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1939-05-30

Letter: Allan Nevins to Ida M. Tarbell, May 30, 1939

Nevins, Allan

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Columbia University
in the City of New York

May 30, 1939

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Dear Miss Tarbell:

Yes, I think the Pyle life of Hill is mine. I once had such a set, and have none now. It is hard for me to keep track of my books. What puzzles me is the library filing mark, for I do not mark my books; perhaps I bought them second hand. Thank you for thinking of me. If the books are not mine--I can tell for certain when I see them--I shall send them back.

I wish I might have heard your lectures on Lincoln as a subject for biography. It is a rich field. Of all the biographies, I like yours and old Herndon's the most. Nicolay & Hay is an appalling mixture of history and biography, the history now being completely outdated, and the biography so fulsome in its flattery, so blind to all Lincoln's shortcomings and defects as he grew up into greatness, that it is now almost worthless; only the literary style redeems those ten volumes. Beveridge never got around to digesting his material properly. Nathaniel Stephenson's single volume is provocative, but there is too much Stephenson and too little Lincoln.

A few months ago in Washington I ran across a new Lincoln item which I want to use in a magazine article. In the papers of B.F. French (Commissioner of Public Buildings under Lincoln) are many letters, with new material on Lincoln, and one long description of a scene that occurred when Lincoln read the bill for Mrs. L's furnishing the White House. French had no liking for Mrs. Lincoln.

Cordially yours,

Allan Nevins
Allan Nevins

Miss Ida M. Tarbell