October 19, 1932

Dear Mrs. Rudolph:

I have been distressed by my delay in getting this manuscript back to you. I turned it over to Dr. Warren when in Fort Wayne at the unveiling of the Manship statue and received it back some days later in Pittsburgh. I expected to remain in Pittsburgh a week longer than I did and I was hoping to run up to Warren one day for a talk with you. It would have been impossible to have accepted your invitation to make you a visit, much as I should have liked to do so, for I had my work program too full as it was; and that I was unable to carry out being called back here suddenly for some work which has kept me going constantly ever since.

I have meant to write you why I have been so rude about your invitation as well as why I held the manuscript so long. Do forgive me.

Now as to the manuscript. By this time you have received a copy of the Lincoln Lore, Number 179, in which Dr. Warren speaks of "Grandmother Hanks" and emphasizes the traditions of Lucy Hanks, that is, Nancy's Mother was Shipley. Do you not think it would be a good idea to make this Shipley relationship clearer? It has always seemed to me important to sift this persistent tradition to the bottom. Again on Page 14 of your manuscript you make the positive statement that Lucy Hanks put Widoy before her name in signing the marriage license and say that they, that is, "the letters W and Y show very plainly in the original document." I only wish they did!

While I was gone I went up to Chicago University where the Barton collection is now waiting to be unpacked and arranged and asked the Librarian to let me see the document - Dr. Warren had told me that it was there - Dr. Barton having kept it - it was loaned him by the Clerk of Courts. Well, after a close scrutiny of this original I could not see a sign of the W and Y in the reproduction. There seems to be at least a suspicion of the letters but not in this original, nor is there any evidence that the writing had been tampered with. I asked the Librarian to get a first class hand writing expert to examine it. He promised to do so and to let me know the results.

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

In view of all this I do think you will be wise to modify your statement - say that it is believed by Dr. Warren, an authority on the early life and ancestry of Lincoln, that Lucy did write "Widoy" and that the first and second letters have faded.

I read the article twice since I wrote you. I did not get a chance to discuss it with Dr. Warren. In returning it he said, "I think it is a very worthwhile manuscript." He feels that you may find editors unwilling to publish an article which does not give positive new evidence, but I am not so sure about that. The paper is most interesting to me as a student of Lincoln's life. It is good reading and possibly it supposes more knowledge of the early Lincolns and Hanks' as well as more interesting men than the average reader has. However, I am hoping you will find a good publisher. By all means try the Atlantic, Harpers, The American Mercury, The Forum - they are all periodicals of serious intent and might be interested.

If I did not know by experience that there is nothing an Editor hates worse than to have a writer call attention to a friend's writing I would forward the manuscript myself.

Do let me know how you come out and if you see anything I can do please let me know.

Faithfully yours

Mrs. [illegible] Rudolph
831 Woodbine Avenue, S. E.
Warren, Ohio

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