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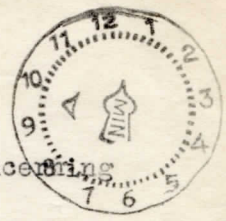

JUL 1 1925

My dear Mr Black:-

I have your favor of June 25 with its questions concerning evidence pertaining to the identification of John Wilkes Booth.

Evidence, like everything else in the world, is relative in value. Six jurymen may find evidence sufficient to hang a man in testimony the other six jurymen may ~~find~~ consider of no evidential value.

It seems that what you accept as evidence I do not. For example:- In your recently published article "What the Mark of the Scalpel Tells" I read that Dr May, who knew Booth well, did not know by looking at his face that he had ever seen the man. To identify a man's neck by a scar when his face can not be recognised, is not evidence to me. Men by the thousand have scars on their necks. My own husband, a highly decent gentlemen, had a bunch of boils once that left their scars. A neighbor had a carbuncle that left, from the cut of the lance, a scar he took to his grave. Dr May's evidence has no evidential value to me as an identification of Booth. On the other hand it has evidence that the body was not that of Booth.

The summary of your testimony I have studied carefully. For me much of it has no value whatever as evidence. You state that Colonel Everton J Conger gave certain testimony at the conspiracy trial- testimony to the effect that he had seen Booth in Washington etc.

In my conspiracy trial report I find that in answer to a question by Judge Holt as to whether Conger had seen Booth previously ~~he answered~~ so that he knew the man killed was the same man, Conger's answer was, "I thought I could recognise him from his resemblance to his brother. I had often seen his brother Edwin Booth and was satisfied this was the man from his resemblance to him".

To me this is not evidence.

Your article refers to certain testimony given by Captain Jett at the Surratt trial. But Captain Jett gave no evidence at the Surratt trial - not in my official report of proceedings.

There is a question in my mind as to the alleged tattoo mark on Booth's right hand. If there was such a mark it must have been small and inconspicuous as no mark shows in any photograph on his right hand. Nor was this mark known to be on his hand by those who knew him quite well for when the reward was offered he was described minutely even to a peculiar ring he wore on his little finger. A ring could have been easily taken off. A tattoo mark could not. Why was it never mentioned?

You ask other questions, interesting every one. There will always be questions asked. So again I say it is a matter of what we accept as evidence. There were reasons why the body of the man killed in the barn should be declared to be that of Booth. In my book I have referred to this.

I have asked that a copy be sent you and while I do not expect you to be convinced I think you will be interested.

I have much Lincoln material of value and interest- several stories. The forth coming book is the only one featuring Booth.

Very truly

Mrs Bernie Babcock

Mr F.L.Black
Dearborn, Mich
June 28 1925