

Assassination

326 West Fourth Street
Greenwich Village
New York, N.Y.
July 28, 1926

Miss Ida M. Tarbell
CITY

My dear Madame:-

At the suggestion of Mr. Harry H. McClure, of the Associated Newspapers, 170 Madison Ave., I am writing to say that I have some interesting unpublished material touching the assassination of Mr. Lincoln, and should be glad to place it at your disposal under certain conditions. Mr. McClure thought you might think it of sufficient importance to include in your Lincoln series.

Briefly stated, the possession of this material enables the person bringing it out to perform the service of forever dispelling the doubt that John Wilkes Booth was killed at the Garrett farm in Virginia. For 61 years it has been zealously guarded, in fact, appears to have been lost for quite a while, and after knocking six months at the inner shrine I managed to obtain admission. My study of the subject covers more than two years in all. Up to the time of finding this new data I was leaning strongly to the belief that Booth made his escape and committed suicide at Enid, Okla. in 1903. Assuming that the documents I have are authentic, now I am just as well convinced the other way.

If you have investigated this phase of Mr. Lincoln's life you must know there are thousands of people studying and hunting with the idea that Booth never paid the penalty. More than 100 books and pamphlets are among the contributions to *Lincoliana*, on the assassination alone. Only last year Lippincott's allowed Mrs. Babcock in "Booth and the Spirit of Lincoln" to follow the Enid myth through to the end. In the November, 1924, Harper's Magazine, Wm.G. Shepherd convinced many that the wrong man was killed. The War Department receives thousands of letters annually expressing this doubt in the public mind.

I thought, therefore, that it would be a service to the public and a literary triumph to bring forth these unpublished affidavits. As a historian, I insist that they be used in full, the some 70,000 words, with the proper introductions and weaving. If in book form, so much the better, and then syndication and magazine use; otherwise, in pamphlet form, for I am determined to bring them forth. Certain papers like the New York Times wanted to chop the material cruelly; I said no, I would wait until it could be handled properly.

I have lengthy statements from Herold, the man who fled with Booth, and from Dr. Mudd and Mrs. Surratt, which I am told read like fiction. They were taken fresh on the heels of the assassination and were suppressed by Mr. Stanton. Included also are statements from Major Rathbone, Mrs. Quesenbery, Alexis Thomas and others; likewise affidavits from five witnesses who identified the body of Booth on the Monitor Montauk.

I can not promise to hold this material any length of time if I get a chance to turn it loose advantageously, but if you want a shot at it I will save it to the best of my ability under the circumstances, considering that delay might enable someone else to beat me to it and negative to a large extent my labors. It is impossible to describe its interest and value in a letter, and I trust you will write me at your earliest convenience if you are interested in this statement. I send copy of this letter to you also at Bethel, Conn., at the further suggestion of Mr. McClure, who indicated he might be interested in a syndicate venture after publication in book form.

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