Lincoln Scrap Book P 91-92

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR.

OFFICIAL COPY FROM THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL.

So much has been said about the spoliation of the Booth diary since the charge was made by General Butler in Congress, that the people generally, and almost without an exception, the leading journals demand that the book be published, no matter whether its contents be important or unimportant. Upon representations to Mr. Johnson of all the circumstances, and of the general demand that the diary be printed, in order that the people may for themselves judge of the facts and merits of the controversy in reference to it, the President has given his consent that a copy be published.

Mr. Johnson, never having himself seen the diary, had, some days ago, ordered a certified copy to be made, which was accordingly furnished. We are permitted to publish this record, as certified by the Judge Advocate:

Executive Mansion,
Washington, D. C., May 9, 1867.

The Secretary of War will please furnish the President with a certified copy of the "diary" found upon the body of J.Wilkes Booth, together with a succinct statement of all the facts connected with its capture and its possession by the War Department.

Andrew Johnson.

War Department,
Washington City, May 14, 1867.

Sir: I have the honor to submit herewith a copy of the entries contained in the memorandum book found on the person of J. Wilkes Booth at the time of his capture, certified by General Holt, Judge Advocate General, (who has possession of the book), together with his report in relation thereto.

The memorandum book was first seen by me about the 26th day of April 1865, shortly after Booth's capture, and a few hours before his remains reached Washington. It was brought to my house by Provost Marshal Baker and another person, who was, I think, Lieutenant Colonel Conger.

The book was then examined by me, in presence of General Eckert, Assistant Secretary of War, and was found to contain only the entries certified by General

Holt, also some photographs of females. Immediately preceding the entries some pages appeared to have been cut out, but there was nothing indicating what had been written thereon or whether anything had been written, nor when or by whom they had been cut out.

Immediately after careful examination of the book and its contents, it was placed in the hands of General Eckert, in the same condition as when I first saw it, to be delivered to the Judge Advocate General, in whose possession, after its delivery to him by General Eckert, I am informed and believe it has continued until the present time.

The last time I saw the book was some time last winter. It was then before the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives, and was, in all respects, in exactly the same condition as when I saw it first, without any change or alteration, so far as I could discover, in its contents.

General Eckert reported to me that, upon receiving the memorandum book from me, he sealed it up, and locked it up in his safe, and it continued in his possession until he delivered it to the Judge Advocate General, and that it was then in the same condition as when it was brought to my house by Baker.

Very respectfully, your obe'nt serv't,
Edwin M. Stanton, Sec. of War.

To the President.

The following is the copy of the writing (which was in pencil) found in the diary when taken from the body of J. Wilkes Booth.

Official copy: J. Holt, Judge Advocate General.

"Te Amo."
April 13-14, Friday, the Ides.

Until today nothing was ever thought of sacrificing to our country's wrongs. For six months we had worked to capture. But our cause being almost lost, something decisive and great must be done. But its failure was owing to others who did not strike for their country with a heart. I struck boldly, and not as the papers say. I walked with a firm step through a thousand of his friends; who stopped, but pushed

the blow I struck. I may before my God, but not to man. I think I have done well. Though I am abandoned, with the curse of Cain upon me, when, if the world knew my heart, that one blow would have made me great, though I did desire no greatness.

To-night I try to escape these blood-hounds once more. Who, who can read his fate? God's will be done.

I have too great a soul to die like a criminal. O, may he, may he spare me that, and let me die bravely.

I bless the entire world. Have never hated or wronged any one. This last was not a wrong, unless God deems it so. And it's with him to damn or bless me. And for this brave boy with me, who often prays (yes, before and since) with a true and sincere heart, was it crime in him, if so, why can he pray the same.

I do not wish to shed a drop of blood, but "I must fight the course." 'Tis all that's left me.

Upon a piece of paper found in the diary, and supposed to have been torn from it, is written the following:

My Dea --, (piece torn out.) forgive me, but I have some little pride. I cannot blame you for want of hospitality. You know your own affairs. I was sick, tired, with a broken limb, and in need of medical advice. I would not have turned a dog from my door in such a plight. However, you were kind enough to give us something to eat, for which I not only thank you, but on account of the rebuke and manner in which to --(piece torn out) It is not the substance, but the way in which kindness is extended that makes one happy in the acceptance thereof. The sauce to meat is ceremony. Meeting were bare without it. Be kind enough to accept the enclosed $5 (although hard to spare) for what have rec'd.

Most respectfully, your obedient servant.

REPORT OF THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL.

Bureau of Military Justice, May 14, 1867

Respectfully returned with the copy asked for.

The "diary" purports to be one for 1864, and the leaves cut or torn from it probably contained enteries of that year and were thus destroyed by Booth himself.

Trace Lincoln Hanks Booth Page 91-92

It is absolutely certain that the Diary is, in all respects, as it was when it came into my hands, and Col. Conger, who was prominent in the pursuit and capture of Booth, after having carefully examined it in my presence on yesterday, declared its condition to be now precisely the same as when he took it from Booth's body after he had been shot -- the writing in it being the same and all which it then contained. Col. Conger was examined before the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives today.

J. Holt, Judge Advocate General.