MISS IDA M. TARBELL R. F. D. 1 BETHEL, CONNECTICUT

March 6, 1941

My dear Mr. Bryan:

I rather think I have settled the matter of Thomas Y. Mears occupation. I think I told you that I was writing to the Case Library in Cleveland for information. I have received from the Director of the Western Reserve Historial Society the following reply:

> "In answer to your inquiry in the Cleveland Directory 1863-64 page 124 is listed John A. Ellsler, Jr., manager Academy of Music, board Angier House. There is no reference to Mears in the regular directory, or the business directory, or in Orth's History of Cleveland.
>
> Charles W. Mears, a nephew, lives in Cleveland, but he cannot say what uncle's business was in the 60's. His father, uncle and Ellsler were all friends. In the 80's Thomas Y. Mears was associated in the oil business with Doane of Doane's Corners fame."

This fits in well enough. I wanted him to be a theatrical man, but it fits well enough to have him a dealer in oil lands. Indeed, it was because he was a friend of Ellsler's. In april of '65 Mears and his wife bought three acres of land across the Allegheny River from Franklin, Pennsylvania. Early in the summer of '65 John Wilkes Booth came to Franklin and with Jo. B. Simonds, your Mr. Simonds, Mears and Ellsler formed what was called The Dramatic Oil Company. I have been trying to make out that all four members of the firm were connected in some way, but I have about concluded that the name of the Company was based on the Booth and Ellsler names.

I have two or three former assistants in Washington who might go around to the Office of Judge Advocate General to inquire about the Simonds letters, but I shall have to find out if any one of them is available for a little piece of research.

With renewed thanks for your kindness, dear Mr. Bryan,

Very sincerely yours,

P. S. I have just been looking over with increased satisfaction your 12th Chapter on "False Colors and Shapes." I wanted to refer a doubting correspondent to the best piece of analysis of the escape and future life of John Wilkes Booth that I know exists.

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