FORD MOTOR CO.
DEARBORN

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Winchester, Tenn.

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The Dearborn Independent,
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Gentlemen:

With much interest, I have read your John Wilks Booth articles. A few years ago I made some local investigations for the "Oklahoma Historical Society", and obtained some very interesting information in connection with the David E.George matter. It had been rummered that D.E.George had married in Franklin County, Tennessee, under the name of Booth.

After interviewing several old people living near Sewanee, Tennessee, a small town in this county, I learned that a strange and very peculiar man, to the mountain people, had come there in the year 1872 and married Mrs Louisa J.Payne, a widow, who had a boy who was twelve years old at the time of the marriage, named Cager Payne. I looked through the Court Records and found the original marriage license and attached certificate, dated February 25th, 1872.

John W.Booth to Louisa J.Payne. The old residents told me that Booth soon left the woman. I learned that Cager, her son, lived at Fayetteville, Tennessee and made a trip there to see him. The Oklahoma Historical Society had sent to me photographs of D.E.George. I was very much surprised when going into Cager Payne's house to see an enlarged picture of his stepfather on the wall and that same was the photograph of the same man George whose picture I had. He then showed me other small pictures of Booth and they were examined very closely and I feel sure that David E.George and the John W. Booth that married this woman were the same man.

Mr.Cager Payne stated that they never discussed the matter very much, but that he would give me some facts pertaining to the matter for the Society. He also had enlarged photographs of his mother, Louisa J.Payne and his sister, Laura Ida Booth, the daughter of John W.Booth, who left before she was born.

Mr.Payne stated that being twelve years old he remembered Booth well and that he heard him tell his mother, when he did not know that he was about, that he was John Wilks Booth and the same man who assassinated President Lincoln, and that he might have to leave at any time and that she need not think anything strange when he was gone. Stating that he would make affidavit to these facts any time. He still lives at Fayetteville, Tennessee. By some means it soon got rummered about this county that Mrs Payne had married John Wilks Booth who had escaped. He took her and Cager went to Memphis he passed a citizen on the streets of Memphis who turned round and looked back at him and said to the party with him

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If that isn't John Wilks Booth,it is his ghost,Booth left Memphis at once and neither Cager nor his mother ever heard of him any more until Cager identified him at Enid Oklahoma after he was dead under the name of D.E.George.

The daughter Laura Ida never saw her father except after it was embalmed. Her picture,which I saw at Cager Paynes home,revealed the fact that she was a very fine looking woman,

Mr.Payne told me that his mother told him and his half sister, Laura Ida Booth,that the Booth she had married was none other than John Wilks who escaped and that another man was killed whom they thought was Booth. Mr.Payne is an honorable citizen of his community and states that with all the facts and circumstances before him as he has them,he could not believe anything else than that John Wilks Booth,John W.Booth and D.E.George are one and the same man and that he positively knows that John W.Booth and David E.George are the same man.

After the death of Mrs Booth,Laura Ida lived with Mr.Payne until she was fourteen yeans old at that age she developed talent for the stage,hired herself to a traveling company and has been on the state ever since.

I have before me a letter from her dated January 29th,1924, at that time her address was 116 West 77th St.,New York,N.Y.
In the several letters I have,the things she states fully coroberate the statements of Cager Payne. Her Stage Name is Mrs Art Norman. She objects to the publicity of being the daughter of John Wilks Booth,but states that it is true.

Now I have no interest in this matter except curiosity and would like to know what the facts really are. Your investigation has not yet removed the Idea from my mind that J.Wilks Booth escaped and died at Enid,Oklahoma under the name of D.E.George.

I do not know anything about the truth of the details of ~~#########~~ Judge Bate's story or the St.Helen matter,but the the honest story given,almost reluctantly, by Mr.Cager Payne has a volume of truth behind it,in my opinion. This is only an outline of the facts before me. I have the full report of the Oklahoma Historical Society which concludes that David E.George was Booth.

Very respectfully yours,

Roy J. Wilson

RJW/k