

January 28, 1940

Dear Mr. Pratt:

It is good of you to take so much trouble to run down that supposed hanging in Springfield. I think it is settled that there was none. Certainly if there had been at that period, the late '40's or early '50's, there would be records of it. I accepted it as a bit of local color in an anecdote a former Springfield man gave me. I have always found him trustworthy, even if I did not always agree with his opinion, but I felt I must check up on the hanging.

That is a horrible story you tell of the hanging of a negro barber for marrying a white wife. Do you suppose that could happen in Springfield today?

So you are on Sandburg's track? I cannot contribute anything as yet to your findings. I have not had time to read him at all carefully, but have been dipping in here and there and getting a great deal of fun and excitement out of it. It is an amazing omnibus which I think is very valuable. ~~It somehow~~ gives you a sense of the immense tumult or confusion through which Lincoln was working his way, gives you the feel of the times better than anybody. I do not know that it could be done in any other way excepting by pouring in in what seems to be an almost helter skelter fashion, this tremendous accumulation. ann

The book certainly needs what you are giving it, that is sure. I shall be grateful if you will send me your findings as you suggest, and you may be sure that when I do get around to reading it critically, if ever, I'll pass on any questions I have. I am afraid I am over-lenient towards mistakes having made so many myself.

Thank you for the good word you say for my autobiography. I am glad you found it interesting.

Thanking you again for the trouble
you took over the hanging business, believe me

Cordially yours

Mr. Harry E. Pratt
First National Bank Building
Springfield, Illinois