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The Ida M. Tarbell Collection of Lincolniana

Correspondence, research materials, writings, etc. about Abraham Lincoln

1923-04-19

Letter: John McA. Palmer to Ida M. Tarbell, April 19, 1923

Palmer, John McAurley, 1870-1955

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HEADQUARTERS
GENERAL OF THE ARMIES
WASHINGTON

April 19, 1923.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
120 East 19th Street,
New York City.

My dear Miss Tarbell:

Mary 2 girls

I wonder if you can put me in the way of verifying a fact in Lincoln's history. I remember reading some place that early in the war he studied Clausewitz. In his letters to McClellan advising him against the Peninsula Campaign I find profound reasoning on the nature of war, which must have come from that source. But since the idea occurred to me, I have not been able to find the reference. I have an important use to make of this fact if I can verify it, and would appreciate it very much if you are in a position to guide me to it.

I have made good progress on my book and hope to send it to you soon. I started out with the idea of describing our new military organization, which is much like that of Switzerland and also like the military establishment which Washington vainly attempted to establish in his day. I proposed to call the book "An Army of the People", but on going back into the history of Washington for the development of this idea I am convinced that, if we had followed his guidance, neither the Civil War nor the World War could have occurred. I find, in short, that Washington proposed for us an effective organization of peace and that the strongest hope of such organization in the future lies in going back to him. The whole scope of the book has therefore changed, and I will call it "The Organization of Peace."

The principal news in our family is that our daughter Mary is to be married in June, and we shall hope that you may be able to honor us by coming to the wedding.

Very sincerely yours,

John M. Palmer

JMcAP:jem