

BOOTH MUMMY

DRAWER 115

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Booth



# The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

John Wilkes Booth Mummy

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

# Niece Admits Truth Of Booth Story

Question Which Aroused Many Iowans At State Fair In 1921 Is Answered---  
Body Of Man Who Shot Lincoln Exhibited In Iowa

1525-

DES MOINES, Feb. 26.—Admitting the truth of the history of John Wilkes Booth, as written by Finis L. Bates, his attorney, Blanche Booth, a niece living in Minneapolis has in effect answered a question which has puzzled many Iowans since the state fair in 1921.

During the state fair that year, there was on exhibition as a side-show attraction with a reputable aggregation of shows, an embalmed body declared to be that of John Wilkes Booth, assassin of Abraham Lincoln. A huge reward was offered to anyone who could prove that it was not Booth's body. Thousands in this state and in others where it was exhibited saw it. They heard the convincing lectures of Dr. Charles Cole of Los Angeles, who was in charge of the exhibit. Some believed, others doubted.

## Died In Oklahoma

Blanche Booth, the niece, substantiates the Bates story that the assassin of Lincoln escaped and lived for 38 years after the slaying of the president, finally committed suicide in an Enid, Okla., hotel in 1903. At the time of his death he was known as David E. George and had confessed and proved his identity to Bates, his lawyer, she recites in accord with the history written by Bates after the death of his client.

Before the body was exhibited here, A. R. Corey, secretary of the fair board, demanded adequate proof of the authenticity of the showmen's claims. Affidavits of Booth's relatives and of court officials were furnished Corey.

C. C. Potter, Des Moines printer, who made a number of posters

for the exhibitors, had been a salesman of the Booth history, published by Bates, and frequently corresponded with the author. He immediately queried him regarding the exhibits and the claims made for it.

## Has Old Reply

Bate's reply, declaring that the body was Booth's and that relatives had authorized its exhibition, and also requesting Potter to report on the state of preservation and care given it, remains in Potter's possession today.

By the acknowledgement of Bates' story concerning Booth, his relatives also have given credence to the exhibit which toured the country and which left many Iowans doubting or thrilled after their glimpses at the embalmed body of a president's assassin.

# EMBALMED BODY REALLY BOOTH'S

ASSASSIN OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
KILLED HIMSELF

1925  
**LIVED 38 YEARS AFTER CRIME**

Remains on Exhibition at the State  
Fair in 1921, Declared to be  
Genuine by Niece of  
Slayer.

(United Press Dispatch)

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**Mummified Body of Lincoln's Assassin?**

W. B. Evans, a rancher of Delco, Utah, traveling by truck, is enroute to Washington, D. C., with what he claims is the mummified body of John Wilkes Booth, assassin of President Lincoln. He says he hopes to be able to prove to government officials at Washington that the man who was killed in a barn in Virginia, by federal troopers, following Lincoln's assassination, was a man named Rudy, and not Booth.

The rancher has with him much documentary evidence to prove his contention, he says. He says that after Booth escaped from the Ford theater, following the assassination, he fled to Virginia. He did take refuge in the barn in Virginia, but fled from there six hours before the troopers arrived, Evans contends. Booth was several miles away when the soldiers killed the man named Rudy, thinking he was Booth.

According to Evans, Booth found his way into Texas and Oklahoma, and was a saloon operator for a number of years. He went under the name of John St. Helen. In 1903, according to Evans, Booth endeavored to call on his niece, Blanche Booth, an actress, who refused to see him, and he went to a hotel room in Enid and ended his life with gas, according to Evans.

The body is now mummified, and Evans says he is able to prove the identity as that of Booth. He says he is going "to confront the government officials" with it.

*Democrat & Mercury  
Starting Dec. 6, 1926, 1927*



# ASSERTS HE HAS BODY OF LINCOLN'S ASSASSIN

By International News Service

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., July 25.—Armed with affidavits, photographs and other data, W. B. Evans, Declo, Idaho, today was to visit Lincoln authorities here in an effort to prove that a body he has with him is that of John Wilkes Booth, Abraham Lincoln's assassin.

Evans asserts he has new proof of the oft-raised contention that Booth never was apprehended and killed following the murder of Lincoln. Evans is vice president of the American Historical Research Society, an organization formed to study Lincoln's assassination.

The body which he claims is that of Booth was obtained from Flint L. Bates, attorney general of Tennessee, Evans says. Evans added that he has spent \$15,000 to prove the truth of his claim.

## GIST OF STORY

The gist of Evans' story follows:

A man living under the name of David E. George ended his life at Enid, Okla., January 13, 1903, but before his death he confessed that he was John Wilkes Booth, requesting that his body be turned over to Attorney General F. L. Bates of

Tennessee. Bates immediately came to Enid and identified the body as that of John St. Helen, with whom he was well acquainted and who had confessed to him thirty years before that he was Booth.

Bates stated that at that time he notified the War Department, who ordered him to let the matter drop as "of no importance." George also confessed his identity to other persons. A niece, Blanch Booth, visited George before his death and identified him as Booth.

## HAS AFFIDAVIT

Evans says he has an affidavit from William McKedzie, one of the party that was present when the supposed Booth was surrounded and shot, stating that the man was not Booth. He states that he is now en route to Minneapolis to visit Booth's niece.

Booth's real activities following the assassination, Evans claims, follow: Escaped to Mexico; returned to U. S.; ran two saloons in Texas; took up homestead in Oklahoma.

Evans stated that he is not commercializing Booth's body.

ROCHESTER N. Y. TIMES  
JULY 25, 1925  
Vine ...

# Wife of Man Who Embalmed Body of 'Booth' Tells How Legend Started

By United Press

COLUMBUS, O.—One night 28 years ago the body of a vagrant who had taken his life with poison was brought to the undertaking rooms of W. B. Penniman, at Enid, Okla.

The body was unclaimed. Penniman mummified it. One day a minister from an Oklahoma church entered the darkened chamber where the mummy lay, gazed on it a moment and said:

"This is the body of John Wilkes Booth. This man killed Abraham Lincoln."

The vagrant had told the minister he was Booth.

## Embalmer Died Unconvinced

Penniman held the remains 10 years. He received hundreds of letters saying the man was Lincoln's assassin. Strangers came to see the mummy. They said it was Booth.

Penniman died several months ago unconvinced, altho he had been at the center of the controversy.

Today Chicago scientists are try-

ing to solve the riddle by examination of the mummy.

## How Did It Get to Chicago?

Mrs. Victoria Penniman, now a resident of Columbus, does not know how the body got to Chicago. Penniman sent it to a Memphis, Tenn., man named Bates who took it on tour, charging the curious to see it. Bates had written Penniman he knew "Booth" and knew him to be the true assassin.

"Booth supposedly was killed in a barn at Bowling Green, Va., April 26, 1865," Mrs. Penniman told the United Press, "but the many who told us the man we held was Booth contended a tramp was slain in Virginia. Booth, they said, escaped to Texas.

"That man may have been Booth, the actor, or an actor playing an amazing role in life. We never knew.

"A Cressgo, Iowa, man swore it was Booth. The man had traveled everywhere and the story came up from all quarters. He killed him-

self in Oklahoma.

"I remember him as he lay dead. He had distinctive features, sensitive, aristocratic, and a beautiful shock of gray hair.

"I think Mr. Penniman was principally proud of the preservation he had given the body with certain embalming fluids.

"The Memphis man, a lawyer Bates, wired he knew the man in Texas and he was indeed Booth.

## Sent Body to Bates

"When we moved to Columbus my husband sent the strange body to Bates. Books had been written about it. Anyway the man had built up a strange legend."

Mrs. Penniman shuffled thru old letters on the subject.

She read with interest of the Chicago research in which a ring and a broken leg bone of the mummy were said to have lent support to the Booth identity.

"I have no idea how it got to Chicago," she said. "The last I heard the spooky thing was in Bates' garage at Memphis."



## BODY OF PROFESSED SLAYER OF LINCOLN HIDES 'B' RING

Mummy of Man Who Declared He  
Was J. Wilkes Booth Is X-Rayed

Chicago, Dec. 16—(AP)—The wizardry of modern science is being employed in an effort to answer a question that has been argued off and on for 65 years—namely: What became of the body of John Wilkes Booth, assassin of Abraham Lincoln?

Chicago scientists, including Health Commissioner Herman Bundesen, began an attempt to find the answer last night by the examination of a gaunt mummified body of a man who killed himself almost 29 years ago at Enid, Okla.

The body was that of a man known as John St. Helen, who had claimed he was the real Booth. Before he died he reiterated his statement. Following his death his body came into possession of Finis L. Bates, then Attorney General of Tennessee, who wrote a book attempting to prove that St. Helen was Booth. When Bates died the St. Helen body became a side-show exhibit and later was purchased for \$8,000 by Mrs. Agnes Black, of Chicago.

The scientists who examined the mummy said the X-ray revealed a ring mounting with a "B" monogram in the dead man's stomach.

St. Helen made his first statement that he was Booth after he became ill on a Texas ranch in 1872, when he summoned Bates and told him the story. He recovered, however, and took his own life in 1903.

PHILADELPHIA

Bulletin

12-16-31

## Booth, Slayer of Lincoln, May Be Sideshow Mummy

CHICAGO (UP).—A jury of prominent physicians drafted today a verdict adding to the evidence that John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Lincoln, rather than dying the ignoble death of a cornered fugitive, lived for years and finally perished by his own hand.

The verdict, to be announced in a few days, is the result of an investigation by



Lincoln

Dr. Herman N. Bundesen, Chicago health commissioner; Dr. Edward Miloslavich, noted Milwaukee pathologist, and other scientists.

They have examined in the offices of Dr. Orlando F. Scott, alienist, the mummified body of John St. Helen, who committed suicide in Oklahoma in 1903. He twice confessed that he was John Wilkes Booth.

The body has been carted around the country for years as a sideshow exhibit.

The physicians, however, will not pass judgment on the mummy's identity, but will rest with statements of fact adduced through scientific means.

Their statements, the United Press learned today, will include the following:

The mummy of John St. Helen has a thickening toward the extremity of the fibula, or small bone, of the right foot, such as would be caused by a fracture, and there is evidence of a callus from the same cause.

The mummy has a distorted right thumb, which originated through some crushing accident. It has a right eyebrow higher than the left, across which there runs what appears to be a scar.

These points of identity were brought out through X-ray photographs made in the last week and supplemented by surgery. How they match Booth's physical abnormalities is shown by the following:

When Booth leaped from President Lincoln's box at Ford's theater in Washington, he fractured his leg. Years before, at the age of 10 or 12, while watching his father on the stage, Booth tangled his right hand in a windlass, crushing it. Booth's right eyebrow was higher than the left, and an old injury had left a scar.

Dr. Miloslavich declared today that he believed the three points of identification "have proven almost without doubt" that St. Helen was Booth.

Dr. Miloslavich added that he was "very enthusiastic" over the results of the investigation. He said he planned to examine skin from the back of the mummy's neck, where Booth was known to have had an infection.

History records that Booth was killed by government agents and troopers in a barn at Bowling Green, Va., on April 26, 1865. A body, supposedly his, is buried in Baltimore.

Many believe, however, that the real Booth escaped and fled to Texas. There in 1875, John St. Helen confessed to Finis L. Bates, former attorney general of Tennessee, his real identity.

# SCIENCE STUDIES MUMMY TO SOLVE BOOTH PUZZLE

CHICAGO, Dec. 16. (AP)—The wizardry of modern science is being employed in an effort to answer a question that has been argued off and on for sixty-five years—namely what became of the body of John Wilkes Booth, assassin of Abraham Lincoln?

A group of Chicago scientists, including Health Commissioner Herman Bundesen, began at attempt to find the answer last night by the examination of a gaunt mummified body of a man who killed himself almost twenty-nine years ago at Enid, Okla.

The body was that of a man known as John St. Helen, who had contended he was the real Booth. Before he died he reiterated his statement. Following his death his body came into the possession of Finis L. Bates, then Attorney-General of Tennessee, who wrote a book attempting to prove that St. Helen was Booth. When Bates died the St. Helen body became a side-show exhibition and later was purchased for \$8000 by Mrs. Agnes Black of Chicago. She decided to have St. Helen's claim tested and the examination of the mummy was arranged by the Chicago Press Club.

Beneath a flood of light the body was subjected to the scrutiny of Dr. Bundesen and his associates, and while no definite conclusions were reached, one newspaper said that X-ray plates showed markings that might account for injuries and

surgical treatments which Lincoln's assassin had received.

The examination recalled the events of April 26, 1865, when Federal secret service agents stormed a barn near Bowling Green, Va., and killed a fugitive identified as Booth. Despite this, a controversy has sometimes been waged as to whether the slain man was Booth.

The scientists who examined the mummy said the X-ray revealed a ring mounting with a "B" monogram in the dead man's stomach.

St. Helen made his first statement that he was Booth after he became ill on a Texas ranch in 1872 when he summoned Bates and told him the story. He recovered, however, and took his own life in 1903.

## **'BOOTH' MUMMY RING REMOVED**

*Clew to Lincoln Assassin  
Identity Studied*

*St. Helen Had Told He Slew  
War President*

*Dispute May Be Cleared by  
Enlarged Photo*

CHICAGO, Dec. 17.—The face of a signet ring removed by a group of Chicago scientists from the stomach of a mummified man known as John St. Helen, held the key today to the mystery of whether the man was John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of Abraham Lincoln. St. Helen had so declared himself before his death in Oklahoma in 1903.

### **RING BEARS "B"**

The ring plate bore a scroll identified by John Doctoroff, an artist, as the initial "B" in old English script. Dr. Orlando F. Scott, who performed the autopsy, said he believed the plate was part of a ring worn by Booth on the small finger of his left hand in all pictures of him available.

"We must get somewhere an enlarged picture of Booth that would show clearly the nature of the inscription," he said. The pictures we have are all too small to show the detail."

### **DEATH IN DISPUTE**

For sixty-five years the death of Booth has been in dispute despite the fact he was officially reported slain in a barn after he shot Lincoln, and buried in the Booth plat in a Baltimore cemetery. The mummy of St. Helen was displayed for years without proof of his claim until X-ray plates showed the presence of a small piece of metal in the stomach and markings which Dr. Scott believed accounted for injuries and surgical treatments known to have been undergone by Lincoln's assassin.

Dr. Scott opened the body in the presence of Doctoroff, Dr. Herman Bundesen, Chicago Health Commissioner, and Dr. Edward L. Miloslavich, Milwaukee criminologist.



# Claim Proof Slayer of

Doctors Examine Mummi-  
fied Body of 'John St. Hel-  
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Booth. 1931.

CHICAGO, Dec. 17— (AP) — A jury of prominent physicians drafted Thursday a verdict adding to the evidence that John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Lincoln, rather than dying the ignominious death of a cornered fugitive, lived for years finally to perish by his own hand.

## EXAMINE MUMMY

The verdict, to be announced in a few days, is the result of an investigation by Dr. Herman N. Lundesen, Chicago health commissioner, Dr. Edward Miloslavich, noted Milwaukee pathologist, and other men of science.

They have examined in the offices of Dr. Orlando F. Scott, alienist, the mummified body, "owned" by a Chicago woman, of John St. Helen, who committed suicide in Oklahoma in 1903 after twice "confessing" that he was John Wilkes Booth.

## SHOWN IN SIDESHOW

If that admission is true, then Booth's mummy has been carted around the country for years as a sideshow exhibit, and the body of an innocent man lies in Booth's grave at Baltimore.

They physicians, however, will not pass judgment on the mummy's identity, but will rest with statements of fact adduced through scientific means.

Their statements, the United Press learned Thursday, will include the following:

The mummy of John St. Helen has a thickening toward the extremity of the fibula, or small bone, of the right foot, such as would be caused by a fracture, and there is evidence of a callous from the same cause.

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Pike, Ivory

Bloomington, Ill.

THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS

DAILY NEWS PLAZA, CHICAGO

DEARBORN 1111.

Dear Mr. Terry:-

Ivory Pike, Maywood, Illinois, was, as a boy, familiar with Lincoln at the Pike House in Bloomington, Ill. He is about the only person I know who might fit your plan.

If you will write to Paul M. Angle, secretary of the Lincoln Association, Springfield, Ill.; he will I'm sure send you names of living persons who knew Lincoln.

Dr. Orlando Scott is at 330 S. Wells St. Chicago. He could give you Mrs. Black's address.

I've done about all I can to quiet that comic rumor of Booth's escape, but it's an atavistic belief, something in the curious limbo where superstition and primitive folk-wishes dwell and it's no use to fight these things with rationality.

I've never seen Dr. French's book on the Enid pretender. I enclose my piece, to which you refer, it was run on Dec. 18th. Since then the doctors have looked at their X-ray plates and found that it was the ~~right~~ left leg which was fractured after all. But they have proved nothing, of course. "Myths After Lincoln" was published by Harcourt, Brace & Co. and 383 Madison Ave, New York City, and is still in print. I should be glad to autograph one for you and would be flattered; indeed, I appreciate your asking how to get one. Simply send it to me and I'll return it inscribed.

Your collection should be valuable, as you describe it, and I should like to see it some day.

Sincerely

Lloyd Lewis.

# 'BOOTH MUMMY' BRINGS LAUGHS FROM SCHOLARS

## Drunken Tale of Enid House Painter Up to Three Doctors.

BY LLOYD LEWIS.

(Author of "Myths After Lincoln.")

It isn't often that the dull, dry scholars who dig into American history have anything to laugh about. This week, however, has been different.

Three doctors—not those of radio fame—have a mummy under Chicago X-ray lights trying to prove whether or not its original tenant was John Wilkes Booth, the man who shot Lincoln.

One of the three doctors, Edward Miloslavich of Milwaukee, is exultant over the fact that, so far, the pictures that have been made "prove almost without doubt" that Booth was not killed in 1865, as histories say, but that he escaped to the southwest, died under another name, and that this is his corpse under the X-rays. The other doctors—Orlando F. Scott, Chicago alienist, and Herman N. Bundesen, Chicago health commissioner, haven't yet decided if the mummy be Booth's or just merely that of an Oklahoma house painter who died twenty-eight years ago with false claims on his drunken lips.

In the last fifty years, some twenty men have been said to be John Wilkes Booth. It's an old American custom.

### Booth Buried Secretly.

It is true that Booth, who was killed on April 26, 1865, by Union military pursuers in Virginia two weeks after his murder of Lincoln, was buried secretly for political reasons, but there was identification ample to convince the United States government and most later historians that there could be no mistake about the body. I once collected the proof of this, and it took me 5,000 words to set down the evidence.

This mummy now being investigated by the three doctors is admitted by its owners to be that of a man who died in 1903 in Enid, Okla., David E. George by name, and that previously he had lived in Granbury, Texas, under the name of John St. Helen. The historical evidence is that St. Helen, while running a saloon in Granbury, told an open-mouthed boy, Finis L. Bates by name, that he was in reality John Wilkes Booth who had evaded his Union pursuers in April, 1865, and had run away to let an innocent man be shot and buried in

his stead. Years later Bates went to Enid, Okla., to investigate the claims of a suicide, David E. George, who had claimed to be Booth. Bates recognized his old wonder-man, St. Helen, obtained the body, brought it home to Memphis with him, and held it in a mummified condition while, he spent the rest of his life trying to find some authority who would share his belief.

The evidence is that George, an itinerant house painter of Enid, a frequent drunk and occasional if not steady user of morphine, would, when ill from excesses, claim to be Booth. Bates died in time and the mummy passed into the hands of sideshow men who have been exhibiting it for years at county fairs at 10 cents a look. Thousands of gullible people have stared at it in gaping credulity.

Some seven or eight years ago William Shepard, investigating the case for Harper's magazine, compared the handwriting of Booth with that of St. Helen-George and found them not from the same man. Both Shepard and Frank Black, another trustworthy investigator working for Henry Ford's Dearborn Independent, found no support for Bates' fantastic faith and much to disprove it.

### Wrong Leg Bone Broken.

Dr. Miloslavich, if reported correctly attaches much importance to the X-ray's discovery that the mummy has a broken bone in its right foot and that Booth suffered a broken leg in leaping from the theater box after murdering Lincoln. The government-indorsed publication of the proceedings at the trial of Booth's fellow conspirators in 1865, specifies that it was the left leg which Booth broke in his leap. The government introduced the left boot of the assassin as it had been cut off by Dr. Samuel Mudd during the flight of the assassin.

Dr. Miloslavich is "very enthusiastic" on discovering that the mummy had a crushed thumb and scarred eyebrow, in accordance with scars reputed to have been borne by Booth. The doctor also is making tests to find if the mummy has a scar on the back of its neck, for Booth is known to have had such a mark. This neck scar was said by townspeople of Granbury to have been won by the sportive Mr. St. Helen in a barroom fight, and, according to their accounts, he led such a life as might easily have won him a masked thumb and slit eyebrow, not to speak of other wounds. As a matter of fact, the neck scar was the means by which Dr. Frederick May, a Washington surgeon, identified Booth's dead body in 1865.

At the inquest where this identification was made Charles Dawson, a hotel clerk, recognized Booth's corpse by the indelible initials "J. W. B." on a hand. And, although in the numberless times that I have seen the claims of the mummified St. Helen-George advanced I have never heard this tattoo mark mentioned, I shall not be surprised if the three doctors find it on the mummy. A tipsy, morphine victim such as was this poor Oklahoma house painter might well have had himself so tattooed just to make his story good.

## Old Ring May Prove Mummy That of Lincoln's Assassin

Chicago physicians convinced suicide of 29  
years ago John Wilkes Booth

Chicago, Ill., Dec. 17 (AP)—The corroded face of a signet ring, removed from the stomach of a 29-year-old mummy that thousands have viewed at carnival side shows held the attention of scientists today as they attempted to determine whether the mummified figure of granite hardness was the body of John Wilkes Booth assassin of Abraham Lincoln.

The searchers, promine Chicago physicians and surgeons, have found anatomical similarities between the mummified body of John St. Helen and the known deformities of the actor-assassin and declared they were satisfied St. Helen was Booth, although they planned further enquiry to prove it.

The face of the ring bore a barely discernible initial B in old English lettering and Dr. Orlando F. Scott, alienist and head of the enquiry declared all photographs of Booth show

him wearing a signet ring on the small finger of his left hand.

He sought enlarged photographs of the assassin to verify the inscription on the metal plate, expressing the belief Booth swallowed the ring as he was being pursued by troopers after the assassination.

St. Helen asserted twice that he was Booth before he took his own life with poison in Oklahoma 29 years ago. His body was mummified and exhibited at carnival side shows until purchased by Mrs. Agnes Black of Chicago for \$8,000. She decided to have St. Helen's claim tested.

From a St. Paul woman, however, there came today what she claimed was confirmation of the accepted version of Booth's death—that he was shot to death by soldiers at Bowling Green, Va., in 1865, and that his body is buried in Baltimore. Mrs. Minnie Ely said her uncle helped plan Booth's capture and told her of his slaying by the troopers.



2-18-31

PHILADELPHIA, FRIDAY MORNING, 1

## RING AIDS IDENTITY OF BOOTH'S BODY

Doctors Remove Emblem From  
Mummy Believed to Have  
Been Lincoln's Slayer

### WOMAN DISCREDITS REPORT

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## Face of Signet Ring in Mummy's Stomach May Indentify Body as That of Booth, Lincoln Assassin

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St. Helen asserted twice that he was Booth before he took his own life with poison in Oklahoma 29 years ago. He first told his story to the late F. L. Bates, attorney general of Tennessee in 1875. His body was mummified and exhibited at carnival sideshows until purchased by Mrs. Agnes Black of Chicago for \$8000. She decided to have St. Helen's claim tested.

The real Booth fractured his right foot as he leaped from Lincoln's box at the Ford theatre after the assassination; at the age of 12 he tangled his right hand in a windlass, crushing it; his right eyebrow was higher than the left and furrowed by a scar.

The Chicago investigators found through X-ray the mummy had a thickening of a bone on the right foot, such as would be caused by a fracture; they found that the mummy had a distorted right thumb resulting from some crushing blow, and that the mummy's right eyebrow was higher than the left with a corresponding scar running through it.

Dr. Edward Miloslavich, noted Milwaukee pathologist, said he planned to examine the skin on the mummy's neck where Booth was known to have had an infection.

From a St. Paul woman, however, there came today what she claimed was confirmation of the accepted version of Booth's death—that he was shot to death by soldiers at Bowling Green, Va., in 1865, and that his body is buried in Baltimore.

Mrs. Minnie Ely said her uncle, Egbert Ingersoll, helped plan Booth's capture and told her of his slaying by the troopers. Ingersoll died in Los Angeles in 1923 at the age of 101.



# EX-SALOON KEEPER SLAYER OF LINCOLN, SCIENTISTS SAY IN DEBATE ON MUMMY

CHICAGO, Dec. 18 (A.P.) — The mummified body of John St. Helen precipitated a controversy today between scientists, who say the microscope, X-ray and lancet have established he was the real John Wilkes Booth, and supporters of accepted history who asserted the real assassin of Abraham Lincoln is buried in Baltimore.

The scientists, headed by Dr. Orlando F. Scott, former expert on the Cook county coroner's staff, based their claim on the discovery of anatomical deformities on the mummy that corresponded with those of Booth, evidence of a fracture on a leg, a scar on the neck, deformed thumb and an elevated eyebrow.

## FORMER SALOON KEEPER

But these very findings were subjected to an attack of the orthodox historians whose arguments were voiced by Lloyd Lewis, author, dramatic critic of the Chicago Daily News, and an authority on Lincoln. Lewis had previously investigated the story of Booth's slaying by federal soldiers in a Virginia barn.

Lewis declared St. Helen was an Oklahoma house painter who, before his suicide in Enid, Okla., in 1903, operated a saloon in Granbury, Tex., where he received a wound in the neck in a brawl; that he was a drunkard who claimed he was Booth whenever under the influence of liquor or narcotics; that Booth's body was def-

initely identified by Dr. Frederick May, a Washington surgeon, through a scar on the neck caused by removal of a tumor.

The scientists displayed a corroded face of a signet ring removed from the stomach of the mummy and inscribed with the initial "B" in scroll. They hoped to establish through enlarged photographs that it was the same ring which photographs of Booth show him wearing.

## FOOT SCARS IMPORTANT

The historian declared that Booth had the initials "J. W. B." indelibly tattooed on his hand and that Charles Dawson, a hotel clerk, had identified Booth's corpse through the tattoo. No such tattoo was found on the mummy.

Lewis pointed out today that Booth fractured his left and not his right leg when he leaped from the president's box in Ford's theatre. Dr. Scott replied that reports saying he found evidence of a fracture on the right foot of the mummy were not correct. The X-ray plates, he said, show a deformity of the fibula on the left foot.

Dr. Scott, who with Dr. Herman Bundesen, city health commissioner, and Dr. Edward Miloslavick, a Milwaukee pathologist, in preparing a report on the mummy, invited any "impartial jury of prominent historians" to consider the facts established so far and determine "once and for all what happened to the real Booth."

## NEW YORK SCENTS HOAX IN BOOTH MUMMY CLAIM

From the New York Bureau  
of the BUFFALO EVENING NEWS.

NEW YORK, Dec. 18.—New York will not have much of an opportunity of passing upon the question as to whether John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of Lincoln, lies buried in a cemetery in Baltimore or whether, embalmed and mummified, it has been touring the country as a sideshow attraction.

Thursday in Chicago it was said that such a mummy had been almost positively identified as that of the body of Booth.

Because of the rules of the New York Board of Health, the mummy, if brought here will have to be buried within a week.

It is believed here that the excitement stirred up out in Chicago is a prelude to a tour of the country by the mummy. There is still doubt that the mummy is that of Booth.

# BOOTH HISTORY IN CONTROVERSY

*Mummy Findings to Reopen  
Old Argument*

*Doctors Contend Body That  
of Lincoln's Slayer*

*Writers Maintain Assassin  
Slain by Pursuers*

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# BOOTH'S 'MUMMY' FIERCELY DISPUTED

## Scientists' Identification of Body Attacked by Historians.

CHICAGO, Dec. 18 (AP).—The mummified body of John St. Helen precipitated a controversy today between scientists. One faction claims the microscope, the X-ray and the lancet have established he was the real John Wilkes Booth. Supporters of accepted history asserted the real assassin of Abraham Lincoln is buried in Baltimore.

The first group, headed by Dr. Orlando F. Scott, formerly of the Cook county Coroner's staff, base their claim on the discovery of anatomical deformities of the mummy that correspond with those on the real Booth, evidence of a leg fracture, scar on the neck, a deformed thumb and an elevated eyebrow.

But these very findings were subjected to an attack by the orthodox historians whose arguments were voiced by Lloyd Lewis, author, Chicago Daily News dramatic critic, and an authority on Lincoln.

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## ALIENIST BELIEVES MUMMY BODY OF THE REAL BOOTH

*Autopsy Group, However, Leaves It to History to  
Determine Fate of Lincoln's Actor-assassin*

CHICAGO, Dec. 19 (A. P.).—A group of scientists today finished an autopsy over the black mummified body of John St. Helen and left it to history to determine whether St. Helen was the real John Wilkes Booth, the actor-assassin of Abraham Lincoln.

A fact-finding report, relating to discovery of similarities in the physical deformities of the 29-year-old carnival mummy and the real Booth, was prepared by Dr. Orlando Scott, alienist.

The report, result of an investigation by four prominent surgeons and physicians, contained the recommendation that the facts established be sifted by an impartial jury of men

learned in history "to establish once and for all" whether Booth was killed by Federal soldiers in 1865 and buried in Baltimore, or whether he escaped and committed suicide in Enid, Okla., in 1903 as John St. Helen.

The mummy-chipped by souvenir hunters during its carnival tours. Penetrated by the X-rays, its granite-like exterior chiseled for anatomical evidence—was to be turned back to its owner, Mrs. Agnes Black, of Chicago, who bought it for \$3000 and then decided to have St. Helen's claims examined.

"Personally," said Dr. Scott, "I am convinced we have found the body of the real Booth, but it is up to history to prove it."

PHILADELPHIA

Inquirer

72-50-31



January Dec 20  
Ledger 1931  
PHILADELPHIA

## SCIENTISTS ASK AID ON 'BOOTH' MUMMY

Decision if It Is Body of  
Lincoln's Slayer Put  
Up to Historians

### FACT-FINDING JURY URGED

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#### Returned to Owner

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The scientists, who support Dr. Scott in his belief base their claim on the discovery of anatomical deformities of the mummy that corresponded with those on the real Booth, evidence of a fracture on a leg, a scar on the neck, a deformed thumb and an elevated eyebrow.

But these very findings were subjected to an attack of the orthodox historians whose arguments were voiced by Lloyd Lewis, author, dramatic critic of the Chicago Daily News and an authority of Lincoln. Lewis had previously investigated the story of Booth's slaying by Federal soldiers in a Virginia barn.

#### Denies Identification

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Lewis pointed out today that Booth fractured his left and not his right leg when he leaped from the President's box in Ford's Theatre. Dr. Scott replied that reports saying he found evidence of a fracture on the right leg of the mummy were not correct. The X-ray plates, he said, show a deformity of the fibula on the left leg.

#### Pastor Upholds Claim

Orlando, Fla., Dec. 19.—(AP)—Dr. J. A. Sutton, Orlando Baptist minister, who said he conducted funeral services for John Wilkes Booth in Enid, Okla., today expressed belief a mummified body examined by scientists in Chicago was that of the actor-assassin of President Lincoln.

Dr. Sutton said the funeral services for Booth were held twenty-nine years ago. He said the actor was not killed by Federal agents, as generally recorded, but committed suicide in a hotel at Enid. Booth worked as a carpenter, according to Dr. Sutton, but appeared to have ample funds which he was believed to have obtained from a bank in Canada.

The pastor said Billy Pennyman was the Enid undertaker who embalmed Booth's body.

# DIGGING INTO BOOTH GRAVE IS SUGGESTED

Comparison of Bones With Mummy Should Settle Argument, Says Dr. Scott.

*Dr. Orlando Scott, Chicago pathologist was one of five scientists who recently examined a mummified body in Chicago in an effort to determine whether it might be the body of John Wilkes Booth. He discusses the case in the following article.*

By DR. ORLANDO F. SCOTT

Copyright, 1931, by United Press.

CHICAGO, Dec. 21 (U.P.).—Let us get at the truth of what became of John Wilkes Booth.

Was he killed by Sergt. "Boston" Corbett in a Virginia barn?

Or does his body, mummified, rest on a slab in my office, after its sideshow wanderings, proving he escaped to Texas and 38 years later, a drunkard, died in Enid, Okla., after taking arsenic?

Scientific advances since 1903 enabled my colleagues and myself to establish that this mummy, in later life known as John St. Helen, had a fractured left fibula, a disfigured right thumb, a scarred and elevated eyebrow and a scarred neck. So did Booth.

If that is not conclusive, then let us find the supposed Booth's grave.

The supposed Booth is interred near Baltimore. But there is a tale that Booth's relatives had the remains removed to Philadelphia.

Whatever happened, even if the body was not embalmed, there is a good chance its bones are preserved. By examining them we could determine if the left leg had been fractured and the right thumb crushed.

Many believe as I do that the mummy is Booth. Only two dissenting voices, to my knowledge, have been raised.

One was that of Lloyd Lewis, the esteemed author of "Myths After Lincoln." Gently but firmly he takes issue. But his arguments, though he offers them as "agin," are "fer."

The other dissenter, an anonymous Texan, says he has proof that though Booth escaped he did not leave Texas for Oklahoma but married a farmer's daughter and by her had seven children. This writer says Booth is buried beside three of his children in Texas.

Returning to Lewis, he says the supposed Booth was identified by the indelible initials "J. W. B." on his arm. He adds that we probably will find these initials on the mummy. The "false" Booth, he says, doubtless would have strengthened his claim by having the letters tattooed.

I am sorry to disappoint Lewis. We found no initials on the mummy's skin nor any trace of such markings. Are Lewis' other opinions about Booth likewise based on false hopes?

We who believe history errs about Booth's end are sincere and we ask that this mystery be solved once and for all.

## Mummy

Last week in Chicago six physicians, including Health Commissioner Herman Bundesen and Dr. Edward Miloslavich, Milwaukee pathologist, gathered in the offices of Dr. Orlando Scott to examine the mummified remains of one John St. Helen. They thumped it, felt it, x-rayed it. Then they gravely nodded their heads and all but announced that the mummy was none other than that of John Wilkes Booth, assassin of Lincoln.

On April 26, 1865, twelve days after the Ford's Theatre tragedy, a dying man was taken from a burning barn near



Acme

DR. SCOTT & JOHN ST. HELEN

*When drunk, it was Booth.*

Fredericksburg, Va. by U. S. troopers who believed they had captured and killed Booth. The body, removed to Washington, was hastily identified as Booth's and secretly buried in the Arsenal Grounds. Four years later it was exhumed, removed to Baltimore, again identified by friends and reburied in the Booth lot in Greenmount Cemetery.

At the end of the last century an itinerant house painter named John St. Helen appeared in the Southwest. When drunk, he would confess that he was Booth, that U. S. troopers had got the wrong man in Virginia, that he had escaped to Mexico. When sober, he would deny the whole yarn. There was just enough doubt about the identification of Booth's body to make St. Helen's story sound plausible. In 1903 at Enid, Okla., he committed suicide with arsenic. Finis Bates who later became Attorney General of Tennessee, believed his story, had his body embalmed, exhibited the mummy at circus sideshows about the land as Lincoln's killer. A Chicago woman bought it for \$8,000, submitted it to physicians for examination and identification.

The doctors found:

The mummy had a broken leg. Booth broke his leg leaping from the Lincoln box.

Its right thumb was distorted. Booth as a boy had his right hand crushed in a scenery windlass in a theatre.

Across one eyebrow ran a scar. Booth's eyebrow was scarred as the result of a false thrust in a stage duel.

And in the mummy's stomach lay a ring marked "B."

TIME

2-28-31



# JOHN WILKES BOOTH

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

A shrunken, mummified corpse is being shown to all comers at Forest Park Highlands as the "true body" of John Wilkes Booth, the slayer of President Lincoln.

The body is that of an elderly eccentric, who committed suicide by drinking poison in 1903, in Euclid, Ok., after "confessing" he was John Wilkes Booth, and whose story, rife with historical error, was compiled in book form by Finis L. Bates, a Tennessean who exhibited the body and sold books about it up to his death five years ago.

W. B. Evans, owner of a hot-dog stand and ranch at Delco, Ida. who declares that his only interest in the body is that of a historian, says that Bates willed him the body at his death. There is no admission charge at the exhibit, but Bates book, titled the "Escape and Suicide of John Wilkes Booth" is on view, and although the management does not like to "sell" the volumes, it will let customers take home the books after making a deposit of \$1 for each.

## Historians Scout Story.

Historians for years have flouted the rumor, widely circulated in parts of the South, and in Oklahoma and Texas, that John Wilkes Booth escaped and that another man was killed. Four years ago Herbert Wells Fay, custodian of Lincoln's tomb at Springfield, Ill and an authority on the Booth legend, found it necessary to denounce the Finis L. Bates story as founded on imposture.

"Those who wish to make money out of the hoax, or to obtain cheap notoriety," said Fay at that time, "are the only ones to dispute the historical record of Booth's death in a barn at the Garrett farm in Virginia."

The name borne in his later years by the man whose body is on view at the Highlands was David E. George. Fay said of him: "David E. George was but one of 20 different men who sought to create a furore by claiming to be Booth. Recently when I was lecturing on Booth's death. One of my audience who gave his name as William Regan said he had embalmed the body of George. Asked whether he thought it was Booth's and whether the dead man had any proof of his identity, Regan said he believed not. Nevertheless, George's body was embalmed and taken around the country in a commercial show scheme."

## Wants to Sell the Body

Evans emphatically denies any desire to exhibit George's body for mere money, but admits his hope of selling the remains, at a vast profit, to a great museum.

"I've spent \$14,000 gathering affidavits,"

Evans said. "Here's one framed from the Rev. Clarence True Wilson, secretary of the Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals, of the Methodist Episcopal Church. I have hundreds of other affidavits to show this is really Booth's body. I'll take the corpse eventually to Washington. It's gaining in value all the time."

The vast majority of the affidavits are from purported distant relatives of Booth who tell of a traditional belief that Booth was not killed but escaped, and from persons who knew a Texas bartender named John St. Helen who later turned out to be David E. George and who asserted when taken sick, on several occasions, that he was really John Wilkes Booth.

Evans' lecturer, a man named O'Brien, glibly indicts President Andrew Johnson and Secretary of War Stanton as fellow conspirators of Booth in Lincoln's assassination basing his authority on Bates' book which has caused Civil War specialists in history to laugh or grow indignant, according to their temperament.

Evans is not worried over any errors in Bates' volume. He regards the paper-backed booth as gospel truth.

One of the larger signs on Evans' exhibit reads: "To Falsify History Is Criminal."



# '?' MARKS THE SPOT WHERE BOOTH LIES

Greenmount's Earth and Chicago Laboratory Rivals in Mystery of Assassin's Fate

Old Controversy Revived as X-Ray Pierces Mummified Remains of Suicide

News, from Chicago, that seven physicians and scientists there have been examining a mummified body in the belief it may be that of John Wilkes Booth is of especial interest in Baltimore—where the body of Booth is supposed to have been buried since 1869. Following is the first of two articles on the subject. The second will deal with the story of "John St. Helen."

By CLINTON H. JOHNSON  
Where is the body of John Wilkes Booth?

Is it in the unmarked grave in Greenmount Cemetery, where lie other members of the family of Junius Brutus Booth, John Wilkes' father?

Or is it in the laboratory of a Chicago physician, undergoing X-ray tests to determine its identity?

Was the man captured and killed in Virginia on the night of April 26, 1865, really the man who assassinated President Lincoln—or did the President's slayer escape the thousands of troops who hunted him and live past the turn of the century, only to die a suicide at Enid, Okla., in 1903?

These aren't new questions. They've come up before and they've been argued back and forth through column after column of newspaper. But never before have such convincing arguments been brought forth as now are offered by the Chicago physicians, who, for several days, have been examining the mummified body of "John St. Helen," the Oklahoma suicide.

## X-Ray Used in Check

For the first time modern science has been called on for facts instead of opinions; the unwinking eye of the X-ray has been asked to check what the fallible eyes of humans may have missed or misinterpreted.

The scientific tests were undertaken with the idea of settling the question, once and for all time. Instead, it appears the scientists' conclusions simply are going to start the old argument all over again.

For the seven physicians who have been conducting the X-ray examinations of the mummy, and who are scheduled to deliver their verdict formally today—although most of its contents has been known since yesterday—have no intention of being drawn too far into the dispute. They are not going to pass judgment on the mummy's identity, they announced, but will rest "with statements of fact adduced through scientific means."

They won't say the body buried in Greenmount isn't that of John Wilkes Booth—neither will they say the mummy in Chicago isn't his remains, either. They will say, however:

That the mummy shows a fractured fibula corresponding to the leg injury that Booth suffered when he leaped from the President's box to the stage of Ford's Theater in Washington after shooting Lincoln.

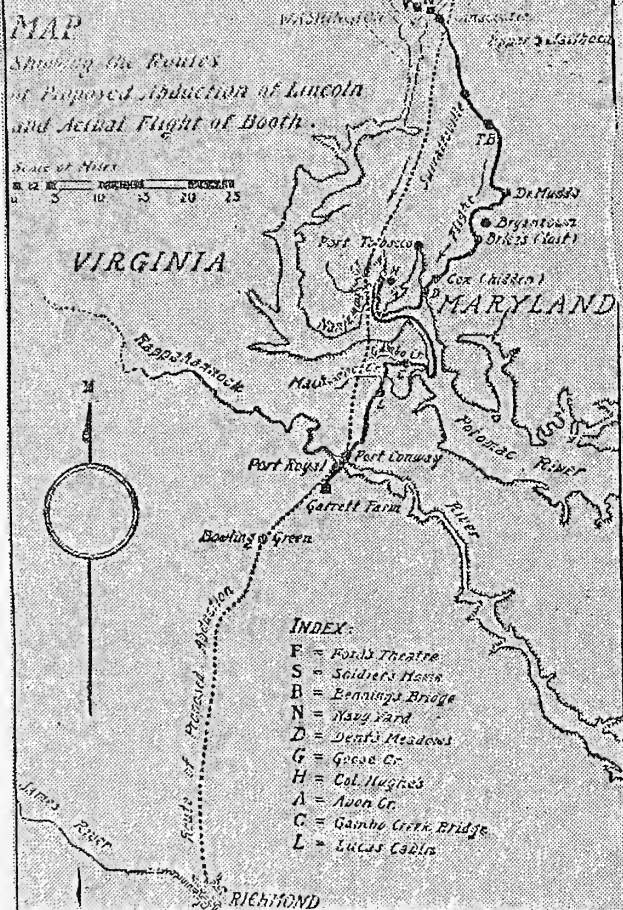
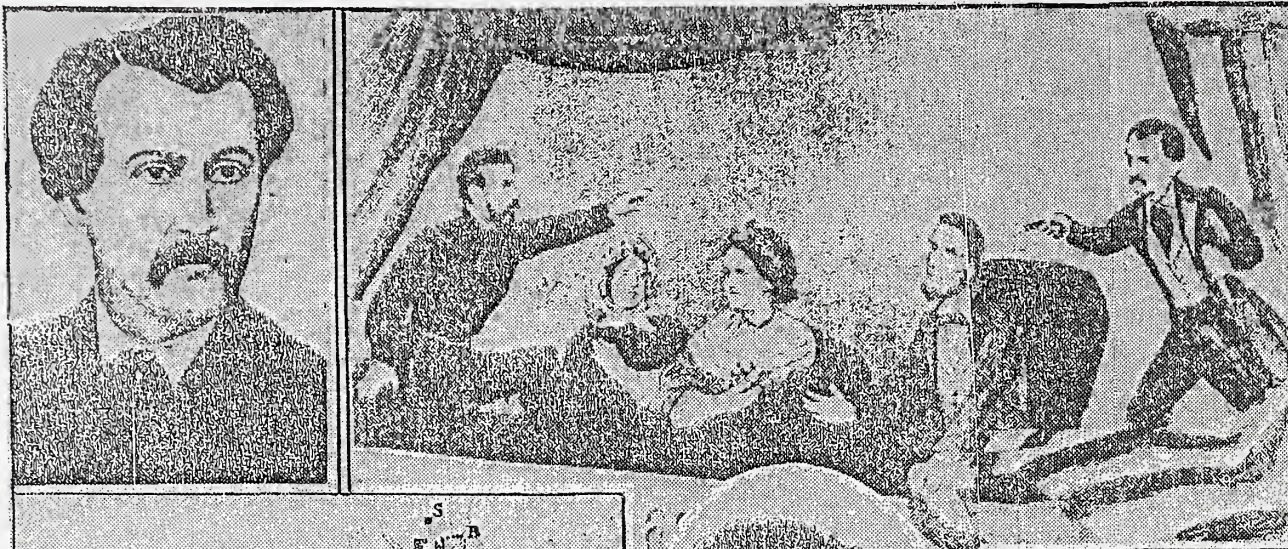
## Has Crushed Thumb

That the mummy shows a thumb crushed as Booth's thumb was crushed when, while a boy, he caught his hand in a back-stage windlass during one of his father's performances.

That the mummy's right eyebrow is noticeably higher than the left, a physical factor visible in all of Booth's pictures and testified to by those who knew him.

That a corroded signet ring, taken from the mummy's stomach, bears the initial "B."

Those are the facts from Chicago that have opened the way for a revival of what always before has been termed the "Enid myth." Per-



The photo at upper left is that of John Wilkes Booth at the age of 27, taken just before the assassination of Lincoln. The other small photo is one of "John St. Helen," at the age of 38. The resemblance is too marked for easy dismissal as coincidence. The large photo, showing the assassination of Lincoln, is from a contemporary print. The map shows the route followed by Booth in his flight from Washington, with the dotted line indicating the proposed route in the plan to abduct Lincoln.

haps this time it will be found to be more than a myth.

To Baltimoreans most directly concerned, however, it will continue to be a myth, whatever the scientific outcome.

## Recalls Burial Here

Chief among that group is Henry W. Mears, 800 block Calvert St., who helped prepare for burial the body that now lies in Greenmount Cemetery as that of Booth. Mears, it is believed, is the only living Baltimorean who saw the body when, in 1896, it was removed from the crude grave under the floor of a Washington military jail, where it had lain for four years, and was brought to Baltimore for burial in the Booth family plot.

Mears has answered questions concerning that burial many times. He always answers the queries the same way.

"John Wilkes Booth," he says "is lying in Greenmount Cemetery. That's all there is to it."

Mears himself was an apprentice, at the time, in the Weaver undertaking establishment that used to stand on Fayette St., between Gay and Holliday, just across the street from the stage door of the old Holliday St. Theater where Booth had played many times. Mears recalls that the funeral, such as it was, took place about 8 o'clock in the morning. There were no services at the undertaking establishment and only a brief prayer at the grave. He didn't go to the cemetery and,



while a group of sailors were preparing a coffin, the body was seized by another naval party acting on special orders, and was taken in a small boat to the prison where it was buried. There it lay for four years—until, in the final month of President Johnson's administration, that chief executive acceded to the pleas of the Booth family and it was moved to Baltimore.

## 'John St. Helen' Appears

That ended the story—for many years. Then came the sequel in "The Escape and Suicide of John Wilkes Booth," published in 1907 and written by Finis L. Bates, once attorney general of Tennessee.

Bates re-told the story he said was told to him in 1872 by "John St. Helen," known to Bates only as a

consequently, doesn't know whether any of the Booth family were there. None of them, he is sure, looked at the body while it was at Weaver's. It was seen, however, by several persons who had known Booth. None of them expressed any doubts as to its identity. Mears himself had known Booth for years. They had been associated in amateur theatricals before John Wilkes became a professional star.

Mears saw the body and believed it Booth's. He believes that still and discounts the possibility it could have been that of someone else. The fact that it had been buried four years he dismisses as of no consequence.

"I tell you it was John Wilkes Booth's body," he says with vehemence that leaves no chance for argument.

## Versions Are Many

Besides all the books written about Booth himself, the assassination and the subsequent capture of the conspirators is dealt with in almost every volume on the life of Lincoln. The capture of the man supposed to be Booth is described variously, but all versions seem to agree on

several essential facts.

The fugitive was cornered in a barn, and, in a parley with the military officer who headed the posse, refused to surrender. The barn was fired and the fugitive, with flames all around him, started for the door. At that instant he was shot by a soldier, acting in complete disobedience to orders. The fugitive was dragged from the blazing barn hardly able to speak, the bullet having entered his spinal cord just below the neck. The few words he was able to articulate before he died were meaningless so far as they had any bearing on his identity.

Subsequently his body was taken toward Washington, with several transfers from one conveyance to another on the way. It arrived on a naval vessel, but the next day,

Baltimorean Relates How he Prepared Booth's Body For Grave Here

general store proprietor in Grandberry, Texas.

Reduced to its essentials, "St. Helen's" story was:

That he was John Wilkes Booth. That he had escaped from the scene of Booth's supposed killing a day or two before the capture.

That he had conspired with others to kidnap President Lincoln and deliver him to the Confederate Army; and that when the war suddenly ended he had been inspired to kill Lincoln by Andrew Johnson, then vice president, and that Johnson parted from him on the streets of Washington less than an hour before the assassination and with full knowledge that it was to take place that evening.

Finally—That Johnson's co-operation made his escape from the city possible.

## A Mummy—But Whose?

It is St. Helen's body that, mummified, is now in Chicago and has been subjected to the X-ray tests. He committed suicide in Enid, Okla., on Jan. 23, 1903.

For years it has been carted around the country as a sideshow exhibit. Whether or not the scientists' statements change history regarding the location of Booth's body, it is probable the mummy will continue to be publicly exhibited at a price—at a considerably increased price should the Booth theory substantially be strengthened.

As a matter of fact, that eventuality may have a lot to do with the present revival of the "Enid Myth," for all the scientific apparatus and important names that have been brought into the picture.

Baltimore

12-19-31



# **Proves' assassin of Lincoln never caught**

CHICAGO, Feb. 12.—(UP)—Dr. Orlando Scott, who with a group of Chicago physicians five years ago made a thorough study of the mummified body of John St. Helen, said today he was sure the corpse was that of John Wilkes Booth.

Dr. Scott's assertion, coming on the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, followed a story from Glen Rose, Texas, where citizens again revived the legend that Booth was never killed and lived there long after assassinating the Civil War President.

"There's no doubt in my mind or in any of the others that the body examined was that of Lincoln's assassin," he said.

"There's not a mathematical chance in the world that any two people would have the very same marks and be identical in looks, too."

Both had a peculiar upward displacement of the right eyebrow, he said, which Booth reputedly received in a stage duel while playing in a Shakespearean play; both had a deformed knuckle joint on the right thumb, received, it was said, when Booth as a boy caught his hand in a stage curtain

windlass; a broken fibula bone in the leg sustained when he jumped from the opera box after shooting Lincoln; and a scar tissue formation on the back of the neck resulting from a carbuncle removal.

But to many persons at Glen Rose and in nearby Granbury, John Wilkes Booth was the dapper saloon-keeper who came from the East about 1870 and took his own life in Enid, Okla., in 1903.

At Granbury, the stranger—who called himself "John St. Helen"—became friendly with Attorney Finis Bates.

"I have some personal papers and a photograph of myself," the stranger told Bates. "When I'm dead, I want you to send them to my brother in New York—Edwin Booth, the actor."

"Perhaps you've already guessed it, but I'm John Wilkes Booth."

# Leader of Drys Declares He Can Prove John St. Helen Mummy Is That of Booth

**Methodist Dry Leader Says He Has Documentary Evidence Identifying Body Marks**

By MARTHA STRAYER

**POSITIVELY**, says Dr. Clarence True Wilson of the Methodist Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals, the John St. Helen mummy is that of John Wilkes Booth, Abraham Lincoln's assassin.

Two weeks ago a board of physicians examined the mummy in Chicago and reported three points of absolute similarity which indicate that it is the remains of Booth.

## Can Prove It, He Says

Dr. Wilson told The News today that he is the only man in the world who can prove this. For 40 years he has been collecting original documents, photographs, affidavits, etc., in the Booth case.

"Except that a thief gained access to my library and stole my manuscript," Dr. Wilson said, "I would have published in 1931 a book covering, with documentary evidence, Booth's career in his disguise as John St. Helen, from the time of Lincoln's assassination until Booth (or St. Helen) committed suicide in Oklahoma in 1903. This would have included every point adduced as evidence by the Chicago physicians."

## Stolen Last Spring

The manuscript was stolen some time previous to last spring, Dr.

Wilson said, from his apartment in the Methodist Building, First and B streets ne. He is now preparing to duplicate it and hopes to have his book in print within a year.

"But I can go still farther than the physicians did," he continued. "They found these points of similarity—a scar over the right eye, and lifted right eyebrow, a healed fracture of the right foot and a crushed thumb. I have documents proving that these physical features actually existed in Booth's body, and why.

## Had Body Mummified

Finis L. Bates, former attorney general of Tennessee and at one time Booth's attorney, had the body of St. Helen embalmed and mummified, when he committed suicide in 1903 by taking arsenic. He had been married twice, once in 1872 and again shortly before his death.

"I have all the original evidence Bates collected in the case," Dr. Wilson said; "as well as that of two other students who had devoted practically their whole lives to a study of Lincoln and Booth. I paid thousands of dollars for my collection.

"And I am the only man in the world who can prove that St. Helen was Booth."



DR. CLARENCE TRUE WILSON

"For instance, the healed fracture in the right foot. I have a signed statement from Dr. Samuel Mudd of St. Mary's County, Md., who set Booth's broken ankle with splints made by breaking up a cigar box, that the fracture was in the same place and of the same nature as indicated in the mummy.

## Wounded With Sword

"Also, the scar over the right eye and the raised right eyebrow. I have statements from several people who witnessed a sword match between Booth and another actor when he was about 23, in which Booth was wounded over his right eye. This wound made a white scar and spread the eyebrow, causing it to be elevated."

Moreover, Dr. Wilson said he can explain from his documents and affidavits other findings by the Chicago physicians, of which they were able to give no explanation.

"They X-rayed the mummy and found a ring in its stomach," the prohibition leader continued. "Then they performed a surgical operation and removed the ring, which was a signet, much corroded, but still showing faint signs of having been

engraved with the letter 'W.'

"I can tell them why they found that ring and how it came to be in Booth's stomach.

"Booth led a haunted life. Once, during his life in Texas as John St. Helen, he was ill and attended by a nurse. He confided his identity to her, as he confided in numerous people during his 38 years as John St. Helen.

"She told what he had said, and a

deputy marshal and two detectives went to his room. They knew from the nurse that he was sitting up in bed, going over private papers which she said should prove his identity; also that he wore a signet ring bearing the letters 'JBW.'

"They went into the room. With one movement he flung the papers into the open fireplace.

"The officers were too late to save them from the flames. They looked at his hand and saw no ring. They thought he had thrown the ring with the papers, but tho they raked the embers and ashes, they couldn't find it.

## Swallowed Ring

"What he had done, however, was swallow the ring. That was why it was in the mummy's stomach."

Dr. Wilson himself has examined the mummy and found the same points of identification. He also found a scar on the neck which he says is further proof.

Booth had a fibroid tumor removed from the base of his neck during his career as an actor. The surgeon ordered him to stay off the stage until the wound healed; he disobeyed the order and appeared with Charlotte Cushman in a romantic play.

## Broke Wound Open

Charlotte, in an emotional scene, embraced him so vigorously that she broke open the wound. It healed with a wide scar, like a burn, instead of a thin line as from a surgeon's knife.

"This mark is on the mummy's throat," said Dr. Wilson.

The mummy recently was bought for \$8000 by a Chicago woman, who arranged for its examination by the board of physicians. Up to that time it had traveled over the country as a sideshow exhibit.

## BOOTH MYTH STALKS

### Chicago Mummy is Alleged to Be That of Lincoln's Murderer

(N. Y. Herald-Tribune)

Seven Chicago physicians have decided that a battered mummy, which has been a sideshow freak for 28 years, is the body of John Wilkes Booth, assassin of Abraham Lincoln.

"Our X-ray pictures are conclusive evidence that this body is that of Booth," Dr. O. F. Scotts says. "We shall make formal report in the next few days and I can say safely that we believe Booth's body is here in my office, rather than in a Maryland grave." The mummy is that of a man who committed suicide in Enid, Okla., almost 29 years ago.

Some reports have it that Boston Corbett shot the wrong man, that Booth went to Texas under the name of John St. Helen. The latter limped, had a distorted right thumb, as did Booth, and lived lavishly without doing any work. When he thought he was about to die he told Finis L. Bates that he was Booth. In 1903 St. Helen killed himself in Enid, Oklahoma, by swallowing arsenic.

Bates, who later became attorney general of Tennessee, had the body embalmed and after the legal seven years had passed, took it from the State, exhibiting it at 15 cents a look. Bates was reported to have spent \$25,000 attempting to verify his belief that the mummy was that of Booth. After Bates' death five years ago, Mrs. Agnes Black of Chicago, purchased the body for \$8,000. She continued to use it as a sideshow freak.

The International Medico-Legal Association, obtaining the body for examination, put it under the X-ray in Dr. Scott's office. The films showed that the fibula was broken and that the left thumb was out of place. More surprising still, the plates showed in the stomach a ring engraved with the letter "B." Using an electric dissector saw Dr. Scott obtained the ring. "I think that Booth swallowed the ring after he fled the theatre," said Dr. Scott.

1-23-32

## BODY OF BOOTH IS ON VIEW IN OKLAHOMA, ACTOR SAYS

The preserved body of John Wilkes Booth, slayer of Abraham Lincoln, rests in the cellar of an undertaking establishment in Enid, Okla., according to Albert Dunstan, 1715 Barclay street, vaudeville actor.

Mr. Dunstan was playing in Enid in 1913 when he learned what he considers the authentic fate of Booth. The actor's body, he said, had been embalmed and placed erect in an improvised coffin, which left the body exposed to view. Mr. Dunstan said:

"There is no doubt in my mind but that it was Booth. Not only

was the face and figure true likenesses of Lincoln's assassin, but all the scars and physical defects he was known to have, were plainly marked on the body I saw in that cellar. There was the disfigured eyebrow, which Booth received in a stage duel with MacReady; the stiff thumb and the broken shin-bone sustained when Booth leaped from Lincoln's box to the stage."

Booth died in Enid in 1892. Mr. Dunstan said, at the Planter's Hotel, where in a dying confession, he cried:

"I shot the best man that ever lived."



13

A. J. WALSMITH  
Attorney and Counsellor  
Oskaloosa, Iowa

April 14, 1936

Mr. Ralph G. Lindstrom  
Counsellor at Law  
5225 Wilshire Blvd.  
Los Angeles, Calif.

My dear Mr. Lindstrom:

I have just received and read with great interest your letter of the 10th. inst. to which you append a note to Mr. Houser. I shall have to haul Mr. Houser over the coals for sending my letters around over the country, and especially when I write them more or less hurriedly. But, of course, I know he won't pay any attention to what I tell him about it and will go on doing the same thing hereafter. He is a very dear friend of mine and I am really glad he used my letter to add your name to my rather large list of friends who have been made such through the Lincoln subject. Once two young gentlemen, meeting for the first time at a bar and taking a drink together, said, "Now, let's be friends forever." That was back in the early 1890's. They have remained friends ever since. In the same spirit I now say to you, "Let's be friends forever."

I know about this Joseph Hazelton. A few years ago he broke into the magazines with a story about the assassination. The "mummy" which you say he is carting around I presume is the body of the Enid man, David E. George. The last time I heard of it, until you wrote me about Hazelton having it, it was in the office of Dr. Orlando F. Scott of Chicago undergoing a "microscopic" examination. I exchanged a number of letters with Dr. Scott about it and he promised me a full report of the investigation. I have never been able to get him to comply with this promise. The Dr. John W. Potter, whom I mentioned in my letter to Mr. Houser, had stated that an ex-ray examination showed that the "mummy" had a signet ring with the letter B engraved on it in its stomach. I asked Dr. Scott specifically about that and he finally wrote me that they did find a bit of corroded metal with the letter B on it in the "mummy's" stomach. I will say parenthetically that the next day after receiving this letter from Dr. Scott about the piece of corroded metal the Chicago papers came out with a sensational story on the first page under big headlines that Dr. Scott, together with a number of other men, was under investigation by the grand jury for great insurance frauds. It seems that dead bodies would turn up in Dr. Scott's hands from which claimants would collect life insurance. But I know nothing more about the particulars along that line. I have never been able to get any further word from Dr. Scott. Dr. Otto L. Schmidt of Chicago was for many years president of the Illinois State Historical Society and was my personal friend. I asked him about the "mummy" in Dr. Scott's office and he replied rather evasively and in such way as to give me the distinct impression that he took no stock in the alleged examination and that he



4/14/36

had no confidence in the integrity of the men who were conducting it. Dr. Schmidt told me that he had been invited to be present at the examination and autopsy but respectfully declined.

Consider for a moment the statement that there was a signet ring with the letter B on it found in the "mummy's" stomach, as Dr. Potter has publicly stated there was, or that a "bit of corroded metal" with the letter B on it, as Dr. Scott said, was found in the body. These assertions are to prop up the theory that during his last sickness, the man George, whom the "mummy" advocates claim was in fact Booth, took his signet ring off his finger and swallowed it to hide his identity. Such a theory is silly when viewed in the light of the story coming from the mouths of the same advocates that the man George was trying to convince people during the latter years of his life that he was in fact Booth, even going so far as to tell the people around him during his dying hours that he was Booth and the man who killed Abraham Lincoln. And they attempt to verify these declarations made by the man George by affidavits. In this connection it is interesting to know that Mr. Black, when editor of the Dearborn Independent, exposed the fraud by showing that the affidavits had been forged, at least in part. I think you will find an account about these affidavits in Francis Wilson's book. You ought to be able to get this book in your public library at Los Angeles.

All these wild stories about the "mummy" being the body of John Wilkes Booth started with Finis L. Bates and the libelous thing which he published under the title "The Escape and Suicide of John Wilkes Booth." It is the source book for all the "mummy" advocates. I suppose you have read Bates's book. If not, let me say that in my opinion it is the most monstrous libel that I know anything about. Let me mention one point, for instance. Bates says that the plot to kill Abraham Lincoln and others was never thought of by anybody until about the mid-afternoon of April 14, 1865, and that while Booth and Andrew Johnson and David E. Herold were taking a drink at the bar of the Kirkwood Hotel in Washington, about three o'clock that afternoon, Booth reported to Johnson that the abduction plot had failed now that Richmond had fallen and that it would serve no good purpose to make any further efforts along that line; that thereupon Johnson asked Booth, "Are you afraid to kill him?"; that after discussing the matter for a short time Booth accepted the suggestion and said he would commit the atrocious deed. Anybody that knows anything about the character of Andrew Johnson knows full well that he could not have been capable of doing such a thing.

But consider that point, too, for a minute. With Lincoln dead and Johnson president, Johnson would let Booth and his accomplices escape and also would rule more leniently and in favor of the South. Anybody that knows anything about Andrew Johnson knows that all during the war and for some time after he succeeded Lincoln as president his attitude was one of ferocity toward the South and that the South hated him with a deeper and more resentful hate than they ever entertained for Lincoln, and of course we know full well that Johnson did not intervene to save any of the four of Booth's confederates who were hanged. He did pardon Arnold, Mudd, and Spangler a few days before



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he went out of office. I am inclined to believe that this act of clemency was a just one.

Some four or five years ago I commenced to take a deep interest in the tales about the "mummy." Being convinced that Bates was not a man of sound character I enlisted some friends in Memphis, Tennessee, where Bates had lived to get me the low-down on his character and it was only shortly after I commenced that investigation that I discovered in the possession of General A. R. Taylor of that city what is now known as the Garrett letter. Then began a correspondence between myself and General Taylor. He sent me a typewritten copy of the Garrett letter. Later on, at my very earnest pleading, he sent me the original. I am sending you a typewritten copy of that letter. I have a photostatic copy of it, which was privately printed by Judge James W. Bollinger of Davenport, one of my very dear Lincoln friends. Let me explain that this Reverend R. B. Garrett was a son of the Richard H. Garrett at whose farm place near Port Royal, Virginia, Booth was shot and taken on the early morning of April 26, 1865. The Reverend Garrett was then a boy ten years old and an eye-witness to all that transpired. His letter to General Taylor came about through the publication of Finis L. Bates's book. General Taylor's letters to me explain how the Garrett letter came about. Taylor was intimately acquainted with Bates and often talked with Bates about the Booth subject, often telling Bates that he took no stock in his wild theories. As Bates's book was about to come off the press Taylor got in touch with the Reverend Garrett and the letter was the result of their correspondence. Very shortly afterward Taylor sent a copy of Bates's book to the Reverend Garrett, who wrote an extended review of the book, and sent the same to General Taylor. The latter published this review in the Memphis COMMERCIAL APPEAL very shortly after he received the manuscript. In some way the printer did not return the manuscript and it was lost. These two papers, the review and the letter written by the Reverend Garrett, may be said to be an almost priceless contribution to the subject matter and it is a pity that the manuscript of the review should have been lost, but General Taylor, who is a man of substance and of very high standing in Memphis, vouches for the fact that the review as published in the Memphis paper was exactly as the Reverend Garrett wrote it.

I am sending a copy of that review, thinking that it may be of some interest to you. If, when you have read them, I may have them back I will appreciate it and if you wish you may take a copy of both.

Now, sir, having strung this out longer than I expected, I must bring it to a close. If and when you come East to visit your mother in Rock Island I will be glad to have you stop over here that we may become personally acquainted with each other. You would naturally have to go through this part of Iowa to reach Rock Island--at least I would suppose so. I would imagine from your name that your father or grandfather came over to work for John Deere. You have spoken of your mother. Just let me say a brief word about mine.

#4

Ralph G. Lindstrom

4/14/36

My mother, then in her eighteenth year, sat in the audience and heard Lincoln and Douglas in their joint debate in August, 1858, at Ottawa, Illinois, where she then lived. She often told us children about that notable event and among my earliest recollections is hearing her tell about it. My father enlisted as a soldier in the Civil War in 1861 and marched away with his regiment from that place. Immediately on his return from his three-year service he married my mother and lived on a farm but a short distance north of Ottawa.

Yours very truly,

AJW/wmg

(Signed) A. J. WALSMITH

2 Encls.



Dear Mr. Lindstrom:

Thought this might interest you. MLH

COPY

A. J. WALSMITH  
Attorney and Counsellor  
OSKALOOSA, IOWA

Mr. M. L. Houser  
P. O. Box 55  
Peoria, Illinois

My dear Houser:

With this I am returning to you the Ralph G. Lindstrom letter which came to me with yours of the 27th inst. I take it that this man Lindstrom lives in California, although he does not say so directly. He writes an interesting letter.

He speaks of a man who has been "circulating and speaking in this section" on the Booth question. I'll bet at least a dollar that the man he refers to is Dr. John W. Potter who was formerly pastor of the Central Methodist Church of this place. For the past few years Potter has been going out to California for the winter months. I know he dotes on that subject and loves to talk about it, especially when he can get an audience to hear him. I heard his lecture here about five years ago. He followed Bates's book pretty faithfully, adding some touches and flourishes here and there. I have had numerous conversations with him about the subject and he is the man who stirred me up to make an investigation of the Booth question. In one of our talks he told me this, shortly before he delivered his lecture here: "We don't want to be too hard on Mr. Booth. We want to remember that he was perfectly justified under the laws of civilized warfare in killing Lincoln." The statement was so villianous that I asked him if he was in his right mind and offered to give him \$10.00 if he would write those two sentences out and sign his name to it. He did not make that statement in his lecture but did say that Booth was perfectly justified according to the rules of civilized warfare in abducting Lincoln. I couldn't see that there was any difference between murder and abduction, except as to the penalty. Both acts were unlawful and are positively contrary to the laws of warfare, both now and during the Civil War.

If your friend Lindstrom is interested in the subject tell him that Francis Wilson is almost a perfect answer to the "mummy" advocates' claims. Wilson could have gone a little farther. For instance as to the diary, but it may be that when he wrote his book he wasn't fully posted on that point.

I am afraid you are trying to make an author out of me. Don't get that in your head. Will say again that I shall try to cover the ground as carefully as I know how. I wrote your friend Curran of Chicago for a copy of his study but never heard from him. I would like very much to see what he says, he being a lawyer.

#2 M. L. Houser 3/31/36

You mention Theodore Roosevelt as your hero No. 2. I haven't got him cataloged that way but he is also one of my heroes. He was one of the sanest presidents we ever had. But he went plumb wrong in advocating his "Recall of Judicial Decisions." I have some eight or ten biographies of him, together with his autobiography, and read them frequently.

You are doing a mighty interesting subject, "Lincoln's Education." I doubt whether we will ever get the full truth as to how that man got his education. Some writers say he read no books or very few, if any. Other say that he was an omnivorous reader. I don't believe either statement is true but reason tells us that he must have read considerably. No man can acquire a vocabulary such as he had and then make such almost perfect use of it as he did without considerable reading. But I should say that his reading and his reflection upon what he did read would about balance. But here I go running off at the mouth to you who know so much more on that subject than I ever can know.

Write as often as the spirit moves you. I dearly love to hear from you.

Yours very truly,

AJW:WMG

A. J. WALSMITH

1 Enc.



LINCOLN'S ASSASSINATION: Of those who planned and executed the murder of Abraham Lincoln, John Wilkes Booth, the actual murderer, was shot to death in a barn near Bowling Green, Va., dying 12 days after the shooting of April 14, 1865. Four others, Atzerodt, Harold, Payne and Mrs. Surratt, were found guilty of murder after trial in Washington, and were hanged on July 7, 1865. Arnold, O'Laughlin and Dr. Mudd were sent to prison for life and Spangler was given six years. John H. Surratt, a son of Mrs. Surratt, was acquitted. Rumors that Booth escaped, based on a side-show freak mummy said to be body of Booth, have never been substantiated. (2) Communicate with Copyright Office, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., concerning copyrighting a manuscript.—(E. P. M.)

PHILADELPHIA

## ***Mortal Remains***

***J. Wilkes Booth***

*Arizona Republic 1-26-41*

The question asked of Frederic J. Haskin, "What became of Booth after he killed President Lincoln?" recalls an incident which happened in Phoenix during state fair week a number of years ago. It happened, by the way, before the economic crash of 1929.

A stranger came into the newsroom of this publication the night before the fair opened and asked to talk to a newsman. He informed the reporter that he was the possessor of the body of one John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Lincoln, and had come to Phoenix with the intention of exhibiting the remains to the public at so much per head.

The newsman was skeptical about the identity of the corpse which the exhibitor claimed he had been carting around the country, exhibiting it to any and all who cared to view it and who had the price of admission, the latter being the prime requisite. Needing publicity in order to make the venture successful in Phoenix, the visitor upon discovering the reporter thought he was "nuts", offered to allow him to gaze upon the mortal remains of Booth without charge. The offer was accepted.

In a room near the state fair grounds, the reporter was permitted to view what was supposed to be the body of Booth but could not examine it to see if it were made of wax as he thought and so stated. The owner of the body was, or at least claimed he was, disappointed in the incredulity of the newsman. He, however, could not answer the reporter's question as to how he could cart a corpse around the country without having to bury it. The owner also could not, or did not, produce an official authorization, which he said he had, to travel from state to state with the remains of Booth.

Even though he was certain that the body was made of wax and that it was not a real corpse, to this day that newsman wonders about the tale told by the exhibitor that Booth was not killed at Bowling Green, Va., but made his escape and lived to die a natural death. Booth, according to the owner of what was claimed to be his body, died in se-

lades to the place I'm molten iron in de place I'm fer ice cream."

clusion and that was the remains had never been how he came into possession

*Arizona Republic*

*Jan 26 1941*





## CONTROVERSY

# LINCOLN'S MURDERER WAS NEVER CAUGHT

**J**OHAN WILKES BOOTH, the actor who assassinated Abraham Lincoln, is generally assumed to have been shot and killed in a barn, where he was apprehended 12 days after the crime.

Certain historians, however, have always been in doubt as to whether Booth died following the shooting; accounts of the fray are vague; there is a theory that the assassin of a President escaped.

During the first years of this century, tales were heard of a man in Enid, Oklahoma, then Indian territory, who answered to the description of Booth. On January 13, 1903, this man, known as D. E. George, committed suicide. His body was embalmed but never buried.

On December 1, 1931, the Press Club of Chicago, which had access to the body, requested that Dr. Orlando F. Scott invite a group of recognized scientists to decide whether or not D. E. George was John Wilkes Booth.

The scientists included, besides Dr. Scott: Dr. Charles Fischer, eminent pathologist; Dr. Charles K. Barnes, chief surgeon at Auburn Park Hospital; Dr. Bernard Conway, director Chicago Hospital; Dr. L. K. Eastman, chief surgeon of Danish-American Hospital of Chicago; Dr. Edward Miloslavich, criminologist, and Dr. Herman Bundesen, Chicago health official.

A delegation of noted Chicago attorneys witnessed the proceedings.

The physicians first examined the body superficially; later the body, mummified and hard as concrete, was sawed open for further scrutiny.

On the basis of the mummy's deformed right thumb (which Booth was known to have), a leg fracture (which Booth suffered when he jumped from his box to the stage), a metallic charm with B inscribed upon it, several sword wounds and the body's facial characteristics, the investigators concluded it was Booth.



**ALLEGED TO BE** mummy of John Wilkes Booth, Lincoln's assassin, this body of an Enid, Okla., "suicide," dead 28 years, was examined in 1931 by a group of distinguished Chicago scientists. Note upraised right eyebrow. This was known to have existed in the living Booth; other similarities led scientists to conclude that this was indeed Booth. Evidently he had escaped, following the assassination.



**X-RAY** of the mummy's right hand shows clearly the deformity of the thumb Booth was known to have suffered when, as a small boy in a theater, his hand was caught in the windlass of a curtain.

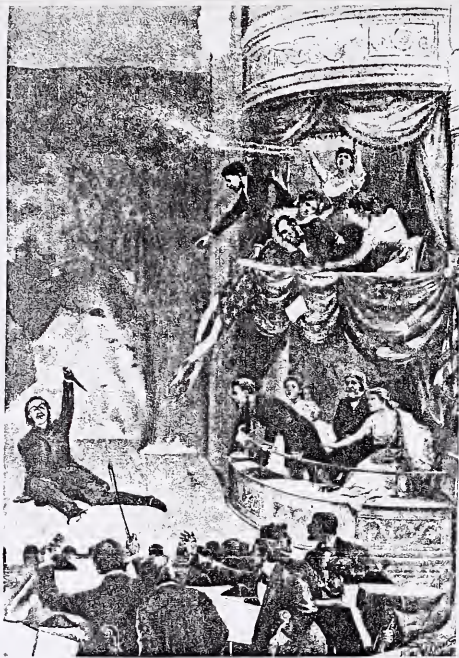


**BLACK** rectangular signet ring metal can be seen in the above X-ray, lying to one side of the spine in the stomach region. The X-ray does not show it, but a letter "B" is inscribed upon the metal.

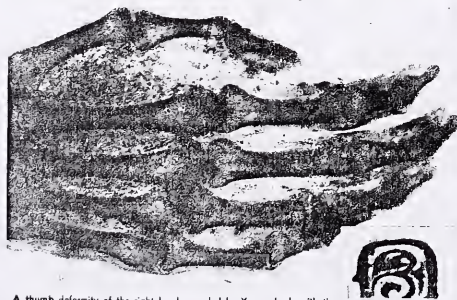


**X-RAY** of the left leg, showing the thickening of the anklebone, indicated that a fracture existed. Theory is that it was sustained when Booth jumped from Lincoln's box to the stage below.





A graphic illustration of the assassination. The President is seen slumped over in his private box. Booth broke his leg in jumping to the stage. There, before the horror-stricken audience, the actor brandished a dagger and cried: "Sic semper tyranni." ["Thus ever with tyrants."]



A thumb deformity of the right hand, revealed by X-ray, checks with the crushed thumb sustained by Booth as a child. Right: The ring with the thumb deformity.

## IS THIS THE MUMMY OF LINCOLN'S SLAYER?



An excellent portrait of Lincoln, taken shortly before he was shot by Booth in Ford's Theatre, Washington, April 14, 1865. Booth was supposed to have been killed in a burning barn in Virginia, twelve days later.

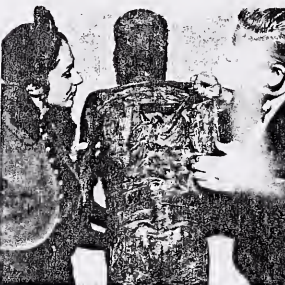


A black signet ring was revealed in the corpse by this X-ray picture. It was imbedded in the stomach, probably having been swallowed by Booth during the escape.



Dr. Charles Fischer examines the ring removed from the body at an autopsy to prove that the mummy is that of Booth. Embalming fluids had eaten into the metal.

A CORPSE claimed to be that of John Wilkes Booth, killer of The Great Emancipator, is ballyhooed as the main exhibit of a Western carnival show. The logical premise that Booth was not shot after the murder, but escaped and lived until 1903 under the name of St. Helen. Before his death, this man confessed to being Booth, and his widow sold his body for \$1000. Since then, the mummy has been a box-office attraction for traveling shows.



A flap was not cut in the cadaver's back to probe for the ring after its presence had been disclosed by X-ray. The opening reveals the heart, stomach and letters of the lung. Surgery was performed on the back so as not to spoil the exhibit.



Under Pictures



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**PIECE** of metal, perhaps from a sword, may be seen at the back of the mummy's neck. Originally, it was in the stomach area. During the autopsy, however, it became dislodged and landed in the spinal canal. When the body was turned upside down, the metal slid freely down the spinal canal until it reached the position pictured above.



**DR. CHARLES FISCHER**, eminent Chicago pathologist, is shown with Dr. Orlando Scott, examining the bit of a signet ring removed from the mummy's stomach. Explanation is that Booth cherished the ring, swallowed it during his flight.



**GROUP OF** noted scientists hold an autopsy on the body, dead 28 years, of an Enid, Oklahoma, "suicide," who was said to be John Wilkes Booth. Ac-

counts of Booth's death were always vague and it is believed he escaped to start his life anew in Indian territory under an assumed name.





**VIEW OF AUTOPSY** of the alleged body of John Wilkes Booth, performed on December 17, 1931, in the laboratories of Dr. Scott. Note that the body is

almost petrified from prolonged dehydration. So stonelike was the corpse that all incisions had to be made with an electrical surgical saw.



# Here's Weird Odyssey Of Mummy Who May Have Been John Booth

By BILL EDSON  
News-Eagle Staff Writer

On the morning of January 13, 1903, David E. George walked from the Grand Avenue Hotel to the Watrous Drug Store to buy poison. A few hours later he was found dying in his hotel room.

It would have been a fairly routine event for Enid (then a bustling town of 3,500), but for one thing. On his deathbed, George confessed that his name was really John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of Abraham Lincoln.

With his death, one of the most intriguing footnotes to the Lincoln assassination began and an equally intriguing odyssey by the man's body. The corpse is not buried yet and today is moving around

the country and still sought by the law.

George's body was carried to Penniman Funeral Home and news of the strange confession quickly spread through the town and gained national attention. Old pictures of Booth were unearthed from magazines and compared with the features of the dead man. His actions before he had moved to Enid were traced and everything he had said or done was discussed at length.

Lines were quickly drawn between those who believed he was Booth and those who believed he wasn't. Young boys loitered around the railroad station earning nickels and dimes by leading strangers to the funeral home for a look at the man who claimed to be Booth.

The personal effects of Booth

were examined and the name of a man who had sent him money was found. The man was notified of the death, but did not respond. Meanwhile, Undertaker Penniman embalmed the body, using an arsenic process. The body, rather than deteriorating mummified.

The traffic through the funeral parlor was terrific and Penniman tied George's body in a chair in the corner with a newspaper in his lap, his eyes staring blankly across the room.

Young newspaper boys who sold papers on the street often slipped in for a look at the strange man in the corner.

A check into the background of the man revealed he had shown up in Hennessey about 1896. He painted houses a little,

but poorly when he did. He moved to El Reno in 1899 and bought a house, taking in a family to help with expenses. In 1900 he swallowed a heavy dose of poison and in his agony, confessed he was Booth.

He recovered and demanded the family keep his secret.

Following George's death, papers found on his body included a letter asking that a lawyer named Finis L. Bates of Memphis, Tenn., be summoned to identify his body. Bates arrived the following January and said the body was that of a John St. Helen who had confessed he was Booth back in Texas in 1877.

St. Helen had taken ill in the room behind the Black Hawk saloon in Granbury, Tex., and summoned Smith as his attorney. He asked that Smith notify Edwin Booth in New York City. He recovered and later told Smith his story.

He said he had escaped the burning tobacco barn near Bowling Green, Va., less than 100 miles from Washington and fled west to the new territories.

Considerable effort was made to determine if the man was a hoax or not. A pair of doctors turned up a medical journal with a description of Booth and some of his physical characteristics. They examined the body and found that all the descriptions fit including an old fracture of his leg that he would have received while jumping from Lincoln's box to the stage of the Ford Theater.

Specimens of George's handwriting and that of Booth reproduced in a magazine were compared and some said they matched perfectly.

The mystery seemed to deepen and speculation gave way to science.

Dr. J. W. Baker, a physician who had moved to Enid three years previously, had recently bought one of the new X-ray machines. It wasn't the modern conception of X-ray since it did not take pictures. A fluoroscopic tube was placed in the room with the patient and the doctor, wearing protective clothing and a large pair of goggles containing the fluoroscope, stood on the other side.

The doctor merely held up the part of the body he wanted to examine and looked at the bones inside.

Dr. Baker was asked to examine the leg of the dead man and find out if it had really been broken. He made the examination, but never revealed his findings, apparently thinking that it would be unethical for a physician to lend his name to what appeared to be an exploitation.

The doctor's conclusions, at that time, would also have been very unpopular, since John

Wilkes Booth broke his left leg jumping to the stage and David George, the house painter, had an old break in his right leg.

The mummified body remained on display in Enid for the next few years. In 1907, four years after the suicide, attorney Finis Bates wrote a book "Escape and Suicide of John Wilkes Booth." In it he tried to prove that Booth was St. Helen and St. Helen was George.

The corpse in the Enid funeral home was eventually turned over to Bates for dis-

position since he was the man's attorney. In 1920 Bates offered the mummy to Henry Ford for \$1,000, but Ford wouldn't buy.

Bates rented it to various carnivals, but it wouldn't draw a paying crowd. In fact, it seemed to draw misfortune to those who showed it. The carnivals had fires, train wrecks and holdups, but the mummy of David George seemed to go on and on.

During the next few years, he

was bought and sold several times and once was kidnapped and held for ransom, held on bond, confiscated for debt and run out of innumerable dusty towns.

In 1937 John Harkin of Wheatfield, Ind., bought the mummy for \$5,000 and took it on tour with a standing reward of \$1,000 for anyone who could prove it wasn't Booth. But the depression-bound farmers in the little towns weren't interested in looking at what they thought was a phony dummy anyway.

Finally at the point whether he had to sell the mummy or find a way to make it pay, Harkin joined the Jay Gould Million Dollar Show. Gould would call in an undertaker at each new town to authenticate the mummy. It stayed on the road for many more years, even after the Harkins lost touch with Gould. Once it was reported touring with a carnival in Florida.

C. P. Fox, general manager of Circus World Museum in Baraboo, Wisc., became interested in the mummy some eight years ago. Jay Gould came by the museum one day and began talking about his acts. Fox thought that the mummy, if it could be found, would make an interesting exhibit during the Civil War Centennial years.

Gould said that he still had an interest in the mummy, and that if he ever located it, would put a claim on it and turn it over to the museum.

Fox, who probably knows as many circus people as John Ringling North, began asking around. The closest he could get was that it was touring Canada with a run-down side show in a series of one-night stands.

Gould has since died, so Fox no longer could get the mummy, but his curiosity is still alive.

"I have been trying to trace that elusive mummy for eight years and I would just like to know where it is," Fox said.

Wherever John Wilkes Booth or John St. Helen or David George is, surely he is tired by now of the rugged knockabout carnival life and ready to settle down. If he is ready to retire, Fox has a place where he can finally get some rest, even if it is a museum where people will be looking at him and wondering from now on.

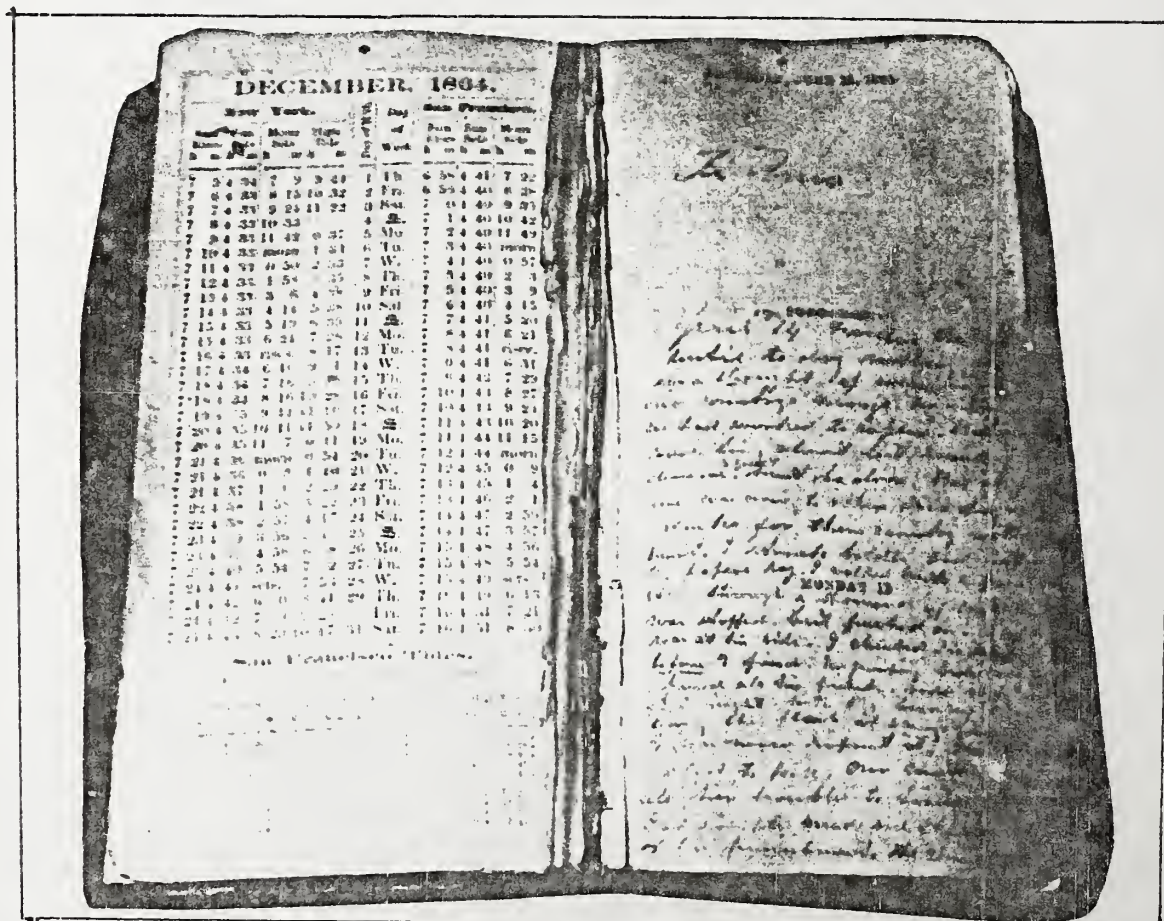


# THE LINCOLN LOG

Richard Sloan, editor \* 3855 Arthur Ave., Seaford, N.Y. 11783 \* Nov./Dec., 1976 \* VOL. 1, No. 11 \* 50c

**MOVIE ON LINCOLN'S ASSASSINATION HAS SURPRISES** -- Sunn Classic Pictures is producing a film documentary for theatrical release on Lincoln's murder. Many rumors have been floating around concerning the nature of the film and what it will disclose. We are now in direct contact with Sunn Classic Pictures, and we can now give our readers first-hand information on this film as it becomes available. The producers have been very cooperative with us, enlightening us so far as they can. Details will be difficult to get, understandably, until their film is well into shooting. To dispell one rumor, the film does not concern the story of the legendary Enid Booth mummy, as we erroneously reported in last month's issue. What the Sunn Classic film does cover are the events starting about six months prior to the assassination, and continuing through the conclusion of the conspiracy trial. This will include the conspiracy, the assassination, Booth's flight, the shooting at Garrett's farm, and the trial. We are given to understand that there will be many revelations and surprises in regard to these areas. What they are, we have yet to learn. The big news from Sunn is, according to their spokesman, that the missing pages of John Wilkes Booth's famous diary do exist. "We have purchased the rights to their contents," we were told, "and have acquired a transcript."

Our March, 1976 issue reported that Paul Weisberg, an antique firearms collector from upstate New York, said that he was in touch with a "go-between" for an heir of Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, who claimed to have the missing pages. About 18 to 20 pages are unaccountably missing from the little memorandum book in which the assassin confided, during his escape from Washington. How these pages vanished has been a subject of interest to students of the assassination for many years. Were they removed by Booth before his capture? If so, it would probably mean that they





were simply discarded, with no importance attached to them. If they were removed after his capture, it would indicate that they contained incriminating information, and that there was some sort of a cover-up. The very fact that the missing pages, should they prove to be authentic, have surfaced, indicates the cover-up. We have no idea who the pages implicate or from whom they came. Our report that they came from a Stanton heir seems to have been erroneous. (Why would Stanton retain the pages if they incriminated him?!) Otto Eisenschiml was the first to point a finger of suspicion at Stanton, but the questions he raised have remained unanswered. We do not know if the missing pages will implicate Stanton or others when Sunn Classic Pictures reveals their contents. We can only guess at this point. Some of you may recall that David Herold, Booth's accomplice and guide, had stated to Judge Bingham after his arrest that Booth told him, "there are thirty-five others in Washington and four that ought to have joined me, and you could have gone to the devil." At the House Judiciary Committee hearings investigating Andrew Johnson in 1867, Major Thomas T. Eckert, former head of the War Department Telegraph Office, testified that Lewis Paine, Seward's assassin, had told him, "You haven't got the half of them." Stanton, Eckert, Lafayette Baker, and two of the men sent to get Booth at Garrett's farm in Virginia were all called to testify at the Judiciary hearing about the diary and the missing pages. (We shall have a review of their conflicting testimony in our next issue.)

We called Stanton's great-grandson, Ernest Lee Jahncke, to ask him if his family was in any way responsible for the alleged missing pages having come to light. He assured us that he wasn't. Other relatives are scattered around, and he doubted that they had anything to offer, either. We asked him what he thought of the stories that his famous relative had been accused of complicity in Lincoln's assassination. He didn't believe any of them, and had pretty much gotten used to those reports over the years. Asked to give his opinion about Stanton, Mr. Jahncke replied, "He was a tough autocrat, a bit of a bastard, but a darn good Secretary of War." He expressed an interest in the Sunn Classic Film, and asked us to keep him abreast of developments as they become available.

After the disclosures are made by Sunn Classic Pictures, no matter what they are, historians will naturally ask if the missing pages are authentic. To that end, according to a Sunn spokesman, they now have several historians checking the authenticity of their contents. Their research department has conducted extensive research on the case for the past eleven months. The Sunn spokesman added, "What we will be putting on the screen is solidly documented. Our almost one year of research will advance the Lincoln assassination story more than it has been advanced in the past 116 years!" We will continue to be in touch with Sunn's producers, and hope that we will have more details from them in future issues of THE LINCOLN LOG. Their film, as yet untitled, is scheduled for release in April, 1977. One producer told us, "We expect some of our revelations to be categorized as the greatest historical discoveries made in the annals of American history."

THE ENID BOOTH MUMMY -- Although Sunn Classic Pictures' film on the assassination doesn't tell the story of this famous cadaver, interest in this legend grows with every passing month. There are still many who believe Finis Bates' story that the mummy that toured carnivals and side shows was Booth, who had escaped alive from Garrett's tobacco barn. And there are folks out there still looking for the mummy.

In the absence of the cadaver, the search also continues for any material associated with the mummy, in an effort to learn if it could have been Booth. An examination of the mummy was made in Chicago in 1931 by a team of pathologists. This report has never been fully quoted before, and we are pleased to present the complete text to our readers. Dr. Richard Mudd came up with the copy for us, and we are grateful to him for sending it to us. We have also learned that one of the doctors who signed the report is still alive, and has all the original X-rays that are mentioned in the report. We hope to have more on that in the near future. It would certainly be a boon to historians to see these pictures, and we are glad to know that they still exist!

Chicago, Illinois  
December 19, 1931

The Chicago Press Club  
Chicago, Illinois

Gentlemen:

At your request, we were asked by Dr. Orlando F. Scott to examine in his office at 330 South Wells Street, Chicago, Ill, the body and X-rays of same, properly identified by us as being the body of an individual who died under the name of D.E. George, on the 13th day of January, 1903, in the Grand Hotel, City of Enid, Territory of Oklahoma, United States of America, and we did examine said body and X-ray plates.

On examining this body physically, we found and noted the following peculiarities:-

1. There was a peculiar elevation or upward riding, of the right eyebrow, it appearing on the body at a higher level on the forehead than the left eyebrow. There was an area about the eyebrow that looked like an old healed scar.
2. The right thumb was seen to be considerably thickened at its knuckle joint, and sort of bowed up, or arched, producing a deformity of the right thumb in question. On comparison with the left thumb: the left thumb was seen to be long and slender, and lying snugly along and in contact with the hand, there being no evidence of any deformity in this left thumb, and the left thumb appearing to be slender in size, as compared to the right thumb.
3. On examination of the legs, there was seen to be an apparent slight thickening over the outside of the left ankle: that is, over what is commonly called the ankle joint and what is technically called the lower end of the fibula, or external malleolus.
4. Examination of the back of the neck revealed that a piece of skin and underlying tissue had been removed. This we were informed, was removed by Dr. Charles E.N. Fischer, of the Fischer Laboratories, for the purpose of making a microscopic examination in order to determine whether or not there was any scar tissue in the skin at this point.

The next examination conducted was an examination of the X-ray films taken in the laboratory of and under the supervision of Dr. Orlando F. Scott of this body, these pictures being of the head, hands, and legs. These pictures were identified by a photograph imprint upon them, and were further identified to us by Dr. Scott as having been made by him and having been continuously in his possession since they were made. He further stated that the X-ray machine was a vicotr X-ray machine in good working order at the time the pictures were made; that he was present when they were made, and that they are in the same condition now as when they were made; and further that it is his opinion that they are true and correct representations of that portion of the body of this man that they purport to show.

1. Examination of right lateral (side) view of the skull of this body shows a thickening of the tissues over the right eyebrow line. This may have been produced by the scar from an injury causing a thickening of the soft tissues over the eyebrow and forehead at this level, or may be due to an actual thickening of the bony covering from an injury, or may be due to both a thickening of the soft tissues and the bony covering.



2. Comparative examination of X-Ray pictures of the right and left leg, antero-posterior view: that is, taking the picture from front to back: this examination revealed that both the right and left legs as determined by the shadows in the X-ray films were taken in a correct and true antero-posterior position. On comparing the ankle joints, we find that the left fibula is markedly thickened at its lower end at the level of that portion which is called the external malleolus, it being the lateral (side) part of the ankle joint. This fibula is approximately 25% thicker at this point than the right fibula. This thickening indicates that at some time there has been a fracture of this left fibula just above the ankle joint, which has resulted in thickening of this bone and the bulbous appearance of it. This thickening is not due to any deform or defect that the body was born with: that is, it is not a congenital defect, but is an actual change in the bone due to a previous fracture of this fibula.

3. Comparative X-ray examination of the right and left hands:- the left thumb is long and tapering, with slender bones, as seen in the X-ray, and the thumb is seen to be lying close to the hand and parallel with the index finger, and is perfectly straight: whereas the X-ray of the right hand shows that there is a thickening of the entire thumb and thickening of the joints of the thumb, with a deformity, or bowing out of the thumb, which is very marked in comparison with the straightness and lack of this deformity in the left thumb. It is my opinion that this thickening of this right thumb and the bones of the right thumb and joints is due not to any congenital defect, but due to changes in the bones with thickening of the bones and joints, and that such a condition is commonly caused by only one thing, and that is, an injury of a crushing nature.

In summing up our findings, it is my opinion that:-

1. The elevation, or upward riding, of the right eyebrow has been produced by injury and could have been produced by the thrust of a sharp instrument, the scar forming when healing ensued.

2. Examination of the right thumb show(s) that the condition present has been produced by the injury and is not a congenital deformity of this right thumb.

3. The condition of the left fibula is not congenital. The bony thickening found and the deformity were produced, in my opinion, by a fracture of the fibula at some remote date.

SIGNED: Dr. Louis K. Eastman  
Dr. Charles K. Barnes  
Dr. Bernard Conway  
Dr. Charles E.M. Fischer  
Dr. Edward L. Miloslavich

ORLANDO F. SCOTT, M.D.

We would like to comment that one of the doctors in attendance at this examination was Health Commissioner Herman Bundesen. Why he chose not to sign it is unknown to us. It is also worth mentioning, we feel, that George Bryan, author of "The Great American Myth" sent a few queries to Dr. Scott. "From his answers," wrote Bryan (Page 357), "it seems certain that he looked for no identifying marks other than those mentioned in Bates' 'Escape (and Suicide of John Wilkes Booth)'."

## Booth 'Key'

To The Editor:

I enjoyed the letter of Ralph J. Erickson in the Feb. 5 issue (TST 733), on John Wilkes Booth.

I saw the display of the body in the Pacific Gas and Electric company window when I was in grade school.

I lived in Enid, Okla., for 22 years. While going through my mother's things I found a large key on which she had a tag: "Mrs. Penniman gave me this key, mate to one that opened the vault where Booth's body was kept." Mr. Penniman was a friend and I remember his mortuary in Enid.

Elizabeth Worden Bradley

1405 West St.

Grinnell, Iowa 50122



## Wasn't Booth

To The Editor.

A Maryland friend who knows of my great interest in John Wilkes Booth recently sent me a copy of the item in your Feb. 5 issue about the alleged Booth mummy. I am hastening to report that there is absolutely no sound basis for believing the claim of the man who died in Enid, Okla., in 1903, stating that he was John Wilkes Booth.

This person was David E. George (not Green, as your correspondent mistakenly wrote). His claim has been investigated by a number of scholars over the years, and there is practically unanimous agreement that he was not Booth. Among the numerous pieces of evidence, most significant is the fact that the real Booth had his initials "J. W. B.", tattooed across his left hand when he was a boy, and the markings proved to be indelible; yet the body of David E. George bore no such marks. Notable, too, is the fact that Booth was quite bow-legged, and the George mummy was not.

It is also true that the man shot at Garrett's farm near Port Royal, Va., 12 days after Lincoln's assassination, was identified as Booth by numerous witnesses.

There are many Booth "escape stories." David E. George, who had the unfortunate distinction of winding up as a mummified corpse on the carnival circuit, is merely the best known of several individuals who claimed the identity of Lincoln's assassin. The real puzzle, then, is not what happened to John Wilkes Booth, whose body lies to this day in an unmarked grave in Baltimore's Green Mount Cemetery. The mystery, rather, is a psychological one: why did so many persons, including the poor, deluded Mr. George, wish to claim Booth's identity, and why did so many viewers take a bizarre delight in the display of the mummy?

Constance Head, Ph.D.  
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Western Carolina University  
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EDITOR'S NOTE: Thank you for your comments. One slight clarification, the published information you mention was a letter to the editor — not a TST correspondent.





Booth Mummy

Drawer 115

Booth

