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DEARBORN
MAR 23 1925

C 3 M

Editor Dearborne Independent,
Dearborne,
Michigan,

March,
21st,
1925.

Dear Editor:-

Have just read with much interest, your article of March 21st, issue, in the Dearborne Independent entitled, "Did Lincolns Assassin Escape"

For yours and the general publics information, I will narrate what history and facts that I have gleaned in both my travels of the North and South of many states in the Union, as reguards the disposition of the body of John Wilks Booth, the Assassin of our President Abraham Lincoln.

On April 14th, 1865, at about 9,30 P.M. at Fords Theatre, Washington, D.C. Mr Lincoln, Mrs Lincoln Mrs Harris and Major Rathburn were sitting in the Presidents private box, the box was on the second floor, looking down upon the stage,

President Lincoln was sitting in a high-backed rocking chair, at the corner of the box, Mrs Lincoln sitting on his right, Mrs Harris sitting next, and Major Rathbone sitting on a sofa, behind Mrs Harris,

The door that entered the Presidents box, had been left standing open, during the entire play, "American Cousin" was the play of the evening, at about nine o, clock a man came to the Theater, and inquired for the Presidents messenger, exibiting an envelope, suposed to be for General Grant, made some inquiry and then went away.

At fifteen minutes after ten ock, John Wilkes Booth passed behind the spectaters in the dress circle, showed a card to the Presidents messenger and stood for a short time, gazing down upon the stage and orchertra, he next entered the vestibule to the Presidents box, and securely fastened the door by bracing a short board against it from the wall, so the door could not be opened from the outside, should help atempt to enter, atracted by his shots, from the outside.

Over.

Booth the drew a small silver mounted Dirringer Pistol,in his right hand and a double-edged dagger in his left hand, President Lincoln was leaning slightly forward,with his head turned toward the audience very much interested in the play,

Just then Booth stepped into the box,immeadiately behind Mr Lincoln,holding his pistol over the back of the chair, fired and shot the president through the back of his head, the head of the president fell slightly forward, and his eyes closed, his attidude otherwise,remaining unchanged,

Major Rathbone instantly sprang forward and steped Booth, but Booth released himself from the Major, dropped the pistol,stabbed him with the dagger, inflacting a wound upon his arm,near the sholder, Booth then shouted"Sic septer tyrannis" - "The South is avenged" - and placing his hands upon the railing of the box, leaped upon the stage below.

As he leaped,his spur caught in the flag that draped the stage,and he fell,immeadiately arising,he brandished the dagger, and turning toward the audience he shouted "The South is avenged" He then rushed across the stage,to the stage door in the rear of the theatre,Booth ran,meeting two persons only,struck them as he passed,went out the door, closed the door behind him, and mounted a horse which a boy was holding for him, rode over the Anacosta bridge across the Potomac river,and gave his real name to the guard that challenged him and found refuge among sympathizers of Lower Maryland,

Mr J B Stewart persued the assassin,but reached the stage door only in time ,to see him galloping off on his horse,Major Rathbone rushed for assistance,encountering the door Booth had barred, Miss Laura Keene leading actress,came upon the stage, called on all to remain quiet, and gently bathed the head of our unconscious President,commanding the croud to give him fresh air,

John Wilks Booth, was found lurking along with Harold an allie,in the swamps of St Marys,County Maryland and was chased to a barn and surrounded,by then Col Lafayette Baker, later General Baker, and his picked men ,one of which is yet living, Sargent Sampson of 1850, Fourth street, Moline, Illinois, now 83 yrs of age,

General Baker, and Sargent Sampson who was a mamber of the United States secret service, and was in Fords Thetre in Washington the night President Lincoln was shot, Sargent Sampson served at one time as the Presidents body guard, he saw Lincolns head drop forward, as he was shot,and he saw Booth leap over the box railing,and trip on the American flag,as the spur of his boot caught in the drapery of the stage in Fords theatre.

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Subject, "Did Lincolns Assassin Escape"

Sargent Sampson was in the party which persued Booth the assassin and surrounded the barn on Garretts farm Where Booth took refuge, He saw a match applied to the straw, which protruded from the mow door,

General Baker had been ordered to selact a man and proceed to Secretary of War Stanton, for indtructions And Sargent E H Sampson was chosen by Col Baker. Sargent Sampson saw the fatal shot, that mortally wounded John Wilkes Booth,

In the light of the burning barn, through the cracks between the boards he vividly recounts seeing Booth frantically pacing to and froe in the mow of the old Garrett barn, He saw with his own eyes, Boston Corbett fire the shot that wounded Booth and later caused his death, Sargent Sampson helped to drag Booth from the burning building and lay him on the grass near by,

Later Sargent Sampson helped to carry booth to the porch of Garretts farmhouse and place Booth on a mattress and he heard John Wilks Booth gasp "MOTHER" as he died. He remembers Booth asking that his hands be raised so he could once more look upon them and in his dying agony he mumbled "WORTHLESS"-"WORTHLESS"

Sampson rode in the rickety cart which conveyed the body of John Wilkes Booth to the Potomac, He was one who was present and assisted in helping to transfer Booths body to the revenue cutter and saw it placed on the man of War in the Philadelphia navy wards, The body of Booth was disposed of in the darkness on the Potomac and only the elements, and Col Baker,)now deceased) and Sargent E H Sampson know of 1850 Fourth Street Moline Illinois, will ever know just what happened to the body of Booth.

Sargent Sampson says that he took a solmn oath, never to divulge what was done with the body of Booth said the sargent ."I have kept the secret locked up in my breast for more than half a cenyury, and there it will repose, unto and after death, he had kept the secret enshrined within his breast for many years, but when being pressed for the story, he divulged a part and will tell no more.

Subject,"Did Lincolns Assassin escape"

Sargent Sampson was a sargent in the First U.S valvery, He took part in Twenty_Four engagements during the Civil War, and wears a Medal over the wound made by a piecr of shell at the battle of Gettysburg,

While seated upon his horse awaiting orders.on July 3rd, 1863, at five oclock he was wounded by shrapnel, from that hour until yhe morning of July 7th,he lay on the battle field left for dead,and as he was bwing carried away for burial, his bearers discovered life in his body, he was immeadiately removed to ahospital, and on July 8th, he was brot back to life,

I sincerely believe Comrad Sampsons story, having seen him and known of him for many years past, the Civil War records will show, that Col Baker and Sargent E H Sampson were two of the men,that carried out the secret orders of Secretary Stanton to dispose of the body of,John Wilkes Booth, amd we can only deduct from Sampsons story, that Booths body in the darkness of the night, was consigned to the waters of the Potomac,

Yours very truly,

David A Biebinger,

Member of Richard Ellis Post, Janesville, Wis#205. and General Superintendent of Construction, for the Madison Flow Company, Madison Wis.