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FREMONT, NEBR..

November 10, 1927

Nov 1939

Ida M. Tarbell
Meadville, Pennsylvania

My dear Madam:

I have received your favor of the fourth, and have been somewhat slow in answering the same on account of other matters that claimed my attention.

For more than 25 years I lived in Cass County, Ill., which joined Menard County, and both of them in the Legislative District that I represented in the Illinois Legislature for one term. I was personally acquainted with quite a number of men who were closely associated and personal friends of Mr. Lincoln, and in my contact with them, I heard quite a lot of stories and incidents connected with his life. My home was Beardstown, Illinois, the county seat and place where was held the famous Armstrong trial. The daughter of Milton Logan, who was foreman of the jury in the trial of the Armstrong case, was a sister of my wife.

As I remember, there were three of the Armstrong boys and they were all enlisted when President Lincoln made his call for 75,000 volunteers, and as I now recall it, two of the boys lost their lives in battle and one of them was seriously wounded and sent to the Washington Soldiers Hospital where Mr. Lincoln visited him and had him discharged and sent home to his mother in Illinois.

I am enclosing a copy of the letter that I wrote to the Lincoln National Life Foundation at Fort Wayne, Indiana, and I had some correspondence with Dr. William E. Barton, the father of Bruce, who wrote a very interesting life of Lincoln, in which he refers to my account of the Almanac incident. I am also enclosing a copy of the letter I received from an old gentleman, Durham Wright, of Medical Springs, Oregon, which is quite interesting.

I am pleased to comply with your requests so far as I can.

Sincerely yours

T. L. Mathews

Medical Springs, Oregon

November 10, 1927

Mr. T. L. Mathews
Fremont, Nebraska

My dear Sir:

Your letter of November first to hand and in the meantime I have had The Old Maid Photographer that made the pictures of the precious little Lincoln Bible more than 25 years ago group through the many hundreds of negatives to see if she could find the one of the little Bible. Finally a long and tiresome search brought the coveted prize to life. I had a few dozen pictures made of which I am forwarding you one. I have many inquiries if I have ever had the Bible photographed. It is well that it was for it burned in the great fire of our Sanatorium some few years ago.

This little book has an unwritten history as my Grandfather William Hanks was a Soldier of the Revolution for our Independence and carried this little Bible through all that long seige of war, and as my mother died when I was but little more than 80 years of age, of course, I was company for them as they lived in a log cabin alone after raising a family of some nine children who were all living in homes of their own, and as I could do many little things for them and save them many steps in the six years that I was with them, they called me Buncum. I, of course, was a favorite with them in the Evening of their lives. I make mention of this that you may know why that I was awarded this precious little book instead of some other member of their family. And as my Grandmother gave the boy they called Abe his first bath and put his first prepared little slips on him, I heard them say many things about this boy Abe's childhood, boyhood and young manhood life which are green in my memory today of which the world knows nothing of.

When I was a lad of 18 summers in the year 1860, I was on my road in the rush to the pikes peak gold mines crossing the old Missouri at Nebraska City. I remember camping on salt creek where now the Capital of the Great State of Nebraska is now located, and it was given the name of the Great Man that we have just been writing of.

There were no settlements then on the Old Platte River and the first Government fort that I had ever seen was a little fort called Fort Kearney. It was there that I saw my first Billiard Table. Four nice looking well dressed Gentlemen were amusing themselves stepping around the table with long sticks in their hands punching beautiful ivory balls and having a jolly time. While just outside there was a rather stout looking man carrying a large pail of water in each hand, while two men in uniform with guns in their hands were following the water carrier with bayonets pointed at him. They were irrigating the garden of the men who were pushing the ivory balls. I did not understand why the water carrier needed to be so well guarded. I learned that charges had been preferred against him and he was put to carrying water to a garden that needed it. We also camped at a place called Fremonts Orchard on the Platte. It took us the same number of days to reach Denver with the slow moving old ox team as it did to submerge the world in old Noahs time.

This must go out in this mail. I appreciate your letter very much. Remember me kindly to Mr. Reynolds.

Am very truly,

Durham Wright