October 6, 1922

Mrs. R. B. Parker,
Hotel Seville,
New York City.

My dear Mrs. Parker:

You have asked me to tell you how I feel about the Lincoln Memorial at Cumberland Gap. I don't call it university, you see, because I am strongly of the opinion that the proper name at present should be the Lincoln Memorial Schools.

To my mind, the kind of schools that have been founded at Cumberland Gap are, above all, the kind of thing that Abraham Lincoln would have preferred. Moreover, the place is the place which he would have preferred. And the people these schools serve are Lincoln's kind of people - people of the best of pure American blood. He loved them. He had a peculiar interest in them, too, because it was these people that had helped him save the Union.

I know how General Howard felt in working for the Lincoln Memorial Schools. He felt as if he were carrying out the personally expressed wish of Abraham Lincoln himself. He knew the gratitude that Lincoln felt to the Unionists of Eastern Tennessee and thereabouts. He knew how glad Lincoln would have been to have brought to them better opportunities. It was General Howard's conviction that he was doing what Lincoln would be glad to do if he were still living that made him so persistent, gave him so much courage in many a dark period of the Schools' history.

I have talked with General Howard more than once about his hopes for the Lincoln Memorial, and I feel certain that you and those who are associated with you who are working so hard today for the schools and with so many handicaps, are carrying out not only General Howard's work but Abraham Lincoln's work. I consider that all this effort at Cumberland Gap is a direct and logical sequence of his life.

I cannot think, for my part, of a nobler thing to

Digital Image, 2009, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

which one can put his hand than building up this undertaking. I look on it as a great national duty, which ought to be a great national joy. I am convinced, as I said at the start, that it is the kind of memorial Abraham Lincoln himself would have chosen if he could. And if we believe that, it ought to be reason enough for us all putting in our best efforts.

Please believe, my dear Mrs. Parker, I have all sympathy with you in the great work that you are doing. Don't allow yourself to be discouraged. In the long run, I feel certain that you are going to win out.

Cordially yours,

Dict. but
not read

Digital Images, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.