
INTER-SOUTHERN LIFE BUILDING

INTER-SOUTHERN LIFE INSURANCE CO.

JAMES R. DUFFIN,
PRESIDENT

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY Newport
~~WALTON~~, KY.

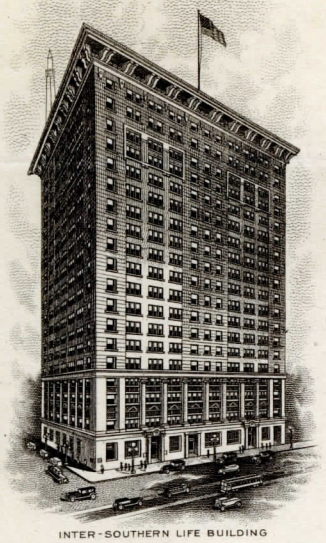
BRUCE H. FRANKS
SPECIAL AGENT

FORD MOTOR CO.
DEARBORN

OCT 25 1926

Mr F.L. Black
Dearborn Mich.

Dear Mr Black: I was in to see Mr. Bruce a week or so ago and he showed me a letter from you in which you expressed the opinion that I am wrong in my conclusion that John St. Helen was John Wilkes Booth. That same man came tramping into Kentucky a short time after he left Texas. He hired to a man to work on the the farm. He got started teaching and taught for about forty five years. From the beginning people suspected that he was John Wilkes Booth. If you would come to Kentucky. I heard it when I was a boy but took no stock in it but about twenty five years ago I saw Booths picture and knew then if the was one chance in a million of Booth's escape peoples suspicion was based on fact. Later I had a chance to study him carefully and when I had investigated for a while I knew he was Booth. But knowing a thing like that and being able to convince others are two different propositions. So I studied him carefully for details scars moles anything that would help to establish the fact. He had the crippled left foot to start with walked with a cane, counting the foot I found eight things marks, scars, moles and disfigurations. So I began to study Booths pictures in the Maganines. I have found everything on Booths picture that I found on him. Soon after Mr Bate:



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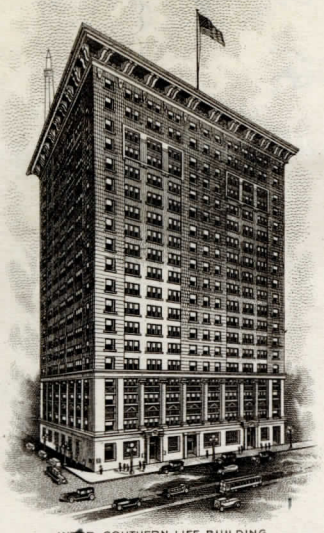
came out I ran across it in the Cincinnati Library I know at a glance that he was the man I wrote to him for a loan of the picture he declined If he had known why I was interested he would have been to see me in two days but he was so cock sure he had Booth's body that I let him remain in ignorance. Then I would not done anything that would have caused the old man trouble for a fortune, I would not ~~know~~ write anything about a month ago I went to see her about it, she knew that people thought he was Booth but did not believe it. I told of my investigation but she would not hear to any publication. She cried a little and begged me not to disgrace him after he was dead I promised her that I would not write anything without her consent.

You have conceived your opinion in the matter But if I could show you two marks of identification on St Helen and on Booth would it have any effect on that opinion? I think I could show you four I am satisfied I can see four but two unmistakably. Bates thought he was Booth and spent twenty years of his life to establish it. He said he was Booth he might of liked. But his picture with the same scars on moles is the best evidence of the truth.

Would it be worth anything to me to convince you that St Helen told the truth? What I would like is for Mr Ford to get interested and try to get the widow to permit the publication



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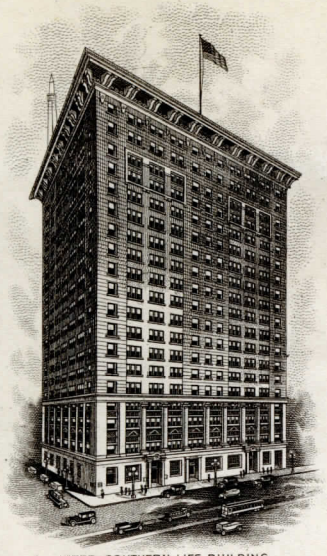
of my investigations. I don't know whether money would induce her but money is a cure for many hurts. The habit of having his pictures made remained with him to the end. She has one that he had made soon after they were married but I have never been able to examine it. I am sure that his pictures will show all the marks that I observed. He was a wonder and if he had not have made the blunder he would have now been in the Hall of Fame instead of his brother. As it was he was perhaps Kentucky's greatest High School Teacher. If you would come down here and mention this name people will tell you that some people that he was Booth, but will say "I don't suppose there is anything in it." People of course who know no more about how Booth looked than a how knows about heaven. I would tell you the same thing if I had never seen Booths picture. There is not one chance in a million that I can be wrong and am as confident as I live that I can convince you though you have already expressed yourself.

Do you think it should be established or let it remain unknown? I have investigated a long time and found out most everthing there is to be found. Everything comes out as I expect. I found one difference but a few weeks ago I found a picture that made it all right. It has been fadana

Bring your picture of St. Helen and Booth if you think it worth while to come

B. H. F.



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ting too fascinating. People think a fellow is a crank who knows that an accepted opinion is wrong. I suspect I have that reputation. And people think it would be wrong to clear it up because he is dead and it might hurt his family.

I have written down the story of my investigations what I have learned step by step. My idea was to include all the pictures of Booth, the picture St Helen and all the pictures of Newton pointing out the scars and moles and other marks of identification. It ought to sell. The knowledge is widespread but I am the only person who investigated it. The surprising thing is that I observed marks fifteen years ago on him and never discovered them on pictures of Booth within the last year and a half. For instance I studied his hands to see if there was any "J.W.B." tatoed on his hands and noticed blue freckles. If you look at your pictures of St Helen you will see the same on St Helen, on most of Booth's pictures they are not there, but I found a picture of Booth, the last one I found and the one I feared did not exist and they are there. If I could see you we could talk it over and surely you will change your mind when I show you the marks. Meet me at the Cincinnati Library some Saturday afternoon. I will get my pictures together and if I can convince you I will prove what I can show is convincing. If Mr Ford is interested bring him along if he has the price of the fare. Your Magazine purports to chronicle neglected truth. It is a chance to Mrs Newton would give her consent to establish the reputation of the magazine for all time if not we can establish the fact that John St Helen was John Wilkes Booth. I would write the articles and you and Mr Ford O.K. it and that would about settle it. This you would do of course if I convince you

Address Newport Rolling Mills
Newport Ky

Very Truly Yours
B H Franks