



COURT STREET BAPTIST CHURCH.

R. B. GARRETT, PASTOR.

RESIDENCE, 457 LONDON STREET.

PORTSMOUTH, VA. Oct 24 1907

Mr A. R. Taylor.

Dear Sir.

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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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 spacing of some soldiers in sight of the house and hobbled on his crutches, to some woods back of the home 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? Did he

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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 thought 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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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 Caro-
lina, 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.