Ford Motor Company

FACTORY AND GENERAL OFFICES
DEARBORN, MICH.

ALEXANDRIA, VA. February 28, 1938.

#8.

Mr. F. L. Black,
The Edison Institute,
Dearborn, Michigan.

Dear Mr. Black:-

Further in connection with the John Wilkes Booth matter:

We enclose original letter from Mr. T. C. Valentine, Deputy Clerk, Caroline County, Bowling Green, Va., dated February 24, 1938, addressed to our Zone Manager, Mr. Perry K. Hamilton, whose territory embraces Bowling Green and King George, Va. I have, today, written Mr. Hamilton, who is now in the territory, to check further with Mr. Valentine and furnish us with a record of the recorded Garrett family heirs shown in Mr. Valentine's report as Commissioner in Chancery in disposition of the Garrett property.

For your further information, we also enclose a typewritten excerpt from Pages 267 to 270, inclusive; also Page 427, of Marshall Wingfield's book entitled "A History of Caroline County, Virginia", as published in Richmond, Va., 1924. Perhaps you already have this information.

Yours very truly,
FORD MOTOR COMPANY,

J. W. McConnolly
Traffic Department.

JWC/c

E. S. COGHILL,
CLERK

T. C. VALENTINE
DEPUTY CLERK

CLERK'S OFFICE CAROLINE COUNTY

BOWLING GREEN, VIRGINIA

February 24 1938

Mr Perry K Hamilton
Alexandria
Virginia

Chancery suit of
Garrett,etc
Vs
Garrett et als Ended Papers
1923

Dear Mr Hamilton,

I have just been doing a little thinking since you were here, in regard to the heirs of RRH Garrett, on whose place , J Wilkes Boothe was captured and shot,

I remembered that some years ago the property was sold, and I as Commissioner in Chancery made a report in it, ; which report sets out the heirs of WRichard H Garrett , who died in 1878, No such name as Shortbridge appears as one of them, You can see at a glance that Richard H Garrett who died in 1878, could not possibly have been the grand father, of the 93 year old man in California,

If you are coming this way, I can let you see the report, which gives all of the heirs at law of Richard H Garrett,

Yours very truly

T. C. Valentine

"A History of Caroline County, Virginia" by Marshall Wingfield. (From its Formation in 1727 to 1924. Compiled from Original Records and authoritative sources and profusely illustrated). Press of Trevvet Christian & Co., Inc., Richmond, Va., 1924.

Excerpt from Pages 267 to 270, inclusive:

"THE KILLING OF BOOTH IN CAROLINE: Many historians have stated that John Wilkes Booth killed Abraham Lincoln to rid his country of a tyrant. But the south was not his (Booth's) country for he was never at any time a citizen or a resident of the Confederacy. The true motive of the assassination was to avenge the death of Captain John Y. Beall, Booth's bosom friend, whom he thought had been unjustly executed.

"Beall, a Virginian of good birth, liberal education, attractive personality and remarkable courage, undertook a hazardous enterprise on Lake Erie in the fall of 1864, and was captured and sentenced to death as a pirate. Booth interested himself in Beall's behalf, procured documents to prove that his friend was a commissioned officer of the Confederate Navy, presented the evidence to Lincoln, and secured from him the promise that Beall should not be executed, but should be treated as a prisoner of war. This promise gave offense to Secretary Seward, who induced the President to sanction the execution and Beall was hanged at Governor's Island on February 24, 1865.

"Booth, immediately upon the execution of Beall, organized a conspiracy for the assassination of both Lincoln and Seward, and on April 14, 1865 seven weeks after the hanging of the gallant Confederate captain, the plot was executed.

"On April 24th, just ten days after the assassination, Booth and Herold, his accomplice, entered Caroline, being ferried across the Rappahannock River, from Port Conway to Port Royal, by a negro fisherman named Rollins. On the same ferry boat were three Confederate cavalrymen - Jett, Ruggles and Bainbridge - and it is said that Booth sat on one of their horses while crossing the river.

"Three or four miles farther on Booth was left at the residence of Richard H. Garrett, under the guise of a wounded Confederate soldier by the name of Boyd, and Herold went on with the three soldiers to the town of Bowling Green, thirteen miles distant.

"The next day Herold came back to the Garrett farm and joined Booth, and that same afternoon a troop of Federal cavalry in search of the assassins passed the Garrett home (Booth lying in the yard at the time) and aroused so much suspicion on the part of Mr. Garrett that he urged the departure of his questionable guests, who thereupon sought refuge in a woods back of the plantation. After nightfall the assassins returned and pleaded so earnestly for shelter that "Jack" Garrett, one of Mr. R. H. Garrett's sons, consented that they might occupy a large tobacco barn which stood near the house; but becoming apprehensive that the men might try to make off with his father's horses, the son stationed himself in an adjacent corn-crib and remained on watch that night.

"The Federal cavalrymen came on to Bowling Green, where they found Jett, one of the soldiers with whom Booth had journeyed as far as Garrett's, and seizing him in bed at midnight, they compelled him, at the point of a revolver, to guide them to the Garrett plantation where Booth had been left the previous day.

The cavalrymen reached Mr. Garrett's home at 2:00 o'clock Wednesday morning, April 26th, and demanded that he disclose the whereabouts of the assassins. Mr. Garrett insisted that the two strangers had gone to the woods, whereupon Lieutenant Baker, thinking that he was being foiled in his effort to capture the men, called for a rope to hang Mr. Garrett to one of the trees on the lawn. To save his father, the son came forward and pointed out the tobacco barn as the hiding place of the fugitives. (Garrett's Testimony - SURRATT TRIAL - Page 302). The boy was pushed inside the dark building by Lieutenant Baker, but was ordered out by Booth who threatened to take his life. Baker then called to Booth saying, "We have fifty armed men around this barn, and unless you surrender we will set fire to the building." Out of the darkness came the voice of Booth, saying, "Captain, give a lame man a chance. Draw your men up before the door and I will come out and fight the whole command." Baker replied to this challenge saying, "We came to arrest you, not to fight you," to which the voice in the darkness responded, "Well then, my brave boys, you may prepare a stretcher for me."

"Herold broke under the strain and surrendered his arms, and was pulled out empty-handed and turned over to one Doherty, one of the cavalrymen, who tied him to a tree. Conger, another member of the troop, then set fire to the barn, and, as the flames lit up the interior, Baker caught sight of Booth as he was about to make his exit. He had just arisen from his bed of straw, with a crutch under his left arm and a carbine in his right hand, and was in the act of starting toward the fire. He caught up an old table as if to smother out the blaze, but, looking up he saw the flames mounting to the rafters. "Then," Baker relates, "he seemed to abandon hope, and his countenance fell. Dropping his crutch and passing the carbine to his left hand, with a kind of limping, halting, jump, he advanced toward the door where Baker, unseen by him, was awaiting his approach. When within about twelve feet of the door he paused for a moment, as if trying to make some decision, when a shot rang out, and, with an upward spring, Booth fell on his back, a ball having passed entirely through his neck.

"Baker was upon the fallen man in an instant, wrenching the revolver from his clenched hand. Garrett next entered the barn calling for help to put out the fire. Conger rushed in, exclaiming, "he shot himself," to which Baker replied, "He did not, you shot him." Conger rejoined, "I did not," and Baker persisted in saying, "He did not shoot himself, for I saw him the whole time; and the man who shot him goes back to Washington under arrest."

"The fire continued to gain headway, and the apparently lifeless body was removed from the danger of the flames and laid under a tree. Signs of life reappeared, and he was carried to Mr. Garrett's porch and a messenger was sent to Port Royal for a physician, Doctor Urquhart, who, on his arrival, gave it as his opinion that Booth could not live more than one hour.

"Conger, eager to be off to Washington with the momentous news, began to rifle the pockets of the dying man, who murmured all the while, "Kill me, please kill me," until he lapsed into unconsciousness which at seven o'clock deepened into death.

"The first sergeant of the company from which the detachment of cavalry was drawn - Boston Corbett by name - soon claimed that he fired the shot which killed Booth, and when called to account by his superior officer, said "Colonel, Providence directed me." Corbett afterwards toured the North lecturing on the pursuit and capture of the assassins, and was everywhere acclaimed and welcomed as an avenger of blood. His story was not corroborated by the testimony of a single witness out of the thirty-four men who were his comrades on the expedition.

"In after years Corbett received an appointment as door keeper of the Kansas House of Representatives, and, while serving in that capacity, tried to exterminate that body with a revolver, in consequence of which he finished his days in a lunatic asylum.

"The question as to whether Booth was shot by one of his captors, or whether he killed himself, has never been, and never can be, definitely answered.

"Booth's body was sewn up in an army blanket and conveyed by a market wagon to Belle Plain where it was put on board a boat and sent to Washington. A post mortem examination, for the purpose of identification, revealed that the bullet which caused his death passed through the neck bone, and this section of the perforated vertebrae was removed by the surgeon-general for preservation as a national memento. His remains were placed in a gun box and buried beneath a cell of the Old Penitentiary.

"Herold, Mrs. Surratt, Payne and Atzerodt were tried as accomplices in the conspiracy, and were convicted and hanged. Miss Rita Gray, of Upper Zion owns a charred section of Booth's crutch which was taken from the barn."

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Excerpt from Page 427, same book:

"THE GARRETT FAMILY: The Garrett family, of Caroline is sprung from ancestors who have been honored in many lands for many centuries. The family is of Teutonic origin, "Ger," the root of the name, meaning "firm spear." The family, or a branch of it, came over to Britain with William the Conquerer, and there the root "Ger" became "Gar." A number of this family were ennobled by the English kings and Queens from time to time and a coat of arms granted to them. Some of them became high church officials in the Church of England, and others became Quakers. A number of the members of this family went to Ireland and purchased the sequestered lands of the Irish gentry after the Conquest. Many of the Garretts, of England and Ireland bear noble titles to this day. The Caroline Garretts are descended from ancestors who came to Virginia from Leicestershire England in 1684. Sir William Garrett, of London, was one of the charter members of the first Virginia colony, and it is believed that he was one of its first Chairmen. The Garretts of Caroline have been, for the most part, planters, but several have held public office, among them W.R.W.Garrett, Treasurer of the county, and C.W.Garrett, his son, postmaster at the county seat.

"The Garrett arms are thus described:

"Arms: Ar. on a fesse sa. a lion pass.betw.two flanches sa.

"Crest: A lion pass.erm.resting the dexter paw on a fleur-de-lis or."

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