January 14, 1938

Mr J W Connolly
Traffic Manager
Ford Motor Company
Alexandria Va

Dear Mr Connolly:

Since my letter to you of January 6th, I have received yours of January 5th, 6th, 11th, and 13th. Unfortunately, I have been so tied up with plans for the Ford Exhibit at the New York Fair that I haven't been able to do very much else.

The magazines to which you refer in your letter of January 11th are in the Detroit Public Library and we have borrowed them for photostating here. As you know, we have our own photostatic equipment. I believe that enlargements of the photostatic pictures of the relics which we can make from the magazine illustrations will answer our purpose. Therefore, it will not be necessary to apply to the War Department for this privilege. Of course, if Mr Pitts should at some time look up the original negatives that were made with permission of the Secretary of War, Lamont, we would like to have prints, but I do not believe it will be necessary to request that they photograph the objects overagain.

With reference to a search through the Richmond "Enquirer" there is no hurry about this. When you do go over them, watch for any other items that refer to Booth such as play reviews or announcements.

I am enclosing a photostatic copy of Eisenschiml's review of Izola Forrester's book, which appeared in the Chicago Daily News, December 8, 1937. When I write Messrs Pitts and Garrett within a few days I will send them copies of this. It should give them some amusement. I'll send you copies of the letters I write them.

We now have Pittman's report of the conspiracy trial and the word by word report edited by Ben Perley Poore, and the New York Tribune day by day question and answer report.

None of these reports give the statements taken by the War Department and Washington police department during the days immediately after the assassination, to which Eisenschiml refers. Incidentally, I am curious about his claim that Major Rathbone's statement given a day or two after the assassination differs from that which he gave at the conspiracy trial. What red tape cutting would be necessary to have these statements photostated? Does the War Department have a photostating machine so that the work could be done without removing the files from the building?

Would you give the the copy which appears on the title page of Ezekiel's "History of the Jews of Richmond." It isn't necessary to photostat this. I merely want to have the name of the publisher and date of publication or copyright date so as to have a complete record put on the back of the photostat.

As you know, the Booth escape mythers claim there was something peculiar about the ease with which Booth and Herold crossed the Anacostia bridge. They imply that Booth and Herold knew the password and had some other help in passing the pickets. It is my impression that passwords were not necessary to get in and out of Washington at any time during the war; that while there were pickets at this bridge, unless there was something that particularly aroused suspicion, people passed back and forth across it without even being questioned.

I have just read "A Confederate Spy" by Captain Thomas N Conrad in which he describes how he passed across the bridge a number of times. I wonder if someone in the War Department is an authority on this phase of the question and could give us references to books in addition to this one by Conrad?

We have out here the Official Records of the Rebellion, about 150 volumes, but I have been unable to find anything in them that would enlighten me on the above point.

Frankly, these Booth escape stories will probably appear forever, and we would like to have a complete reference library on the subject in connection with our Lincoln court house and Lincoln collection.

Sincerely yours,

F L BLACK

FLB:EGH
Encl