



Soldiers attempting to find John Wilkes Booth believed he might be hiding near Port Royal on the Rappahannock River. Their guess was accurate - Booth and Herold were both in the barn at Garrett's farm.

Commanding that the pair surrender, Colonel Baker wanted the men taken alive. Herold came out, but Booth refused. Thereafter, Conger set the barn on fire, hoping to cause Booth to escape the flames. (Click on the image for a much better view.)

Reporting what happened, *Harper's Weekly* published this illustration in its May 13, 1865 issue. Also included was the story of Booth's capture and shooting (which occurred against orders).

Hereafter are excerpts from the *Weekly's* story:

BOOTH'S CAPTURE - THE ASSASSIN BROUGHT TO BAY.

THE ASSASSIN'S END.

AFTER eleven days transpired since the death of the President his murderer, JOHN WILKES BOOTH, was discovered in a barn on GARRETT'S farm, near Port Royal, on the Rappahannock. Immediately after the murder Colonel BAKER, of the detective service, set out to find BOOTH's hiding-place. He soon succeeded in capturing ATZEROTH and Dr. MUDGE. It was the latter of these who attended to BOOTH's crippled leg, and a boot with BOOTH'S name in it was found in his possession.

A negro was then arrested, who said he had seen BOOTH and another man cross the Potomac in a fishing-boat. Colonel BAKER sent to HANCOCK for twenty-five mounted men to aid him in the pursuit. These were sent under Lieutenant DOUGHERTY, and BAKER placed them under the control of Lieutenant-Colonel E. J. CONGER, and of his cousin, Lieutenant L. B. BAKER, and dispatched them to Belle Plain, with orders to scour the country about Port Royal.

The detectives and cavalymen left Washington at two P.M. on the 23d of April, and at ten o'clock disembarked at Belle Plain, near Fredericksburg. Here they commenced their inquest, but without any result. The next morning they came to Port Royal ferry and crossed. At Port Royal they found one ROLLINS, a fisherman, who referred them to a negro named Lucas as having driven two men a short distance toward Bowling Green in a wagon.

These men perfectly answered the description of BOOTH and his accomplice HAROLD. Some disbanded men, it was learned, belonging to MOSBY'S command, took BOOTH under their protection on the way to Bowling Green. On the 25th BAKER and his party proceeded to Bowling Green, a small court-house town in Caroline County. Here they found the captain of the rebel cavalry, and extorted from him a statement of BOOTH'S hiding-place. It was found that this was at the house of a Mr. GARRETT, which they had passed on their way to Bowling Green.

Without noise the house was surrounded, and BAKER went up to the kitchen door on the side and wrapped. An old man in half undress undrew the bolts, and had scarcely opened the door before BAKER had him by the throat with a pistol at his ear, and asked, "Where are the men who stay with you?" Under the menace of instant death the old man seemed paralyzed, but at BAKER'S order lit a candle.

The question was then repeated. "They are gone," replied the old man. Soon a young boy appeared on the stage and told BAKER the men he sought were in the barn. The barn was then surrounded. BAKER and CONGER went to the door. The former called out signifying his intention to have a surrender on the part of the men inside, or else a bonfire and a shooting match.

He sent the young boy in to receive their arms. To the boy's appeal BOOTH answered with a curse, accusing the boy of having betrayed him. The boy then came out, and BAKER repeated his demand, giving BOOTH five minutes to make up his mind. BOOTH replied,

"Who are you, and what do you want with us?"

BAKER answered, "We want you to deliver up your arms and become our prisoners."

"But who are you?"

"That makes no difference. We know who you men with carbines and pistols. You can not escape."

After a pause BOOTH said: "Captain, this is a hard case, I swear. Perhaps I am being taken by my own friends." He then asked time to consider, which was granted.

After a little interval BAKER threatened to fire the barn if they did not come out. BOOTH replied that he was a cripple and begged a chance for his life, declaring that he would never be taken alive. BAKER replied that he did not come there to fight but to capture him, and again threatened to fire the barn.

"Well, then, my brave boys," said BOOTH, "prepare a stretcher for me."

HAROLD now wanted to surrender, and, in the midst of a shower of imprecations from BOOTH, did so. CONGER then set fire to the barn. It is this instant that our artist has chosen for the graphic illustration on page 293. The World correspondent thus describes the scene:

"The blaze lit up the black recesses of the great barn till every wasp's nest and cobweb in the roof was luminous, flinging streaks of red and violet across the tumbled farm gear in the corner, plows, harrows, hoes, rakes, sugar-mills, and making every separate grain in the high bin adjacent gleam like a mote of precious gold. They tinged the beams, the upright columns, the barricades, where clover and timothy, piled high, held toward the hot incendiary their separate straws for the funeral pile. They bathed the murderer's retreat in a beautiful illumination, and while in bold outline his figure stood revealed, they rose like an impenetrable wall to guard from sight the hated enemy who lit them."

Behind the blaze, with his eye to a crack, CONGER saw WILKES BOOTH standing upright upon a crutch. He likens him at this instant to his brother EDWIN, whom he says he so much resembled that he half believed, for the moment, the whole pursuit to have been a mistake. At the gleam of the fire WILKES dropped his crutch and carbine, and on both hands crept up to the spot to espy the incendiary and shoot him dead. His eyes were lustrous like fever, and swelled and rolled in terrible beauty, while his teeth were fixed, and he wore the expression of one in the calmness before frenzy.

In vain he peered with vengeance in his look; the blaze that made him visible concealed his enemy. A second he turned glaring at the fire, as if to leap upon it and extinguish it, but it had made such headway that this was a futile impulse and he dismissed it. As calmly as upon the battle-field a veteran stands amidst the hail of ball and shell and plunging iron, BOOTH turned at a man's stride, and pushed for the door, carbine in poise, and the last resolve of death, which we name despair, set on his high, bloodless forehead."

Against orders, someone shot Booth.

Credits:

Illustration and quoted passages from *Harper's Weekly*, May 13, 1865 issue. Online, courtesy Library of Congress.

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