New York World
Dec 23, 1931

Booth's Suicide Just a Myth, Says Authority on Lincoln

Doctors Found the Wrong Foot Broken When They Focused X-Ray on Shrunken Cadaver of Western Saloon Fighter, Declares Lewis.

The amusing controversy over the death of John Wilkes Booth, assassin of Abraham Lincoln, after doctors examined a mummified corpse of what is supposed to have been the actor, had led Lloyd Lewis, author of "Myths After Lincoln," to place the story of the actor's suicide in Enid, Okla., in 1903, in the category of a popular folk tale.

By LLOYD LEWIS.

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CHICAGO, Dec. 23.—According to watchful reporters, six instead of three Chicago doctors are focusing X-ray machines upon a pitifully shrunken cadaver in an attempt to decide whether it be that of the real or the pretended John Wilkes Booth, assassin of Lincoln.

Such an examination may gratify scientists and enhance the sideshow value of this shrunken monstrosity, but it can prove nothing except that the pretender had certain scars which roughly tally with those said to have been carried by Booth.

Saloon Fighter.

David E. George, whose mummy is being scrutinized, is reputed to have had saloon fights in his life, up to his suicide in 1903, in the Southwest. Hundreds of Wild Westerners could, by this system of proof, be established as Booth.

The doctors began by announcing the mummy had a fractured right foot, but when it was pointed out that Booth had a fractured left foot, they quickly discovered the mummy's left foot shows signs of an injury.

Plenty of Proof.

Before this mummy can be proved Booth's, it must be established that Booth was not killed as the United States government and many witnesses said in 1865.

Against the sworn testimony is a vast body of legend, rumor, fantastic claims. From primitive times mankind always has cherished just such folk tales.

I have heard backwoodsmen in Utah say Brigham Young did not die as announced, but was wandering in Mexico for many years. Today many say Jesse James was not shot by Robert Ford.

Only Ballyhoo to Old Veteran.

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MADISON, Wis., Dec. 23.—Dr. Hervie A. Dobson, 88, U. S. Secret Service operative in Washington when Abraham Lincoln was President, today said "this John Wilkes Booth mummy argument is just scientific ballyhoo for next year's carnival season."

"If this thing is Booth," he asked, "how did the man who was captured in a barn back in April, 1865, happen to have Booth's diary in his pocket?

"How did another conspirator in that crime happen to be with him then?

"Why did Booth's brother and sister, who came in a closed carriage, ask to see the body and then want to take it away with them?

"If it was not Booth whose body lay on the gunboat when so many of the people in Washington who knew him came to see it, why wasn't that known then?"