

Document I John Wilkes Booth



Portrait of John Wilkes Booth

Source: U.S. National Archives
<http://www.archives.gov>



1865 Broadside

Source: Library of Congress
<http://memory.loc.gov>



**Green Mount Cemetery
Baltimore, Maryland**
Obelisk (Monument) marking
Booth's family burial plot

On April 14, 1865 John Wilkes Booth fatally shot President Abraham Lincoln at Ford's Theatre on 10th Street in Washington.

The attack came five days after Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House in Virginia.

Booth was a Maryland native, respected actor, and Southern sympathizer. During the play, *Our American Cousin*, he slipped into the president's box and shot Lincoln in the back of the head. Booth shouted, "Sic semper tyrannis! [Thus always to tyrants] The South is avenged!" He jumped onto the stage, breaking his leg. He escaped on horseback.

The U.S. Army eventually cornered Booth in a barn near Bowling Green, Virginia. The barn was set on fire. As Booth was fleeing, he was shot and later died.

Sensing that an exhibition of Booth's body might cause a riot, the government had it secretly buried at night in a grave in the yard of the Washington Penitentiary.

In 1869, Booth's brother, Edwin, asked President Andrew Johnson to release the remains to him for proper burial. Johnson agreed to the request. Booth's body was moved to Green Mount Cemetery in Baltimore and buried in an unmarked grave in the family plot. Night time graveside services were presided over by the Rev. Fleming James, an Episcopal minister visiting from New York. When his parishioners learned that he officiated at the reburial of Lincoln's killer, James was fired.