

# IS J. WILKES BOOTH ALIVE?

Chris Ritter, a Boon Companion,  
Asserts That He Is.

Affirms He Is Enos, the Great South  
American Actor.

Ed Fox Was the Man Killed for Booth at  
Richter's Barn.

Some Corroborative Facts Indorsing Rit-  
ter's Revival of an Old Story.

ANDERSON, Ind., Jan. 30.—"Men, I have killed Lincoln; I have this night done a great deed for humanity. David, will you stay with me?" The clock in the inner rooms on the third floor of the old Pacific hotel at Washington, which were then the scenes of the councils of the Knights of the Golden Circle, pointed to 10 o'clock. The date was April 14—the time was night—a night which went into history as one of the "darkest" in the events attending the great struggle which was then on between the north and the south.

At St. Mary's hospital in this city, on one of the white beds, lies Christopher C. Ritter, who came here three months ago from



J. WILKES BOOTH.

Cynthiana, Ky. Life is passing away, and in his last moments he tells a story which will strengthen the belief that John Wilkes Booth, the slayer of Abraham Lincoln, is yet alive. The story is a most remarkable one and there are connections which makes it not only corroborate with historical data, but finds ample indorsement.

Prior to his advent in the interesting part of American history Ritter's life is a long and interesting story. It is cut to an outline, but it is sufficient to know that his grandfather was made a German nobleman in the first part of the century for great valor when Napoleon's star was in the zenith. His father, however, was exiled for being a member of a revolutionary society known as the Sons of Freedom, but was later restored to his estates and royalty through the kind graces of Princess Olga of Russia, who was then in the pupil of King Wilhelm's eye. Young Ritter was raised in the German military service and after a long series of incidents met John Wilkes Booth in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1862, when he was then 18 years of age. There Ritter fell in love with a concert singer, Miss Enoth, whose father, together with Carl Schurz and a man who later became prominent in Illinois politics, had been banished with his father from the German empire for being identified with the Order of the Sons of Freedom. Booth was there under an assumed name and in the interest of the confederate states. He fell in love with Miss Enoth's sister and he and young Ritter became inseparable. Booth revealed to young Ritter a glorious picture of the fight of the south against the north and finally revealed his identity to the young German.

## RITTER AS A CONFEDERATE OFFICER.

Being a master of military instruction, Ritter became wildly infatuated with the idea of accompanying Booth home, and laid the matter before his father, but the latter had just returned from his exile to the United States and he was a northern man at heart. He forbade his son to leave Germany, but the latter finally succeeded in getting a passport through another name and shipped to Baltimore and was there met by Booth, who took him to Cincinnati and then to Lexington, where he enlisted in the confederate army and was made an officer. He was wounded in the south three months afterward and returned later to Germany to get \$12,000 which his mother had left him. He returned to Baltimore and landed there March 9, 1865, just thirty-five days prior to the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. He was met by his companion, Booth, who was playing there at the time. He accompanied Booth to Washington, arriving there on the 3d of April.

He was then taken by Booth into the third story of the old Pacific hotel and into the rooms which were the quarters of the Knights of the Golden Circle. There he met many notable persons, among them, he says, Edwin Booth. On the 10th he became a member of the Golden Circle by special dispensation, though he was then six months under age. He was conducted through by John Wilkes Booth, and it was the custom for the two thus affiliated to be joined together by a special vow as "Jonathan" and "David," and with daggers at hearts were sworn to stand by each other under any and all circumstances for a period of thirty years, as well as to fulfill all obligations to the order. Ritter soon found that there was a circle within this circle, and the next night he was asked to join it, it being explained that the purpose of this order was to kidnap the president and take him to an old chateau out of Washington, then used as a resort, and to later take him out to sea until legislative enactment was forced through insuring the payment for all negroes to be set free. Ritter refused to go into this, although he was assured that Booth was one of the leaders. This proposition was made to him by Dave Harold, who was executed for his part in the assassination of the president.

## NIGHT OF LINCOLN'S ASSASSINATION.

At 6 o'clock on the night of the 14th Booth and Ritter were together in the Pacific hotel. Booth asked him to go down to "The Dagoes," a place well known, and get an oyster stew with him. While there Booth said to him that it was very probable that he would want to start very soon for Brazil to see "those girls of theirs," the two Miss Enoths having joined their exiled father in Brazil. He asked Ritter if he would go with him, and the latter replied, "Yes, I guess." When leaving the place Booth said to him: "Ritter, I will probably want some money tonight—a great deal—can I have it?" Ritter thought it was for poker, for he had made him several loans for that purpose, and at one time Booth owed him \$1,500 and had paid him. He assured him he could have all he wanted at the asking.

Booth seemed relieved. He was about to leave for the theater, where he was to take part in a benefit for Laura Deming that night, when he came closer to Ritter and said: "I wish you would be sure to be at the rooms tonight at 10 o'clock." Robert E. Stinton then joined Booth, and the two went to the theater. In Stinton's pocket at that moment was the revolver with which Booth killed Lincoln. Ritter went to the Golden Eagle rooms and got in a game of "sixty-six." He was a winner and got up from the table five minutes of 10. He went to the window and, hearing a great noise on the street, lifted it and heard that Lincoln had been murdered. He closed it and sat down to wait for Booth.

Ten o'clock passed and the hands were just at five minutes after 10 when the door flew open and John Wilkes Booth stood in the entrance. "Men," he said, "I have killed Lincoln. I have this night done a great deed for humanity," and, turning to Ritter, he said: "David, will you stay with me." The terrible oath administered a few nights previous loomed up before Ritter in a new and awful light. Stepping to his side, Ritter said as he gave him his hand, "I will." "Then go," said Booth, "to Kolb & Fox's stable and get three horses, and be sure to get Maxie, and bring them to the rear of the dago's."

Fifteen minutes later the horses were there and Booth came out of hiding. He had Robert E. Stinton with him and the three went into a room where the clothing of three plasterers was laying. They removed their own and donned these. They then started for Dr. Mudd's a well-known confederate sympathizer, whose place was south of Washington on the "underground route." Booth suffered greatly from his ankle. They came to two roads branching off and, the night being dark, they took the wrong one of these by mistake. They went many miles before they found they were lost, but were finally directed to Thomas Jones' house. Jones was one of Mudd's overseers. Here they stayed for several days. Secret service was opened up between this point and Washington and Booth was kept close; in touch with what was going on. Two of those messengers were Edward Fox and Dave Harold.

## HOW BOOTH ESCAPED.

Booth was greatly worried over having left his discarded suit in Washington. It contained papers which would incriminate many others and which were also of the greatest necessity to him. It was arranged that Fox and Harold were to don the clothes—the former Booth's and the latter Ritter's—and were to meet them on the morning of the 23d at Richter's barn, eighteen miles distant, it becoming apparent that the Jones house was not altogether safe any longer.

At dusk on the night of the 22d Jones and Ritter put Booth on a horse and made way

Send the Address depicted

to the ferry where they were forced to abandon the animal. They were then fourteen miles from the barn. It had been raining and the ground was very muddy—the mud very sticky—and although the two almost carried Booth mud accumulated on his shoes so as to draw the half-mended bones out of place and made them very painful. When eight miles away they sought refuge in an old hut, known as Elizabeth's hut. Ritter dressed his wounds. The next morning a man whom Ritter did not know entered the hut and said: "Booth, you are a dead man—you were killed at Richter's two hours ago." It was then explained that Fox and Harrold had arrived at the barn in the clothes of Booth and Ritter. Fox's horse had kicked him and he was lame. Harrold helped him to the barn and they were seen to enter. The rest is known as told in the death of John Wilkes Booth.

Fox and Booth were remarkably alike in appearance, the former even having a scar on his neck like the one on Booth's neck. He had on Booth's clothes and looked every inch like him. The \$75,000 reward hastened the trial, the remains were interred and Booth was dead to the world. Booth swore the man to secrecy and he left the cottage, or hut, immediately. They rested there for several days, until Booth's leg was again healed. On May 6 they sailed out of the port of Philadelphia, bound for South America. Off of Trinidad the boat took fire and was run ashore. From there they went overland to the Amazon, thence up the Amazon and then by rail and overland landed at Para, where they were met by Andrew Enoch, the German exile, and his daughters. Two days later Ritter was married, and Booth, recovering from his injury late in the fall, was also married, to the sister. Today, says Ritter, John Wilkes Booth is Enos, the great South American actor. Enos is taken from Enoch, the wife's name. Ritter's wife was killed in a runaway and a few years ago he returned to the United States. He landed in Anderson three months ago.

#### RITTER'S STORY CORROBORATED.

Such is the story, but the corroboration of it is as interesting. It will be remembered that Lewis J. Weichman, a student, who lived at the Surratt home in Washington, was the man who gave the testimony which sent the Surratts, Harrold, Paine and others to the gallows. Weichman disappeared shortly afterward and has not been heard of since. He is now Professor Weichman of the Anderson Normal university. Among the people whom Ritter met in Washington was Weichman. An intimacy sprang up between them. A month ago Ritter entered a restaurant in this city. He was turning to go out, when he heard a man speak. He had not heard that voice for thirty-one years, but he turned and looked at the speaker. He then went up to him and, extending his hand, said: "How do you do, Weichman?" The latter looked up and said: "I believe I do not know you." "Well, look at this, then," and saying this he unbuttoned his coat and with his thumb nail flipped up a triangular watch charm. Weichman's face showed excitement. "Are you Ritterspur?" "No, my name is Ritter now." The next day they met and in private went over the strange case. The watch charm was a peculiar one. It had Greek letters on one side and was a gift from Booth. It was through this channel that the story now reaches the public.

There is another incident which has connection with the case. Booth had a mistress when in Washington. She was the daughter of a senator. Thirty-five days after Booth left Washington she gave birth to a child. Later she was married to Stinton. Booth sent her \$800 a year as an allowance to the

child. Her husband died. This money was put on deposit in the Cincinnati Savings bank. Later she again married. In a brownstone front in Brooklyn lives a widow. Her husband learned the secret of her birth. She is the daughter of John Wilkes Booth. After Stinton's death the \$800 from Booth to her mother had been paid annually by Ritter. His days on earth are numbered. What the future of this complication may be no one knows.

This story was published some years ago in a Syracuse, N. Y., paper, about as related here, but not in detail. Ritter was then thought to be insane for making such statements, and he was not believed. By the accidental meeting of two great principals in the great tragedy in this city, together with the circumstances which have afterward placed Ritter so near death's door, the story has been given new life, and is here considered the very best of indorsement by one so true and reliable as Weichman.

Cincinnati Ohio Enquirer  
Feb. 3, 1897.

### THAT BOOTH STORY.

Weichmann in His Turn is Out With a Statement.

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

ANDERSON, IND., February 2.—For the first time since the great trial in which he wove the web around the Surratts, Payne, Harold and others, in the Lincoln assassination, Lewis J. Weichmann, the nation's principal witness, to-day made a written statement concerning the case. It was to combat the story given out by C. C. Ritter, of this city, who claims that John Wilkes Booth, the assassin, escaped, and that he assisted him to get to South America, where he now lives.

Mr. Weichmann makes a very concise and complete statement in writing, showing how it was impossible that Booth's identification was not complete. He relates several of his personal experiences, and also the expert testimony at the trial, and his statement is convincing. Ritter, on the other hand, says that he will produce letters and papers which will prove beyond all doubt that John Wilkes Booth is alive, and is to-day in Brazil.