Lewisburg,Pennsylvania
August 9,1940

Miss Ida Tarbell,
120 E.19th.St.,
New York,N.Y.

Dear Miss Tarbell:

It is with hesitancy that I write you concerning a genealogical query and only after an exhaustive search for this particular authentic information concerning our family lineage.Since you have written so many interesting and life-like accounts about President Lincoln it seems very probable that you have access to many first hand and exclusive accounts of the Lincoln family.

We are in quest of a family record which will authenticate an assumed lineage.We have exhausted all possible court records,to our knowledge,that might contain some recorded document which would be positive evidence of our ancestral lineage.Now we are trying to obtain either an old family Bible or book which will name the children of Francis and Mary(Lincoln)Yarnall.Francis Yarnall was born 1719 and 1741 married Mary Lincoln,daughter of Mordecai Lincoln of Reading,Pennsylvania.It was at this time he was excommunicated from the Exeter Meeting for marrying out the Quaker Faith.After his excommunication there were no records of this union kept as in the previous two generations of the Yarnalls in the Penn Colony by the Meeting Houses.There is neither a known date of birth nor date of death of Mary Lincoln,wife of this Francis Yarnall.The death of this Francis and Mary(Lincoln) is noted as"some time after 1769".It was then they executed jointly a recorded document——I believe some kind of a transfer of real estate.We are most desirous of locating an authoritative record which will name the children of this union——Francis and Mary(Lincoln)Yarnall of Berks county,Pennsylvania.

It is assumed that Jesse Yarnall,born about 1750,is a son(progenitor of our family) of Francis and Mary(Lincoln)Yarnall.This Jesse Yarnall married Ann Tomlinson ,daughter of John Tomlinson,a Revolutionary War soldier of Reading,Pennsylvania. Shortly after their marriage,about 1790,they joined the western trek to Kentucky with the Boones,Lincolns,Hughes,etc.This Jesse and Ann(Tomlinson)Yarnall settled near Cynthiana,Harrison county,Kentucky.He died there in 1809 and we have a certified copy of his will probated in Harrison county,Kentucky July 1809.

We are unable to give positive proof that the parents of this Jesse Yarnall were Francis and Mary(Lincoln)Yarnall of Berks county,Pennsylvania.The lineage here it seems,with our available data,rather fragmentary.In a Lincoln family record at Lebanon,Ohio we found positive evidence of two of the Yarnall children of this union(Francis and Mary Lincoln Yarnall)——the oldest and probably the youngest; the other ones mentioned are assumed to be their children.

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

2-continued. FIRST EXCERPT from Account of The Pennsylvania State Library.

"The only occurence of the name of Yarnall in the Berks County Probate Court is the granting of administration,March 10,1781,on the estate of Mordecai Yarnall,late of Exeter township,Yeoman,deceased intestate,to Leah Yarnall,relict:sureties;Francis and Jesse Yarnall.It is quite probable these are the children of Francis and Mary(Lincoln)Yarnall. The recent discovery of a Lincoln family record at Lebanon,Ohio,which is printed in full under John Lincoln,Adaa,has furnished positive evidence of two of the Yarnall children,the oldest and,probably the youngest;and it seems safe to assume that Francis and Jesse,the sureties just named,were their brothers.(The Ancestry of Abraham Lincoln,pp. 72-195).

CHILDREN:

(a) Mordecai, born July 29,1743; married Leah ___?___

(b) Francis (?)

(c) Jesse (?) married Ann Tomlinson

(d) Hannah (?) married Ellis Hughes

(e) Isaac, born 1755 ~~-(?)~~

(f) Mary ,born Apr.9,1760; married John Lincoln(first cousin) adaa.

(g) probably others."

If we were able to obtain the contents of a book known as"Rachael Lincoln's Book"with the date of January 29,1807 on its cover we would be able to determine definitely the family's lineage.If you might have a copy of this book or the contents of a particular part of this book,no doubt,it would have the information we have been trying toget for the past fifteen years.If you do not have this book perhaps you would be able to refer us to either a library or person that you might know who had a copy.This particular book seems to be the only remaining source where we might be able to obtain this long sought information.

SECOND EXCERPT from Account of The Pennsylvania State Library.

"On page 100 of the Lincoln Genealogy appears some Lincoln records taken from a book which has on its cover the name of Rachael Lincoln,January 29,1807.

Mr.Walter Lincoln states that"on the next page is a memorandum of the sons and daughters of Francis Yarnall and Mary,his wife,formerly Mary Lincoln". "

Any information you and your staff may offer us which will authenticate this lineage,especially by the above mentioned book or its contents,will be most gratefully received——I assure you.Find enclosed self-addressed and stamped envelope——hoping to receive a reply at your convenience and again thanking you for this special favor,I am

Most sincerely yours,

Ben R. Peck

Ben R.Peck,Federal Employee,
U.S.Penitentiary,
Lewisburg,Pennsylvania.

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