

This is a somewhat fictionalized account of the event surrounding Booth's possible visit to the area.

At the end of this story by Thomas Barnes, the webmaster has provided additional information.

Below is a copy of the marriage license for John W. Booth and Lousia J. Payne.

John W Booth ✓
To
Lousia J Payne ✓

10th Feby 24th 1872
I solemnized the rite of matrimony between
the within named parties on the 25th day of
Feby 1872
L L Rose J P

CHAPTER II

"LOUISA AND THE ASSASSIN"



THE MAN WHO KILLED LINCOLN—John Wilkes Booth, whose description on the reward posters after Lincoln's assassination read "weighing 160 pounds, with black hair, black eyes, and a heavy black mustache." The John Wilkes Booth of Franklin County was described as having "black hair,...very dark eyes and a black mustache...weight about 145 pounds."

LOUISA AND THE ASSASSIN

The ride home to Burrows' Cove seemed even longer than usual. Mr. Dykes was talking of Jeweldean's next teaching position, which was to be closer to home. That in itself might well be good reason to be excited. She was indeed happy to be assured of her next assignment, but just now her thoughts were centered on being home for the summer.

The parting with the Hobbs family and the students at the Pond Spring Schoolhouse had been an emotional one. How glad she was that it was such a contrast to the apprehension she felt when first arriving there. Now she was returning to Elk River Valley with a sense of accomplishment and confidence in her future.

It seemed she could almost smell mama's cooking as they approached the Cove. Weekend trips home from Pond Spring had been fewer than Jeweldean had hoped, hence her present impatience for the homeward journey's end. With all the passing of years, Lonnie Myers' daughter would still have undiminished anticipation of being home again. Mama's embrace would always be warm and loving, while papa would stand back, patiently waiting, or at least outwardly appearing patient to greet his beloved offspring.

Papa! The third-born daughter of Lonnie Myers held among her fondest memories the summer evenings of her earlier years. All the family would gather on the front porch to hear papa play his violin or sometimes sing for them, both of which he did unusually well. Yet richest in her memory were the wonderful stories papa would tell - fascinating "yarns," most of which were true accounts of adventures of family, friends and neighbors of many years earlier.

As the car approached a crossroad, Jeweldean caught sight of a sign that pointed to Payne's Cove. The name of the familiar community aroused remembrance of one story papa told, that would never be forgotten - the moving tale of true events in one local young woman's tragic life. It seemed she could almost hear papa's soft rich voice as she recalled his vivid account of the experiences of the ill-fated local beauty of long ago, Louisa Payne.

Jeweldean's papa liked to whittle. Some whittlers enjoyed carving out whistles and wildfowl callers, but papa always found some more important projects. Hammer handles and other toolgrips were his practical choice. He was busy with one such project one evening when he was interrupted by his enthusiastic brood, urging him to tell a story. The always accommodating parent was quick to respond that summer night with an accurate recollection of the Louisa Payne story, as told by his papa, Thomas Jefferson Myers.

"Accordin' to my pa,' Lonnie Myers began, 'There wasn't a prettier young woman in all the Valley than Louisa Payne. She wasn't more'n seventeen when her bridegroom, twenty-two year old Zebadiah, was mustered into the Confederate forces. No matter that the War Between the States was 'most over with in 1865, he was badly wounded in late action, and Louisa's young husband was sent home to die. Not long after, Louisa was scarcely eighteen and a widow expectin' their first child.

"She was as willin' a worker as you could find, and had a right good hand for sewin'. As soon as her baby boy, Macager, was born and old enough to be left in care of someone else durin' the day, she went lookin' for work. The students at the University of the South over in Suwanee were in need of a seamstress, so the school hired her on.

"It was long about 1872 while she was still workin' there, that she met a feller who did woodwork around Suwanee, and who also did some play actin' to entertain the students. He was known as Jack Booth, and it wasn't long before this handsome lad persuaded Louisa to marry him. Her boy Macager was now close to seven years old, and the idea of marryin' someone who seemed as if he was the kind who'd make a good father to the boy made sense to the young mother. The records over to the courthouse in Winchester show that they were pronounced husband and wife by a Justice of the Peace named C.C. Rose. It was just about then that Louisa's new husband told her he was John Wilkes Booth, the man who had killed President Lincoln up at the Ford's Theater in Washington. He showed her scars on his leg that he claimed were the result of a broken leg he got jumpin' onto the theater stage after shootin' Mr. Lincoln.

"He wasn't willin' to make himself known as John Wilkes Booth to the Valley folks, since a goodly number of them were of Federalist persuasion. He felt sure he would find more sympathetic neighbors in the western part of the State, the word bein' that out toward Memphis folks were more inclined to still be loyal to the Confederate side. So, he soon convinced Louisa that a move to that part of Tennessee would be best for him, herself and the boy.

"When they got to Memphis, the more profitable work he expected to find there did not exist. His plan had been to make enough money to pay railroad fare to New Orleans, where, he told Louisa, there awaited him a one-hundred thousand dollar payment for having slain Abraham Lincoln. He claimed that secret sympathizers there had collected the bounty for him in appreciation for havin' somehow accordin' their thinkin', avenged the Confederacy. "

"The only work Booth could find was in a cottonseed mill, his wages not bein' enough to provide savin's for train fare to New Orleans. To make matters worse, he 'roused unexpected hostility among the workers in the mill when he told them he was John Wilkes Booth. He had thought it would impress folks in his favor, but instead put him and his family in real danger.

"The fact that men began to watch their boardin' house - that men at times seemed to be shadowin' him, convinced him that he had best leave town as soon as possible. As soon as he made up his mind to move on, he convinced Louisa it would be wiser to journey to New Orleans by himself, pick up the reward money, and return for her and the boy. They would then, he told Louisa, find a safe place to the west where they could live well.

"Now, most folks believe that Louisa never told Booth that she was expectin' a baby. Folks also say that Booth went off with no intention of goin' to New Orleans, since there probably wasn't any reward waitin' for him to claim it. Most think he was more likely headin' out toward the Texas or Oklahoma Territory where he hoped for a friendly welcome. It seems like he never intended to return to Louisa. So, once again she was sayin' goodbye to a bridegroom, one she was never to see again.

"Louisa managed to find some work for a while longer there in Memphis. Two problems, however, soon made it clear to her that she must return to Elk River Valley. One was that she was gettin' close to the time for her baby to be born. Also, some fellers had found out that Booth had escaped them, and their constant hangin' around near the boardin' house frightened her. She felt they wanted to hurt her and her son. With the help of some fine folks in the Episcopal Church, she found a place to stay outside the city. All that happened just in time, for before long, a little baby girl was born to her. Right away she had the infant christened Laura Ida Elizabeth Booth. As soon as the baby was old enough to travel, and again with the help of the kind churchfolks, Louisa was on a train, with her nearly eight year-old son Macager and her newborn daughter, headed back to Pelham.

"Louisa was mighty tired when she got back to the Payne homestead. Her first husband Zeb's family were kind and helpful as always, readyin' the cabin where she had enjoyed such a short but happy homelife before the War took Zeb from her. His thoughtful sisters had seen to it that the cabin was neat and clean and ready for Louisa, Macager and the little Ida Booth to move in. "

"As soon as she was able, Louisa returned to work again. Determin' to be independent, she wanted to bring up the two children without dependin' on other folks. It wasn't long before she was operatin' a laundry business of her own, and doin' real well with it.

"Things went along pretty fine for about six or seven years. The young mother had long since given up hope of hearin' from Booth. Louisa had told her seven year-old Ida Elizabeth about her father, but of course it didn't seem to mean much to the little one. Louisa was able to keep both children in school. Macager was a big feller for his fourteen years, and was a big help to his mama. Louisa and the boy had been doin' a brush and stone clearin' job around the cabin, and had gotten quite a lot of branches and twigs raked into piles for burnin'. Bein' home one day while Macager and Ida Elizabeth were off to school, she set herself to finishin' the job of burnin' the brushpiles.

"Busy rakin' extra small branches that had been scattered by wind and rain a couple of days before, Louisa got a little too close to a burnin' pile. Before she knew it, her long skirt was on fire. Anne Payne, sister of her late husband Zeb, was busy with her household chores only a few hundred feet from Louisa's cabin. She suddenly heard an awful scream.

"Anne ran outside just in time to see Louisa half runnin', and half staggerin' toward the creek down behind her cabin. All the while she was tryin' to tear off her long skirt which by now was 'most all aflame. Her efforts were only addin' to the fury of the fire, and it was now spreadin' to her long hair. Anne Payne tried to catch up to Louisa, but before she could reach her, the poor woman had plunged into the shallow creek, rollin' herself over and tryin' to douse the flames and get some relief for her burnin' flesh.

"By now some of the Payne menfolk who were workin' in the fields had heard the commotion, and came runnin' to help. As gently as they could, they carried poor Louisa into her cabin, while others went for a doctor. But in only a few days, even though the doc' did all he could, Louisa gave up the awful fight, leavin' her son Macager and her little daughter Ida Elizabeth in the promised care of the Payne family. "

"In the meantime, this feller Booth was, accordin' to later reports, driftin' around the western territories, sometimes workin' as a bartender in hotels and saloons, once even as a house-painter. A young lawyer was said to have met him once down in Texas - or at least the feller he met claimed he was Booth - but goin' under the name of David George. The real odd thing about it is that the two men who conspired to kill President Lincoln had similar names. The one had the first name David, and the other the last name George. Anyhow, the man had talked to the young lawyer in private, so nobody else heard him claim to be John Wilkes Booth. Besides, a lot of people around the country had met fellers who claimed to be John Wilkes Booth, and it got so that folks paid little attention to them. One thing was certain the man who had married Louisa, and the man the young lawyer met in Texas were one and the same. It seemed so because the feller in Texas was also a very fine actor, as was Louisa's man, and as was the John Wilkes Booth who shot the President. The young lawyer, who was to practice law in Memphis, and who was to be more involved later, said the man he met in Texas knew lots of stage plays by heart, and was always quotin' Shakespeare. Yes, he sure was an awful lot like Louisa's husband.

"Later on this Booth, or David George, who or whichever he was, moved on from Texas into the Oklahoma Territory, and at last settled in a town close to Enid. Perhaps he expected, or at least hoped he would be welcome there, and maybe profit somehow by makin' himself known as Booth. When he arrived there, somethin' must have made him decide to hold off. He kept the name David George for a number of years, continuin' to perform stage plays, somehow even earnin' enough to buy land in or around Enid.

"A few times, over the next twenty-five years or so, Mr. George took sick, and told his friends he was dyin' and confessed that he was Booth. It seems he was in the habit of usin' morphine to ease pain, and folks figured it was the drug that was talkin'! Each time he recovered, he asked people if he said anything strange in his delirium: finally he did tell his doctor that he was the man who shot the President.

"Either folks figured he was makin' the story up, or else they didn't much care whether or not he really was John Wilkes Booth. In fact, he had by then made lots of friends, and quite a lot of money, too. So it seems like many others in the fast growin' territory, he had become sort of an "old timer" in Enid.

"There came a day, however, when his earlier claim of bein' Booth got to be heard of around much of the East. It reached as far as Washington, D.C. and got a lot of attention from a Union Cavalryman by the name of Boston Corbett. This Corbett was soon to leave the army, and was to go to great lengths to investigate the reports of Booth bein' in Oklahoma. He had good reason to be interested.

"Back in '65, directly after the President had been shot, a cavalry unit was off in pursuit of the assassin. Corbett was one of that group of horse soldiers, and the group soon had the fugitive and one of his henchmen cornered in a barn in Virginia. The officer in charge had one of his men torch the barn, ordering his men to hold their fire. He then called for Booth to come out of the barn with his hands up.

"Now, this feller Corbett sorta lost patience, and in spite of orders, ran toward the rear of the burnin' barn. Peerin' through an openin' between the boards, he saw the man inside, and fired a shot at him. The man staggered out of the barn and collapsed, and behind him came the feller who was with him. The man Corbett shot was taken to the nearby farmhouse, and stretched out on the front porch floor. It was only a few more minutes and he was dead.

"The officer in charge was determined to have Corbett court-martialed for disobeyin' orders. But when they returned to Washington, they found that the newspapers had already made Corbett out a hero. With public opinion so much in Corbett's favor, and in consideration of his past military record, the War Department dismissed all charges.

"So, when the War was over and his army hitch was up, Boston Corbett headed on home to Massachusetts, figurin' to bask in the fame he had got through the newspapers. Well, it didn't work out that way. Most folks were anxious to try to forget the War and get on with life. Corbett decided to get back into the Army. Wherever his outfit went, it seems he was always hearin' about this man in Oklahoma who claimed to be the real John Wilkes Booth. It got more and more under his skin, as he somehow felt that this feller in Enid was makin' him out a liar.

"Mr. Corbett was a strange sort. He seemed sometimes to have a religious way about him, even preachin' at the other enlisted men, or whoever he could get to listen. Yet, the other men knew his good battle record came from the sheer pleasure he seemed to get from killin' somebody. Anyhow, as soon as his enlistment was up, he started layin' plans to work his way to Oklahoma.

"After some wild adventures in the midwest, Corbett took a job as a farm equipment salesman. He did real well and soon got himself assigned as manager of the Southwestern office of the company in Enid, Oklahoma!

"For a long time, he kept to his business there, never lettin' on to anybody about his past life in the army. Bidin' his time, he got to know lots of folks in Enid, and was soon regarded as a pleasant, mild-mannered and earnest business man. David George's popularity and social and business activities became known to him, even though they had not met as yet. It wasn't long before he heard the local folks talkin' about Mr. George's claim to be Booth.

"Nearly four years passed when Corbett decided to make his move, and settle the matter that had been on his mind for so long.

"It was common for businessmen in the town to carry a pocket pistol, and Corbett was certainly no exception. He knew it would be very useful when the opportunity to confront his man would come. He would be ready to challenge Mr. George to admit or deny bein' Booth.

"The day finally came when they were face to face. David George walked out of the downtown hotel one morning. Suddenly, Corbett stood in his path and, without introducin' himself, demanded to know whether or not he was John Wilkes Booth. There were a lot of bystanders who knew Mr. George. Probably most expected he would deny it, considerin' the menacin' look on Corbett's face.

"But the well dressed and dignified Mr. George didn' show any sign of fear. Without even flinchin', he said outright that he surely was John Wilkes Booth. The quiet and matter-of-fact answer made Corbett's rage even worse. He then pulled a pistol from an inside pocket and aimed it straight at Mr. George's chest.

"Then a real strange thing happened. Corbett's eyes suddenly got real wide. He seemed for a couple of seconds to be starin' at Mr. George as if he was seein' a ghost. All of a sudden the gun fell from his hand, his whole body stiffened, and he pitched forward on his face. It looked just as if he himself had been shot!

"One of the people who had gathered around ran for a local doctor, who right away pronounced Corbett dead of a heart attack.

"The newspapers began to take more and more notice of Mr. George after that incident, yet he refused, for some time, to talk about it. He just kept on in a business-as-usual way, and

as the years passed, gettin' richer all the time. His wealth increased even faster when, in 1907, Oklahoma became a state.

"His gettin' rich, of course didn't help his failin' health, and he still got times when he took morphine to ease pain. When it got so bad the drug didn't help, he decided to end what had become real misery. Mr. George, or Mr. Booth, took a massive overdose, and died in a short time. Just before he died, he again told his doctor and others around him that he really was the man who had killed President Lincoln. He must have given some convincin' details, for all the witnesses felt sure he was tellin' the truth.

"Now the press and the city authorities felt no doubts. Besides, so much widespread interest somehow charmed the city officials. Instead of the usual method of embalming, they had the local undertaker use a kind of mummyfyin' process, and placed the body in a glass case. Folks were comin' from distant ranches and towns to pay to see the remains of the man who claimed to be John Wilkes Booth.

"The news of these happenin's soon reached Memphis, where the lawyer, who had met Mr. George years before, lived. He left Memphis right away, and headed straight to Oklahoma, where he positively identified the body of the man he had met years before. The local excitement was already beginnin' to wear off, and the Memphis lawyer actually persuaded the Enid authorities to sell the glass-encased body to him. He then took the body East, shippin' it from place to place. For a couple of years, he made a good deal of profit, chargin' the public anywhere from fifteen to twenty-five cents to view the corpse. Again, interest began to drop off, so the lawyer had Booth's, or Mr. George's body placed in a grave on his own Memphis estate.

"Now you might be wonderin' why the Memphis lawyer was so sure he had the genuine John Wilkes Booth. It seems that durin^g the time he was showin' the remains around the country, he had secured affidavits from some fourteen people. they had known the actor, and were positive in their own minds that the man in the glass coffin was Booth. One of those witnesses was actually a retired Union General.

"Now I know that all this might not have meant much to folks in Pelham, especially to Louisa's children, except for what followed. It wasn't long before the U.S. Government confiscated the Oklahoma properties belonging to Mr. Booth. He didn't leave a will, and while

he likely never knew of Louisa's death, he surely never knew of the birth of his daughter, Laura Ida Elizabeth Booth.

"In time, Macager Payne and his half-sister Ida Elizabeth heard of the government action and figured the man must be her father, and the estate rightfully hers. At the urgin' of family and friends, the by then grown Ida Elizabeth set out for Oklahoma, in the company of some lawyers. It turned out that the rumors were true. Her father's estate was considerable, so much so she brought suit against the government for eight million dollars.

"The report was that the government offered to settle with her for one million, six hundred thousand dollars. Her lawyers insisted that they would be entitled to half of any settlement. Ida Elizabeth refused the offer. She was not about, she said to give that much to the lawyers. I don't know if it was just stubbornness on her part, or if she felt it a matter of principle, but it all ended there. As far as anyone knows, to this day the matter of her suit against the U.S. Government has never been resolved."

In the last few moments before arriving in Pelham, the car was passing the Red Hill Cemetery, where the ill-fated Louisa Payne had been laid to rest. Both she and her son Macager had been buried there, but no markers remained to identify their graves.

Jeweldean wondered what had become of Laura Ida Elizabeth Booth, who had stubbornly refused to pay such a large share of the government's settlement offer to her lawyers. Some of the local old-timers remembered that she had become a circus performer. She was said to have traveled for many years with a well-known troupe, never again to return, or to have any further contact with the Elk River Valley.

The Testimony of McCager Payne

On a second visit with Chitty in the late 1950s, Rees shared newly acquired information. Rees had just gone to visit Payne's Cove, which lies at the foot of the mountain near Pelham, Tennessee. The audio record of that interview is in the University of the South Archives. Rees said that as a young man in the mid-1920s, he received a suggestion from his father to talk with the elderly night watchman at his mill, one McCager Payne (1863-1932). Payne claimed that his stepfather was John Wilkes Booth.

Payne's story was that in 1872, when he was nine years old, his mother Louisa Payne, a young widow, had married and briefly lived with John Wilkes Booth at Sewanee. Louisa was the daughter of a widow who had a laundry business cleaning and mending the clothes of University of the South students. In 1871 or 1872, a quiet-mannered stranger with dark hair came to town. He was neatly dressed and appeared well educated, but he did carpentry work. He gave his name as John Booth and said he was a distant relative of the infamous actor. After a short courtship, John Booth and Louisa Payne were married.

Payne said that he had seen Booth show Louisa the scar on his leg caused by the fracture sustained by Booth's jump from the presidential box to the stage, and that Louisa would bathe Booth's injured leg in hot water to relieve the pain. Booth told the nine-year-old, "If you ever tell anyone, I'll kill you."

Shortly after the marriage, in July of 1872, the three left Sewanee for Memphis, where Booth told Louisa he expected to collect a large sum of money that was waiting for him as a reward for killing Lincoln; he was worried about being pursued, however. Booth found rooms in a small hotel and got a job in a factory. One day, his wife overheard one in a group of men saying, "There is where the skunk lives."

One day, according to a newspaper story by one Florence Wilson in 1938, published in the Nashville Banner, "Booth returned home in a cab greatly excited and told his wife he would have to leave home...He dressed himself in his best clothes, packed a few belongings, and left." He promised Louisa and "Cager" that he would keep in touch with them. She never heard from him again. A few months later, in February, back in Sewanee, she gave birth to a baby girl whom she named Laura Ida Elizabeth Booth.

Louisa Payne Booth only lived another five years after the birth of her child. In 1877, she was burning leaves in her yard when her clothes caught fire; she died from the burns. On her deathbed, "Cager" said, she called the children to her, eight days after the fire, and told Laura Ida that her father was John Wilkes Booth.

Laura Ida herself became an actress and married two actors in succession.

George Lushaw ✓
To
Nancy McKeloy ✓
Is^d January 25th 1872
Returned Feb^y 5th 1872 with the following endorsement
I solemnized the rite of matrimony between the within named parties on the 25th day of Jan^y 1872
Jas Wagner M^{rs}

J. M. Allister ✓
To
Martha S. Malone ✓
Is^d Jan^y 26th 1872
I solemnized the rite of matrimony between the within named parties on the 27th day of Jan^y 1872
Jas Seigant J^r

Andrew J. Kanner ✓
To
Nancy Ann Prince ✓
Is^d Jan^y 29th 1872
I solemnized the rite of matrimony between the within named parties on the 30th day of Feb^y 1872
Lele Rose J^r

Robt L. Wait ✓
To
Mary Harris Phelps ✓
Is^d Feb^y 3rd 1872
I solemnized the rite of matrimony between the within named parties on the 6th day of Feb^y 1872
H. A. Shoup^r Priest

James Austin ✓
To
Annetta Rogers ✓
Is^d Feb^y 5th 1872
I solemnized the rite of matrimony between the within named parties on the 5th day of Feb^y 1872
James Roagier J^r

A. J. Kinningham ✓
To
Pattie E. Porter ✓
Is^d Feb^y 5th 1872

J. W. Gray ✓
To
M. A. Jones ✓
Is^d Feb^y 10th 1872
Returned with the following endorsement
I solemnized the rite of matrimony between the within named parties on the 13th day of Feb^y 1872
A. J. Simpson J^r

James M. Coward ✓
To
Jennie M. Williams ✓
Issued Feb^y the 14th 1872

Geo W. Brown ✓
To
Delia P. Davis ✓
Issued Feb^y 15th 1872
Returned with the following endorsement
I solemnized the rite of matrimony between the within named parties on the 16th day of Feb^y 1872
Thos J. Shaw M^{rs}

Mc H. Davis ✓
To
Lydia J. Rice ✓
Is^d Feb^y 16th 1872
Returned with the following endorsement
I solemnized the rite of matrimony between the within named parties on the 18th day of Feb^y 1872
Mendith Carter M^{rs}

Louisa M. Smith ✓
To
Sarah E. Anderson ✓
Is^d Feb^y 19th 1872

Jefferson Lasater ✓
To
Mary Koanmer ✓
Is^d Feb^y 20th 1872
Returned with the following endorsement
I solemnized the rite of matrimony between the within named parties on the 20th day of Feb^y 1872
Daniel Lasater M^{rs}

James Smith ✓
To
Mary Ann Hill ✓
Is^d 20th Feb^y 1872
I solemnized the rite of matrimony between the within named parties on the 21st day of Feb^y 1872
H. S. Long J^r

Jones L. Turner ✓
To
M. E. Oakley ✓
Is^d Feb^y 22nd 1872

John W. Booth ✓
To
Louisa J. Payne ✓
Is^d Feb^y 24th 1872
I solemnized the rite of matrimony between the within named parties on the 25th day of Feb^y 1872
Lele Rose J^r

Henry Associate ✓
To
Louisa A. Burnett ✓
Is^d Feb^y 24th 1872
I solemnized the rite of matrimony between the within named parties on the 28th day of Feb^y 1872
W. P. Blue Rose Chaplain
University of the South

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Daughter of Abraham Lincoln's Slayer
Married in Hoopeston

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Last week a couple entered the First M. E. parsonage as Rev. W. L. Ewing was reading in his study, and asked to be married. They gave their names as Lewis A. Howard, 54, of St. Louis and Mrs. Laura Ida Asburn, 35, of Tullahoma, Tennessee. Both were actor folk, and each had been married once before. They had a marriage license, regularly issued by Deputy John R. Moore, in the county clerk's office at Danville during the afternoon, and the marriage ceremony was performed, with Mrs. Ewing as witness. After the ceremony the minister began to fill out the blanks on the back of the license, to be returned to the county clerk. The questions pertaining to the groom were answered and the answers duly recorded. Then the bride gave her maiden name as Laura Ida Booth. When asked her father's name she replied: "John Wilkes Booth." The minister looked up in surprise, and the groom's said:

"You have perhaps heard that name before."

"Do you mean to tell me," asked the minister of the bride, "that you are a daughter of the man who killed Abraham Lincoln?"

"Yes," simply and quietly replied the woman.

"A mighty bad piece of business," remarked the minister.

"Yes," again replied the bride, with a note of wistfulness in her voice, "and I have suffered from it all my life."

The balance of the questions were asked and answered as usual, and the couple left the parsonage, saying they were going on to New York City to visit a son of the bride by her former marriage. The appearance of the couple was not out of the ordinary and they seemed to be refined and cultivated people. The bride had straight black hair, and was of rather prepossessing appearance. The only incongruity of the occurrence was that the bride gave her age as thirty-eight, while the man she claimed as her father died forty-nine years ago. It is, however, a privilege generally accorded to widows who remarry to fix their age to suit themselves, and it is presumed that it so happened in this case.

Hawkins Will Filed

The will of the late Millard J. Hawkins was filed in probate court last week, and a hearing was set for August 1. All the property of whatever kind, both real and personal, is left to the testator's wife, Fannie E. Hawkins, who is made executrix without bond.

The Rossville Press says that the Hoopeston balloon ascension here on the Fourth was seen from Rossville.

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No. 26993

MARRIAGE LICENSE

Adult.

Lewis A Howard

AND

Laura Ida Asbury

Issued July 8th 1914

Married July 8th 1914

Returned Aug. 3 1914

FILED

AUG - 3 1914

Clerk.

By Thos J Dale
CLERK

Deputy.

Registered Aug. 5 1914

on page 5 of Marriage Record 7

STATE BOARD OF HEALTH REGISTER.

Page

This Return is to be carefully filled out and returned with the Marriage License. This return does not take the place of the Certificate which comes attached to the License, but is IN ADDITION THERETO.

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF HEALTH.

Return of a Marriage to County Clerk.

1. Full name of Groom Lewis A. Howard
2. Place of residence St. Louis Mo.
3. Occupation Actor
4. Age next birthday 31 years. Color White
5. Place of birth St Louis Mo.
6. Father's name W. W. Howard
7. Mother's maiden name Adaline Hosking
8. Number of groom's marriage 2nd
9. Full name of Bride Laura Ida Asbury
Maiden name, if a widow Laura Ida Booth
10. Place of residence Tullahoma Tenn.
11. Age next birthday 39 years. Color White
12. Place of birth Greenville Tenn.
13. Father's name John Edles Booth
14. Mother's maiden name Louisa J. Price
15. Number of bride's marriage 2nd
16. Married at Hopkinton in the County of Vermillion and State of Illinois, the 8th day of July 1914
17. Witnesses to marriage W. H. Ewing

N. B.—At Nos. 8 and 15, state whether 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, &c., marriage of each. At 17, give names of subscribing witnesses to the Marriage Certificate. If no subscribing witnesses, give names of two persons who witnessed the ceremony.

We hereby certify that the information above given is correct, to the best of our knowledge and belief.

Lewis A Howard [GROOM.]
Laura Ida Asbury [BRIDE.]

I hereby certify that the above is a correct return of a Marriage solemnized by me.

Dated at _____ this _____ day of _____ 19____

MARRIAGE LICENSE
THE PEOPLE
OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS,
COUNTY OF VERMILION

On any person legally authorized to solemnize Marriage Greeting
Marriage may be celebrated

Between Mr Lewis A Howard of St. Louis
in the County of St. Louis and State of Missouri
of the age of Thirty years and Mrs Laura Ida Asburn
of Sulphur in the County of Coffee and State of
Tennessee of the age of Thirty eight years

Witness Thomas J. Dale, County Clerk and the seal of said County
at his Office in Danville, in said County this 8th day of July A. D. 1914
Thomas J. Dale County Clerk.
By _____ Deputy County Clerk.

State of Illinois }
Vermilion County, } ss. W. L. Ewing a Minister
hereby certify that Mr Lewis A Howard and
Mrs Laura Ida Asburn were united in Marriage by me at Hoopston
in the County of Vermilion, and State of Illinois on the 8 day of July A. D. 1914
W. L. Ewing

LEVINE & BOOTH
Equilibristic & Marvels
A Genuine Novelty

Introducing a most wonderful exhibition of Equilibristic Skill, Juggling and Balancing Chairs with the Teeth, using as many as 12 and 14 chairs at one time. Artistic Lamp Balancing, Wonderful Feats of Contortion, Back and Forward Bending; also holding tables and chairs with the teeth while the lady does many Wonderful Feats of Contortion on them.

(Information above is from the heading of the stationery. A personal letter from Ida Booth Levine follows just as it was written.)

Altoona, PA Jan. 21, 1896

My dear Aunt Laura

I will write to you all once More to see if you will answer me this time as it has been some time scence I have wrote. I think you ought to answer this time I would like to know if my Grandma is still living and if my brother Caggie is still living in Tullahoma and he is kindly tell him to write to me as I have lots of nice things I can send him for Jennie to make up for the Children. I am now working under a different name now My stage name now is Alma Booth and I am now married again science I last wrote home my other husband being dead if you answer this tell Grandma I will write to her if she is living I am now getting along very nice now as I have a good husband and he treats me good is an actor like my self and is the owner of property in New York City which he has in my name this picture on the front of this paper is My self and husband as we appear on the stage and is one of our business letter heads we are now making good money in show business making from \$50.00 to \$100. per week. so you see I have proved luckey at last and after knowing many a bitter day at home the lord above has not let me suffer I will close by saying to all the folks How de and would like to see you all but don't know as I ever will and Aunt Laura I think if you have respect for your dad sister I think you ought to answer this I write this to you because you will get it quicker than the rest because you are in town this is a program from the theatre that we are at this week our names are marked in ink from Your loving neice

Ida Booth

Answer my letter and put it in this envelope and seal it up and it will reach me alright.

Goodby
Love Ida

Laura Melvina Price Campbell (buried in Oakwood Cemetery in Tullahoma) was the “Aunt” addressed in this letter. Laura lived in Tullahoma, TN. “Grandma” would have been Martha Jane Crawford Price, wife of Jerome Wilson Price, a Cumberland Presbyterian minister. Jerome and Martha’s family was in Grundy County in both the 1850 & 1860 Censuses. The Prices lived in the Payne’s Cove area, probably very near the Elk River, because there is a spring that feeds into the river that is still known as the Ms. Price Spring.

Laura Ida Elizabeth Booth was the daughter of Louisa Jane Price and John Wilkes Booth. Their marriage was recorded in Franklin County TN, in 1872. Louisa already had a child, McCager Payne “Caggie”, by her first husband C.Z. Payne, who died as a result of wounds suffered in the Civil War.

I received a copy of this letter from a lady in Florida who asked not to be identified because her mother, even though long deceased, would be appalled to know that the family had been publicly identified as having a connection with John Wilkes Booth