

Sangamon County Bible Society

ORGANIZED 1824

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ORGANIZED 1816

Springfield, Illinois

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June 24th 1937

Dear Miss Tarbell:-

I must ask your pardon for answering your letter of 22nd so promptly, but I had some clippings of the dedication of the new buildings at New Salem, so thought I would send them to you.

I had with me three friends who all had very interesting Lincoln backgrounds, that may interest you.

The first was Leon Putman Hopkins, an old High School mate and he has the distinction of being the last person who ever looked on the face of Abraham Lincoln. When with Robert Lincoln's permission the opening was made in the casket before it was finally encased in concrete and steel, he was engaged to make and close the opening, as he was a plumber, so could solder the lead covering. So after it had been seen by those present, he had the last look as he finished his job. You may have interviewed him, but he is very retiring so does not exploit his great privilege. He has a remarkable lineage, as one of his ancestors came over in the Mayflower.

The second was John L. Roll, the life of whose father I believe you extend several years by showing him to have helped Lincoln build the flatboat at Sangamontwon, where he lived as a boy.

The third was Franklin Pierce Coon, who ~~used~~ ^{helped} to make Mr Lincoln's boots and incidentally, he later sold his shoe store to John E. Roll. He says the largest lasts made were No. 12 and as Lincoln took a 13, his father had to build out the toe for the purpose.

I need not blow my own horn but I did push the shrinking "Violts" to the front or they would not have gotten up on the platform and also all been introduced to the present day "Ann Rutledge."

As you know by this time my birthday comes July 14th and Hopkins July 15th, but he will be 86 while I am only 83. Coon will be 85 in August, while Roll will also be 83 June 26th. So you see I am the baby of the quartette.

We had many requests for autographs and were also "snapshot" a number of times and by one person taken in an Eastman movie camera on the porch of the Rutledge Tavern. They promised to show "our movies" and I invited them to my birthday party, as they are Mr and Mrs Elunk of Virden, also great Lincoln "fiends".

When my folks asked me who I wanted on my birthday, I told them these three old friends, but now I have extended it to include Mr and Mrs H. J. Fay also and a few more. If you were around this way I would have your name "Put in the pot" but of course that will be impossible.

The evening pageant was very good, as the Petersburg people are fine at getting up interesting things.

I suppose you will smile and think "Poor old man, what a flock of bats got in his belfrey" but they have now flown, so I am again normal, and will merely subscribe myself,

Your admiring friend

Isaac R. Diller