

January 12, 1921

Mr. F. K. Mathiews,
Boy Scouts of America,
200 Fifth Avenue,
New York City.

My dear Mr. Mathiews:

Pardon me for the delay
in giving attention to Mr. Chambers' letter. It has been im-
possible to get to it until today.

You say that Mr. Chambers asks for a memorandum of
the statements by Lincoln that are contradictory to the things
stated in their book.

You will remember how much space is given in Mr.
Gore's story to the part that Lincoln took in preparing the
timber for the school house and church in which he was so in-
terested. There is a direct statement of his own that contra-
dicts this - one in which he says that the ax was first put
into his hand when the family moved into Indiana; and, in one
of his little autobiographies that he wrote for some inquiring
friend, he adds that from that time until his 23rd year he was
almost constantly handling that most useful instrument. This
would show that Lincoln himself did not remember any specific
timber cutting before he went into Indiana. I think it is quite
probable that he may have done a little brush cutting, and,
undoubtedly, if there was building going on, he would, if he
were allowed, be on the scene, Austin Gollaher with him.

This is the kind of thing that makes me feel strongly,
as I do, that in publishing a book there ought to be a carefully
worded introduction, stating that the work is an attempt to re-
produce the life of Abraham Lincoln up to his eighth year, but
there is no intention to present this as bona fide reminiscences.

Of course, Mr. Gore must know that Mr. Gollaher was
often interviewed in earlier years. Lamon, Herenden's representa-
tives, the Century people, all saw him in the '80s. The Century
published his picture with their first chapters sometime in the '80s.
At intervals other interviewers saw him. There is no doubt Mr.
Gore spent more time with him than anyone else, and he has had the
advantage of knowing intimately the country and the people.

I want Mr. Chambers to know that I am entirely sympathetic
with what he has done; think it very interesting and a good piece
of work; but that I think it highly incredible that things happened

(Mr. F.K. M. 2)

just as they are set down here, and that to present it so would be wrong; but that to present it as a reproduction, based on an old man's talk of his early youth, is entirely justifiable.

Is this clear, and sufficient?

Very sincerely yours,