

February 24, 1939

Dear Mrs. Burr:

The stories that Booth was in Franklin for a long or short time in 1865 must be fitted in to a series of established dates. Begin with the 25th of November when he played in New York. From the 9th to the 11th of that month and again from the 14th to the 16th he was registered at the National Hotel in Washington. He turned up in December again in Washington and was there from the 12th to the 17th - went away - was there again from the 22nd to the 24th - went away - came back the 31st and stayed until the 10th of January. Apparently he was away again for twelve days, back on the 22nd, left on the 28th, not to return until the 9th of March. On the 25th he played in the McCullough Benefit but three days before this he had been away from the National according to the records. From the 25th to the first day of April he was absent, then back for a week, then away for a week. That is, from the 1st to the 8th of April when he returned and was in Washington until he fled after the assassination.

Now this leaves very little time for Franklin. What dates there are in this period I do not know excepting that in February - Valentine's Day - both Asia and Chester claim that he was in New York. (See records)

It looks then from this Hotel register that if he were in Franklin at all it must have been for a very brief period as he had closed out his oil interests near Franklin. But in the Spring of '25 came the great Pithole outbreak with the Homestead Well. J. A. Simonds according to the map in Dr. Giddens' book

had a lease next to the Homestead Well and the tradition is that Booth had an interest there though it is generally said in the Homestead Well. However, he told J. D. Mathews in Washington, according to Mathews, that he had an interest in a piece of property next to a great well and expected to make money out of it. (Check up on Mathews testimony.) He could have gone to the oil regions for a brief time to look after this piece of property. His dealing would have been with Simonds who was his agent. There is also another supposition. Booth realized how weak his battery of kidnapers was. There may have been in Franklin someone he trusted and tried to persuade to go along with him. He tried Chester. If he did this he had no more success than he had with Chester.

Affectionately

*Ida M. Tarbell*

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