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FOUNDED 1920

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MR. JOHN E. ISLEHART, CHAIRMAN, EVANSVILLE
Evansville, Indiana,
July 6, 1925.

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

Dear Miss Tarbell:

Referring to my letter to you of yesterday, I have on reflection thought it advisable to make my statement in regard to Mrs. Ehrmann's relation to this work generally a little more complete.

The fact is I am so historically minded in this work and have had to be for reasons you understand, that I do much of my writing even correspondence from the viewpoint of local history, dealing with events which no one understands quite so well as I do and there is a need for anchoring the truth of historical work I am doing. In this view I have rewritten the second page of my letter to you, leaving in the first half of it everything contained in the second page of my letter sent you yesterday but adding to it a little more than full half a page, and I am sending you the page two as rewritten with the request that you will substitute it for page two as originally sent you yesterday, and I will make the same change in my file so that the fact will appear.

All of these references to Mrs. Ehrmann have been in substance made by me in public and will no doubt go into our publications, and the tribute of Dr. Turner, who understands now just what we are doing, gives me a good deal of confidence in our work.

Sincerely yours,

John E. Ishart.

ENC.
JEI:VB

From a standpoint of friendly enthusiasm, while in no manner personally associated with the planning or the work, I feel like saying that this pageant, unique of kind, teaching the lesson of Patriotism in tribute to the memory of Abraham Lincoln, upon the exact spot of his departure 100 years ago for New Orleans for the purpose, as old Dennis Hanks put it, of earning money to buy books, with many realistic scenes of pioneer life in Lincoln's environment, based on the truth of history, enacted by old and young descendants of pioneers who in Lincoln's real life were his intimate associates and friends, substantially acted the same or similar scenes, all performed without a break, in a dignified and capable manner, with scenes of beauty and grace performed before the audience with the background the great Ohio River a mile wide at its grandest, unequalled in volume at any time within the last fifty years or longer, rises in importance to a place worthy of your attention, for I count you the Mother Superior of all of our great work in the Lincoln Inquiry.

To Mrs. Bess V. Ehrmann, whom I have in public described as, in the intimate knowledge of their descendants, the best living interpreter, all qualifications considered, of the people in Spencer County among whom Abraham Lincoln moved and found his environments between 1816 and 1830, must be given the credit for this so nearly a perfect work, and as such I feel it ought to take its rank.

Mrs. Ehrmann has at our earnest request written for the Southwestern Society short sketches of or references to a number of these descendants of old families, describing also Lincoln's environments which will be found published in the bulletins of the Indiana Historical Bureau, which are destined to have high permanent value in the new literature created by our Southern Indiana workers.

In a letter to Dr. Frederick J. Turner of June 4, last, shortly after an interview with him personally in Chicago, after a comprehensive statement of our methods of work with results I spoke of Mrs. Ehrmann using the following language: "There is one among us who has had greater opportunity than all others to know the individual descendants of the individual neighbors and others composing the environments of Abraham Lincoln in his time in Spencer County. I refer to Mrs. Bess V. Ehrmann, the President of our Society and for these reasons I stated in the last meeting of this Society before the Gentryville meeting, held at Evansville last February, that I regarded Mrs. Ehrmann as the best living interpreter of those people and of those environments with which she from birth and tradition and high ancestry, who were on the ground in Lincoln's time and she has devoted the best energies of her life to this work, has worked under some difficulties but permitted nothing to interfere with it and in my associations with her she has advised with me as to the field of her own work and I have urged upon her to describe the people of that time, much as she has done it and her contributions are the only effort in existence to compile within so small a compass so valuable material, and it is done with discrimination and ability and the vision of an interpreter as she in fact is."

In his answer to that letter of June 24, Dr. Turner says, "You are doing an important work both on the Lincoln side, and in preserving the environmental history, in my opinion, and I am glad it is being recognized." I value ~~this~~ highly this statement of Dr. Turner as I regard him the greatest living authority on the questions of historical interpretation, so fully underlying our work.