

## ACTRESS OF '65 DIES; SAW LINCOLN SLAIN

Mrs. Jeannie Gourley Struthers Passes at Media; Long Off Stage

Was in Cast of "Our American Cousin" at Capital Night of Assassination

Mrs. Jeannie Gourley Struthers, who was a member of the cast of "Our American Cousin" in Ford's Theatre, Washington, D. C., on the night that Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, died yesterday at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Charles Newell, at Media.

Mrs. Struthers, who was 83 years old, was the only surviving woman member of the company whose attraction the Martyred President came to see on that fateful night sixty-three years ago.

Then, and for many years after, Mrs. Struthers was a more or less public figure, interviewed wherever she appeared, questioned as to the details of the shooting and generally pointed out. After some years, however, her connection, indirect as it was, with the assassination of President Lincoln, failed to win her admiration and attention, and, gradually, she dropped from public notice.

### Funeral Tomorrow

Mrs. Struthers will be buried tomorrow, following funeral services at the Edwin Forrest Home for Actors, at Holmesburg. Interment will be at Milford, Pa.

As "Mary Meredith," in the play "Our American Cousin," which later became famous, Mrs. Struthers, then Miss Jeannie Gourley, was herself menaced by the crazed J. Wilkes Booth, as he fled, brandishing a knife at the audience after firing the shot that caused Lincoln's death.

At the time of the shooting, four other members of her family were in

the theatre, her father, John O. Gourley, and a sister, Margaret, being in the cast. Her brothers, Thomas, Jr., and Robert, were in the audience and gave the War Department officials news of the assassination. One of her prized mementoes of the night is an original programme, in which she appeared as playing the part of Mary Trenchard, instead of Mary Meredith.

Mrs. Struthers had four daughters, Mrs. R. E. Humbert, Montclair, N. J., Mrs. Newell, Vivian P. Struthers, Milford, and Effie Struthers, who is a teacher of the blind. Just three years ago, in an interview at the house where she died yesterday, Mrs. Struthers remarked that she still likes to "take in" the shows in this city, and that she enjoys them.

### Made Plea to Harding

Five years ago Mrs. Struthers made one of her few public utterances when she sent a plea to President Harding asking him to prevent the sale of Lincoln relics to Henry Ford. The relics have been kept in the house in which Lincoln died.

In an interview on January 5, 1925, Mrs. Struthers said:

"Booth, himself a well-known and well-liked actor, selected a moment at the close of my best scene to kill the President.

"The scene was between myself and Asa Trenchard, who was the American Cousin. Harry Hawk played the part of Asa. The scene shows Asa, realizing that he must sacrifice his heritage in order not to leave Mary destitute, burning up the will which would have disinherited Mary.

"The theatre was so quiet a pin could have been heard had it been dropped. While I was sitting on the bench next to Hawk, repeating my lines, I saw Booth in the rear of the theatre. He looked nervous and sick. My brother told me later Booth had drunk a large glass of whisky before he committed his deed. My scene had ended and I left the stage to talk to Mr. Withers, leader of the orchestra, when I heard a shot.

"A moment later Booth rushed past us, brandishing a huge dagger. As he brushed past he slashed Mr. Withers' coat and pushed me aside. Then he went out the rear door, leaped onto his horse, which a stage hand, Ned Spangler, had been holding, and rode away."

### Brothers Saw Shooting

Two brothers of Mrs. Struthers witnessed the shooting and Booth's escape from orchestra row seats.

"They had come to see the big performance and were with Mr. Williamson, Tad Lincoln's tutor. My brother

Thomas told me once what happened as he saw it from in front.

"Lincoln, arriving late in the first act, was greeted by the audience standing and cheering him. He bowed and took his seat in a box, far back where the audience could not see him. We had all become deeply interested in the play when suddenly a pistol shot rang out.

"Then I saw Booth, knife in hand, rush to the edge of the box, jump like a cat to the stage below, and trip over some flags. He stamped several times to loosen his foot and then, waving the knife dramatically, cried, "Sic Semper Tyrannis!" Then he ran out the opposite side of the stage from the President's box."

### Described Tumult

Vividly Mrs. Struthers described the rush of the spectators after Booth, and how the members of the cast crowded into the wounded President's box.

"While they stripped his clothes off, looking for the wound, Laura Keene, the star of the cast, held his head in her lap. As she lifted it, blood was seen trickling down her gown.

"Lincoln was in too grave a condition to be moved far, so they carried him across the street, where a young soldier opened the door of a house, and the President was put in one of the hall chambers. He died there the following morning.

"I was to have had a benefit the following night, but of course this was canceled. Later, the authorities, thinking the cast might be in the plot, ordered us to rehearse the play before them. It was at first feared a mob would burn the theatre, and our mail was sent to the War Department.

"It all seems as vivid as yesterday. The shot, Booth's rush to escape, the cry 'The President has been shot!' and then carrying him out."