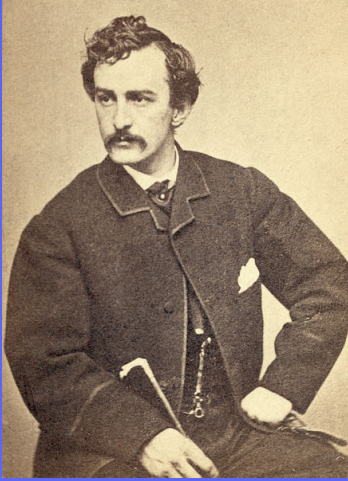


John Wilkes Booth



John Wilkes Booth was born May 10, 1838 in Maryland and died at the age of 26 in April 26, 1865. Twelve days before his death, Booth had assassinated President Abraham Lincoln at Ford's Theater in Washington, DC.

Booth, like other members of his family, was an actor. He had attended the hanging of abolitionist John Brown and wrote a long speech expressing strong feelings in support of the institution of slavery. Between 1855 and 1865, Booth's yearly earnings amounted to the equivalent of over \$500,000 in today's currency, adjusting for inflation. He sometimes performed under the name JB Wilkes to hide his famous family name.

As a successful actor, Booth used his celebrity to promote The Fuller Farm Oil company, an outfit that sought to use explosives to increase the output of oil wells. Of course, the explosives destroyed the company's wells, which had previously been very productive, and the company folded. In the failed investment, Booth lost a substantial sum, just over \$80,000 in today's dollars.

On November 9, 1863, Booth played a sculptor in a play called The Marble Heart by Charles Selby. Lincoln was in the audience. Booth declined to meet the president, and gestured angrily at the President at one point during the production.

Originally, Booth and 8 conspirators had planned to kidnap the President, Abraham Lincoln, the Vice President, Andrew Johnson, and the Secretary of State, William H. Seward to aid the cause of the confederacy. By 1865, Booth was putting the plan into action. At the time, he was also secretly engaged marry the daughter of US Senator John P Hale of New Hampshire. The senator's daughter, Lucy Lambert Hale, invited her fiancée to the second inauguration of Lincoln on March 4, 1865, which Booth attended. Booth and 3 conspirators in the crowd took no action at that time.



On March 17, 1865 Booth learned that Lincoln would attend a play called Still Waters Run Deep. He and his companions waited for the President in the road leading to the play house. Lincoln never showed up. Ironically, Lincoln had changed his plans to attend a reception in the hotel where Booth had been staying--the National Hotel in Washington, DC.



On April 14, 1865, the American Civil War had been over for 4 days, but Booth incorrectly believed that the war was still in progress because, although Robert E. Lee had surrendered, an army led by Joseph E. Johnston was still fighting the union. Despite the fact that several conspirators had plotted to assassinate Lincoln, only Booth acted on his plans, killing the President. A conspirator managed to severely wound the Secretary of State, William H. Seward. After the assassination, Booth fled on horseback. A union soldier killed Booth because he would not surrender peaceably after authorities discovered Booth and a companion hiding in a barn in rural northern Virginia. Authorities located, tried, convicted, and hanged the conspirators.