Affidavit of authenticity of letter (copy), R.B. Garrett to A.R. Taylor, October 24, 1907

Taylor, A.R.

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STATE OF TENNESSEE,  }
COUNTY OF SHELBY.  }

I, A. R. Taylor, being first duly
sworn, depose and say:

That I am a resident of Memphis,
Tennessee;

That the foregoing is an original
letter written by the Reverend R. B. Garrett,
and received by me shortly after the date it
bears;

I further say that this letter is
a part of the correspondence between us aris-
ing on account of Mr. Finis L. Bates' book on
the date of the death of John Wilkes Booth.

[Signature]

Subscribed and sworn to before me
by A. R. Taylor this 15th day of May, 1933.

[Signature]

4/21/35

Notary Public in and for
Shelby County, Tennessee.
Mr. A. R. Taylor

Dear Sir,

Applying to your letter of Oct. 21, I assured you that I had had some correspondence with Mr. Bates in regard to the matter mentioned. He asked me to furnish something for his book, but I am very sure that he has not published what I wrote. If he has taken the trouble to verify the statement made by one, which he said was easily done, there would have been no need in publishing his book, and I told him so. There never was the slightest doubt about the death of Mr. Miller, Death, on Apr. 26, 1865, there never was an missing link in the chain which led from the theatre in Washington to my father's barn.
Mr. Bates' letter to me indicates clearly that he had never taken the trouble to study the real history of the flight and death of Booth, even superficially.

Like many men possessed with a theory, he makes every fact bend to his theory. He was so eager to fit the facts to his theory that he clutches at straws.

For instance, it is a fact that on the second day of his stay at my father's home, Booth became alarmed at the appearance of some soldiers in sight of the house and hobbled on his crutches, to some words back of the house when he remained for an hour or two. Mr. Bates in his letter to me alludes to this fact and asks: "How do you know that the same man came back from the woods that went into the woods?"
think no a set of fools that we should not know a man in broad daylight that we had been entertaining for two days? Again in his letter he says that Booth was not identified after his death. But I saw it done, and our whole family, and the officers, many of whom knew him personally, saw it done. Remember that he was a strikingly handsome man with a face one could scarcely forget. The detectives had a printed description of him which they proceeded to verify after his death. It agreed in every particular, height, color of hair, eyes, size of hand, feet. He said, "He has his initials in India ink on his fore arm just below the elbow." I saw the officer roll back his sleeve.
and saw the initials J. W. B. just where
they were said to be. I saw the detec-
tive place the Cabinet Photograph of
John Wilkes Booth, the well known actor,
beside the dead face of the man we
had known for two days, and all the blood
in the world could not persuade me that
God ever made two men so exactly a-
like. I read his diary, from on his
body, and preserved yet in Washington, in
which he referred to what he had
done. I heard him say "Tell my
mother I died for my country. I
did what I thought was right." It
was through another dying utterance
of his, that my father and brother
escaped the penalty of harboring an
assassin when he said, "It is hard
for this man to suffer for what I"
I have done. He does not know who I am. I know by contemporary history that Mary McLeod knew him personally saw the body in Washington, and that in order that no possible mistake might be made, a surgeon who had removed a tumor from his neck came and pointed out the scar of the operation.

I know that his family never had any doubts on the subject. For my library are valuable books bearing the autograph of Edwin Booth, and in one of them a letter which says, "Your family will always have our warmest thanks for your kindness to him whose madness wrought so much ill to us." I knew that they sought and secured the body of the dead man and buried
in the family lot in Greenmount Cemetery in Baltimore, and over it placed a stone on which is carved his name, "John Wildes." I have seen it myself. I know that Mr. Bates' story is only one of many such, utterly improbable and impossible. To ask people to believe that the U.S. government and his own family, and his many friends, should be deceived by a chance resemblance is too great a strain on faith. Many books were written to account for the last Dauphin of France, and many people believed that Napoleon's Marshal Ney escaped
the bullets of the firing squad and died of old age in North Carolina, but nobody who takes the trouble to acquaint himself with the facts, will ever have any doubt that John Wilkes Booth died at my father's house on April 26, 1865.

Yours very truly,
R. E. Garrett.

P.S.
I have not read Dr. Nate's book but we acquainted with his theory through his letter to me.