

STATE OF TENNESSEE,)
COUNTY OF SHELBY.) SS:

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 arising on account of Mr. Finis L. Bates' book on the date of the death of John Wilkes Booth.



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

my com esp
4/21/35

Alvin Gregory
Notary Public in and for
Shelby County, Tennessee.



COURT STREET BAPTIST CHURCH.

R. B. GARRETT, Pastor.

RESIDENCE, 457 LONDON STREET.

PORTSMOUTH, VA.

Oct 24 1907

Mr A. R. Taylor.

Dear Sir.

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Replying to your letter of Oct. 21 - I would say that I have 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 had taken the trouble to verify the statements made by me, which he could have easily done, there would have been no use in publishing his book. and I told him so.

There never was the slightest doubt about the death of J. Miles Booth on Apr. 26. 1865. There never was a missing link in the chain which led from the theatre in Washington to my father's barn.



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R. B. GARRETT, PASTOR.

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Mr. Bates letter to me indicate 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 clutched 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 passing of some soldiers in sight of the house and hobbled on his crutches, to some woods back of the house where 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 then went into the woods? Did he

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think us 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, foot, &c. It said "He has his initials in India ink on his fore arm just below the elbow." I saw the officers roll back his sleeve



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and saw the initials J. W. B. just where they were said to be. I saw the detective 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 books in the world could not persuade me that God ever made two men so exactly alike. I read his diary, found 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 best." It was though another dying utterance of his, that my father and brothers escaped the penalty of harboring an assassin when he said, "It is hard for this man to suffer for what I



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have done. He does not know who I am.
 I know by contemporary history that many
 who 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. In 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 know
 that they sought and secured the
 body of the dead man and buried



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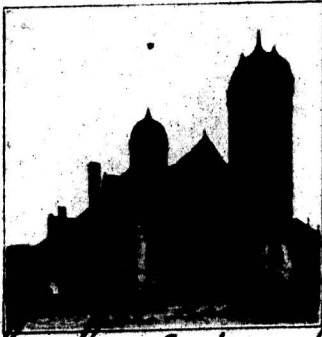
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it in the family lot in Greenmount Cemetery in Baltimore, and over it placed a stone on which is carved his name, "John Wilkes." I have seen it myself. I know

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 into believing that Wilkes Booth ^{while he was still alive} was dead, is too great a strain on faith.

Many books were written to account for the lost Dauphin of France, and many people believed that Napoleon's Marshal Ney escaped



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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 but that John Wilkes Booth died at my father's house on April 26 1865.

Yours Very Truly
R. B. Garrett.

P.S.

I have not seen Mr. Bates' book but am acquainted with his theory through his letters to me.