Ford Motor Company

FACTORY AND GENERAL OFFICES
DEARBORN, MICH.

ALEXANDRIA, VA. January 6, 1938.

#8.

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

Dear Mr. Black:-

Enclosed are two photostats, secured from U.S.Library of Congress today. The smaller photostat covers the page #153 from Ezekiel's "History of the Jews of Richmond" and deals with the John Brown matter, while the larger photostat is that of an article appearing in the Richmond "Enquirer" of Sept. 11, 1873 entitled "A Strange Story - Is Wilkes Booth Still Alive". These matters are covered by your letter of December 24, 1937.

Mounted as fin [illegible]

Yours very truly,
FORD MOTOR COMPANY,

J. W. Connolly
Traffic Department.

JWC/c

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE GRAYS.

Another command popular with the Jewish youth was the Richmond Grays, Company G of the 1st Virginia Infantry, but later Company A of the 12th.

While long expected, to show that in the end how suddenly the war came on, just one month before the John Brown raid, in October, 1859, the Grays paid a visit to New York, where they were entertained by the citizen soldiery of that city. With the Grays at that time were Ellis Ellis, Herman Hirsh, Isadore Lovenstein, Ezekiel M. Ezekiel, Philip Whitlock, and Simon Rosenfels.

On the 19th of November following, the command was ordered to Harper's Ferry. John Brown had incited the negroes to insurrection, and, it was rumored, the Abolitionists were about to free the slaves. At Washington word was received of the capture of Brown, and the company returned home.

Later it went to Charlestown upon the occasion of the hanging of Brown. In numerous homes throughout the country are pictures of Brown taking a negro baby from the arms of its mother and kissing it as he ascends the scaffold. Scores of newspapers have published heart-rending accounts of the alleged event. Notwithstanding this, Philip Whitlock says he was within fifty feet of Brown when he was hung, and states positively that not only did the sage of Ossawatomie fail to indulge in the luxury of kissing a negro baby, but that as a matter of fact there was not a colored person in sight.

Whitlock says, there stood near him a young man who, shortly before had joined the company and had been made a non-commissioned officer. As the drop fell he turned very white. When asked the reason for his paleness, he expressed a desire for a "good stiff drink of whiskey." This young man was John Wilkes Booth, who as the murderer of President Lincoln occupied the limelight less than six years later.

Two days after Virginia passed the ordinance of secession

A STRANGE STORY.

IS WILKES BOOTH STILL ALIVE?

Our own opinion is that he is dead—dead as old Marley, or a door nail, or a nail in a coffin; but there are some who doubt, and would not believe even though his proper ghost were to appear and make assurance doubly sure. The Missouri *Republican* has "seen a man,"—not the man around the corner, but another man, who has seen Booth in the flesh, since his body was administered upon by the Washington military commission. The story, as related to the *Republican* reporter, by an old sailor, is briefly as follows:

TRUTH STRANGER THAN FICTION.

My name, said the narrator, is Carroll Jackson Donelson, and I am a blood relative of Andrew Jackson Donelson, who died recently at Memphis, Tenn., (at the Peabody Hotel), for which city I am now en route to assist in the settlement of his estate. During the war between the sections I was a captain in the Eighth Texas cavalry, known as Terry's Rangers, and was at Terry's side when he fell, on the banks of Green river, in a charge upon Willich's Germans. At the close of the struggle I returned again to the sea, and in 1866 found myself in San Francisco. There I shipped on board the ship Kate Hooper, as first mate, having on board as passengers thirty Chinese women bound for Shanghai. Reaching Singapore we took in a cargo of mahogany, sandal wood, rattan, and sugar. It was in the month of September when we sailed from Singapore, in the strait of Malacca, south of Borneo, and rounded through the Molucco isles, avoiding the monsoons, and passing on the western (?) side of the Pelew islands, a small group north of the equator and near the tenth parallel.

We landed on the island for water; and found a tent there occupied by white men. Five men and one woman made their appearance from the tent. The first one that advanced toward me and extended his hand was J. Wilkes Booth. There was no mistake as to his identity, as I had been an intimate friend of his in Montgomery, Alabama, years before. He directed my men where water could be procured, and then entered into a confidential conversation with me, asking that I should not reveal his name to my men, nor to any one for a period of one year; besides, said he, "the world would not believe you if you were to say that J. Wilkes Booth lives. I have lost my identity among living men. A great government has killed me, buried me, paid its reward, and I live a new and original existence."

His conversation with me was long and earnest, he stating that but one person in his party knew that he was Booth, and that was the female who accompanied him.

"And she," he said, "is my wife."

How he made his escape from the United States he did not reveal, except that he did not leave Washington City for thirty days after the assassination. During his wanderings he had been in Mexico, South America, Africa, Turkey, Arabia, Rome, and latterly in China. While in Rome *he met John Surratt*. In China he entered the imperial service under Ward, the American-Irishman who commanded the Emperor's forces against the rebels of the Tartar breed, the latter being under the command of an American from New Orleans of the sobriquet of "Peacock." While under Ward he was engaged in many battles, and fast gained the Emperor's favor, when an accident served to cause him to leave the country hurriedly by command of Ward.

A MOST ROMANTIC STORY.

While in Shanghai, which has three divisions or settlements of foreigners—Americans, French and English—his old passion for the stage returning, he and several English and American naval officers and residents, with the countenance of Ward, organized a dramatic club, and Booth being the leading spirit, was cast in the character of Richard, in the play of Richard III. All were astonished at the grace and bearing of the youthful actor throughout the performance, until the little scene where Richard and Richmond fight with such terrific energy, when astonishment gave way to a wild storm of applause, and high over all the tumult came the ominous words, "Booth! Booth!" meaning very likely, the elder Booth. The name, the situation, and the startling words, so pierceingly distinct, caused him to become forgetful of where he was. Perhaps the recollection of the burning hate with which his name was heralded throughout the world, caused him to poise his sword and glare like a tiger at the audience. The excitement proved too much for him, and the curtain fell upon an unfinished play with a living Richard.

HE IS STARTED ADRIFT AGAIN.

Ward waited upon Booth the next day and informed him that a lurcher and crew awaited him. No explanations were given, and he set sail for the Carolina islands as a temporary place of abode; but hard winds and bad weather caused him to put into the Pelew islands, where I found him. On leaving Booth he gave me a token which he said his brother Edwin would recognize.

My departure from Booth was hurried by the booming of a gun from our ship, warning us that a breeze had sprung up.

I did not reveal the secret of having met him until the expiration of the year, and when it was told it gained no credence and was treated as the trivial fiction of a seafaring man. After the event on the Pelew Islands, while on the coast of New Guinea, I learned from Americans that the lurcher described had been sighted on that coast. That is the last I heard of Booth.

The token spoken of by Donelson was produced for Maury's inspection, and was a heavy gold medal, heavier than the Mexican silver dollar, bearing appropriate inscriptions, having been presented by the citizens of New York to Booth's father years before the famous actor's death, and while he was at the apex of his histrionic greatness.

The Richmond Enquirer
September 11, 1873