

Suggested Reading Booth Family Nonfiction

American Gothic: The Story of America's Legendary Theatrical Family—Junius, Edwin and John Wilkes Booth by Gene Smith (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992). This compelling book is quick and easy to read and is a great place to begin for adults unfamiliar with the history of the Booth family.

Mad Booths of Maryland by Stanley Kimmel (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1940). This massive 400 page book is considered to be a “must read” by many Booth scholars. A “revised and enlarged” paperback edition was published by Dover Publications of New York in 1969. Unfortunately, both books are out-of-print and expensive to purchase in the used book market. Copies are available at the reference desk of the Bel Air Public Library and in the Maryland Room of the Aberdeen Public Library. The Historical Society of Harford County has a copy that can be read at the society but not checked out.

John Wilkes Booth: A Sister's Memoir by Asia Booth Clarke, edited by Terry Alford (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1996). Originally published in New York by G. P. Putnam's Sons in 1938 as *The Unlocked Book*, this memoir was written by John Wilkes Booth's older sister and published after her death. It is the best source of information about life on the Booth's Harford County, Maryland, farm and the years John and Asia spent growing up there. It is also the best way to get to know Asia Booth Clarke.

Junius Brutus Booth: Theatrical Prometheus by Stephen M. Archer (Carbondale: Illinois University Press, 1992). This thoroughly researched and well-written biography is the best source of information about the patriarch of the Booth family.

“Right or Wrong, God Judge Me”: The Writings of John Wilkes Booth edited by John Rhodehamel and Louise Taper (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997). This fascinating book contains “all the known writings of John Wilkes Booth” (up until 1997) and provides unique insight into his personality, thoughts, motives, adventures, and relationships with friends and family. The earliest “writing” included is a letter to a friend in Baltimore written from Harford County, Maryland, on January 25, 1854, when Booth was 15. The last “writing” included is a letter written two days before his death on April 26, 1865, at the age of 26.

Prince of Players: Edwin Booth by Eleanor Ruggles (New York: W. W. Norton, 1953). Several writers and historians are in the process of preparing new biographies of this great actor, but until those works are published, *Prince of Players*, the most recent biography, remains the best source of information about Edwin Booth.

American Brutus: John Wilkes Booth and the Lincoln Conspiracies by Michael W. Kauffman (New York: Random House, 2004). This fascinating book thoroughly explores John Wilkes Booth's plots and schemes in the years and the months just prior to the assassination. It is also an excellent source on the assassination itself and the events that followed. Kauffman is one of today's foremost Booth scholars.

Manhunt: The 12 Day Chase for Lincoln's Killer by James L. Swanson (Harper Collins, 2006). This popular, easy-to-read book follows John Wilkes Booth's escape attempt after the April 14, 1865, shooting of President Abraham Lincoln in Washington, DC. Swanson also retells the story for younger readers in *Chasing Lincoln's Killer* (Scholastic Press, 2009).

Good Brother, Bad Brother: The Story of Edwin and John Wilkes Booth by James Cross Giblin (Clarion Books, 2005). This is a good book for young readers (ages 10-14); older readers will also enjoy the many wonderful images included in the book.

Articles

***Harford Historical Bulletin* articles published by the Historical Society of Harford County, are available for purchase in the Booth Room Gift Shop at Tudor Hall and Historical Society of Harford County, 143 N. Main St., Bel Air, Maryland.**

“Edwin Booth: Harford County’s *Prince of Players*, Part 1,” by Dinah Faber, *Harford Historical Bulletin*, No. 98, Summer 2004. This 36 page article examines the life and career of Edwin Booth who was one of the greatest American actors of the 19th century.

“Edwin Booth: Harford County’s *Prince of Players*, Part 2,” by Dinah Faber, *Harford Historical Bulletin*, No. 99, Fall 2004. This 63 page article describes the various ways Edwin Booth has been honored in Harford County over the years, including a portrait in the courthouse, a fountain on Main Street in Bel Air, and a mural in the post office.

“Joseph and Ann Hall: Behind the Scenes at Tudor Hall, by Dinah Faber, *Harford Historical Bulletin*, No. 104, Fall 2006. This 64 page article examines the lives of an African American couple and their children who were associated with the Booth farm and Tudor Hall even longer than the Booth family itself. Joseph Hall came to the Booth farm as a slave hired by Junius Brutus Booth Sr. from a local doctor and slave holder. Joseph later purchased his wife Ann’s freedom from an adjacent land owner. Together, Joseph and Ann had a large family and persevered through many hardships.

“The House that Booth Built, A Revisit: Harford County’s Tudor Hall” by Kathryn Hopkins Kavanagh, *Harford Historical Bulletin*, No. 71, Winter 1997. This 59 page article summarizing the history of the Booth family, the Booth farm, and Tudor Hall is currently out-of-print. Contact the Historical Society of Harford County, 143 North Main St., Bel Air, Maryland, for a photocopy of this article.

***Maryland Historical Magazine* published by the Maryland Historical Society. Photocopies of articles from this scholarly journal are available at the Historical Society of Harford County, 143 N. Main St., Bel Air, Maryland.**

“John Wilkes Booth’s Enigmatic Brother Joseph” by John Calder Brennan, *Maryland Historical Magazine*, Spring 1983, pgs. 22-34. This well-researched and well-written article by one of the foremost Booth scholars of all times is the best source of information about the youngest of the Booth children, Dr. Joseph Adrian Booth.

Historical Fiction

Most of the fiction written about the Booth family has been disappointing. However, the following book is the one notable exception.

Booth’s Daughter by Raymond Wemmlinger (Calkins Creek Books, 2007). This carefully researched and beautifully written novel is based on the actual relationship between Edwin Booth and his only daughter Edwina. The book explores the conflicts Edwina experiences as she enters young womanhood and faces the inevitable separation from her father that goes with “growing up” and becoming her own woman. The book was written for young readers (grade 7 and up), but adult readers will enjoy it as well.

Prepared by Dinah Faber for Spirits of Tudor Hall, revised March 2009.