

Galveston, Texas  
Jan 1, 1871

My dear Doctor,

As you see I am writing in Houston and I beg you will direct your answer to this place; I am not however living here but at Evergreen and visit Houston only occasionally. Please accept my best wishes for many happy new years to you and all of yours.

You remember that many years ago in 1838 I bought of Col Isaac W. Benton, the headright certificate of Ferdinand Bell to 1/3 league of land which land was located for me on Greens Bayou. I afterwards sold the land to David Ayers; by him it has been sold to others. We cannot now find Bell's transfer and sale of certificate by Bell to Benton. I once had this transfer and on this instrument of transfer the patent was delivered to me\_. It is most important for me prove that Bell did sell his certificate to Benton. You had the supervision at that time of all my papers and indeed transacted most of my business.

I want you to state if you are able to do so that \_ first you were well acquainted with my business, attending yourself personally to most of it\_ and 2dly, that according to your best recollection, the chain of sale and transfer was complete from Bell through Benton to myself\_ and you will much oblige.

Your old friend in haste

Ashbel Smith