February 7, 1941

Dear Mr. Bryan:

I have at last heard from the Baltimore Mears. He says that he never heard of Thomas Y. Mears, that he had never been inclined to take an interest "in these matters", but that if his father were alive (he's been dead two years)"he" sure could have given you a a great deal of information."

I am writing to Mrs. Hall, Custodian of the Harvard Theater Collection, asking if they have a record of a Thomas Y. Mears, on the stage in the 60's.

Thank you for the copy of the JuniusBrutus Booth statement from the Conspiracy Records. Mr. Boothcontradicts deeds in the Venango County Courthouse. According to these deeds J. W. B. bought outright one-third of the land on which he and his theatrical friends had been drilling for oil in the summer of 1864. The price for the full tract was $4000, so that Booth put in a third of $4000. A month later in New York City the deeds say that he sold one-ninth of his one-third to a partner of his agent, consideration $1000. The Agent was Joe Simonds whose letter you quote. Two-ninths the deeds says he sold to his brother JuniusBrutus for $1000. From the nature of the deed I think any lawyer would conclude that he did pay the $1000 to his brother and probably received some receipt for it.

Having examined these deeds I can't think that J. B. B. was quite so ignorant of J. W. B.'s oil transaction as this statement would lead one to think.

He speaks of Thomas Y. Mears as Reuben Mears. He possibly never knew him.

If you are at all interested inthis oil episode I shall be glad to let you examine the Certified Deeds which I have from Venango County. That is, a little later when I have taken off the notes that I want.

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I wrote the Reis Library asking why you had been denied your request to examine the Ben Pitman material. It was as I surmised. Two of the faculty have pieces of work on hand for which they asked a first production of the Pitman documents. This was granted. I think that one of these pieces of work has been published, the other not.

If I succeed in getting any information on Thomas Y. Mears I will pass it on to you if you are interested.

One more question. The Clerk of the Judge Advocate office in the War Department tells me that there are four other letters from J. B. Simonds to John Wilkes Booth in addition to the one you quoted, and of which he sent me a photostat. I asked for copies of them but have received no answer. You probably examined them and possibly would tell me if you thought they had any value.

I hope I am not making you too much bother. If I am stop me.

Very sincerely yours,

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