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WASHINGTON, D. C.

December 27th, 1924.

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Mr. F.L. Black,
Dearborn, Michigan.

Dear Sir:

I have your letter of December 11th relative to correspondence with Dr. Amos T. Harrington, of Hartford, Connecticut.

It is true that I have written what has now grown to be enough for a volume of facts about the escape of John Wilkes Booth and his varied life and various names in the Southwest, in the Island of Ceylon, and his visit with his brother, Edwin, in Paris and in London.

It is the story of the same man written up by his attorney, Finis L. Bates, in rather a crude book, "The Escape and Suicide of John Wilkes Booth."

The story came to me thirty-eight years ago in Princess Anne, Maryland, when Samuel Colona, a man who was thirty years a Justice of the Peace in Princess Anne, gave me the story of his ninety day stay with Booth in Central America and Mexico, beginning with his boat cruise from Vera Cruz to Central America.

Francis Wilson has the autobiography of Edwin Booth and I believe is preparing it for the press. Edwin Booth tells the story of a strange meeting with his brother but leaves it a mystery, gives his sensations upon seeing him and shaking his hand, rather than the cold facts that would substantiate the meeting. This, of course, was of design, as Edwin Booth was not anxious to put on record the fact that he knew for many years of his brother's whereabouts.

I have an affidavit sworn to in Minnesota, from Miss Blanche Booth, Wilkes Booth's neice, that she met her Uncle and spoke to him in the hotel at Enid in which

hotel he committed suicide two weeks later, January 14, 1903.

I have in affidavit form the statement of Wilson Kensay, a sergeant in the regular army, who was in the squad that captured the man in the barn. He and Joe Zisgan were the only two in the party who personally knew John Wilkes Booth. They had been companions of his in New Orleans and they both made the statement at the time and have taken oath to it since that the man killed in the barn was not John Wilkes Booth and did not resemble him in any way.

I have the sworn statement of the oldest of the Garrett boys that the man killed was a man who had walked the sixteen miles from Bowling Green that night, arrived at eight o'clock, was too tired to go on and asked for permission to sleep in the barn; and that John Wilkes Booth, who could not walk at all because of his broken ankle, had left on horseback at two o'clock in the afternoon, so that he had eight hours start on his pursuers.

Some months ago I wrote the Dearborn Independent offering my story in three or four installments, but some one in your office wrote me that Mr. Bates' story had been investigated down at Enid and the whole thing was a fake. This was a little amusing to me as I went to Enid again and again, following out every trail that the book gives, have traced out its statements here at Washington, found official documents substantiating almost all that he says and while there are inaccuracies in his book, they are mostly verbal. For instance, he calls Levi Thrailkell, Levi Treadkell. He speaks of Bel Air, Maryland, as being twelve miles out of Baltimore, when it is exactly twenty-two. But with the exception of such slips as that, his book is an accurate and truthful description, and I have material in my volume that practically substantiates everything that his book says or implies.

I am so sure of this that I would be very glad to have you read the volume and submit the pictures and documents to you with great confidence that your decision would be what every other man's has been who has read them, that there could not be such a set of facts as I prove by documentary evidence, if the story was not real.

Besides, the body of John Wilkes Booth has never been under ground. It can be viewed today by the people who knew him, as it has been by thousands who knew him and were thoroughly familiar with the family and photographs. I could make a volume of the sworn statements of people that it is in reality John Wilkes Booth.

Mr. Black
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The letter you write me calls Samual Colona Coleman, and Dr. Harrington is also in error as to the photostatic copy of the Palace Hotel register being in the hands of Francis Wilson. It was in the hands of W.P. Campbell, State Historian of Oklahoma, in charge of the historic documents in the State House, but who died recently. His papers are to be sent up to me as soon as his son can get around to it. When they arrive I shall be glad to let you see the name of John St. Helen registered the day after Junius Brutus Booth, eldest son, and his mother, registered at the same hotel.

I have found here in Washington many of the department chiefs, officers in the Pension Department and elsewhere, who thoroughly believe from information received at first hand that the man who was buried for Booth was an obscure hired man by the name of Ruddy, who had been sent on an errand by Booth to get his papers for him, and was caught in that trap, shot by Corbett and only identified by the papers which were found on him.

Very truly yours,

Clarence True Wilson

CLARENCE TRUE WILSON
General Secretary

CTW/cm