

April 7, 1923

Mr. A. E. Ewing,  
532 Michigan Trust Co. Building,  
Grand Rapids, Mich.

My dear Mr. Ewing:

Indeed your letter of March 23 did not bore me; it interested me profoundly, and you would have had an answer before but that I have been exceedingly busy.

I am glad that you have found my recent Lincoln studies sufficiently interesting to induce you to give me the information which you have in this letter.

I feel reasonably confident that the Hank and Hanks families are one and the same, though of course we must have much fuller investigation before we can prove it.

The West Virginia branch of the family and its connection with the Berry family as well as with the Mitchells and the Shipleys has never been satisfactorily worked out. This will have to be done before we can establish anything like a trustworthy genealogy.

You ask if I ran across any of the Hank ribe in Rockingham County, Va. No, and I have had a careful search made, too. Three or four people in the Shenandoah Valley, careful and interested students, are working on the matter. At present all that I can do is to ask people like yourself who are familiar with family traditions, possibly have family papers which would throw light on the problem, to give me what they have and to suggest to me any leads that I might follow. It is pretty certain that I shall never myself complete the Hanks genealogy, but I hope that I can persuade some person of genealogical training to undertake it, sooner or later. It is going to be a long and intricate task, I fear, but that it can eventually be pretty well worked out, I feel certain.

The ideal thing would be to have some person of means finance a reliable genealogist while he was at the task. I cannot do that, but I perhaps can eventually interest somebody in doing it. Anything that you may have, my dear Mr. Ewing, bearing on the subject, will, I assure you, be gratefully received by me.

Sincerely yours,