

The Surratt Courier

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Louise Oertly, Editor

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President's Message

With the arrival of autumn and cooler weather, we begin to think of pumpkins, hayrides, bonfires, and Halloween. Like many of our holidays, Halloween is a compromise between pagan and Christian rituals.

To mark the end summer and the harvest, the ancient Celts celebrated the festival of Samhain on October 31st. The next day, November 1st, was the start of the new year and of the dark, cold days of winter.

It was during those dark hours before the new year that the Celts believed that the boundary between the worlds of the living and the Otherworld blurred. This allowed ghosts of the dead and Otherworldly spirits to enter this world. To ward off any mischievous spirits, the Celts would light sacred bonfires. However, the Celtic priests used the presence of those same spirits to help make predictions for the future, which would give the people hope during the long winter months. They would also offer sacrifices to placate the Celtic gods so that the people and their livestock would survive the winter. During these celebrations, the Celts wore costumes consisting of animal heads and skins. Perhaps the precursor of today's Halloween costumes.

Believing it would help protect them during the coming winter months, at the end of the celebrations, each household would take home a flame from the sacred bonfire to relight their hearth fires, which they had

extinguished earlier that evening. Perhaps it was a symbol of a new beginning.

As the pagan and Christian worlds began to mesh, so too did many of their celebrations. In the eighth century, it was Pope Gregory III who declared November 1st as All Hallows' Day or All Saints Day. In 1000 A.D., November 2nd was declared All Souls Day. Many believe it was the Christian Church's way to replace the Celtic festival of the dead on October 31st.

So how did Halloween get its name? Since early Christian times, the day before a major feast day is its vigil. In the case of All Saint's Day or All Hallows Day, the night before became known as All Hallows' Eve or Halloween as we call it today.

Request for Articles

From the comments I've received, I know that many have enjoyed reading, or rereading as the case may be, articles from the past 40+ years of the Surratt Society's newsletters. However, new information is

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The Surratt House Museum's phone number is (301) 868-1121.

always welcome, so we are looking for articles for future issues. The topics can range from the assassination and its cast of characters to social history of the time. It can be articles from our experts or even questions you would like answered, if possible. There are still many unanswered questions.

To submit an article, send it to surratt.society@gmail.com for consideration. I can't guarantee that everything sent will be used, but we will do our best.

Louise Oertly
President, Surratt Society

In Memoriam

Burrus “Buzz” Carnahan (1944-2022) passed away on September 9th from complications of pancreatic cancer. His professional life was broad and far-reaching. He was a Judge Advocate in the U.S. Air Force, a Foreign Service officer, and a lecturer at George Washington University. He was a popular speaker in-person, as well as on C-Span, besides being a noted author specializing on Lincoln and the laws of war. His books include *Acts of Justice: Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and the Laws of War* and *Lincoln on Trial: Southern Civilians and the Laws of War*. Additionally, he spoke on Lincoln and his era at numerous venues, including the Lincoln Group of DC and the Civil War Roundtable of DC.

He is survived by his wife, Lucinda (Lucy); two daughters; and a granddaughter.

More details on his life can be found at:

www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/washingtonpost/name/burrus-carnahan-obituary?=3660341

The Booth Escape Route Tours aka BERT

For over 100 years, people have been fascinated by the story of John Wilkes Booth's escape from Ford's Theatre, his journey through southern Maryland, and his death at the Garrett's farm in Caroline County, Virginia. As early as 1901, Osborn Oldroyd followed Booth's trail and wrote about it in his book, *The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln*. Since then, others have followed his route. This includes the Surratt Society with its Booth Escape Route Tour, which started in the late 1970s with a school bus load of people and grew to roughly 300 people a year riding on a tour bus. I have been on both the school bus and the tour bus trips, and the 12-hour ride was much more comfortable on the tour bus—it has a restroom!

Unfortunately, due to COVID, the Surratt Society has not been able to offer the escape route tour since 2019, so I thought it would be interesting to reprint articles about two of these early tours. I'm also including some additional articles on Booth, Herold, and what was in the Garrett's tobacco barn that night. Depending on where you are from, a tobacco barn is also known as a tobacco shed or tobacco house, as the Garretts called theirs.

In 1987, *The Surratt Courier* was provided with the following article about a group that met in 1946 to follow Booth's escape route. However, we caution our readers that portions of this narrative are inaccurate. Seventy-six years have passed since this article was originally published. Where possible, we have clarified sections to make them more historically accurate for modern readers (see the Editor's Notes in the brackets). Our Surratt Society historians have thoroughly researched and documented the escape route during the intervening years. However, there are still unanswered questions about some of Booth's locations and interactions to this day.

The article after this one gives the details of a tour that took place in 1977.

Covering the Booth Escape Trail

By Claude E. Simmons

From *The Lincoln Herald*, February 1946

Reprinted from *The Surratt Courier*, September 1987

"Be at the Ford's Theatre at nine-thirty Saturday a.m., if you want to go on a Lincoln jaunt" was the message I received the afternoon before. And I made the grade. A hurried night trip from Boston to Washington, D.C., and I was the first one at the Theatre. There at the Theatre entrance I deposited my dime in the meter and gave my two cents tax to the attendant. Then, as soon as I made myself known, the fare and tax were promptly returned.

Shortly, in came Bert Sheldon, and he spotted me across the Exhibition Room. I know not how, but he said he had a way of knowing Lincolnians at a glance. After Robert Lincoln O'Brien arrived, who was to be the host of the day, and with Congressmen Chauncy W. Reed of Illinois and J. Edgar Chenoweth of Colorado, we all left by the rear door of the Theatre. This is not the same door through which Booth made his hurried exit. That old doorway was in the corner of the back wall of the Theatre and has been walled-up since those days, a window now taking its place. However, our exit, though not quite as hurried as the assassin's, was by a door just a few feet away from the old exit. After we stood for a while in the alley discussing the location of Booth's old stable and various old cabins, now gone, our "Cadillac" came up. Entering the car, we turned left out of the alley, using the same route, so far as is known, that Booth used that fateful night.

Travelling up and around the Capitol building, we made a slight detour, to take on another passenger, Rev. Monsignor Edward P. McAdams, who as a young man had known John and Anna Surratt and their famous "boarder" Louis Weichmann, as well as other members of the families of various Marylanders mixed up in the conspiracy. Through this acquaintance, Monsignor McAdams has made an intensive study of the assassination period and has many times covered the Escape Trail. This turned out to be our rare good fortune, as he made a very competent guide. While the good priest did not do a great deal of talking at first, what he had to say later was both impressive and instructive.

After taking on this capable guide, we returned to the route taken by Booth and soon reached the Navy Yard Bridge. Only one of the old buildings that was at the approach to the bridge

that night of nights still stands. Far to the right we could see the remnants of the old landing place where the *Montauk* deposited Booth's remains when they were taken back to Washington. Reaching Uniontown on the Maryland shore, we turned left up Good Hope Hill, at the top of which Booth halted in the moonlight to wait until Davy Herold caught up with him. [There is no evidence to document such a wait. Today, the accepted meeting site is Soper's Hill. It's located on Old Branch Avenue near the Washington Beltway, I-495.]

Surrattsville, now renamed Clinton, is eight miles out along this road. The old village, given the new name shortly after the crime [The Post Office was renamed in 1878. The origin of that name is lost to history, but it is the most used Post Office name in the U.S. with 26 of them so named.], but is often called by the old name [e.g., the local high school is Surrattsville High School]. An elderly Mrs. Curtin now occupies the old Surratt Tavern, little has changed since the old days. Mrs. Curtin welcomed us in and showed the way into her little parlor that used to be the old Tap Room. The old door through which Lloyd's patrons used to find their way in and out (if they were able) still remains in the corner of the room. Timid Mrs. Curtin has drawn her piano across the corner as a means of protection. Through this old doorway John Lloyd carried out the brandy [whiskey] to Booth (who did not dismount) and which the assassin gulped down in quantities to ease the pain in his foot and to deaden his mental agony.

On the long rides between the historic stopping places, Robert Lincoln O'Brien and Monsignor McAdams regaled us with their reminiscences. Mr. O'Brien told us much of his experiences since living in Washington, and Monsignor McAdams gave many sidelights about the conspirators and their relatives. One anecdote was about the experience a few years ago while Stanley Kimmel was taking Ella Mahoney (of Booth's Bel Air) in his car to vote for Ritchie for governor of Maryland. [Albert C. Ritchie served as governor of Maryland from 1920-1935, the only four-term governor of the state. He was defeated in his bid for a fifth term in 1934 by Harry W. Nice.] She then requested him to drive over the Potomac and near enough to the Lincoln Memorial so "that she could spit on it." The Civil War is not over yet.

"Judge" Chenoweth, who is an honorary member of the Lincoln Group of the District of Columbia, did much questioning while riding along, from a legal view-point, bringing out questions and answers of unusual interest.

When we reached TB [the small village south of Surrattsville, so-named for Thomas Brooke], we turned left on Bump Oak Road, [Actually, this would be a right onto Horsehead Road, as Bumpy Oak lies many miles to the southwest of TB.] leaving the "planned route" of Booth, as by the time he had reached this point his injury was giving so much pain that he needed the attention of a doctor. Here, Monsignor McAdams offered more information as to the condition of the broken bones in Booth's instep. [Booth broke his fibula, the smaller of the two parallel bones in his left leg.] When horseback riding at a terrific pace, the rider puts all his weight in the stirrups. Whereas riding at a more leisurely gait, he hugs the side of the horse with his legs, relieving the weight in the stirrup. Riding at a gallop had caused Booth such agony that he had to make a detour to visit the nearest doctor to be had in that section of the country. This caused much delay in his escape and proved to be his undoing.

From Bumpy Oak Road [see previous note] Booth took a left road [He actually turned right.] at the little Episcopal [It was Methodist.] Church and down what is now a gravel road until he reached the home of Dr. Mudd, whom he had met in Washington a few months previous. When we reached the driveway to Dr. Mudd's home, I got out of the car to unfasten the chain-tied gate, after which we rode up the driveway to the house, which remains the same as 80 years ago, except that a porch has been added over the front door. Another gate leading into the enclosed dooryard

was well wired up and took some little patience to open the way in. The present Mrs. Mudd, wife of the grandson of the Doctor, made us welcome and took our party into the parlor and showed us the family portrait of the Doctor and the old square piano—all that is left of the original furnishings. Everything else has been sold to tide them over various periods of depression. [Thanks to Dr. Richard Mudd, Dr. Samuel Mudd's grandson, many of the furnishings of Dr. Mudd's house are now original, including the couch on which Dr. Mudd first examined John Wilkes Booth.] She did not take us to the second floor room occupied by Booth and Herold, as did the wife of Dr. Mudd's son, when I visited the place a few years ago. It was in this room that Booth shaved off his mustache and where was found the tell-tale boot a few days later.

The floor beams of the old house creaked and trembled under our tread, as if nervous to have such Lincoln students about. In view of the fact that we were all Lincolnians, Mrs. Mudd waived the usual price of admission. On reaching the dooryard again, Monsignor McAdams took us around the corner of the house and pointed out the path taken by the fugitives to reach Zekiah Swamp, where they are supposed to have shot their horses, for fear that neighing would divulge their hiding place. [The "disposal" of the horses came later.] A tradition still prevails in this neighborhood, that the horses were not thus disposed of and were later put to good use in a neighborhood where there was a scarcity of them, and they were much needed for the spring planting. It is said, had the horses been shot in the swamp, the buzzards would have made their whereabouts known and the assassins would have been taken sooner. And curious as it may seem, all during the day of this interesting jaunt the buzzards were hovering overhead.

Leaving Dr. Mudd's home, we retraced our route down the gravel road to a spot where stands the little St. Peter's Catholic Church of one Dr. Wilmer, whom Booth had interviewed a few weeks previous, while going over the territory planning his route of escape. [Parson Wilmer was the priest at the Episcopal Church at Piney, several miles from St. Peters. He was a staunch Unionist, and it is doubtful that Booth would have dealt with him.] It is in the old churchyard of this place (St. Peter's) where, in an unmarked grave [It was marked in 1983 by the Surratt and the Dr. Samuel Mudd Societies.], lies Edman Spangler, the "crab catching fisherman of Ford's Theatre," who was taken to Dry Tortugas with Dr. Mudd, and later, when pardoned by President Johnson, was given a home by Doctor Mudd [in 1873] and there ended his days. [Spangler died in 1875.]

Reaching Five Points or Dogtown [Dogpatch], a triangle is reached from which we backtracked for a short way to Malcolm and then traveled over the road which Oswald [County records indicate his name was Oswell.] Swann guided the fugitives to Rich Hill, the home of Samuel Cox.

We passed Newmarket and on to Rich Hill, set well back from the highway. At this house, the owner, Colonel Cox, refused the assassin admission and engaged them in a misleading conversation in order to deceive Swann, so that he would have no reason to be suspicious of the strange night visitors. Here they hid for a time in the old tobacco beds nearby. These tobacco beds, at this time of year, were covered with cheesecloth to protect the young plants. It was while hidden here that Cox ordered his foster brother, Thomas Jones, to keep the men supplied with food and the newspapers of the day.

Rich Hill is a large and comfortable old farm house, painted white, with a wide entrance hall running from the front to the back of the house. Here in the "breeze-way," it is customary for the family to gather for their meals and rest during the heat of the day. In the large living room to the left, off the hall, is a huge fireplace, connected by a double chimney to another fireplace in the room at the rear. A small closet with a tiny window is built between these two fireplaces, and it

was in this closet that Booth was hiding during a visit of the detectives; and, according to tradition, he dared not draw his breath for fear of being heard, as the detectives were close to his hiding place. This interesting double chimney drew us around the side of the house, when leaving, to see its construction. It shows much evidence of having been rebuilt or restored. Rich Hill is now owned by Mrs. Neal, granddaughter of Colonel Cox, and we were shown some of his old books and furnishings. [Rich Hill is now being restored and will open as a museum. Its history includes the deaths of both Washington and Lincoln.]

Leaving Rich Hill, we traveled to Bel Alton where Booth hid until it was safe for him to try to cross the Potomac. Soon we passed the little Catholic cemetery, where lies Father Wiget, spiritual advisor of Mrs. Surratt, and who, tradition tells us, died during a furious snowstorm. Our road now took us on to Pope's Creek and to the left we saw Huckleberry, the home of Thomas Jones, the source of supply of all the food Booth had these last days on the Maryland side of the river.

Where Pope's Creek empties into the Potomac, stands an old oyster bar....A short distance up the stream is the spot where Jones hid the boat to be used by the assassin. At the oyster bar, Mr. O'Brien, our host, had us stop to partake of large Potomac oysters in the half shell. Turning left we followed River Road about three miles along the shore until the new bridge [the Harry W. Nice Bridge] over the Potomac was reached. From the height of this bridge, we were given a good view of the route that was covered by Booth on the night he made the crossing, when he was nearly discovered by the scouts from the gunboat.

After crossing to the Virginia shore, we took our way to the right, up another bumpy gravel road, which brought the wise-crack from one of our party that this must be a "Republican" road, as it was so rough to travel over. Soon the summer home of Dr. Stuart was reached and this is where Booth met with the inhospitality that brought forth the curt note which he wrote later, that saved the Doctor from being implicated. The tradition told to us here is that Booth arrived much intoxicated, but after some argument, was not refused shelter. Mrs. G.D. Richardson, the present occupant of the fine old mansion, says that Booth was welcomed in. Mrs. Richardson is an ardent student of the assassination and the escape of Booth. However, history has it that Booth, on being refused shelter in Stuart's home, left the well-ordered estate and turning left [right] when reaching the main road, soon came upon the cabin of William Lucas. Brandishing his revolver, he demanded that Lucas get his sick wife out of the only bed in the cabin, then throwing aside the bedclothes, spread his own blanket on the bed and spent the night there....The old Lucas cabin stands in a grove of trees and underbrush not far from the road, but various members of our party did not care to stop to see the place. Further on up the road formerly stood the dilapidated home of Mrs. Quesenberry, who also was afraid to give the fugitives food and shelter. [Actually, Mrs. Quesenberry's home still stands, but much closer to the Potomac on Machodoc Creek and was the first stop by Booth and Herold on landing in Virginia.]

Traveling along Route 301, we reached Port Conway where Booth and Herold signaled across the river for the ferryman to come and take them over. This the ferryman refused to do until the tide came in. It was while they were compelled to tarry here that they met the three Confederate soldiers to whom Herold indiscreetly divulged their identity. After some discussion amongst themselves, the Confederates agreed to assist the fugitives. The old Rollins house on the river bank at Port Conway still stands the wear and tear of the years, while the old ferry house at Port Royal leans crazily over the water as if anxious to hide itself in the river, which it will do ere long.

The fugitive party, now five in number on leaving the ferry at Port Royal, proceeded to the home of a Mr. Garrett where, after some bargaining with the elderly man, it was agreed that Booth

could rest there a while. From here, the restless Davy Herold, on a borrowed horse, went to Bowling Green to buy himself a much needed pair of shoes. [See page 14 for more information.] While in the village, he learned of the presence of the troop of soldiers and detectives inquiring about the fleeing pair. Rushing back to Garrett farm, he warned Booth of their presence in the village, and shortly, when hearing the soldiers coming up the road, the two beat a hasty retreat to the woods in back of the house. This sudden move aroused the suspicion of the elder Garrett, who, on their return to the house, questioned them as to the reason for their hurried retreat. From this incident, and the suspicion it caused, came the refusal to have them in the house another night and they were compelled to spend the night the old tobacco shed. [The Garretts called it a tobacco house.]

In the evening, when apparently all danger was past, one of the Confederate soldiers, Willie Jett, rode back to Bowling Green to see his sweetheart, the daughter of Mrs. Gouldman [named Izora], who kept the hotel in the village. Persuaded to stay for the night, he was suddenly awakened from his sleep by the detectives and dragged unceremoniously from his bed. He was taken out of the hotel, while still struggling to get into his trousers. He then requested the soldiers to “arrest him” before they took him back to the Garrett Farm, so it would seem that he was forced to tell where the conspirators were hiding. With Jett tied thus to his horse, this strange band of people rode to the Garrett Farm, and what then happened is now history. [In clarification, the three Confederates took Booth and Herold to Garrett’s farm on April 24th. Booth stayed there while Herold rode with the others to Bowling Green, visiting a local tavern en route. At the Star Hotel in Bowling Green, Jett and Ruggles (two of the Confederates) remained behind for the night while Herold and Bainbridge went on to a friend’s farm to spend the night. On April 25th, Bainbridge and Herold returned to the Star Hotel. Jett decided to stay there while Bainbridge, Ruggles, and Herold returned to Garrett’s. Herold was dropped off there, and the two others headed to Port Royal. They spotted the Federal troops and rode back to warn Herold and Booth before scampering off in another direction. The troops rode on to Bowling Green, working on a tip about where to find Jett. Find him they did, and he led them back to Garrett’s farm about 2 a.m. on the morning of April 26th. The rest is history.]

When our party reach Bowling Green, we drove up to an attractive roadside eating place called the Bowling Green Grille. While having refreshments here, the owner told us the new building was constructed from the bricks of the old Gouldman Inn, and the beautiful paneling inside the Grille was made from the original woodwork of the old hostelry. The new owner, on request, presented me with the printed menu of the day, which all of our party inscribed, and this now forms an interesting remainder in my Lincoln Room of a pleasant jaunt with a group of ardent and distinguished Lincoln students.

Booth Escape Route Summary **[The One That Started It All for the Surratt Society]**

By Joan Chaconas

Reprinted from the *Surratt Society News*, June/July 1977

There was a slight chill to the morning air as we 36 early birds gathered at the Surratt House parking lot preparing to board the [yellow school] bus that was going to transport us back into history. We were all thrilled at the prospect of living over those last 12 days of John Wilkes Booth and Davy Herold as they desperately tried to escape the nation's wrath. Several had followed the route before, but each time they enjoyed a new experience.

The moment arrived. We stepped into our "time machine" at 7 a.m. and were on our way! Our first destination was Ford's Theatre where our 16th president, Abraham Lincoln, had been assassinated by the actor, John Wilkes Booth (JWB). We saw the box JWB leaped from, and we "followed" the sound of his running footsteps across the stage and out the back door. Here we imagined the fierce look on his face as he yelled at Peanut John [Joseph Burroughs], "Give me that horse!" and the confusion Peanut John felt as he fell to ground after being hit on the head by the handle of Booth's dagger. We eagerly awaited our next stop.

But alas! A halt in plan! Dick Sloan locked his keys in his car. Gad!

Within about 10 minutes, things were back under control and off we went. At Ford's we had picked up our leader, James O. Hall. It was through his vast knowledge and experienced guidance that our trip was successful.

By 11 a.m., we had followed Booth and Herold as they galloped through the District, across the bridge, down to Surratt's Tavern, and out to Dr. Samuel Mudd's house. Mrs. Louise Arehart, granddaughter of Dr. Mudd, had a beautiful reception for us. She and her group showed us through every inch of the Mudd house, which is in the process of being restored and soon to be opened to the public for tours. She showed us photographs, told us the story about the "crooked" painting, and served us delicious coffee and donuts. We all welcomed coming back to the "present" as we "chowed down."

Soon we were off again! By 2 o'clock, with Mr. Hall in the lead, we had traced Booth and Herold to the pine thicket where Thomas Jones hid them for about six days. Nearby, stood the old Collis home used later by Jones in his book to identify the spot where he had hidden the conspirators. From here we pursued the two men down a very steep hill to the sandy beach along the Potomac River to the very spot Jones had hidden the rowboat that was to have carried JWB and Herold over into Virginia. As we stood there at the river's edge, we imagined we could hear the strained voices and groans that must have drifted out across the water that night as the men struggled down to the river's edge. This spot was so unchanged, it was rather eerie. One half-expected to really see JWB lurch out from behind the trees.

By 4:10, we had picked up the trail again at Mrs. Quesenberry's in King George County, Virginia. The old house was still there. We then made our way down the narrow path to *Cleydael*, the summer home of Dr. Stuart—a rather lonely and gloomy looking house. Dr. Stuart did not take too kindly to JWB stopping there and sent them away. We plunged out after them!

By 5:30, we crossed the Rappahannock River and viewed the old town of Port Royal. We headed for St. Peter's Church to meet the Rev. Fall. He kept us spellbound while telling us of JWB's ride right past the church door as he made his way to the Garrett Farm, his last and final stop. Rev. Fall also told us several hair "swatch" stories. Mr. Hall commented that if as many

people cut locks of JWB's hair off as legend says, no wonder they could not positively identify Booth—he would have been bald!

We were right on JWB's heels now, and we left Rev. Fall to go to the Garrett Farm. There was nothing there, but an historical marker and small metal stake showing the site of the chimney of the house. The land on which the tobacco barn that Booth had been cornered in, has been bulldozed and is now part of southbound Route 301. We all piled out of our "time machine" once more, onto the grassy median strip, and let our imaginations carry us back to that night on April 26th, when Union soldiers were all around. We heard the shot ring out, and we heard the rustle of a body being dragged across the ground.

We "watched" JWB die—not the hero he wanted to be, but the hunted murderer he was. This was an emotional high and low. Some of us had just gotten to know JWB better and understood him better. We had "suffered" with him as he pompously clawed his way into the pages of history. No doubt, he was a villain and committed a horrible crime, but he still uses his charm even to this day.

We climbed back aboard to discover our "time machine" was really a bus; and, all the way home, we discussed our adventure. We began to get some of the initial thrill back when we came up with the idea of doing it all over again next year. We reached our home base around 8 p.m. and 36 tired, but satisfied, history buffs headed for their separate destinations. We made many more stops than I mentioned. All told, we travelled 230 historic miles.

Our entourage was very enthusiastic and gave generously of their knowledge. This was not only a most successful tour; it was also a special tour of special people and one that will be remembered for some time. The participants included:

- James O. Hall, our leader and expert
- Dick Sloan, editor of the *Lincoln Log*, and his wife. This was the eighth time Dick had followed Booth's escape route
- Charles Cooney and Bill Davis, co-editors of *The Civil War Times* magazine
- John Brennan, our "sweetheart from Laurel, Maryland, was taping as much as he could
- Mary Mudd McHale of the *Enquirer-Gazette* and Dr. Mudd's great granddaughter
- Kay Miller of the *Prince George's Journal*
- Nate Orloweck with his different theory as to when, where, and how Booth died

A Garrett Speaks Out

Taken from James O. Hall Research Center files
Reprinted from *The Surratt Courier*, February 1995

Entitled *An Interesting Letter about the Death of John Wilkes Booth*, the following was written by the Rev. R.B. Garrett of Portsmouth, Virginia, to General A.R. Taylor of Memphis, Tennessee, in 1907. It was subsequently printed for the Oakland Lincoln Club (Iowa?) in 1934. Once a part of the Illinois State Historical Library, it was discarded by them in 1942.

The Rev. Richard B. Garrett was a young boy (around 11 years old) on his father's farm in Caroline County, Virginia, when John Wilkes Booth was shot in the family's burning barn. The Rev. Garrett frequently wrote for the newspapers and lectured on this event. He must have hit a

raw nerve with Finis Bates, who in 1907 had just published his book, *The Escape and Suicide of John Wilkes Booth*. Bates has Booth going into the woods back of the Garrett barn to meet Ruggles and Bainbridge, who furnished him a horse to flee to the west. The Rev. Garrett had said that Booth and Herold did go into the woods, but they came back some time after the cavalry passed on their first trip to Bowling Green (when they ignored the Garrett farm). Bates tried to get Garrett to say that **Booth** went into the woods, but **a different man** came back. Garrett “chopped him up” on this point as can be seen from this letter to General A.R. Taylor. [The words in boldface were emphasized by Rev. Garrett.]

It’s ironic to note that, in the introduction to the 1934 printing of this letter for the Oakland Lincoln Club, the editor states, “...The hoax which this Garrett letter controverts will not live. It has few adherents left in spite of the frequent references to it in the press. Like most sensation, a little thought and a little study of the basic facts [will] bring the end.” If this gentleman only knew that the hoax lives on.

Portsmouth, Va.
October 24, 1907

Mr. A.R. Taylor

Dear Sir,

Replying to your letter of October 21--would say that I have had some correspondence with Mr. Bates in regard to the matter mentioned. He asked me to furnish something for his book, but I am very sure that he has not published what I wrote. If he had taken the trouble to verify the statement made by me, which he could have easily done, there would have been no use in publishing the book, and I told him so. There never was the slightest doubt about the death of J. Wilkes Booth on April 26, 1865. There never was a missing link in the chain which led from the theatre in Washington to my father’s barn.

Mr. Bates’ letters to me indicate clearly that he had never taken the trouble to study the real history of the flight and death of Booth, even superficially. Like many men possessed with a theory, he makes every fact bend to his theory. He was so eager to fit the facts to his theory that he clutched at straws. For instance, it is a fact that on the second day of his stay at my father’s home, Booth became alarmed at the passing of some soldiers in sight of the house and hobbled on his crutches to some woods back of the house where he remained for an hour or two. Mr. Bates in his letter to me alludes to this fact and asks “How do you know that the same man came back from the woods that went into the woods?” Did he think us a set of fools that we should not know a man in broad daylight that we had been entertaining for two days? Again in his letter he says that Booth was not identified after his death. **But I saw it done**, and our whole family, and the officers, many of whom knew him personally, saw it done. Remember that he was a strikingly handsome man with a face one could scarcely forget. The detectives had a printed description of him which they proceeded to verify after his death. **It agreed in every particular**: height, color of hair, eyes, size of hand, foot, etc. It said, “He has his initials in India ink on his forearm just

below the elbow.” I saw the officers roll back his sleeve and saw the initials J.W.B. just where they were said to be. I saw the detective place the cabinet photograph of John Wilkes Booth, the well-known actor, beside the dead face of the man we had known for two days, and all the books in the world could not persuade me that **God ever made two men so exactly alike**. I read his diary, found on his body, and preserved yet in Washington, in which he referred to what he had done. I heard him say “Tell my mother I died for my country. I did what I thought was best.” It was through another dying utterance of his, that my father and brothers escaped the penalty of harboring an assassin when he said, “It is hard for this man to suffer for what I have done. He does not know who I am.” I know by contemporary history that many who knew him personally saw the body in Washington, and that in order that no possible mistake might be made, a surgeon who had removed a tumor from his neck came and pointed out the scar of the operation.

I know that his family never had any doubts on the subject. In my library are valuable books bearing the autograph of Edwin Booth, and in one of them a letter which says, “Your family will always have our warmest thanks for your kindness to him whose madness wrought so much ill to us.” I know that they sought and secured the body of the dead man and buried it in the family lot in Green Mount Cemetery in Baltimore, and over it placed a stone on which is carved his name, “John Wilkes.” I have seen it myself. [According to Asia Booth Clarke’s book, *The Unlocked Book*, Booth’s “body was lowered into the grave, and the remains of the other children, Frederick, Elizabeth, Mary Ann, and Henry Byron contained in one box with silver plate, were laid upon the top of his coffin, and soon the busy spade of the workman filled the grave, leaving only the customary mound to mark the spot.” Frederick, Elizabeth, and Mary Ann died of cholera in 1833. In 1869, their remains were transferred from the family cemetery in Bel Air to Green Mount Cemetery in Baltimore, where they were buried with their brother John Wilkes in the only unmarked grave in the Booth family plot. Henry is still buried in England where he died of small pox in 1836. The only gravestone in the Booth plot that has the name “John Wilkes” on it is his father’s gravestone, where on one side is engraved: TO THE MEMORY OF THE CHILDREN OF JUNIUS BRUTUS & MARY ANN BOOTH—JOHN WILKES, FREDERICK, ELIZABETH, MARY ANN, HENRY BYRON, JOSEPH ADRIAN BOOTH.] I know that Mr. Bates’ story is only one of many such, utterly improbable and impossible. To ask people to believe that the U.S. Government and his own family, and his many friends, should be deceived by a chance resemblance into believing that Wilkes Booth was dead while he was still alive is too great a strain on faith.

Many books were written to account for the lost Dauphin of France, and many people believed that Napoleon’s Marshal Ney escaped the bullets of the firing squad and died of old age in North Carolina, but nobody who takes the trouble to acquaint himself with the facts will ever have any doubt but that John Wilkes Booth died at my father’s house on April 26, 1865.

Yours very truly,
(signed)
R.B. Garrett?

P.S.: I have not seen Mr. Bates’ book, but am acquainted with his theory through his letters to me.

Contents of the Garrett Barn

By John Stanton

Reprinted from the *Surratt Society News*, May 1984

Do you know what was in the barn, and burned up, when Colonel Conger tried to flush Booth out? Well, here is the claim that Richard H. Garrett filed against the U.S. Government:

- One wheat-thrashing machine
- One wheat-fanning mill
- Four scythes and cradles
- One horse-rake
- Three large two-horse plows (two of them new)
- Two stoves (one a cooking stove)
- Fifty pounds plow castings
- One pair chart-wheels
- Two pair light wheels (one new)
- One set large dining tables (mahogany or walnut)
- One long dining table
- Ten walnut chairs (cushioned seats)
- One feather bed small
- One chest and shoemaker's tools
- Three bedsteads
- One molasses mill
- Four empty barrels
- One hogshhead
- One shovel
- Two axes
- One large iron-tooth harrow
- One lot warping-boxes
- Three swingle-trees
- Four plank fruit driers
- One set buggy harness
- Five bushels sugar-seed corn
- Five hundred pounds fodder
- Five hundred pounds hay

The 48 x 50 foot tobacco house [that burned down] was framed on heavy cedar posts, had plank floor throughout, heart cedar sleepers, furnished with all the fixtures for curing tobacco, including prize-press and sticks for hanging tobacco.

Garrett also asked for pay for 15 bushels of corn used in feeding 26 horses of the command of this expedition, night and morning, on one occasion and 10 bushels for feeding 28 horses on another, and 300 pounds of hay, used by same. Total value \$2,670.

[Editor's Note: The Garretts were storing furniture in the barn for families who lived close to the Rappahannock River and were subject to shelling from federal gunboats. In an effort to keep Yankee soldiers from pilfering, the barn door had a lock on it. You will also note that there was no tobacco in the barn.]

Welcome to the Trail of James W. Boyd aka Booth

It's amazing what you find when you're not looking for it. I knew the information was somewhere in my files, but I couldn't find it, so I gave up. Fast forward several months and I was searching for information in my old Surratt House Museum's docent manual, and there it was. Not the information I was currently looking for, which I amazingly did find later. It was the other information. I would never have thought to look for it in the binder, which I had forgotten held more than just the manual. Here's what I found.

Facts about James Ward Boyd

Researched by James O. Hall, Peggy Robbins of Tennessee,
and from the *Civil War Times*, Bill Davis and Charles Cooney

While on the run, John Wilkes Booth used the alias James W. Boyd at the Garrett farm to explain the tattoo J.W.B on his arm and introduced Davy Herold as a Boyd cousin. Here is the information Mr. Hall compiled on the real James Ward. Boyd.

- In 1865, Boyd was 43, while Booth was 26
- When paroled, a personal description given on his Oath of Allegiance states that Boyd was 6'2", grey-haired, and blue-eyed. Yet some think he could be mistaken for the young, 5'8", black-haired, dark-eyed Booth.
- A letter from Boyd to his wife complaining about a reaction to a vaccination, given while in prison, states that is the only thing that had ever bothered him. No mention of a leg wound.
- Boyd was killed on January 1, 1866, in Tennessee according to family diaries, letters, newspaper obituaries, etc. More information below.

A Note from James O. Hall dated October 23, 1977

In 1977, Sunn Classics Productions released the film, *The Lincoln Conspiracy*, in which they have Captain James W. Boyd, Co. F, 6th Tennessee Infantry (CSA), killed at Garrett's farm. It seems that John Wilkes Booth got away. This same line is followed in the little book based on (movie) scenario. So I suppose that I should say: "Welcome to the trail of James W. Boyd."

Poor man! Killed he was, shot down by mistake and then identified as Booth, all as part of a massive "cover-up" by Edwin M. Stanton and Lafayette C. Baker. I can see it now. There is the dying Boyd, stretched out on the porch surrounded by the frightened Garretts and by tired troopers. His last thoughts are of his motherless children back in Jackson, Tennessee.

But wait! There is a smallish fly in this historical ointment. Boyd was indeed gunned down, killed he was, a "murder most foul." There was no problem of identification. The shooting took place in his hometown, Jackson, Tennessee, on January 1, 1866. He was surrounded by those who knew him well. A man named William Roark came into the store where Boyd was working as a clerk, struck him with a weight, and then fired several shots. One was fatal. This unhappy

episode is well-known to numerous Boyd descendants in Texas, it is set out in an old diary found in a Jackson library, and it was reported in the press.

The Boyd fabrications have been investigated by responsible researchers. The result of this investigation will appear as an editorial by Mr. William C. Davis in the November 1977 issue of *Civil War Times Illustrated*. Watch for it.

James O. Hall

That's right. According to this October 23, 1977, note, without the benefit of a computer and the Internet, James O. Hall and his friends had tracked down the mysterious James W. Boyd, who some say died at the Garrett's farm, instead of Booth. Booth did introduce himself as Boyd at the Garrett farm and Herold as his Boyd cousin. (As per William Garrett's statement to authorities.)

Editor's Note: Over the years, Mr. Hall discovered an amazing amount of information by sheer dogged determination and a lot of legwork. Can you imagine how much more he would have found, if he had survived long enough to have access to a computer?

Hobbledehoy David Edgar Herold

By John C. Brennan

Reprinted from *The Surratt Courier*, August 1987

It is widely known that John Wilkes Booth broke the smaller of the two parallel bones in his left leg when he jumped from the box to the stage at Ford's Theatre, after having mortally wounded President Lincoln. During the twelve days remaining of his life, Booth was obviously forced to hobble—somewhat less painfully after Dr. Samuel A. Mudd and his English handyman, John Best, fashioned a pair of crutches for him at the second [known] place he stopped in his attempt to escape punishment for his deed.¹ But none of the accounts having to do with Booth's flight south from Washington mentions the probability that his unswervingly loyal companion in the escape attempt, the 23-year-old David E. Herold, also limped at any time he was proceeding on foot. Whether Herold's unsteady gait was caused solely by an ill-fitting boot is unknown, and his limp may have gone ignored by eyewitness chroniclers because of the much more pronounced infirmity of the man on crutches with the broken leg.

The first inkling of Herold's trouble occurred on the afternoon of the evening that the President was shot, while he was walking down Pennsylvania Avenue with an acquaintance. The companion's testimony was, "I noticed Herold walking a little lame, and says to him, 'What's the matter? You are walking lame.' He replied, 'Nothing, my boot hurts me.'"²

The next reference encountered about Herold's concern with his feet or footwear is the statement attributed to Absalom R. Bainbridge who, along with two other Confederates, Mortimer B. Ruggles and Willie Jett, provided the horse transportation that enabled Booth and Herold to travel from Port Conway to the Garrett farm: "...when we reached the gate leading

into the [Garrett] farm, Herold said that he wanted to go with us as far as Bowling Green to buy a pair of shoes....³”

Either Davy was unable to obtain another pair of shoes, or else he succeeded in making a purchase that did not alleviate his misery. Apparently with Booth’s somewhat reluctant approval, Davy surrendered himself to the Union cavalrymen shortly before the barn, in which the two men had slept on the evening of Tuesday, April 25th, was set afire. At the trial of the conspirators a month later, the officer in charge of the cavalry unit at the Garrett farm answered the questions put to him as follows:

(Testimony of Captain Edward P. Doherty)

Q. Did you hear Booth say anything about Herold’s innocence?

The Judge advocate objected to the question; and it was varied as follows:

Q. Did Booth say anything further in reference to Herold?

A. Booth said that he was the only guilty man or party, or words to that effect.

Q. Herold made no resistance at all, did he?

A. No sir: excepting coming home, **he said his feet were sore, and he could not walk;** and I procured a horse, and tied him on it.⁴ [emphasis added]

After Herold’s return to Washington on the same boat that transported Booth’s body and while imprisoned on the ironclad monitor *Montauk* anchored in midstream off the Navy Yard, he “...had nothing to say except that he would like to send out to his mother [whose home was near the Navy Yard entrance] **to get him a pair of shoes.**⁵ [emphasis added]

In his daily reports to General Winfield Scott Hancock, Military Commander of the District of Columbia,⁶ General John F. Hartranft, Commandant of the Arsenal Prison, set forth in detail all incidents having to do with the inmates there. On May 3, 1865, in reviewing the happenings of the previous day, General Hartranft put the following statement in his journal:

At 6 p.m. bread and coffee were again furnished all of the prisoners in the usual manner, except prisoner 157 [Mrs. Surratt was confined in Cell 157] who did not eat it. At the same hour I made inspection of all the cells and prisoners, and I also gave the slippers furnished by Dr. Porter [Army physician at the Arsenal] to prisoners in 157, 195. The other prisoners preferred to have their shoes or boots on in order to keep their feet warm. [emphasis added]

Surprisingly, it was Lewis Powell [Payne], and not Davy Herold, who was confined in Cell 195.⁷ Herold’s foot problem must have abated—with him completely immobilized in chains and hand irons and with his head hooded, except for slits around the nose and mouth⁸—for him to have “preferred” to retain his boots. It would have been improbable that the authorities would have allowed Herold’s mother to furnish him the shoes he had expressed a wish for, while he was confined on the *Montauk*; the physical or mental comfort of the conspirators was initially of no interest whatsoever for those having custody of these persons.

At the conclusion of his confinement of about seven weeks, during which time the conspiracy trial of 1865 proceeded at a snail’s pace, Herold was led to the scaffold [located where the tennis courts are at the present-day Fort Lesley J. McNair] to pay the penalty for his cooperation with John Wilkes Booth. Washington’s *The Evening Star* Extra that came out later on the afternoon of the hangings stated that Davy, like the two other male prisoners who were being executed that day, ended his existence on this earth “in his stockings,”⁹ Having his feet unfettered as he met his death would have been of small, very small, comfort to Davy, because: *Herold, who*

*had been called the silly boy all through the trial, was the most frightened on the scaffold and he stayed alive after the hanging longer than the others, trying to draw his body up repeatedly, so that there would not be so much weight on his neck.*¹⁰

SOURCES:

¹ *War Department Files: Statements Made by the Alleged Lincoln Conspirators under Examination*, Surratt Society (November 1980), p. 31.

In this same volume appears a "Voluntary Statement" of answers made by Herold to questions put to him on April 27, 1865, while he was confined aboard the monitor *Montauk*. In one answer Davy furnishes one of his many non sequiturs:

"Previous to this time [March 21, 1865?] I went fox hunting. In jumping a fence I knocked my ankle out of place, and was in bed two weeks. This happened in Prince George's County, Maryland."

Whether Davy was telling the truth in his ingenious concoction of tales is doubtful, but interspersed elsewhere in his answers are supplied names and happenings corroborating details generally accepted as factual.

² Vol. I, *Trial of John H. Surratt*, GPO (1867), p. 177.

³ Article titled "Pursuit and Death of John Wilkes Booth" by Prentiss Ingraham in *The Century Magazine*, January 1890, p. 444.

Coincidentally, Richard H. Garrett, in a letter to the New York *Herald* of April 2, 1872, reproduced in House Report No. 713, 1st Session, 43rd Congress, states that after Booth had breakfasted at his home the day before his death, "my oldest son, John M., rode to **a shoemaker's about one mile from my house**, to have his boots repaired." [emphasis added] [Thanks to Michael W. Kauffman for the copy of the Congressional document.]

⁴ *The Conspiracy Trial*, Edited by Ben Perley Poore, Reprinted by Arno Press, New York (1972), p. 94, Vol. II.

⁵ Reprint of Extra, *The Evening Star*, Washington City, on the Execution of the Conspirators, p. 1, 3rd column, 3rd paragraph from the bottom of page.

⁶ The Hartranft papers were located by Surratt Society members Nancy Griffith and Betty Ownsbey at Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania. Highlights of this important discovery were published in the *Surratt Society News* of December 1983 and October 1984. The paragraph here quoted appears in General Hartranft's Report of May 3, 1865.

⁷ Reprint of Extra, *The Evening Star*, p. 1, 4th column, 3rd full paragraph.

(According to David Homer Bates' *Lincoln in the Telegraph Office*, The Century Company, New York, 1907, p. 381; "When the time came to remove the prisoners [from confinement on the monitor] to the arsenal prison...Payne's feet had swollen so that he could not wear his shoes, and a pair of carpet slippers were provided which gave him much relief.")

⁸ *Twenty Days*, Dorothy M. and Philip B. Kunhardt, Jr., "The Eight Fiendish Headbags for the Wretched Accused," p. 184 et seq., Harper & Row, New York (1965).

(In his report of June 11, 1865, General Hartranft stated: "Last evening I removed the hoods from all the prisoners except 195." As previously indicated, Lewis Powell [Payne] occupied Cell No. 195.)

⁹ Reprint of Extra Edition, *The Evening Star*, July 7, 1865, p. 2.

¹⁰Very likely the most detailed write-up of the executions appears on pages 205-209 of the Peterson Brothers version of the 1865 trial, the account having been copied from the Philadelphia *Inquirer* of July 9, 1865. The excerpt here quoted appears on page 208 of the hardback book.