

Correspondence of George Huron concerning Boston Corbett

Section 16, Pages 451 - 473

Correspondence of George A. Huron who was appointed guardian of Boston Corbett after he was committed to an insane asylum in Topeka, Kansas. Corbett is known as the man who killed John Wilkes Booth following President Lincoln's assassination. Corbett escaped from the asylum in May 1888. This correspondence relates to Huron's guardianship of Corbett and matters of his estate following his disappearance and presumed death.

Date: 1887-1913

Callnumber: Boston Corbett Coll. #318, Box 2

KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 307434

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The picture of Corbett was taken in 1776 when he was a gate-keeper at the Centennial Exposition held at Philadelphia that year.

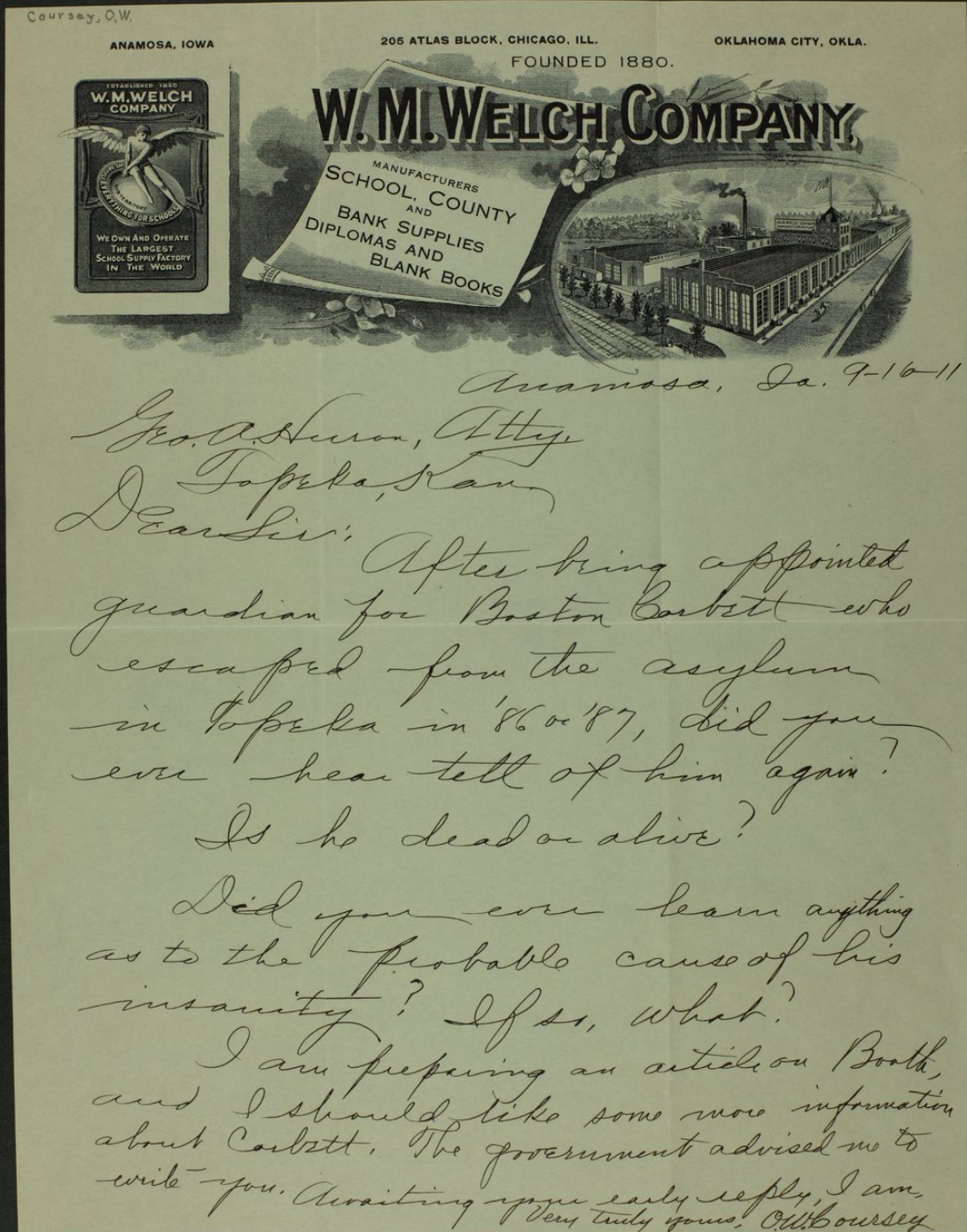
The picture of the impostor is from a photograph taken at San Angelo, Texas, while he was in jail, just prior to his trial in October 1905, twenty-nine years after Boston Corbett's photograph was taken.

George Huron

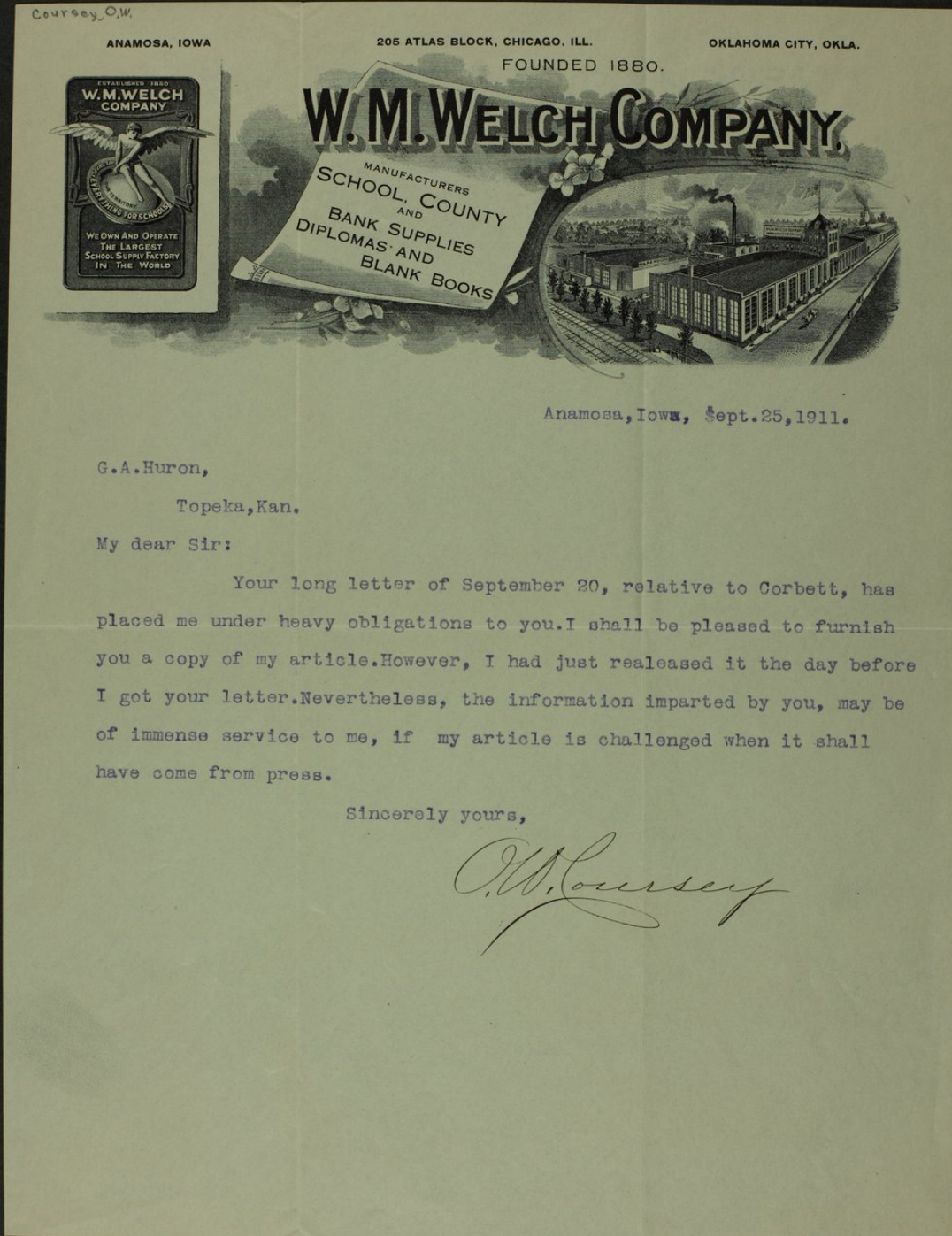
On motion of Colonel Deale the thanks of the Board were given Judge Huron for his interesting gift.

HICKORY BOND

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Calder, W. W.

Mr. L.R. Acton,

Concordia, Kansas.

Dear sir:-

I have hastily examined the petition of George A. Huron guardian of Boston Corbett, praying the probate court of your county to make an order, authorizing him to sell the west half of the north-east quarter of section twelve (12), township seven (7) south, of range three (3) west of the 6th. P.M., Cloud county, Kansas, which property was located by Corbett as a homestead.

Is the wife of Mr. Corbett living, and if so, will it not be necessary for you to obtain from her a deed, conveying to you her interest in this property? Must not the deed, conveying the title to the homestead be a joint deed executed by the husband and wife, or must not the wife, at least, convey her interest in the property? I have heard, from a source outside of anything shown by these papers, that Boston Corbett has, since he was declared insane, intermarried with some woman in the state of Texas. Of course, if such be the case, as to her, this real estate is probably not a homestead, but if Boston Corbett is capable of entering into the marriage contract, he must be sane, and if sane, by what authority does Mr. Huron claim jurisdiction to sell this property? If sane, has the probate court of Shawnee county jurisdiction over his real estate, or any other property he may possess?

Section 19 of article 1, chapter 60, Dassel's statutes of Kansas, 1899 (page 796) provides that the probate court by whom an insane person is committed to guardianship may sell or mortgage any part of such estate, real or personal, when necessary for the safe keeping of such insane person for the management of his estate, for the support and maintenance of his family, or the education of his children.

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Section 20 provides that "Whenever the personal estate of any such insane person shall be insufficient for the discharge of his debts, the maintenance of himself and his family, or the education of his children, it shall be the duty of the guardian to apply by petition to the probate court by which he was appointed, praying authority to mortgage, lease or sell the whole, or so much of the real estate of such person as shall be necessary to supply the deficiency".

Section 21 provides: "The petition shall set forth the particulars of the amount of the estate, real and personal of such insane person, and of the debts by him owing, accompanied by a full, true and perfect account of the guardianship of the petitioner, showing the application of the funds which have come to his hands."

Section 22 provides: "If it appear to the court, upon examination of the matter, that the personal estate is insufficient for the purposes above mentioned, and that the property has been applied as far as the circumstances of the case may render proper, the court shall make an order, directing the mortgage, lease or sale of such part of the estate as may be necessary or proper".

The petition to sell this property does not, as required by Sec.

21, "set forth the particulars of the amount of the estate, real and personal, of such insane person, and of the debts by him owing", nor is

it accompanied by a full, true and perfect account of the guardianship of the petitioner, showing the application of the funds which may have

come into his hands as is required by Sec. 21. The recital is that

"He is now more than 70 years of age and is in poor health and needs the proceeds of said sale, if sold, for his sustenance. That he is now a resident of Pecos county, Texas". There is the same recital in the order of the court. *There is a more conclusion in the first should be more*

and in my opinion
I do not say the title the guardian offers to convey to you is defective, but, for the reasons above mentioned, I would hesitate to accept it and pay full price for the land. It is currently reported here that Corbett has for years earned his own living, and that his guardian has never contributed one cent toward his support. It is further reported that he has not been taken care of by his friends or by any charitable institution. If this be the case, and he is really insane, is it necessary to sell this property for his maintenance? If he is sane, has the court any jurisdiction to sell the property? I say no, and most emphatically NO.

Yours truly,

Dict.

George Huron
Subscribed for me Corbett as he is now wearing this hat and
and I was with some medicine company

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[Jan. 8, 1913]

The Estate of Boston Corbett, Insane, to George A. Huron,
Guardian, debtor.

Sept. 21, 1905, To expenses from Topeka, Kansas to San Angelo,
Texas to attend Preliminary Examination of John Corbett, alias
James Corbett, alias Boston Corbett charged with perjury in pension
claim, as follows--To wit:

To R. R. fare from Topeka to San Angelo, Texas and return	\$43.30
To sleeping car berth " " " " " "	
	two nights 4.00
To hotel and meals--7 days on trip	12.70
To services 7 days, at \$ per day	
Cr.	Total

Sept. 19 By check of U.S. Marshall, allowance mileage and per
diem 77.70

Oct. 4, 1905 To expenses from Topeka, Kansas to Abilene, Texas to
appear before Grand Jury in same case, as follows--To wit:

R. R. fare, Topeka to Abilene, Texas and return	\$38.70
Sleeping car berth " " " " " "	
	"two nights 4.00
Hotel and meals, 5 days on trip	8.25
Services 5 days at \$ per day	
	Total

Oct. 2 By check, Geo. H. Green U.S. Marshall, allowance mileage
and per diem 70.00

Balance due.

Oct. 14, To expenses from Topeka, Kansas, to San Angelo, Texas to attend
trial of said Corbett, as follows--To wit:

R. R. fare Topeka to San Angelo, Texas and return	\$43.30
Sleeping car berth, three nights	6.00
Hotel and meals on trip	9.50
Services 5 days at \$ per day	
	Total

By check, Geo. H. Green, W. S. Marshall allowance mileage
and per diem

Balance due.

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Estate of
Boston Corbett
" "
Copy of
Statement filed
with Final Account
January 8-1913

Correspondence of George Huron concerning Boston Corbett

Jan. 8, 1913

GUARDIAN'S ACCOUNT OF ADMINISTRATION.

State of Kansas,
Shawnee County.
 IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF
Boston Corbett
 Minor Heir of An Insane Person
deceased
Final account of the administration of George A. Huron as
 Guardian of Boston Corbett
An Insane Person minor heir
 of deceased. Made this 8th day
 of January, A. D. 1913.

Guardian's Account of Administration.

		Dr.	Cr.
		Said Guardian charges himself as follows:	Said Guardian claims credit as follows:
1903	January 9	To Balance on hand, due Ward per Settlement	\$597.44
January	17	By. Paid C. S. Smith Probate Judge Cloud Co. Voucher 1	\$3.00
February	21	" " J. W. Hardiner " 2	25.00
March	12	" " Chas. M. Baldwin " 3	5.00
" 1904	12	" " Expenses In re Estate " 4	130.46
May	24	" " M. A. Pearce Appraising land " 5	2.00
"	"	" " J. W. Panshee " " 6	2.00
"	"	" " H. L. Pearce " " 7	2.00
October 1905	23	" " Geo. W. Parker Official Stenographer " 8	10.00
December 1908	19	" " Stanley Medlicott Co. Treasurer 1892- " 9	3.88
December 1909	20	" " Stanley Medlicott " " 10	1.91
June 1910	15	" " Stanley Medlicott " " 11	1.91
Dec- 1911	20	" " Stanley Medlicott " " 12	3.58
Dec- 1912	19	" " Matt Wrightman Jr. " " 13	21.2
June	12	" " Matt Wrightman Jr. " " 14	21.2
Dec.	18	" " Matt Wrightman Jr. " " 15	3.75
"	"	" " Geo. W. Parker Services & Expenses as Guardian 16	390.76
"	"	Schoch Probate Judge Costs this Settlement	7.95
			\$597.44

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(When this Blank is not large enough, order additional sheets to lengthen it to the desired capacity.)

State of Kansas, Shawnee County, ss.

I DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR, That I am the above-named Guardian, and that the foregoing is in all respects a just, true, full and accurate account of my administration upon the above-named estate.

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO before me, this 5th day of January, A. D. 1913

Correspondence of George Huron concerning Boston Corbett

No. _____

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF

Boston Corbett

Mrs Susan Benson

MINOR HEIR OF

Deceased.

Copy of
Final GUARDIAN'S
Account of Administration.

Filed this *8th* day of

January, A. D. 1913

Probate Judge.



Correspondence of George Huron concerning Boston Corbett

Jan. 8, 1913

JOURNAL ENTRY—FINAL DISCHARGE.

State of Kansas, }
Shawnee County, } In the Probate Court of said County.

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF
Boston Corbett
Minor of an insane person. }
Decedent. } Journal Entry—Final Discharge.

AND NOW, on this 8th day of January 1913, came
G. A. Huron, Guardian of the above-named Minor,
and files a receipt of said of all disbursements as ordered
for the sum of money and all property, real and personal, ordered to be paid to said
by this Court, at the hearing of the final account of said
G. A. Huron as such Guardian,
on the 8th day of January 1913.


And it being made to appear to the Court that said G. A. Huron
has fully complied with said order of the Court in every particular,
Now, THEREFORE, It is by the Court considered, ordered and adjudged, that said estate be, and it is
hereby, fully and finally closed; and that said G. A. Huron
and his sureties be, and they are hereby, discharged and released from any and all
further liability on the bond of said G. A. Huron
as such Guardian.

(Seal) W. F. Schoch
Probate Judge.

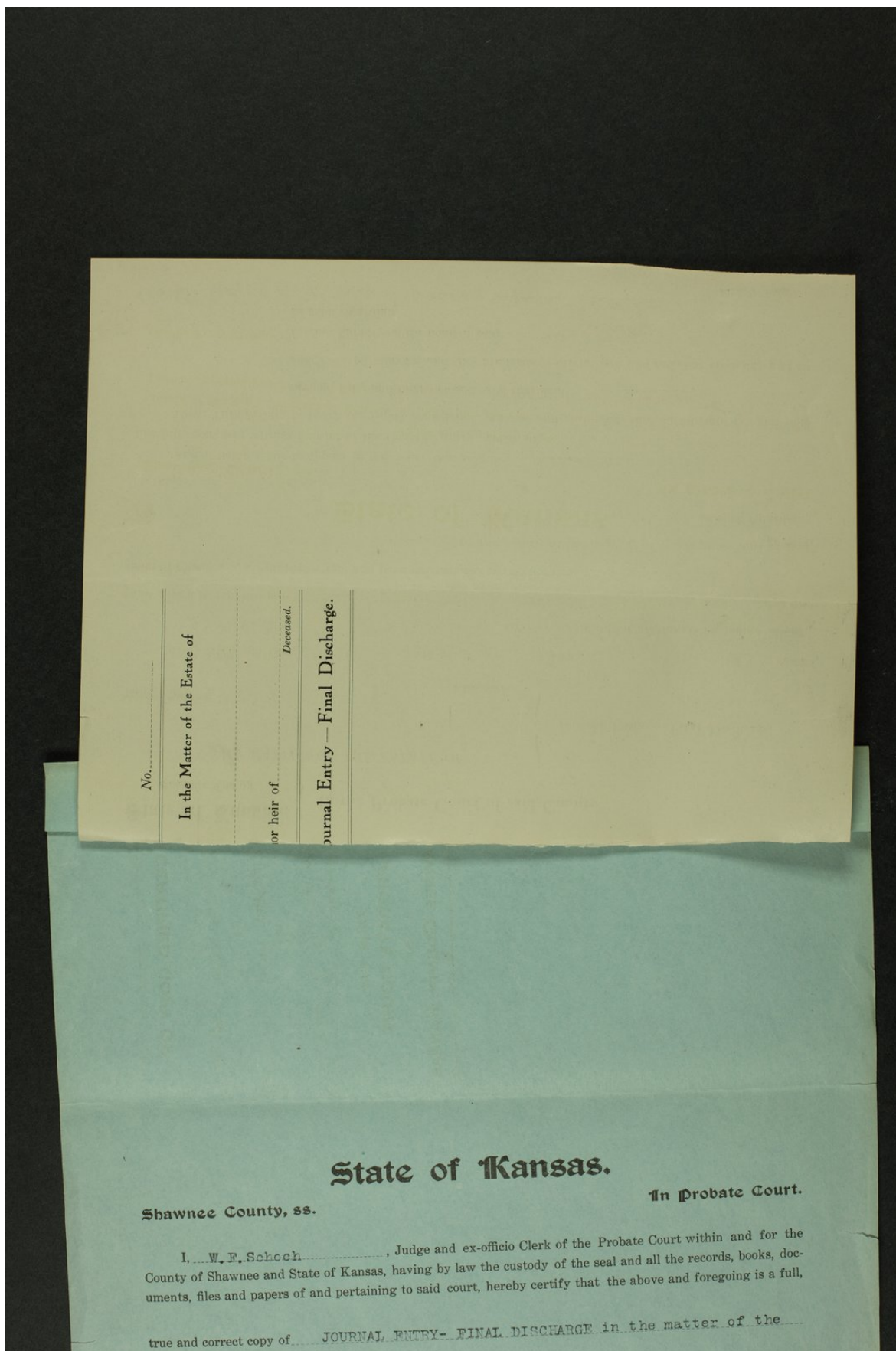
as the same appears on file and of record in my office.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the official seal of said Court, at my
office in the City of Topeka, in said County and State, this 8th day of January 1913.

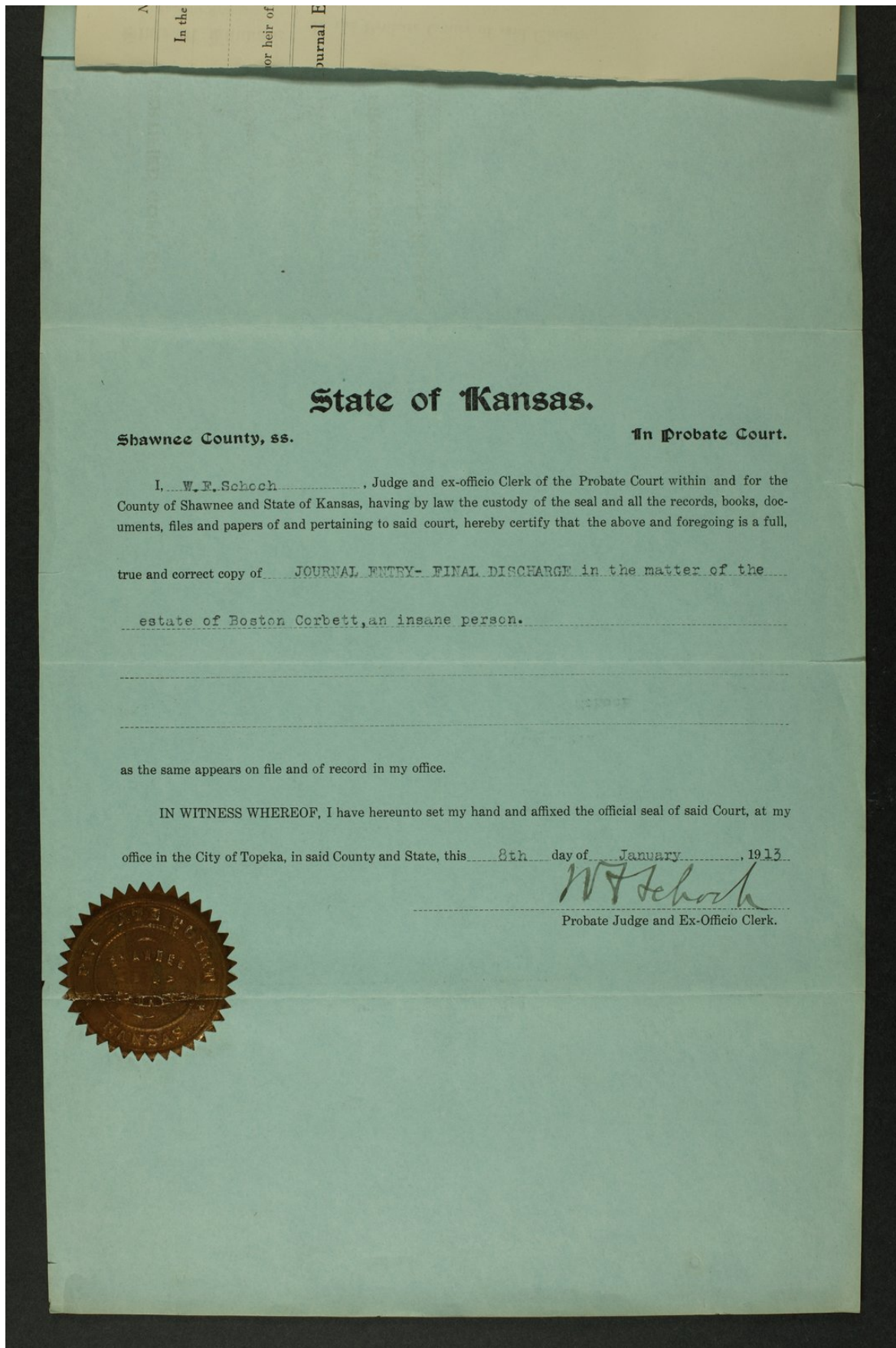
W. F. Schoch
Probate Judge and Ex-Officio Clerk.



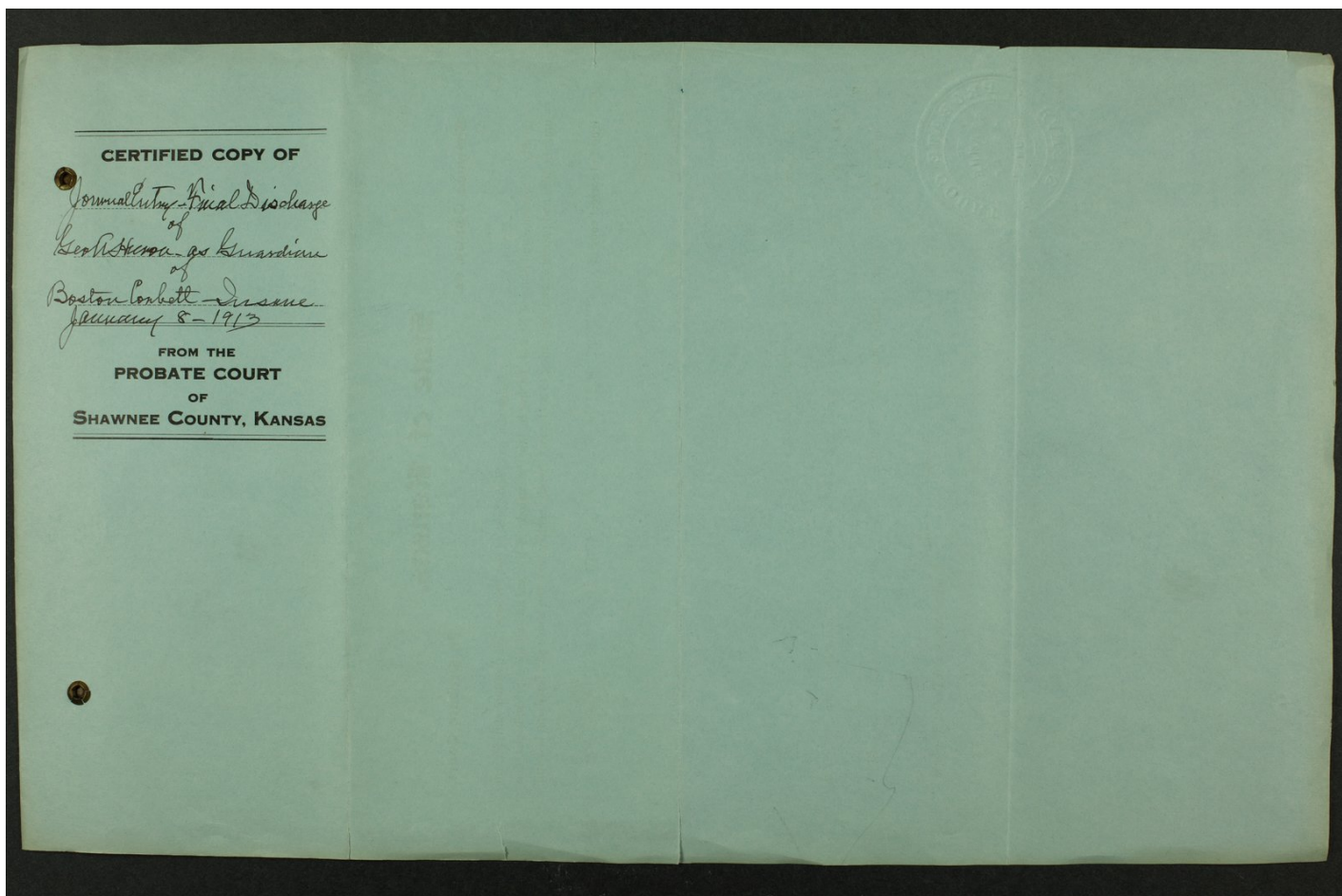
Correspondence of George Huron concerning Boston Corbett



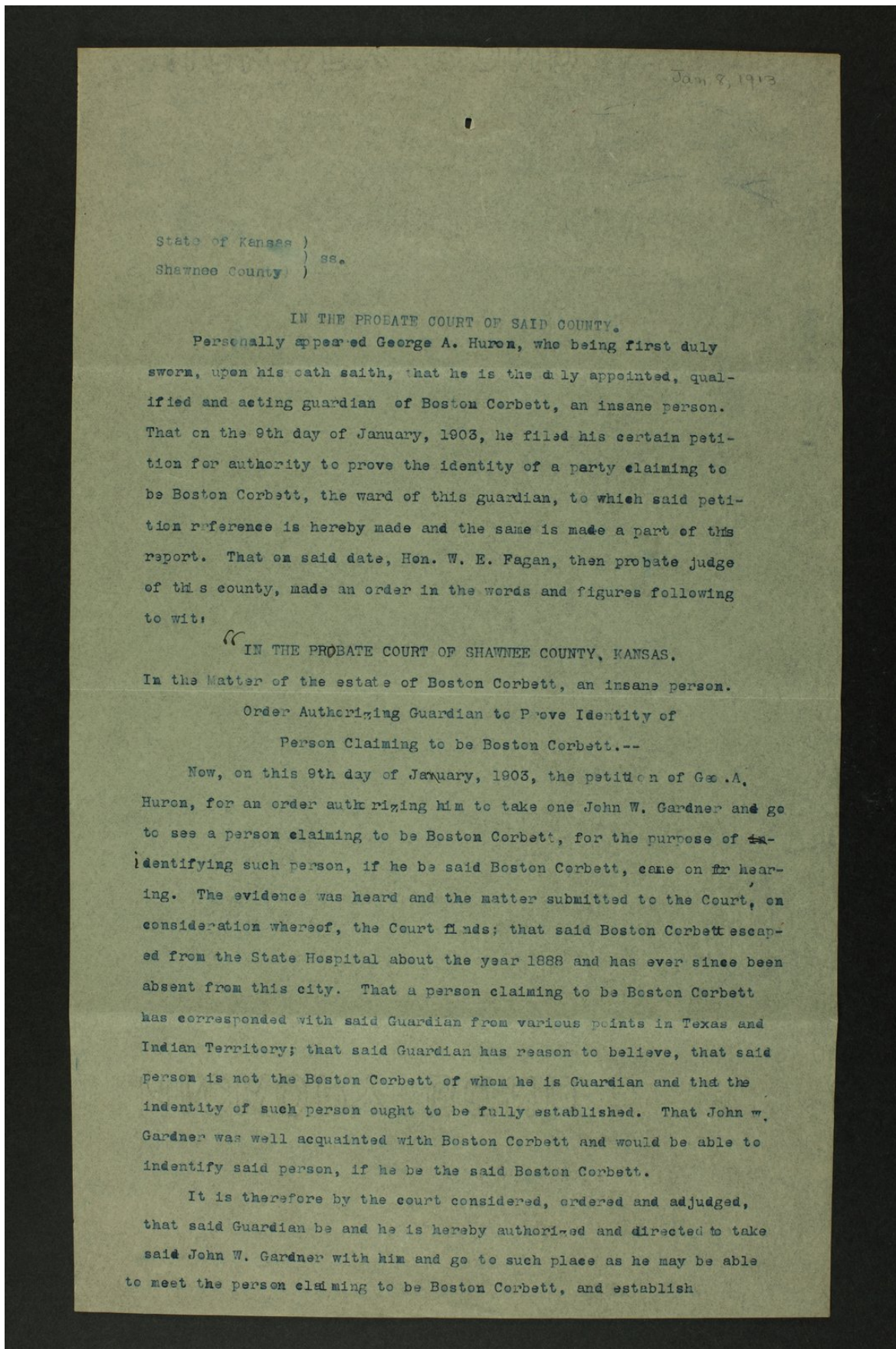
Correspondence of George Huron concerning Boston Corbett



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State of Kansas)
Shawnee County) ss.

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF SAID COUNTY.

Personally appeared George A. Huron, who being first duly sworn, upon his oath saith, that he is the duly appointed, qualified and acting guardian of Boston Corbett, an insane person. That on the 9th day of January, 1903, he filed his certain petition for authority to prove the identity of a party claiming to be Boston Corbett, the ward of this guardian, to which said petition reference is hereby made and the same is made a part of this report. That on said date, Hon. W. E. Fagan, then probate judge of this county, made an order in the words and figures following to wit:

“ IN THE PROBATE COURT OF SHAWNEE COUNTY, KANSAS.

In the Matter of the estate of Boston Corbett, an insane person.

Order Authorizing Guardian to Prove Identity of Person Claiming to be Boston Corbett.--

Now, on this 9th day of January, 1903, the petition of Geo. A. Huron, for an order authorizing him to take one John W. Gardner and go to see a person claiming to be Boston Corbett, for the purpose of identifying such person, if he be said Boston Corbett, came on for hearing. The evidence was heard and the matter submitted to the Court, on consideration whereof, the Court finds; that said Boston Corbett escaped from the State Hospital about the year 1888 and has ever since been absent from this city. That a person claiming to be Boston Corbett has corresponded with said Guardian from various points in Texas and Indian Territory; that said Guardian has reason to believe, that said person is not the Boston Corbett of whom he is Guardian and that the identity of such person ought to be fully established. That John W. Gardner was well acquainted with Boston Corbett and would be able to identify said person, if he be the said Boston Corbett.

It is therefore by the court considered, ordered and adjudged, that said Guardian be and he is hereby authorized and directed to take said John W. Gardner with him and go to such place as he may be able to meet the person claiming to be Boston Corbett, and establish

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whether or not such claimant is the Boston Corbett of whom said George A. Huron is Guardian.

W. E. FAGAN
Probate Judge. ??

This Guardian further reports that at the time of making said order he had a conversation with said Honorable W. E. Fagan who referred to the expenses to be borne of the trip; directed therein for this Guardian to make, and of the rate of compensation ^{at} that would be reasonable to this Guardian. That in accordance with said order, this Guardian employed John W. Gardner, in said order named, to go with him upon his search for the person claiming to be Boston Corbett, upon the agreed compensation, that this Guardian should pay all of the expenses of said John W. Gardner and the further wage of \$2.50 per day for the entire trip. That it was further ~~agreed~~ between this Guardian and the Hon. W. E. Fagan, Probate Judge, that since the proposed trip would take this Guardian away from Topeka and away from his business as an attorney-at-law that \$15 ^{per} day for the time he should necessarily be away from Topeka, in addition to all of his expenses of his trip, would be a reasonable compensation ^{at}. That this Guardian and the said John W. Gardner made the trip, that the expense account of said trip is filed with this final account of his administration, ^{this day filed} ~~this said file~~ amounting in the aggregate to \$134.46, as voucher number 4.

This Guardian further informs the Court that he had previously been in correspondence with a person claiming to be Boston Corbett, his said ward, who was traveling over the Territory of Oklahoma and the state of Texas, engaged in the business of trapping wolves for cattle and stock men, and selling medicines for the W. W. Gavitt Medical Company of Topeka, Kansas, in the said Territory of Oklahoma and state of Texas. That his said correspondent had convinced him that his claim of being Boston Corbett was genuine. And that, as a matter of justice, to his said ward, this Guardian had made application to the Commissioner of Pensions at Washington, D. C., for the restoration of his said ward to the Pension Rolls of the Government, from which rolls his said ward had been dropped, after his escape from the State Insane Hospital at Topeka,

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in the month of May 1888. That this Guardian had tried for three years to persuade said claimant to come to Topeka, Kansas, for the purpose of identification, if he were said Boston Corbett. That this Guardian had also been in constant correspondence with the U. S. Commissioner of Pensions at Washington, D. C., in regard to his said application for restoration of his ward, and that as a part of his said work, he had assisted the Commissioner of Pensions and the special examiner detailed by the Commissioner for that purpose, in procuring evidence of sundry and divers witnesses as to the identity of said Boston Corbett, but that the final testimony could not be obtained without having said Corbett come to Kansas or to take ~~as~~ witnesses from Kansas to see him where ever he might be found.

This Guardian further informs the Court that he and the said John W. Gardner made stops at Enid, Oklahoma, Wichita Falls, Texas, Seymour Texas, Benjamin, Texas, and finally located and found said claimant living in a dugout upon Chesser's Stock Ranch about "five miles north-west from the postoffice, Truscott," in Knox County, Texas.

This Guardian further informs the Court that said party had been known as, and going by the name of Boston Corbett in that county, and was the same party with whom this Guardian had been corresponding as the genuine Boston Corbett.

But this Guardian informs the Court that the genuine Boston Corbett was born in London, England, in the year 1832. That he was of the hight of about 5 feet, 4 inches. That he weighed from 130 to 140 pounds and was consequently small in proportion to his hight. That said Boston Corbett would, consequently, have been 71 years of age in the year 1903. That this Guardian, said John W. Gardner, and one Robert T. Dixon, of Seymour, Texas, found the person with whom this Guardian had been corresponding, here, on said Chesser's Stock Ranch on Tuesday, the 17th day of February, 1903, and upon conversation with him, he was fully identified by this Guardian as the person with whom he had been corresponding. That this Guardian found said party to be a large, raw boned man who would have weighed 180 to 190 pounds. That he was 5 feet 11 inches to 6 feet high and 45 to 50 years of age. This Guardian did not reveal himself to said party in his own name, but, by previous agreement

Correspondence of George Huron concerning Boston Corbett

with said Commissioner of Pensions represented himself to said party to be a special pension examiner.

This Guardian further informs the Court that the trip from Seymour by way of Benjamin to Truscott, Texas, and to said Stock Ranch being a distance of from seventy to seventy-five miles was made over very bad roads, through heavy snow drifts, in very inclement weather, immediately following a Texas blizzard. That the ^{entire} trip was made as expeditiously as possible and consumed ten days. That the services of this Guardian for said trip were reasonably worth \$15⁰⁰ per day, aside from his expenses.

This Guardian further informs the Court that said Boston Corbett had from the close of the civil war worked at his trade of silk hat maker in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and further/more/at the time had lived in the City of Camden, New Jersey. That he had been licensed as a local preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church, had joined the conference of that church, and had been assigned as pastor of a mission work, under the auspices and direction of said church, at 328 Pine Street, City of Camden, New Jersey, which mission he had served as pastor from the year 1870 to 1877. That this Guardian had a business trip that took him through Washington City and the City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and that he corresponded with the Commissioner of Pensions and consulted with the Probate Judge of this county and it was found desirable that he should stop off at Philadelphia and spend sufficient time to secure evidence of persons who had been intimately acquainted with the genuine Boston Corbett in said City of Camden, in order to fully decide the question of identity of said pretender. That this Guardian arrived in the City of Philadelphia late in the afternoon of March 11, 1903, remained there all night and spent the day of March 12th in the City of Camden; That he found a large number of persons who were members of said mission church, during the pastorate of the genuine Boston Corbett; And that he procured a large number of affidavits, descriptive of the genuine Boston Corbett from such members. That he necessarily incurred the expenses set out as the three last items in voucher four, of this settlement and that his services in procuring said evidences were reasonably worth \$15⁰⁰ for the day.

Correspondence of George Huron concerning Boston Corbett

This Guardian further informs the court that the evidence secured, as above stated, was fully reported to the Commissioner of Pensions, which resulted in his application to have Boston Corbett restored to the pension roll, was refused. But that the same pretender continued to demand a restoration as the genuine Boston Corbett to the pension rolls. That this claim resulted in this ^{Guardian} ~~Boston Corbett~~ being constantly on the defensive, corresponding with the Pension Office and answering the inquiries, with the result that he finally wrote the Commissioner of Pensions, Hon. Eugene F. Ware that it was due to this Guardian and to the ^Government that the Department of Justice should be interested in the investigation, with instructions to do what was found to be just and right. The Commissioner of Pensions adopted the suggestion with the result that a special examiner of the Pension Department was sent to San Angelo, Texas, to interview the pretender, who was making his headquarters at that time in that vicinity. This special examiner took the affidavit of the pretender with the result that the Department of Justice had a prosecution commenced against him for perjury in the pension claim. This resulted in this Guardian and the said John W. Gardner being served with subpoenas to go to San Angelo for the preliminary examination. This Guardian had ^{also} ~~also~~ given the commissioner of Pensions the names and addresses of persons who had been acquainted with Boston Corbett during his service in the army, and his confinement in the Andersonville prison. One of these witnesses was also summoned from Oklahoma.

This Guardian went in accordance with the subpoena at an expense of \$60.00 for the trip, The trip consumed seven days. He was allowed by the U.S. Marshall as mileage and per diem the sum of \$77.70, being \$17.70 in excess of his actual necessary expenses.

This Guardian was then served with subpoena to appear before the U.S. Grand Jury at Abilene, Texas where the case would be inquired into. That he appeared in obedience to said subpoena on October 2, 1905. That the necessary expenses of said trip were \$40.95. That he was allowed by the U. S. Marshall for his mileage and per diem the sum of \$70.

That said Grand Jury found a true bill against the said pretender, and afterwards, this Guardian was served with subpoena to attend

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the ~~session~~ of the U. S. District Court at San Angelo, Texas upon the trial of said pretender. That he did attend the trial as commanded, at the aggregate necessary expense of \$58.80, and received a check from Geo. H. Greene, U. S. Marshall for mileage and per diem \$77.70

This Guardian further informs the Court that upon his first trip to San Angelo his necessary expenses were \$60.00
That his check for mileage and per diem was for 77.70
Being in excess of his actual expenses \$17.70
That the necessary time for said trip was seven days.

This Guardian further informs the Court that the necessary expenses for the trip to appear before the U. S. Grand Jury at Abilene Texas were \$50.95
That the allowance of mileage and per diem was 70.00
Being in excess of actual expenses \$19.05

This Guardian further informs the Court that his necessary expenses to San Angelo, Texas, to attend the trial of said pretender were \$58.80
That his allowance for mileage and per diem as above stated was 77.70
Being in excess of his actual necessary expenses \$18.90

That seventeen days were necessarily consumed by this Guardian in making the three trips. And that his stay in Topeka between each of said trips was so short and his time, consequently, so broken for an entire month, that he could give but little attention to personal business as a lawyer. And this Guardian avers the fact to be that his total compensation in mileage and per diem was only \$55.65 above his actual expenses. That in the beginning of the business to establish the identity of said claimant as to whether or not he was the genuine Boston Corbett, no such expenses of time or money, as was necessarily consumed in the bringing of the pretender to justice, was contemplated. And this Guardian claims the fact to be that he is entitled to have an allowance from said estate sufficient to bring his compensation up to the sum of \$15 per day, as originally contemplated.

This Guardian informs the Court that the trial of said pretender resulted in a verdict of guilty as charged in the indictment, and his sentence by the Court on October 17, 1905 "to three years in the

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penitentiary at Atlanta, Georgia at hard labor" and "\$100 fine against" him.

This Guardian presents to the Court a copy of extracts from the proceedings, trial, and sentence of said pretender, for filing with the papers in this case.

This Guardian further informs the Court that it was impossible for him to secure a bill of his various and sundry expenses, and receipts of the persons to whom such expenses were paid. And he makes this verified statement of such expenses in his claim for allowance as will enable the Court to properly adjust the sum to which he should be entitled out of said estate.

Geo. W. Huron

Guardian of Boston Corbett, an insane person.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 8th day of January, 1913

W. A. Schook

Private Judge.

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Estate of
Boston Corbett
Susanne

Copy of Report of
Geo. Huron of
Services & Expenses for
Prosecuting a person who
pretended to be Boston
Corbett — H

Correspondence of George Huron concerning Boston Corbett

Leupp, Francis E,



1013 SIXTEENTH STREET,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

January 21, 1913.

Dear Sir:

To settle a discussion which has come up here among several persons interested in the history and sequels of the Lincoln assassination, would you be kind enough to tell me the facts about the more recent history of Boston Corbett. Mr. Lincoln's first avenger? At the War Department they gave me your name as that of Corbett's trustee. The records of his case in the Adjutant-General's office and the Pension Office are in such shape that anything definite and accurate will take some little time to dig out---at least on the lines of my personal inquiry.

I have always been interested in the psychology of Corbett's case, as I know that he was for many years pursued by threats from anonymous sources, and I have preserved such newspaper clippings as I have been able to make about him from time to time. These bring him down to the time he was sent to the Kansas State Hospital for the Insane after a rather violent outburst in Topeka; but in the Adjutant-General's office they have a memorandum that he was later sent to the Atlanta Penitentiary, though there is nothing attached, I believe, to show on what charge.

Anything you are so kind as to give me, about Corbett's later life and his death---if he has died, as General Ainsworth thinks he has---will be much appreciated by

Yours sincerely,

Francis E. Leupp

Mr. George A. Huron, Topeka, Ks.: