903 and again to the present writer in 1921, says that she first became acquainted with D. E. George in March, 1900, and heard his "confession" in April, 1900. She was married May 21, 1900, and immediately moved from El Reno. She knew Mr. George for only a period of two months. Yet Mr. Bates begins her story with the intimation that she had known George for a long time.

The "confession" of D. E. George does not at all agree with St. Helen's as to how they both, as John Wilkes Booth, escaped from Washington. In Mrs. Young's statement to the writer, she says that at the time of his confession Mr. George "said that he had friends in Washington, who, after he escaped from the theater in which he killed Lincoln, had hidden him in a trunk, and got him on a boat for Europe where he had remained for ten years."

The actual statement obtained from this lady by Mr. Bates is here given. The portion printed in italics was not used by Mr. Bates. Apparently it did not suit his purpose, and to cover the defect he used several pages of alleged conversation.

Mrs. Young (Harper) said in her 1903 statement to Mr. Bates:

"On the eve, of January 13th I was startled, and surprised, by reading in the *Enid Daily News*, the suicide of David E. George, of El Reno (of whom I first became acquainted with in March, 1900, in El Reno, at the home of Mr. & Mrs. J. W. Simmons). Mr. Harper went down on Wednesday morning the fourteenth of January and recognizing him, told the embalmers of a 'confession' that David E. George had made to myself, and that they had better investigate. I went to the morgue with Mr. Harper on the fifteenth, and identified the corpse as David E. George.

Enid, Oklahoma Jan 13 1902
 I am informed that I made a
 a few days ago and am in
 indistinct of having done so.
 I can recall every letter
 syllable and word of any will
 I may have signed at
 I owe Jack Bernstein
 ten dollars but he
 has my watch in pawn for
 the amt.
 D. E. George

SUNDAY, JUNE 26, 1864.
 The very little I left behind
 to leave my name that
 I could not have done to do
 myself. So ends all. For
 in country I have given
 up all that makes life
 sweet and holy. I am
 returning upon my family and
 have some things in my pocket
 in the morning for me here.
 Monday 27
 I am confident one so, I
 have only heard of what
 you have done (I left what
 did not) and at this

Above—A letter written by D. E. George just before he committed suicide. He wrongly dated it 1902 instead of 1903. He says, "I am informed that I made a will a few days ago and I am indistinct of having done so. I hereby recall every letter syllable and word of any will that I may have signed at Enid. I owe Jack Bernstein about ten dollars but he has my watch in pawn for the amt." The will referred to was dated December 31, 1902, and left most of his mythical estate to Geo. E. Smith. Jack Bernstein was an Enid saloon keeper.

At the left is part of a page in John Wilkes Booth's handwriting from his notebook. This was printed in the April 11 issue of *The Dearborn Independent*. A careful comparison shows no similarity in the handwriting.]

7
 "In April, 1900, David E. George, took a drug (supposedly morphine), with suicidal intent, and I being at the time a visitor, in the home of J. W. Simmons was called upon to help attend him and watch by his bedside, while said Mrs. Simmons was, necessarily, absent part of the time assisting in the care of the patient. With the promise from me, that I should sacredly keep the secret he was about to divulge, till after his death, he voluntarily told me that he had killed 'one of the best men that had ever lived, Abraham Lincoln.' That he was John Wilkes Booth. He asked me to procure a pencil, and paper, and he wrote upon it, 'I am going to die, before the sun goes down. J. Wilkes Booth,' and handed it to me. I proposed sending for a Doctor, but he vehemently protested, and proceeded with the details of the confession, finally becoming unconscious. Mrs. Simmons sent for Dr. Arnold. His subsequent manner impressed me with the conviction that he was whom he had confessed to be, as he thought, on his dying bed, 'J. Wilkes Booth.' As brevity has been enjoined upon me, I will close by simply stating that I have merely outlined, his confession."

A comparison with Mrs. Young's (Harper's) statement as quoted by Mr. Bates will show that he not only

omitted from his book part of her statement, but when publishing it, added, "Will reaffirm my former statement made in detail of David E. George's confession to me at El Reno, about the middle of April, 1900, as fully as if same were set forth herein."

There is no doubt that D. E. George made the "confession" which Mrs. Young describes in her statement, but it was admittedly made under the influence of morphine.

The following statements of W. E. Robare and C. R. Miller describe D. E. George's "gentlemanly" disposition, his "highest degree of intelligence," his "refinement," his "fluent and captivating conversation," descriptive terms used by Mr. Bates to describe George's personality:

D.

Statement of W. E. Robare:

"I was Chief of Police of El Reno during the time that D. E. George lived here, 1900 to 1903 and remember him very well. I lived about a block from J. W. Simmons' place while George boarded with them. One day he came home drunk and got into a fight with John Sams, Mrs. Simmons' brother, over some trivial matter. George threatened to kill Sams and went to his room for his pistol, a six-shooter. Sams got out of the house and ran down to my place, and I went back with him. Old George came out to meet us with the six-shooter. Sams jumped behind me while I took the pistol away from George and arrested him. I took him down to the police station and 'Progress' Smith (George E. Smith) went on his bond. I kept the pistol and still have it in my possession. After becoming sober, George promised he would never start anything again, and I turned him loose.

"At Police Headquarters, we considered D. E. George as harmless when sober, but a little dangerous when drunk, or under the influence of morphine. He loafed in the station a lot during the two or three years he was in El Reno. He was nobody's fool and must have had a good education. He was tall, had a dark complexion, and his hair was quite mixed with gray. He was always fairly neat, but did not have fine clothes. His eyebrows were heavy and were perfect matches. He did not limp and had a southern drawl. One would take him for a Kentuckian. George considered McCartney of the 'force' and myself as friends. He was a morphine fiend and I saw him under the influence of the drug quite often. He didn't take heavy doses as a regular thing. I am absolutely positive as to his using morphine. We had quite a few 'dope' fiend cases down here in those days which gave us considerable experience with them. He was frequently on a drunk for several days at a time. From the description of his actions he had taken poison when he made his confession to Mrs. Harper here in El Reno in 1901. I was called in at the time he took this poison at Mrs. Simmons' home, at which time he made this confession through Mrs. Harper. I was just leaving the room when I noticed that he motioned for Mrs. Harper to come to his bedside and stopped at the head of the stairway where I heard part of the conversation. I noticed that Mrs. Harper was badly scared, she called me downstairs immediately afterwards and told me of his confession, which was to the effect that he (Mr. George) was John Wilkes Booth who killed Abraham Lincoln. She told me that he said that if he died she might tell this fact, but that in case he lived, he would kill her if she did so.

"Soon after he first came to El Reno he once told me that he had drawn a land claim and that his fortune was made, which he sold soon after. At no time did he have much money. He worked steadily at his trade, house painting, and could easily have made all the money I ever saw him with by the painting he did."

Signed: W.D. Robare. (4)

Statement of C. R. Miller, of El Reno, Oklahoma:

"Yes, I remember D. E. George. I ought to. He left here owing me over \$40 for paint. I sold him paint for a couple of years and dye for his mustache and hair. He bought quite a lot of paint during that period and I had always considered him fair pay. For a number of years I owned the cottage which George bought from John J. Davis at 107 South Macomb Street, lot 18 and 19, block 92. As a matter of fact I sold him the paint with which he painted the house. I remember that I passed this house one day while George was working on it and stopped in and talked to him. George lived up with the Simmons' a while in that house. He drank a lot and loafed around the store, but not often when under the influence of booze. I never heard him intimate that he was other than D. E. George. It is rather funny, but while George was here he was known only as an old drunken painter, but as soon as the story got around that he might be John Wilkes Booth all the people that had ever seen him were telling how he quoted Shakespeare and how dramatic he had been. It seemed that then all knew there was something different about old man George. Although George paid his bills, except the last one, he was always hard up and never had any money. Personally, I never considered him more than an ordinary painter, not very good or very bad. I never heard of any recitations that he made here. He mumbled to himself when drunk. He came in the store once and said that he was going back home, some place in Arkansas. Sometime later, he came in and told me that while he was gone he had attended a 'nigger' wedding of some 'niggers' that he knew and said that the 'niggers' had had a preacher come out from Little Rock for there was no preacher good enough for them in the little town. I do not remember that Mr. George was more than ordinarily neat. He was never what you would call slovenly. Sometimes he would get morose spells and hardly talk at all."

Signed: "C.R. Miller." (4)

Mr. Bates says: "When the editor of the El Reno Democrat, in which paper he put an advertisement as a tradesman of house painting, at a cost of four dollars a month, thinking it a useless expense, so universally was it known that George, or Booth, did no such work, suggested this to him, George or Booth, indignantly demanded to know if the editor was uneasy about the price of the card, if so he would pay for it in advance. The editor apologized and the card continued from month to month for two years, up to the date of the death of George.

"Booth's purpose in this is obvious. He wanted to keep himself constantly before the public as a painter, not that he wanted work, but to keep alive his identity as a painter while he played the deceptive character. The little cottage painted for Mr. Anstien was the stage setting to the character, the card in the paper was his program and he played to a successful finish this drama of the journeyman painter."

This interesting theory is badly shattered by the facts as given by Tom F. Hensley, a state senator, in a statement made to the author, at Oklahoma City, January 13, 1921.

He was editor of the El Reno Democrat in 1901-02-03. He said that he knew D. E. George quite well, that George advertised in his paper for a while, but being slow to pay for his advertising, it was dropped. That it was unnecessary anyway since it was well known all over town that George was a painter. After the advertisement was dropped Mr. Hensley said George came in and kicked, and was quite insulted about its removal, and it was replaced for a short time.

Mr. Hensley said that around El Reno George was considered just a drunken bum and painter, a down-and-outer, not particularly polished, and never had any amount of money. Mr. Hensley said that a woman, who said her name was Laura Ida Booth, wrote a letter from New York City to him claiming that George was her father, and that about the same time he got a letter from Laura Ida's brother, and that both of

these letters rather impressed him that George might be John Wilkes Booth.

He said that he wrote the brother, but never heard further from him, but got several letters from Laura Ida Booth in which she was quite anxious to know about the estate of the deceased.

Mr. Bates next devotes space in his book to "Press Comments on the Suicide of David E. George." He takes the liberty of changing these where necessary to make them fit his version of the story.

In his reprint of a story copied from the Wichita Daily Eagle of January 22, 1903, which in turn was copied from the Enid Wave of January 21, "eyes" is changed to "eyebrows" in the sentence "The eyes of the dead man are not mates in appearance." "Almost" becomes "absolutely" in the sentence "The Booth chin, mouth, upper lip and general description is almost perfect in the corpse." He changes a story that appeared in the Enid Wave, January 21, 1903, where it describes D. E. George's handwriting as "large round-lettered schoolboy writing," to "the round, little, scrawley boy writing." The change makes the description more nearly fit the writing of John Wilkes Booth. Although a number of additional instances like this can be pointed out, enough has been quoted to indicate the character of the book.

The Enid Daily Wave of January 13, 1903, carries the story of the suicide of David George, stating that it occurred about 10:30 a.m. and that the body was removed to the undertaking rooms, the coroner finding letters to George from George D. Smith, Colfax, Iowa, and thought he might be a relative and wired him.

Mr. Bates then brings in "The mysterious Mr. Smith" whom he presents as the fiscal agent of the Booth family who is supposed to have supplied D. E. George with regular remittances. Upon investigation in Enid and El Reno Mr. Smith was easily found and promptly disposed of the "mystery."

after George's death

"I first met D. E. George in my store at El Reno, Oklahoma, about a year before his death," wrote Mr. Smith to the author of these articles July 16, 1921.

"D. E. George told me very little about his past, he intimated to me at one time that he had killed a man in Texas, never intimated to me that he was John Wilkes Booth, but several times, while under the influence of liquor, assured me he was a man with a past, and that I would be very much surprised after his death to learn who he was.

"I did believe and still do after D. E. George died that he was really John Wilkes Booth and that big money could be made by exhibiting the remains. After his death I went to Enid, looked the situation over and then went South to consult some lawyers, whom I was acquainted with in El Reno, but was advised by these lawyers that in the eyes of the government John Wilkes Booth was buried and exhibiting the remains of John Wilkes Booth would constitute a felony, by obtaining money under false pretenses. There is no question that at that time while excitement was high, about getting the crowds at an exhibition. However, I did not want to get into trouble with the government over the matter, so allowed the proposition to drop.

"I never attempted to communicate with any of the Booths.

"I never knew that George was addicted to morphine.

"George never appeared to have a surplus of money, but appeared to have plenty for ordinary purposes, except when he got on a spree, when he used to borrow small sums from me.

"He appeared to work steady, but sometimes was out of town for a week or two at a time, claiming he had been doing some jobs elsewhere. I believe he always worked on his own contract.

"I cannot tell accurately how much money I loaned him, as the amounts were usually small and promptly returned, except the last two loans. As I recollect it, one amount was for \$10 and the last amount was for \$25, just before he died. These loans I never got.

"I expected to be reimbursed for the loans I made before he died, and was not worrying particularly whether he paid me back or not, as I enjoyed his company; he was always honest about returning the loans, and until the last two when he advised me he would leave me some property to more than cover the amounts due in case he did not return same before his death.

"I decided to return home and let the matter rest until I could get more information as to whether or not I would be able to exhibit the remains. As I got very little encouragement from the lawyers I spoke to and time passed on I dropped the whole matter.

"I believe this is about all that would interest you, but will call you up the first time I am in Detroit. Since seeing you I wrote my nephew in Los Angeles where the body had been on exhibition and inclose his reply. I have also had a number of letters from Mr. Bates, requesting an interview and wanting me to join him by advancing some money to help meet expenses. I expected to see Mr. Bates before this, but have not been South and as for putting any money in the proposition I do not feel inclined to do so.

"Yours truly,
(Signed) "Geo. E. Smith."

When Mrs. Young (Harper) saw the stories about the suicide of George, she recalled his "confession" three years previously, and went with her husband and told her story to the undertaker, who had previously been a New York newspaperman, and saw its news and publicity value. The Enid, Oklahoma, papers played this story for all it was worth and dispatched it to the newspapers of many larger cities.

Mr. Bates, resident in Memphis, Tennessee, saw the story in the Sunday, January 18, Memphis Commercial Appeal, which carried it headed, "Wilkes Booth a Suicide."(5) On the supposition that there might be some connection established between George and St. Helen, he started for Enid, where he arrived January 22.

To support the theory that George and St. Helen were the same, Bates says in his book that a letter had been left for him by the suicide but was stolen from the body in the morgue before he arrived. This letter, he insists, must have been the basis for a telegram received by him on January 17, asking him to come to Enid and identify the body of John Wilkes Booth.

(6)

The alleged telegram, being quite a new point in the matter, led to inquiry. Questioned by the writer, February 8, 1921,

Mr. Bates said he could not produce this wire as it had been lost.

Penniman, the Enid undertaker, says:(7) "Bates read of George's death in the newspapers and wired me asking if he could see the body if he

came to Enid." (8) Bates himself, after quoting four press reports, says, "These have merely been used for the secondary purpose of showing how I became advised of the suicide's death."

Although Mr. Bates maintains that he started for Enid the afternoon that he received this "wire," January 17, he did not arrive in Enid until six days later, and covers this with the story that he was delayed by washouts on the Frisco system. Since the running time from Memphis to El Reno is only twenty-two hours, the washouts must have been of considerable size, but an investigation covering the period from January 15 to 25, 1903, fails to disclose washouts on either the Frisco or Rock Island lines. The conclusion, therefore, that the wire was imaginary and that David George did not write Bates before he died, is quite in harmony with Mr. Bates' own statements and the facts.

Mr. Bates' book gives a highly colored account of his arrival in Enid, in which "it was estimated that more than fifty thousand men, women, and children had viewed the body of Booth." It is interesting to note that Enid had a population of 3,444 in 1900 and was in a sparsely populated country at that time.

Bates then describes with considerable detail his visit to the Penniman undertaking establishment where "cold, stiff and dead, I beheld the body of my friend, John St. Helen. After a separation of more than twenty-six years, I knew him as instantly as men discern night from day, as the starlight from moonlight, or the moon from the light of day.

"In a few minutes I recovered. I realized now for the first time that I was in the presence of John Wilkes Booth, though I had, in fact, been told so more than a quarter of a century before. I had the tintype picture which St. Helen had given me at Granberry, Texas, twenty-six years ago. I took it out and called upon Penniman and the attendant to bear witness with me to the identity of this dead man with the picture, which



An imaginary pen sketch, reproduced from the Bates' Book where it appears with the cut lines, "Booth (as D. E. George) Playing the Role of a House Painter, and the Only Painting Job He Ever Did."

I showed them, when they replied without a moment's hesitation:

"We need no picture to identify this man in your presence. Yes, this is the same man. It is an axiomatic fact, not debatable, they are one and the same man." [A picture of the dead body taken at this time shows that it was greatly bloated and does not look at all like the tintype of St. Helen. Mr. Bates' recognition after twenty-eight years was, however, "instantaneous."]

"We then compared the high thumb joint on the right hand, the small scar on the right brow—the uneven brow—the scar received in the accident mentioned by Miss Clara Morris, raises this brow to an uneven line with the left; the right leg was examined and we found a slight indentation on the surface of the shin bone—Booth's leg was not literally broken, there was a fracture of the shin bone six inches above the ankle; I should say a split or slight shivering of the bone, for besides the indentation on the front of the shin bone there were small scars plainly discernible, where particles of bone seemed to have worked out through the skin (St. Helen, Booth, told me this himself), leaving small round scars, while the general shape of the leg at this point seemed curved a little. His eyes, head, forehead, chin, mustache and hair were all the same as John St. Helen's, taken at the time before stated, and given to me, the only difference being that the hair and mustache were streaked with gray now, especially the mustache, which was quite gray at its parting, under the nose."

Commenting on Mr. Bates' story of his call at the undertaking rooms, Mr. Penniman, in a letter to the author says: "This was a pathetic attempt on the part of Mr. Bates to make his arrival sensational and mysterious. Arrived at 6 p.m.; called me to the hotel and kept me there until long after midnight. He came to the store in the morning; wept when he saw the body; said it was his friend John St. Helen—John Wilkes Booth. His book account of all this is 'bunk.' He first identified the body as his friend John St. Helen by a bare unsupported statement and afterward by the papers you have examined."

"I was never able to see any striking resemblance between the body and the tintype. In fact, Bates asked me to do all I could to make the body look like the picture and so we combed the hair and mustache accordingly. As to any real substantial evidence offered to prove D. E. George was John Wilkes Booth, I guess you have examined all the 'real positive' proof Mr. Bates has in stock at this time, and have the ability to weigh its value. Bates is the only man who ever tried to convince me as to the real identity of this 'bird,' and he probably used the same selling talk that he used on you. It's good dope, but it doesn't carry."

William J. Ryan embalmed the body of George at the Penniman undertaking establishment and did such a good job that the body is still in fair condition, although looking very much like an Egyptian mummy. When last known it lay in state in Mr. Bates' garage in Memphis. Mr. Ryan told the author in 1921, that he has never believed that it was the body of John Wilkes Booth, for the eyes were blue or blue-gray and John Wilkes Booth had black eyes. John St. Helen also had black eyes, and it will be remembered had something wrong with his throat, which made him wheeze. Those in a position to know claimed this was absent in David George. Mrs. Anstine, with whom George roomed for some time in El Reno, stated that his eyes were either dark blue or brown, but not black. Mrs. Young (Harper) stated that George had very large deep blue eyes.

Mr. Ryan says that the pigment in a man's eyes never changes color. Mr. Ryan positively stated that no one he ever talked with had identified the body as Booth, except Mr. Bates, and that as far as he could see, both of George's legs were whole and sound. (11)

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Mr. Bates, continuing the story of his Enid visit, says, "However, with a manner that indicated indifference to surrounding dangers, I wended my way to the hotel, where Mr. Brown gave me the inside facts about Booth's or George's, coming to the hotel." Then Mr. Bates alleges that Brown told him the following:

"The press reports about George's coming to the Grand Avenue Hotel and registering on the morning of the 3d day of December, 1902, are correct. While here George was a constant reader of newspapers, remaining in the reading room and office most of the time. He seemed to be a man of perfect leisure, paid his bills by the week promptly, was genial and pleasant in his manner, had a tendency to drink a little too much at times and remained up late at nights, but was a reasonably early riser. [Lee Boyd, who lived at the hotel, and Bob Wilson, who gathered the laundry, state that George was usually in bed at 9:00 a. m.] When I was on night watch he was great company to me; he was well read, often repeating parts of Shakespeare's plays and reciting other poetry, which it seemed natural to him to know, reciting it in such a manner as to be highly entertaining.

"At times George would become sad or rather thoughtfully silent. In these moods his discussions would drift to matters of the "hereafter." I asked him, "You mean after death?" He replied, "Yes."

"I remember one night we were alone; he was in what I called his "off" mood. He raised himself erect in his chair, and in a tragic manner, with gestures and expression suited to the words, he said:

"Am I better than the dog? Oh, no. He is far better than I! He is capable of no sin or crime. Yet when he is found dead his body is placed in the garbage box. Then why not ship my body without a crate to the potter's field of the dog? But I, even I, a man, am unworthy that the putrid flesh shall be torn from my bones by the vultures that prey upon the flesh of the dead brute."

"These utterances were made with such strong self-accusation that I wondered what it could mean, and from that time on I watched every move of the man and listened attentively to every word he said. Whether it was what George said or the manner in which he said a thing, I can't quite understand, but what he said always impressed you. Of this I am sure, in all my twenty years' experience in the hotel business I have never seen such another character.

"He was a handsome man for his age. His black eyes, when in repose, seemed to have lost luster by age, but in conversation or when repeating verses from Shakespeare, or other recitations, they would kindle, flash and sparkle as if inspired or ignited into flame from the burning souls of the eternally damned, while his shapely face and magnificent forehead paled from his natural olive. Sitting or standing with a natural, easy grace, in such moods he made a picture one felt privileged to behold, and never to be forgotten. To my dying day the meeting of this man George, or Booth, will be remembered by me as an epoch in my life.

"It is true, Bates. Be this man who he may, George, Ryan [How did Brown know of Ryan at Hennessey when the Hennessey people did not know of such a man, but did know George? Bates himself had not heard of the Treadkel story of Smith at this time. How did Brown know it then?—F. L. Black,], Marr, St. Helen, Smith, or Booth, he is a man without a model. He looks like no one else, he acted like no one else and he talked like no one else that I ever knew or saw."

"Well, Brown, who is this man?"

"I believe him to be John Wilkes Booth, as he stated on his dying bed. In fact, I don't think he could be any one else."

"Did he at any time before his death intimate his identity other than George?"

"No, he did not. In his manner he was quite unobtrusive and mixed but little with the people in the hotel, and the scenes and recitations I have referred to would always be at a time when we were alone, and the people in the hotel supposed to be asleep."

"I noticed that some of the press reports state that George committed suicide in the morning."

"This was not the case. On the night of the 13th of January, 1903, George came into the office and reading room as usual and spent some time reading and finally writing letters. When he had finished the letters, about ten o'clock p. m., he said he was going down to the drug store, just half a block up the street. He was gone only a short time, when he came to the desk, obtained the key to his room and bade me good-night, requesting to be called for breakfast if he should oversleep his usual time. I saw or heard nothing more of him until about half-past eleven o'clock, when I heard groans coming from the first floor just above the office, in the direction of the room occupied by George. The watchman came in hurriedly

and we went at once to his room. On forcing his door we found him writhing and groaning in great pain. A doctor was called, he pronounced the patient suffering from the effects of poison and began vigorous treatment at once. The pains seemed to come and go, and George seemed to be suffering the greatest agony. After awhile I noticed that the pains or spasms seemed to come closer together, and the patient was drifting from under the control or force of the antidotes, and witnessed the most horrifying struggle for life I ever saw or ever could imagine. About four o'clock in the morning the doctor lost all hope of saving his patient, and informed George that if he had anything to arrange he had better do so. In the meantime Mr. Dumont, the proprietor of the hotel, had come into the room, the doctor having left. George said:

"I have only to say, my name is not George. I am John Wilkes Booth, and I request that my body be sent to the morgue for identification," when death came and relieved the suffering of the man whose name we did not then know, and he died at 6:20 o'clock on the morning of January 14th, 1903.

"The undertaker was notified and George's body removed to the morgue, as he had requested. When it became generally reported that the man's true name was John Wilkes Booth neither Mr. Dumont nor myself had ever seen Mr. Booth nor any member of his family and consequently could not affirm or deny the fact of the true identity of the man, though I was ready to believe then, and do now believe, that George, the man who died, is, in fact, John Wilkes Booth, as he said. The truth is I would believe anything he said, and I understand that he confessed his true identity to a Mrs. Harper of this city, who has identified the body as that of Booth."

But what is passing strange is the fact that George lay in the morgue two days and *neither Brown nor the watchman said a word about this confession to the coroner's jury.* Had it not been for Mrs. Young (Harper), George would have been buried and the question of his identity never "established."

The statement of Messrs. Dumont and Brown, as published by Mr. Bates, now claims attention:

"To Whom It May Concern: We, S. S. Dumont, proprietor, and B. B. Brown, clerk, of the Grand Avenue Hotel, in the city of Enid, and Territory of Oklahoma, declare that we, and each of us, knew a gentleman who registered as a guest of said hotel on the 3d day of December, 1902, under the name of D. E. George, who on the 13th day of January, 1903, committed suicide in said hotel by taking fifteen grains of strychnine or arsenic, and died from the effects of said poison at 6:30 o'clock a.m., on the 14th day of January, 1903, and that we have this day been shown by F. L. Bates, of Memphis, Tennessee, a small tintype picture, together with a photograph, and we say that said tintype picture and photograph are the same and perfect pictures or likenesses in each and every feature of the said D. E. George, the only difference being that George, or whomsoever he was, was older at the time of his death than when the pictures were taken.

(Signed) "B. B. BROWN.

"S. S. Dumont.

"Sworn to and subscribed before me this, the 22d day of January, 1903.

(Signed) "GUY S. MANOTT,
"Notary Public."

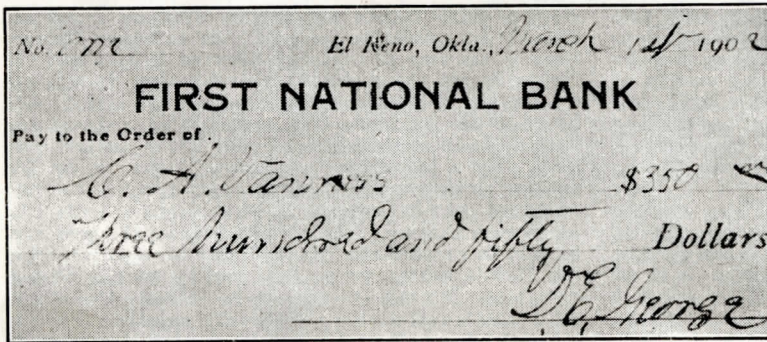
"My commission expires October 22d, 1906."

Compare this with a photostatic reproduction shown below and in the next column of the affidavit that was in Mr. Bates' possession.

This comparison of the original with that given in Mr. Bates' book, as reproduced above, shows that there has been added to the published affidavit these clauses: "in said hotel by taking fifteen grains of strychnine or arsenic, and died from the effects of said poison at 6:30 o'clock a. m. on the 14th day of." The original written affidavit merely says "taking poison." Now look again at the photograph of the affidavit, as taken by Bates, in the space at the left of the signatures of B. B. Brown and S. S. Dumont and compare with that in Mr. Bates' book. In the written affidavit it states, "George declaring on his deathbed that he was John Wilkes Booth," but the Bates' book does not repeat this line. The original statement as given by Brown and Dumont ended with the word "taken." Brown and Dumont then signed, and the notary finished his part of the statement and stamped it. Notice the ink spread in the words "on" and "John" when written over the seal—which shows that the addition was made sometime after the original statement was written. The remainder of the sentence after "George declaring—" had to be written

at the left of the signature, and was inserted by another hand after the affidavit was signed and sealed.

Mr. Bates' weird story of George's death agonies needed confirmation. How could there be a real deathbed "confession" unless the corpse could be kept alive long enough to make it! Therefore, in Mr. Bates' story George does not die until 6:30 a. m. of the fourteenth, whereas the *Enid Daily Wave* of January 13 shows that D. E. George died on the thirteenth. It is not often, even in these days of journalistic enterprise, that a newspaper actually reports all the details of a man's suicide, his removal to the morgue, and the impaneling of a coroner's jury over him the day before he dies!



The signature of D. E. George at the left. First below is "J. Wilkes Booth" written by George for Mrs. Harper when he made the "confession" in April, 1900, and second below J. Wilkes Booth's own signature. There isn't the slightest resemblance.

J. Wilkes Booth

J. Wilkes Booth.

Mr. Penniman, the undertaker, states that George died about 10:30 or 11 o'clock on the morning of January 13th. Even Mr. Bates quotes in his book (12) Mrs. Young's (Harper's) statement that: "On the evening of January 13th, I was startled and surprised by reading in the Enid Daily News of the suicide of David E. George," and again (13) ^{he quotes} / an Enid Special to the St. Louis Post dispatch which states that "George, or Booth, Committed Suicide Here, Jan 13th last." The sworn statement of R.A. Field, M.D., who was called to attend George, also attests the fact of the death occurring on the thirteenth. "He made no confession from the time I entered the room," says Dr. Field, "in fact he could not speak."

When David George's groans were heard on the morning of January 13, Lee Boyd, also a roomer at the Grand Avenue Hotel, was the first to enter his room, an inside hall bedroom the outer partition of which did not run up to the ceiling. Mr. Boyd, in his sworn statement, says, "I stepped on a trunk in the hall and climbed over the partition. George was lying on his bed partly dressed, groaning, and in convulsions. I opened the door and told Minnie to have Mrs. Dumont get a doctor. In about five minutes, Doctor R. A. Field came. Before he could prepare a hypodermic Mr. George was dead. George made no confession at this time that he was Booth, in fact, he did not speak, only groaned with pain."

(14)

George did not make a deathbed "confession." ~~George was not St. Helen.~~ Even St. Helen's alleged confession has no affidavits nor written statements to substantiate a single word of it, sources are not given, statements are misquoted, affidavits altered ~~and~~ historical and honesty absolutely ignored.

The next example of "evidence" does not rise above the level of those already considered. Mr. Bates says, "Being a constant attendant at the theaters at El Reno, Enid, Oklahoma City, and Guthrie in the early part of December, 1900, Booth was much struck by the genius of the leading lady of one of the companies then playing in these towns, beginning at Enid. In fact, Booth regarded her a genius and sought an introduction through her manager, claiming at the time to be a correspondent of the *Dramatic Mirror*, of New York, and giving his name as J. L. Harris."

Mr. Bates then claims that Harris-George-Booth wrote a play, "A Life Within the Shadow of Sin" and makes the amusing comment that this was "Booth's Life." Harris-Booth expected, declares Bates, to star the actress in this dramatization with himself as actor-manager. In support of this statement, Bates told me in 1921 that the play manuscript was found in D.E. George's trunk after his death. Mr. Penniman, the undertaker, was written concerning this and answered, "There were no documents in the trunk - nothing was in it but some old work clothes. Even the trunk itself had no value."

During one of our interviews, Mr. Bates stated that the actress he referred to was Mrs. Charles A. (Josie) Cameron, who was playing in "The Woman in the Case." at Enid, Oklahoma, in March, 1901.

Mrs. Cameron was found in Chicago and from her the writer learned that the Enid man who represented the Dramatic Mirror, to whom Mrs. Bates referred, was John Walter Robinson. Investigation at Enid showed that Robinson had died a few months before George came. The Enid Daily Wave of October 13, 1902, carried a complete story of his death. Robinson and George both died in Enid, that was sufficient for Mr. Bates.

Enid Oklahoma July 24 1908

to Whomever may concern

I the undersigned
 Proprietor and Editor of
 the Enid Daily Wave situated in
 the City of Enid in Oklahoma Territory
 do hereby certify that I have
 on file in my office a copy of
 the Enid Daily Wave of the 20th day of July 1908
 which contains a full and complete
 account of the death of John
 Wilkes Booth as published in
 the Enid Daily Wave of the 20th day of July 1908
 and that the same is a true and
 correct copy of the original as
 signed and notarized by
 the undersigned on the 20th day of July 1908

Witness my hand and seal of office
 this 24th day of July 1908

B. B. Brown
 Editor

S. B. Dumont
 Notary Public

My commission expires Dec 22 1908

Aldwin
 on his death bed that
 John Wilkes Booth
 was the man who
 signed the
 name of
 John

Above—The original affidavit given Bates by Brown and Dumont with the sentence added "George declaring on his deathbed that he was John Wilkes Booth." At the left is a full-size reproduction of "on" and "John" showing how the ink spread when these words were written over the seal sometime after the original was signed and notarized.

Mrs. Cameron had received two letters from Robinson, the first March 5, 1901, the second March 21~~st~~. These the author read and in neither was there any mention or the slightest suggestion that the correspondent was writing a play for anyone. Mrs. Cameron stated that she had never heard of J.L. Harris and could not understand how Mr. Bates became confused as she had loaned him the two Robinson letters "for a sufficient length of time to prevent such a mistake." Does the ease with which this matter was checked when the real name was learned, explain Mr. Bates' reluctance to use it?

Mr. Bates goes from Enid to El Reno and writes: (15) "I next went to the Anstien Hotel and met the proprietors of this house, where David E. George first put up on moving to El Reno. On showing the pictures to them they at once identified them in the following authentic manner:

"El Reno, Oklahoma Territory, Jan 23rd, 1903.

"To Whom It May Concern: We, N.J. Anstien (16) and G.F. Anstien, proprietors of the Anstien Hotel, situated in the city of El Reno, after examination of the tintype picture and photographs shown us by F. L. Bates, of Memphis, Tenn., say that the same are true and correct pictures of one D.E. George, or a man who claimed to be of that name. This man, George, boarded at this hotel for a long time. We knew him well, and do not hesitate to pronounce the pictures shown us to be those of this man, and we fully corroborate the statements of Messrs. Dumont and Brown, as fully as if incorporated in this statement.

"N.J. ANSTIEN.

(SIGNED)

"G.F. ANSTIEN.

"Sworn to and subscribed before me this, the 23rd day of January, 1903.

(SIGNED)

"FRANK MEYER.

"NOTARY PUBLIC."

"My commission expires 6-12-05."

And now Mr. Bates makes another attempt to strengthen his case by repeating his Brown and Harper stunts and falsely reporting statements he would

In the original affidavit possessed by Mr. Bates, the name is ANSTIEN (not ANSTIEN). The incorrect spelling is apparently a typographical error.

commonly call cranky, and as the elder man said, 'always spouting poetry,' everybody liked him. I told him that he knew more about Shakespeare and other books than he did about painting and paint brushes.'

"'If you (Mr. Anstien) could spread and display it in certain places as well as I can you would not need to keep a hotel.' Booth had replied on one of these occasions." "Do you," Mr. Bates ^{now}/dramatically asks," catch his meaning--to spread and display paint on the actor?"

Mr. Bates has again repeated the fictions that George was "not a painter". "Had plenty of money from mysterious sources" "Was prompt to pay his bills." Mrs. Mary Anstine does not corroborate the conversational statements Mr. Bates credits to her husband. Neither does she help his alleged B.B. Brown report. She said in an affidavit given the writer in 1921:-

lead us to believe were made to him in conversation. He declares (17) that: "The Messrs. Anstien said: "It was plain to be seen that the man who called himself George was not a painter; that, in fact, he did not know how to properly mix paints or to spread it after it was mixed, but his taste was good, his idea of the arrangement of colors with respect to blending them into harmony was splendid, and as a paint talker he was a success, but as a practical labor painter he was a dismal failure. We supposed this to be the reason why he did not work at what he claimed to be his trade. Then there was the further fact that he always had plenty of money and was prompt at the payment of his bills, whether he worked or did not work, which made it a matter that, in fact, did not concern others.

"When George, or Booth, bought the cottage for thirty-five hundred dollars he lacked a small amount of having enough money to pay cash for it. He came to the office and requested this amount as a loan for a few days. The money was handed him without a question or a note, and promptly on the day agreed upon for its return he came in and paid the money. Where it came from was a mystery, but that did not concern us, so long as he kept his word. And during the long time that he boarded at this hotel he met all his bills with equal promptness and satisfaction. He was regarded as the soul of honor by those with whom he came in contact, personally or in a business way, and while he was queer, or what we would

"I am the wife of Frank Anstine mentioned in Mr. Bates' book. My husband and his father are both dead and I now run the Anstine House. I remember D. E. George very well indeed. We boarded him and gave him his room for \$5.00 a week during the time he was with us. B. B. Brown, the clerk in the Grand Avenue Hotel, left Enid at the time of George's death, came to El Reno afterwards and clerked for me for six or seven years, leaving here about eight years ago for Hope, Arkansas.

" While Brown talked about George a lot I do not remember that he ever said that George confessed that he was John Wilkes Booth while on his death bed. Laura Ida Booth who claims she was John Wilkes Booth's daughter was here about eight years ago and I cut out Mr. George's name from our old register and gave it to her. I also gave her an old whiskey flask which had belonged to him. I then took Laura Ida Booth over to the cottage, an annex to the hotel, to the room occupied by George while he was here. She sat down on the bed and wept "Father, Oh! Poor Father". She was interested about the stories as to the properties of Booth that belonged to Mr. George and asked if I knew anything about the estate. George was drunk a lot while here and was considered pretty much of a nuisance by my husband. Once when he was drunk George said to me; "Mrs. Anstine, I killed the best man that ever lived. At another time he said;" I wish you could see the pictures I painted in Jerusalem. One time Mr. George did some house painting in Yukon, a small town fifteen miles east of here. While there he courted a young girl 16 or 17, who was living with her aunt and uncle who were rather old people. He was painting the aunt and uncle's house. He told them he had plenty of money and would make a fine home for a wife and wanted to get married. The uncle and aunt took it seriously and came down to El Reno with the girl and asked for Mr. George at the hotel.

They told me that the girl and Mr. George were engaged. I took them over to the cottage annex where George was at the time. He was scared frantic and begged me to stay with him and claimed that he had been just joking. The aunt and uncle got terribly angry and threatened to sue Mr. George for breach of promise, but never took any action. I remember that after the old uncle threatened to bring suit against George that he said, "Mrs. Anstine, they better not fool with me, "I killed the best man that ever lived". He asked me one time, "Mrs. Anstine, are you a Southern woman?" Then asked, "Can you keep a secret?" I replied, "Did you ever see a woman who could?" George then said I am going to tell you something some day. I never took it seriously since he was drunk so much and was thought to be a little "off". He was always giving me advice on how to handle my husband. I do not know whether Mr. George was a "dope" fiend or not, but that would account for his peculiar spells. He must have been about 60 years old at the time he was here, but in an attempt to look much younger dyed his mustache and hair. I remember seeing the dyes in his room. I do not remember that Mr. George ever borrowed any money from my husband. I am sure he would not have loaned him over \$10.00 without security, as my husband wasn't that poor a business man.

" Mr. Anstine was nervous and would feel humiliated when Mr. George got drunk around the hotel where he would always try to be quite dramatic. I remember George Smith. He was called "Progress" Smith and had a clothing and shoe store here known as The Progress Store. Mr. Smith's wife was quite friendly to Mr. George and if I remember rightly came over to see him a couple of times and had him at their house. The Smiths were here but a year or two and then moved away. Mr. George had no friends with whom he was particularly chummy. I do not remember of him ever saying anything about living in Texas. He was quite Southern, had a very musical voice and a Southern drawl. He painted quite steadily during the time he lived in El Reno. In fact, he painted the three cottages north of our hotel which were used as a hotel annex. He also superintended and aided in the painting of the hotel. He always paid his hotel bills and never seemed to have any large amount of money or large bills which would have been particularly noticeable because he would have tried to change them or pay his bills with large bank notes.

" George's eyes were either dark blue or brown, not black. I do not remember that he ever took part in any amateur play, although he might have done so. I remember when Mr. Bates came here after George's death. He showed us the tin type which he claimed was St. Helen and also Mr. George. We did not instantly recognize it as Mr. George, but agreed that it looked something like him, and undoubtedly, was him when younger. I do not remember that Mr. George ever had his picture taken while here. (18)

In the office of the Probate Court at the Enid Court House, I found an envelope containing a last letter by David E. George, his two wills and other papers. On the outside of this envelope was the notation: "Publicly opened by Probate Judge M.C. Garber in open court January 20, 1903." Within the envelope was a receipt for advertising in the Enid Eagle by W.B. Penniman on January 29, February 5 and February 12, 1903, giving notice of the closing of the estate of David E. George. There was also in this envelope a coroner's bill dated February 5, 1903, for \$76.45 against the estate of D.E. George, by Coroner J.S. Jacobs; also W.B. Penniman's "certificate for letters testamentary" as per the testimony of Probate February 20, 1903, giving the property value of the D.E. George estate as about \$50.~~00~~ and giving the address of Anna K. Smith as Decatur, Iowa, and the notice that Mr. Penniman had been appointed administrator February 20, 1903. The wills had been probated on January 16. All this material is filed in case #229 of the Probate Court for Garfield County, City of Enid, Okla. (19)

Ah! but at last Mr. Bates will prove conclusively the identification of David George as John Wilkes Booth! He brings in a palmist and quotes him (20) with all the statements that are necessary to show that George had all the characteristics that were Booths. This identification, we must acknowledge, is as valuable as each and every other instance Mr. Bates has cited for St. Helen and George as Booth.

Mr. Bates next attempted to convince Joseph Jefferson that St. Helen was John Wilkes Booth. He says: (21) "Believing that if any living man would recognize John Wilkes Booth from the tintype picture of John St. Helen that man would be Joseph Jefferson, of whom I heard St. Helen so often speak when discussing the successful peoples of the stage, and I sought this best authority at the first opportune time. Mr. Jefferson, who had known John Wilkes Booth since his boyhood and from the time Booth first went on the stage at the age of seventeen, was in the same stock company with him. Among the members of

this company being Mr. Jefferson, Edward Adams, and John Wilkes Booth, at the age of seventeen playing Hamlet, Mr. Adams playing Laertes, and Mr. Joseph Jefferson, then being twenty-nine years of age and playing the grave-digger. Learning that Mr. Joseph Jefferson was playing in Nashville, Tennessee, and that the next day he would reach Memphis, together with his company for the same purpose, I wired him at Nashville for an interview on his arrival in Memphis, which was accorded me. And as per arrangement I called on Mr. Jefferson at the Gayoso Hotel, in the city of Memphis, on the 14th day of April, 1903, just thirty-eight years to the day from the assassination of President Lincoln. We had a long and most interesting interview, and when I handed Mr. Jefferson the tintype picture, so often mentioned herein and recognized as John Wilkes Booth, he took the picture in his hand, saying:

"This is John Wilkes Booth, if John Wilkes Booth was living when this picture was taken." He continued to hold the picture in his hand and in front of his eyes during the entire interview, which lasted more than two hours. I should not say, and do not mean to convey the idea that Mr. Jefferson kept the picture constantly before his eyes, but that he held it the entire time, making long studied examinations of it during the interview and finally said:

"This, sir, I should say, is John Wilkes Booth, but he is older than when I saw him last. I have not seen him since a short time before he killed President Lincoln, at which time I think he was about twenty-seven years of age." After this Mr. Jefferson gave me the history of John Wilkes Booth, from his boyhood up as well as the history of John Wilkes Booth's entire family. And in this connection as a matter of history I deem it my duty to say that I was impressed with the idea

that Mr. Jefferson was by no means surprised to see a picture of John Wilkes Booth at the age of thirty-eight, and gave expression to no more surprise than to ask, "Where did you get it?" My explanation to that inquiry, which was quite extended, was listened to with seeming great interest and approval by Mr. Jefferson."

Mr. Bates veracity as a reporter is again impugned. This time by a letter from Joseph Jefferson,

in answer to an inquiry from Mr. Oliver D. Street who in 1903 was Secretary of the Tennessee Valley Historical Society.

Buzzard's Bay, Mass., June 10, 1903.

"Mr Oliver D Street

"Dear Sir:

"In reply to your enquiry I beg to say that a gentleman called on me last spring and related to me his story contained in your letter. He showed me also a tintype much disfigured and asked me if I did not recognize it as John Wilkes Booth. I told him that it bore a kind of resemblance to him but that as I had not seen Booth since he was 19 years old and as the tintype was evidently that of a man of 55 or sixty it was quite impossible for me to give him any satisfactory information on the subject—and this is what he calls my "identification of Booth's remains"—rather weak evidence for such an important case—and I do not think that Miss Clara Morris (who also denies the identification) has had any further testimony beyond the uncertain tintype.

"The gentleman further stated that he was trying to obtain the evidence so that he could get possession of the dead man's estate for his client. My opinion is that there is not the slightest foundation for the truth of this rambling story.

"Sincerely yours
(Signed) "J Jefferson"

It would appear from Jefferson's last sentence that Bates approached him on the matter of identification, under false pretenses. (22)

Mr. Street also possesses a letter from Clara Morris, the actress, in which she denies any identification of the tintype as Booth and any belief in Mr. Bates' story.

The last chapter of Mr. Bates' book is devoted to the "identification" of the tintype by Junius Brutus Booth, the nephew of John Wilkes, *but born January 6, 1868, three years after the assassination*, and who had never seen his uncle John Wilkes Booth. Quoting from Mr. Bates: "While Mr. Junius Brutus Booth was in the city of Memphis, playing an engagement at the Lyceum Theater in support of Mrs. Brune, I sought an introduction to him, and by pre-arrangement was accorded an interview at my office, which lasted for several hours, being of much interest to myself as well as Mr. Booth. At this meeting, because of my former meeting and friendship for and close association with John St. Helen, I was enabled to recount to him much of the private history of the Booth family, which was enjoyed by Mr. Booth with an interest equaled only by his astonishment."—Then follows the usual affidavit.

Memphis, Tenn.

2-21-03.

"(F. L. Bates) I hand you Mr. Junius Brutus Booth, a tintype picture which was taken at Glenrose Mills, Hood County, Texas, on or about June, 1877, and handed to me by one John St. Helen, as a means of at some future time of identifying John Wilkes Booth. Will you kindly examine this picture, and in your own way identify the same."

"I, Junius Brutus Booth, of the City of Boston, Massachusetts, recognize the likeness of John Wilkes Booth, not only in comparison with other photographs and pictures of said John Wilkes Booth, but I can also trace a strong family resemblance and a likeness to different members of my family, in the said tintype.

"I am the eldest son of John Wilkes' brother, Junius Brutus Booth, born in Boston, January 6th, 1868. Those now living having any direct relation to John Wilkes Booth are, first, myself and my brother Sydney Booth, 16 Gramercy Park, New York. Creston Clarke, 16 Gramercy Park, New York; Wilfred Clark, New York; Dollie Clark Morgan, Vendome Hotel, New York; Adrienne Clark, Brighton, England, children of Asia Booth, sister of John Wilkes; Marion Booth daughter of Junius Brutus Booth, said John Wilkes' brother, also being my half-sister, New York.

"The family of John Wilkes Booth's father, Junius Brutus Booth (the elder) and his wife, Mary Booth, consisted of my father Junius Brutus, the eldest, Rosalie Booth, Asia Booth, Edwin Thomas Booth and Joseph Adrian Booth. Subsequent or prior to my father's birth there was another son, who died in infancy.

"The Clarks mentioned would be connected with John Wilkes Booth by the marriage of his sister, Asia Booth to John Sleeper Clark.

(Signed) "Junius Brutus Booth."

There is little doubt that the tintype of St. Helen has some resemblance to John Wilkes Booth. This resemblance was aptly put by a Leadville, Colorado, undertaker when shown the tintype by the writer in January, 1921, "Yes, I recognize that picture. I buried a hundred fellows here that looked very much like that back in the early days."

Ch 19

DAVID E. GEORGE AS J. WILKES BOOTH.

Notes.

(1)

S T A T E M E N T

OF

Mr. F. A. Drinkler, Druggist & Dealer
in Wallpaper & Paint. *Hennessey, Okla.*

" Yes, I remember D. E. George who worked for W. C. Ball, painting contractor. George occasionally did jobs on his own hook, but very few. He bought very little paint and what he did he paid for in cash. My books show that the last paint Ball bought was in October, 1901, and that he left here owing me \$9.62. Mr. George bought dye for his mustache and hair at my store. As I remember he was drunk about half the time he was here and was not considered a first class painter. He loafed around the store often, but was always quiet. He was considered by people who knew him as a very odd character. He would hang around a saloon and would be given drinks by others. I never heard of him getting any remittance or having any great amount of money. He talked with a Southern accent. He did not limp, as far as I can remember and never mentioned Lincoln or John Wilkes Booth.

" George did not have to make a lot of money to live here 20 years ago as things were quite cheap. I remember that when he would come into the store to buy dye for his mustache, a little gray would show where it had grown out since he last dyed it. George's locks were not unusual, as the way he combed his hair and his long mustache was a way that lots of men had in the 90's. I never heard of a man by the name "Dad" Ryan here at that time or since."

Signed:- F. A DINKLER

State of Oklahoma)
County of Kingfisher)

I, M.A. Mitchell, a Notary Public in and for the said County, in the State aforesaid, do hereby certify, that F.A. Drinkler, personally known to me to be the same person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, appeared before me this day in person, and acknowledged that he signed, the said instrument.

Given, under my hand and seal, this 18th day of July, 1921.

(SIGNED) M.A. MITCHELL
Notary Public.

My commission expires April 19, 1925.

S T A T E M E N T

OF

George A. Clark, Postmaster,
Hennessey, Okla.

"I have lived in Hennessey since the spring of 1892. I remember D.E. George quite well as a rather lanky man of about fifty, with a long mustache and chin whiskers. I was in the restaurant, candy and cigar business from 1895 on and George occasionally dropped in at my place of business. I was also connected with the local post office at that time, my place of business being in the same room and I am very certain that there was never any remittances came from Mr. George during the time he was in Hennessey, at least by money orders. Mr. George never displayed any great amount of money, and as a matter of fact had very little, as he usually got drunk when he earned enough to get booze. D.E. George painted a house for me twenty years ago last fall. George left here soon after that and I think went to El Reno. George was a good painter on outside work and worked practically all the time he was here for W.C. Ball who did the inside work. Mr. George talked to himself a lot while working and recited poetry, but just what he recited from I do not know and doubt whether anybody else here did. He was considered a little off by Hennessey people. I do not remember of him ever taking part in any plays or doings in town. I am a Knight of Pythias and George told me once that he was a K.P. but could not go to lodge since he was behind in his dues. I do not believe that he was Booth. Opinion here generally in 1903 was that Enid merely wanted a little excitement. I do not

remember of a George D. Ryan or 'Dad' Ryan ever living here."

(SIGNED) G.A. CLARK

State of Oklahoma)
County) S.S.
County of Kingfisher)

I, M.A. Mitchell, a Notary Public, in and for the said County, in the State aforesaid, do hereby certify that George D. Ryan, personally known to me to be the same person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, appeared before me this day in person, and acknowledged that he signed the said instrument.

Given under my hand and seal, this 18th day of July 1921.

(SIGNED) M.A. Mitchell
Notary Public.

"My Commission expires April 10, 1925."

X. This form was typewritten and Mr. Mitchell overlooked the blank space for Mr. Clark's name.

(2) Mr. J.W. Simmons, with whom George boarded for a time while in El Reno and who purchased the house from George, in conversation ^{with the writer} at Weatherford, Okla., January 15, 1921, claimed that he knew D.E. George in '98 or '99 at Geary, Okla., where George was painting houses for about six months. Mr. Simmons says that he and George boarded in the same place at Geary; that George was considered there as rather a character; and that he claimed he came from over near Ardmore, Okla. While at El Reno, George went away several times, Mr. Simmons states, for a week or two and made the claim that he had been visiting his brother who lived on a farm near Marietta, south of Ardmore. After George's death, Mr. Simmons says he wrote to a banker at Marietta, Okla. and asked him to investigate as to any relatives but that the banker replied that he knew of no one by the name of George in that section. Mr. Simmons said, "George spoke of living in Texas and said something about living with

some people by the name of Schaefer in Western Kentucky. Also spoke of having been in Europe and claimed he had travelled quite extensively. "Every once in a while George had a spell," said Mr. Simmons, "and claimed that he was sick. We felt that he might be a dope fiend, but didn't know for sure. He was a man of considerable intelligence, with quite a knowledge of politics and the country and took spells of quoting Shakespeare. I moved to El Reno and one day met George on the street. He immediately wanted to come to our house to board. This was before the time that he bought the cottage. After George bought the cottage he fixed it up and rented it to us for his board. The place was sold to George by John Davis through Vanness, the real estate man. George never had a special amount of money except once when he sold the homestead down south of Hydro which he had taken from the Government. As I remember there was 160 acres and he sold the place for \$1400. He would take spells and work very hard, then lay off and go away for a couple of weeks. After leaving El Reno, he went some place else before going to Enid, but just for a short time. I don't know where. After going to Enid he wrote and begged me to take him back, but I never answered his letter. I never heard of him doing anything else but paint and he did quite a lot of that. He was considered fairly prompt pay. I do not remember of him ever taking part in any theatricals. He used to recite things for the girls at our place. Mr. Simmons was not in the room at the time of the confession to Mrs. Harper. As he had more than one of the spells I don't know which one it was in which he confessed."

(3) (Following sheets.)

I, Mrs. David M. Young, am the Mrs. E. C. Harper referred to in the stories about David E. George, which appeared in the Enid, Oklahoma, papers in 1903 with reference to the suicide of D. E. George at the Grand Avenue Hotel at Enid, Oklahoma, on January 13, 1903.

During the year 1900 I lived near the family of J. W. Simmons at El Reno, Oklahoma. During this period I was almost a daily visitor at the Simmons home, being a great friend of May, the daughter of J. W. Simmons. During this time I became quite well acquainted with Mr. George, who several times entertained Mrs. Simmons, her daughter and myself by repeating passages from Shakespeare and various poets. I remember that one night he repeated a part of Othello, which was as good as anything I have ever seen on the stage. We thought that Mr. George must have acted on the stage to be able to give this so well. His enunciation was very clear and his diction excellent; his motions very dignified and graceful.

He was a man five feet ten or eleven, of medium build and walked with his shoulders well thrown back. He had very large deep blue eyes, his hair being sprinkled with gray; he dyed both hair and mustache. During the time I knew Mr. George he was a house painter and worked quite steadily at this trade; when not at work he dressed in a good suit of clothes and was a very fine looking old man. His eyes as I remember were perfect matches as were also his heavy dark bushy eye brows.

Mr. George quite often talked about various characters of history, and would often wind up by saying that Abraham Lincoln was one of the greatest and best men that ever lived. During the time that I knew Mr. George he spent most of his evenings at home, that is, at the Simmons where he boarded; he spent his evenings reading histories, magazines and papers and a great amount of poetry. Whenever the weather was bad Mr. George limped slightly in his right leg and complained that he had rheumatism in his right knee. I do not remember of ever seeing any scars on his face or neck, and he didn't show the slightest indication of stiff neck. He had a rather long straight nose and square chin, a slender face of good shape and a mouth very firm in shape when shut, his complexion was a creamish olive.

Bates
(The writer had the original tintype of St. Helen in his possession at the time and showed it to Mrs. Young.)

The tin-type of John St. Helen shown me today, while it may be Mr.

George in his younger days, does not look much like him as I knew him; his eyes were not the same and the shape of the face does not seem to be the same. Mr. George's eyebrows were heavier and his face was longer; in fact, Mr. George's face was more like that of John Wilkes Booth, whose picture, a copy of which was shown me, the original of which is in the possession of Clara Morris. Mr. George's eyes looked the same as those of John Wilkes Booth, particularly when in a sad mood. As I remember Mr. George was not drunk often, in fact, he possibly took a little morphine every once and a while, more often than whiskey. Mr. George quite often drew pictures of animals, scenery and buildings with paper and pencil. He wrote an old time sort of a hand with letters big and of different shape than

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usually seen now days. Mr. George would quite often talk about Shakespeare's plays and tell and show how different parts should be acted. He loved classical music and songs of home expressing deep sentiment; would often sit in the yard, or in his room, and sing to himself.

I remember that he went to the Methodist Church once to hear Reverend Harper, who afterward became my husband. After the church services Mr. George said that it was fine when people could believe in what the church taught, but said that it was not for him, that he was beyond pardon; said that he didn't belong to any church, but that there was good in all of them. At another time he said that he was a spiritulist and told of different ones who had had experiences, which proved spiritualism true; he read a great many books and papers on this subject. At the time I knew him he was 64 or 65 years old carried a cane a greater part of the time and occasionally had trouble with his throat, which he said was asthma; when not bothered with this trouble he had a very deep clear musical voice. At times Mr. George had the most sorrowful look and when alone would groan terribly as if in deep remorse. I was told by a friend, whose name I do not remember, that at one time a traveling troupe of players were going through El Reno, and that Mr. George went to see them; that one of them who took the part of a drunken sailor was ill and Mr. George offered to take the part and filled it very creditably. At one time he told me that he had been all over Europe and described very vividly a visit he had made with some Methodist Bishop, whose name I do not remember, to the hill upon which Christ

was crucified, and told me about the discussion he and this Bishop had with reference to that event. While I am not sure, I believe that Mr. George showed me some tatoo marks on his arm at one time, this being some sort of design and not initials.

Mr. George asked both Mrs. Simmons and myself several times if a man could be forgiven who had committed a crime wherein he thought he was benefitting a great many people, but afterward found that he had done a great injury to the world and himself, and asked us to pray for him. About the middle of April, 1900, and I fix the time by the fact that I was married to Reverend E. C. Harper on May 21st of that year and left El Reno, living in Medford for two years, and then moving to Enid, Oklahoma, in about October, 1902, I was at the Simmons home when Mr. George came in looking very ill and went up to his room. Mrs. Simmons said something must be wrong with him and went up to see; she asked me to come up to the room, saying that she believed that Mr. George had taken poison, and that she would make some coffee as an antidote. Mr. George, when the suggestion was made that we send for a doctor, requested us not to do so. I sat down on a chair at the side of his bed, and he said: "Don't you think I have been more than an ordinary house painter", and I answered: "Yes", and he then said: "Can't you guess whom I am", and I answered: "Why no". He then asked for a piece of paper and wrote on it "John Wilkes Booth and Abraham Lincoln." I did not realize the importance of this paper at the time and did not keep it. Mr. George continued: " But you can't imagine how miserable I have been all these years, and not only deprived the world of one of the best men that ever lived, but ruined my own future." He said that he came from a family of actors, had been educated for an actor

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and had started out with a brilliant future; that at times his desire to act had been so strong that he could not resist the temptation to take part in a play a time or two.

He said that he had gone under a great many different names and had disguised himself in different ways. He said that he had friends in Washington, who, after he escaped from the theatre in which he killed Lincoln, had hidden him in a trunk, and got him on a boat for Europe where he had remained for ten years; that he then disguised himself and came back and had since that time lived on the frontiers of Texas. He said that he had remained away from all of his people, and they did not know that he was alive; said he had never been married for he could not give a woman a home and a name; said he had run a little grocery and sold whiskey several times on the Texas frontiers, but when it got too thickly settled he would sell out and go to other places.

He said that after he was dead a man who knew all about his life, and who kept in constant touch with him, and to whom he sent a picture of himself once a year, would write a book about his life. He further said that he had a friend in the South, who I thought was the same party referred to above, who would send him money any time he wanted it, but that he was too proud and would rather work; he did not mention the name of the man in either case. He said: "You know what a fine actor my father was, I was going to carry on the Booth name, but I disgraced it and ruined my career." He said Mrs. Surrat was not guilty and that Andrew Johnson, the then Vice-President of the United States, and some of

the high officials, had hired him to kill Lincoln; said that they had fired his emotional temperament; that he did not realize what a terrible thing he had done until after he had shot the President, and that he had been sorry ever since. He said that he had done different kinds of work, but that he had money in the bank and did not have to work; that he had to do something to pass the time.

I later heard that Mr. George had filed a claim on a farm near Geary, and had disposed of his equity in this to Mr. Simmons for about \$1500.~~00~~. He repeated the fact that he had a friend in the South who would write his story after he was dead and give it to the the world. When Mr. Bates called on me after the suicide of Mr. George at Enid he told me that people would attempt to prove that Mr. George was not John Wilkes Booth, that I should not believe them, that he was; that he, Mr. Bates, had kept in constant touch with Mr. George and knew for a certainty who he was. I remember^{ed} what Mr. George said to me about the friend who would write his life, which Mr. Bates said he intended to do, and I thought that he, Mr. Bates, was surely the same man that Mr. George had referred to as his friend in the South.

After Mr. George had made his confession to me in April, 1900, he asked me faithfully to promise not to repeat it, since he would be hung if people found it out. Mrs. Simmons had come into the room and heard Mr. George talking, afterwards I told her about his confession, and after my marriage I told Reverend Harper. During the two or three weeks intervening from the time of the confession until I married and left El Reno,

Mr. George asked me several times what he had told me while ill. He looked at me so straight, and rather fiercely, that I was afraid of him and passed it off by saying that he had told me nothing.

I saw the body of David E. George, who committed suicide at Enid on January 13, 1903, and am absolutely sure that he was the same David E. George I knew at El Reno, and who made the confession given above.

(S) Mrs. David M. Young

I, Mrs. David M. Young, upon my oath do state that the above and foregoing statement is true in substance as I remember and to the best of my recollection, and that I signed same as I remembered the facts to be.

(S) Mrs. David M. Young

subscribed and sworn to before me, this the 21st day of January,

A D 1921.

(S) Earl Wyatt
Notary Public, Potter County
Texas

(4) The notarial acknowledgment of Mr. Robare's statement is as follows:

"State of Oklahoma)
) SS
"Canadian County)

"I, W.J. Finch, a Notary Public in and for the said County, in the State aforesaid, do hereby certify that W.D. Robare personally known to me to be the same whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, appeared before me this day in person, and acknowledged that he signed the said instrument.

"Given under my hand and seal, this 18th day of July 1921.

(SIGNED) W. J. Finch
Notary Public.

"My Commission expires November 9th, 1924."

(4½) The acknowledgment to the C.R. Miller statement is as follows:

"State of Oklahoma)
) SS
Canadian County)

"I, W.J. Finch, a notary public in and for the said County, in the State aforesaid, do hereby certify that C.R. Miller, personally known to me to be the same person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, appeared before me this day in person and acknowledged that he signed the said instrument.

"Given under my hand and seal, this 18th day of July, 1921.

(SIGNED) W. J. Finch
Notary Public.

"My Commission expires November 9th, 1924."

(5) The Commercial Appeal story which Mr. Bates read is as follows:

"-WILKES BOOTH A SUICIDE-

"WEALTHY MAN CLAIMS TO BE LINCOLN'S ASSASSIN

"-CASE SHROUDED IN MYSTERY-"

"Enid, Okla. January 17th, 1903, Special - David E. George, a wealthy resident of the Territory, who committed suicide here, announced himself on his death bed to be John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Lincoln. He stated that he had successfully evaded the Officers after shooting him and had since remained incognito.

His statement caused a sensation and an investigation was made. Surgeons examined the body and stated the man to be of the age Booth would be at this time and announced that his leg was broken in the same place and in the same manner as that of Booth after jumping from the President's Box at Ford's Theatre, after the assassination.

All the time George has received money regular from unknown sources and telegrams arriving yesterday and today asked that the body be held for identification. It is claimed that one telegram came from the address - "George E. Smith, Colfax, Iowa," the same source as the mysterious money remittances. Smith is unknown to anyone in Oklahoma. Upon his arrival in Enid today, he commanded that no other person be allowed to view the remains and promised to return for the body later. Mr. Smith was asked if Mr. George had ever confided any of his life's history to him, to which he answered:-

"Well, yes, to some extent. He has had a past and had told me of having killed a man in Texas for which crime I think he has been acquitted. He may be Booth, I do not know."

George committed suicide in the Grand Avenue Hotel by taking poison. He previously attempted suicide in El Reno. A letter found in his pocket is addressed - "TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN" and sets aside a former will which he made, although its contents are not known." - Memphis Commercial Appeal,

Sunday, January 18, 1903.

- (6) Mr. Penniman says that there was no such letter and that the first time he even heard of it was upon reading the Bates book. The letter was not mentioned in the newspaper accounts until Mr. Bates began to give out interviews which he used later to corroborate himself.
- (7) Letter from Penniman to the author, July 8, 1921.
- (8) W.B. Penniman, who before he became an undertaker had been a newspaper reporter, in 1909 wrote "The Story of a Mummy with a History" for The Sunnyside, an ~~Embalmer's~~^m magazine. After describing the call of Mr. and Mrs. Harper to the Morgue and the consequent newspaper stories, Mr. Penniman says, "By this time the story had gained flavor and widespread attention from the press, and finally came to the attention of Mr. Finis L. Bates at his home in Memphis, Tennessee. Upon reading it he at once wired to know if the body was still unburied, and stated that if it was, he was in a position to give it the right identity."
- (9) Neither the high thumb joint nor the scar on the right brow are noticeable in authentic pictures of John Wilkes Booth and if they were they were not noticeable enough to have been mentioned in the many newspaper stories about him at the time of the assassination or in the ^{official} descriptions.
- (10) But the wrong leg-- Booth's injury was in the left leg and the fracture was not six inches above the ~~article~~^{ankle}. Col. H. H. Wells, on May 16, 1865, (C. T. Page 168) testified that in an interview the week after the assassination, Dr Mudd told him that he had examined Booth's ~~leg~~^{leg} "and found that the front bone was broken, nearly at right angles, about two inches above the instep. It seemed in his (Dr Mudd's) judgement as slight a breaking as it could possibly be."
- (11) In 1925, Mr Ryan was interviewed regarding George, for the "Oklahoma City Times." He repeated his 1921 assertions to me.
The Times, February 24, 1925, reports---

" David E George, believed by many to be John Wilkes Booth, Abraham Lincoln's assassin, was an inebriated painter, who had a halucination that he was Booth, according to the story told Tuesday by William J Ryan, representative from Garfield county, who says he is the undertaker who embalmed the body.

" Ryan was an embalmer in the W B Penniman undertaking company at Enid when the body of George was brought to that place.

" I do not believe now and I never did believe that the body I embalmed was the body of John Wilkes Booth, the actor and assassin of President Lincoln.

HAS NO PREJUDICE

" I am not prejudiced. My mind is open for conviction but so far no theories have been advanced or proof offered to convince me the man I embalmed as David E George was John Wilkes Booth.

" Ryan is 63 years old, a retired furniture merchant and undertaker. He was in the undertaking business for 48 years and 38 years an embalmer. He was in the undertaking business in Enid for 22 years.

" While Ryan was embalming the body the first story was raised that the painter who had killed himself in Enid was Lincoln's assassin.

" Ryan first embalmed George's body in the usual manner. When the controversy arose over its identity the body was held in the Pennimen undertaking establishment and Ryan says he treated the body three times later to preserve it.

BODY NEVER STOLEN

" He denied rumors that the body was stolen while kept at the undertaking parlors. It never left the place until it was shipped away about eight years after George's death in 1903.

" The reason I am skeptical is that the body I embalmed had what I call faded blue eyes or blue-gray eyes. John Wilkes Booth had coal black piercing eyes. I have talked to persons who knew Booth and knew the color of his eyes. Among them was Capt. E. J. Pierce, of Whitehall, Ill. Captain Pierce said he knew Booth well and

that he had dark eyes, not brown eyes, but coal black eyes.

"The pigment in a man's eyes does not change color."

"Ryan said that after the controversy arose about the identity of the body he posed it for a photograph and showed these pictures to persons who knew Booth. No one he ever talked to identified it as that of Booth.

"The representative was told of the story of an eastern doctor who declared he operated on Booth for a tumor. The operation left a deep scar on Booth's neck. He told Booth he would carry this scar to the grave.

NO SCAR FOUND

"There was no scar on the back of the neck of the body I embalmed," Ryan said. "I looked for identifying marks all over the body. If there was any scar on the neck, I could not see it."

"Ryan was then asked about the fractured left leg that was supposed to have been found on the body of George-Booth is claimed to have fractured a leg when he leaped from the stage of a theater where he assassinated Lincoln.

"Both legs of the George corpse were whole and sound so far as I could tell. A doctor up there, Dr S. N. Mayberry, came and looked at the legs. He kept looking and looking and looking and finally he thought he could see a little bulge in the left leg but I never could see it."

(12) Bates, Page 241.

(13) Bates, Page 252.

(14) "Enid, Okla., Jan. 11, 1921.

On the morning of January 13, 1903, I was called by phone to the Grand Avenue Hotel run by S. S. Dumont. This was soon after I came down to the office. When I arrived at the hotel, I was taken to a hall bedroom on the second floor, to a man who I realized was in the throes of death. In fact he died before I could get a hypodermic prepared. His death was caused by taking an over dose of strychnine. I was informed that the man's name was George. He made no confession from the time I entered the room, in fact he could not speak. The only other person in the room was a Mr. Lee Boyd, who lived at the same hotel.

(Signed) R A Field M D

State of Oklahoma SS
Garfield County

I, A.F. Butts, a notary public in and for the said County, in the state aforesaid, do hereby certify, that Dr. R. A. Field, personally known to me to be the same person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, appeared before me this day in person, and acknowledged that he signed, the said instrument. Given under my hand and seal, this eleventh day of January, 1921.

(Signed) A F Butts
Notary Public

My commission expires June, 2nd, 1923.

Enid, Okla., Jan. 11, 1921.

In January 1903, I was living at the Grand Avenue Hotel run by S. S. Dumont. I had seen D. E. George around the lobby at different times, and the only time I ever talked to him was one morning, when he stopped me on my way down stairs, George was still in bed, and asked me to go get him some whiskey. I refused. On the morning of January 13, 1903, about 9 A.M., I was in the Hotel lobby reading, when Minnie, the maid came down and told Mrs. Dumont, that something was wrong with old man George. Mrs. Dumont was in the office back of the desk, She asked me to go up and learn the trouble. I went up to George's room on inside hall bed room, the outer partition of which did not run up to the ceiling, his door was locked from the inside. I stepped on a trunk in the hall and climbed over the partition. George was lying on his bed partly dressed, groaning and in convulsions, I thought he had delirium tremens. I opened the door and told Minnie to have Mrs. Dumont, to get a doctor, In about five minutes doctor R. A. Field, came. Before he could prepare a hypodermic Mr. George was dead. George made no confession at this time, that he was Booth, in fact, he did not speak, only groaned with pain. Mrs. Dumont told me sometime during the same day, that Brown the night clerk was out walking and Mr. Dumont was at the Court House, during the morning and at the time of George's death. At that time I was night telegraph operator for the Rock Island Railroad in Enid, Okla.

(Signed) Lee Boyd

(14)

State of Oklahoma SS
Garfield County

I, A.F. Butts, a notary public in and for the said County, in the State aforesaid, do hereby certify, that Lee Boyd, personally known to me to be the same person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, appeared before me this day in person, and acknowledged that he signed, the said instrument. Given, under my hand and seal, this eleventh day of January 1921.

A F Butts, Notary Public 6-2-23

(15) Bates, Page 287-290

(16) Bates, Page 289.

(17) George's last letter or statement written on the day of his death and the only letter found among his effects:

"Grand Avenue Hotel,
"S.S. Dumont, Prop.
"Rates \$2 Per Day.
"South Grand Avenue.

"Enid, Oklahoma, January 13, 1902.

"I am informed that I made a will a few days ago and I am indistinct of having done so. I hereby recall every letter, syllable and word of any will that I may have signed at Enid.

"I owe Jack Bernstein about Ten Dollars, but he has my watch in pawn for the amt.

(SIGNED) D. E. George."

(Isaac and Jack Bernstein were Enid saloon keepers.)

(18) The acknowledgment to Mrs. Anstine's affidavit is as follows:-

"State of Oklahoma)) S. S.
"Canadian County)

"I, W. J. Finch, a Notary Public in and for the said County, in the State aforesaid, do hereby certify, that Mary Anstine, personally known to me to be the same person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, appeared before me this day in person, and acknowledged that she signed, the said instrument.

" Given, under my hand and seal, this 18th day of July, 1921.

" W. J. FINCH.

" Notary Public

"My commission expires 11-9-1924."

(19) The will to which George refers bears the indorsement - "Case 229
Filed this 16th Day of January, 1903, in my office No. 1 In Record of Wills,
Page 26-45.

"M.C. Garber, Probate Judge."

It is as follows:-

"I, David E George of the County of Garfield and Territory of Oklahoma,
being of sound mind and disposing memory, do make, publish and declare this
to be my last will and Testament, hereby revoking all former wills by me made.
(1) I give, devise and bequeath to my Nephew, Wilty George, if living, the
Seven Hundred acre tract of land which I made proof upon before the Dawes
Commission about four years ago, which tract of land is located in a body in
the Chickaska Nation I.T. about ten miles South East of Marietta I.T. and
within two miles of the Delaware Crossing of Red River; The intention of this
gift, devise and bequeath is to give my said nephew all of said tract of land
but in the event that I am not granted by the Government the whole of said
tract, then my said nephew shall have all of said tract so granted by the
Government to me. I further provide that in the event that my said nephew
is not alive, then I give, devise and bequeath all of said tract of land or
so much thereof as may be granted to me by the Government to the Sisters of
Charity of Dallas, Texas.

"(2) I give and bequeath to my friend, Isaac Bernstein, all money that may be collected from the life insurance policy I hold of \$3000/00 in the Knights of Pythias Lodge No. 70 of Dallas, Texas or any other Knights of Pythias Organization or Lodge; also my watch, trunk and all my wearing apparel.

"(3) I give and bequeath to my friend George E. Smith, late of El Reno, O. T. all money that may be collected from my Life Insurance Policy of \$2500.00 in the New York Mutual Life Insurance Co of New York. After he shall pay from the proceeds of said Insurance all of my just debts, expenses of my last illness and all funeral expenses.

"(4) I give and devise and bequeath to my friend A. A. Dumont the sum of One Hundred Dollars.

"(5) I give and bequeath to my friend L. N. Houston the sum of One Hundred Dollars and one Note signed by J. W. Simmons for \$350.00 noted dated at El Reno O. T. July 3, 1902 and which matures two years from said date.

"(6) I give, devise and bequeath all my other property not otherwise disposed of, both real personal and mixed whatsoever and wheresoever the same may be to the Roman Catholic Church of El Reno, Oklahoma.

" (7) Imposing special confidence in the integrity and ability of my friend L. N. Houston I request that he be appointed executor of my Estate and that he be not required to give bond. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand this 31st day of December, 1902.

(SIGNED) David E. George

" Signed, published and declared by the said David E. George to be his last will and testament in the presence of us who at his request an in his presence and in the presence of each other have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses thereto, this the day and date above written.

R. B. BrownPost Office, Enid, O. T.

Chas. S. EvansPost Office, O. T.

Charles O. Wood.....Post Office, Enid, O.T. "

This will was voided by the letter or statement George wrote on the day of his death. Since he did not give the address of his "nephew Wilty G. George" and the nephew did not make himself known after David George's death, no trace was ever found of this relative. The bequests to the Catholic Church may have been the basis for the claims that John Wilkes Booth was a Catholic.

Two years before in El Reno, D.E. George had made a "Last Will and Testament". This also was found with the last day letter. It began: "In the Name of God, Amen:"

" I, D. E. George, being of sound mind and disposing memory, do make and declare this my last will and testament, as follows, to-wit:

" To my friend Anna K. Smith, of El Reno, Oklahoma, I give devise and bequeath all my property, both real and personal, of whatever kind and description.

Having special faith and confidence in George E. Smith, of El Reno, Oklahoma Territory, I hereby designate him, the said George E. Smith, as executor of this my last will and testament to serve without bond, and carry out the provisions of this instrument.

IN WITNESS of all which I hereunto subscribe my name this 17th day of June, A. D. 1900, in the presence of the witnesses whose names are subscribed hereto.

(SIGNED) D. E. George

Witnesses;

Frank Anstine

W. T. Beeks.

Territory of Oklahoma,)
Canadian County,) SS

We, whose names are subscribed to the foregoing will as witnesses do hereby certify that D. E. George, to us known to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing will this day in our presence and hearing subscribed his name to said instrument, and declared to us in our presence and in our hearing, and in the presence and hearing of each other that the same is his will; and we

do further certify that our names were there and are hereby subscribed in the presence of the said D. E. George and in the presence of each other at his ~~his~~ request.

"Witness our hands this 17th day of June A. D. 1902

"Frank Anstine"

"W. F. Beeks."

This had been made for the purpose of borrowing money from George Smith, Mr. Bates' "mysterious financial agent for the Booths."

Mr. W.P. Campbell, whose "Wanderings of J. Wilkes Booth" we will examine in the next chapter, has this to say about the Wills:

In reference to certain lands in the Chickasaw Nation variously bequeathed by Booth in his will, in reply to inquiry Mr. Clark Wasson, superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, writes under date of Muskogee, July 27: "You are informed that the names of David E. George and Willy George do not appear upon any of the approved rolls of the Chickasaw Nation. Prior to approval of the Choctaw-Chickasaw agreement of July 1, 1902, ratified by the Choctaws and Chickasaws September 25, 1902, all of the lands in those two nations were held by the members thereof in common, etc. You are further advised that the first allotment of land to enrolled citizens and freedmen of the Chickasaw Nation was not made until April 10, 1903."

Replying to inquiry, F. S. M. Clement, superior of the Sisters of Charity at Dallas, Texas, states that nothing was known there whatever of this man (David E George), etc. "We do not think we are the Sisters interested." The writer is then referred to the Sisters of Charity of St Paul's Hospital, Dallas.

(20) Bates, ~~Pages~~ 292-298.

(21) Bates, ~~Page~~ 300-303.

(22) Compare the Bates statements with the Joe Jefferson letter,--
The statement that John Wilkes Booth and Joseph Jefferson were in the same company from the time when "Booth went on the stage at the age of seventeen," is untrue. Reference to the theatrical histories in the Howard College Dramatic Library and numerous play bills do not show that they even appeared together and then Jefferson says in his letter that he "had not seen Booth since he was 19 years old." Mr. Bates, though, quotes Jefferson, "I have not seen him since a short time before he killed President Lincoln."