

September 27, 1928

Dear Mr. Sedgewick:

The resemblances that you find in the samples of handwriting I sent you and those which you showed me certainly thickens the plot. I wish I were free to look over your shoulder as you compare them. I take it that when you receive the originals that experts in paper and ink will be able to settle the question promptly and finally.

There is an expert here in New York, I am told, that has detected some astonishing forgeries and is regarded as an almost infallible authority by some people. But I suppose you have as good in Boston.

Now, as to the Decatur matter. I am afraid the lady who made the collection in Decatur is dead and gone, though possibly not. Her name is Jane E. Hammand, and she lived in Shaler, Iowa, that is, when she was at home. Although well toward eighty she was a tireless globe-trotter.

I think, however, your most practical way would be to write to the Curator of the Decatur Public Library, where Miss Hammand's Lincoln Collection has been housed for some time. If there is a specimen of Ann Rutledge's writing there they would be able and willing, I am sure, to send you promptly a photograph. The museum has the Rutledge family record and many other interesting items.

It is possible that by writing to Miss Laura Belle Sageser of Bloomington, Ill., you might get what you want. She claims to be a third cousin of Anna Rutledge, and she or her family are supposed to have Rutledge records. I never have examined these, but it is not at all improbable that if there are such records, a specimen of Ann's writing would be among them.

Your best chance is, however, I think, with the Decatur Lincoln collection which, as I told you, has always espoused Ann's claim to fame.

Sincerely yours