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GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

Dec. 10, 1924.

Myra Hank Rudolph,
564 Woodbine Ave.,
Warren, O.

Dear Cousin:--

I have yours of the 8th, enclosing reply letter of Miss Tarbell's of the 4th. I have to confess that since my former letter, I have not had a moment to devote to the Hank records.

I have taken the liberty of copying Miss Tarbell's letter for future reference. Thank you so much for the loan of hers, herewith returned.

Miss Tarbell is very gracious in discussing the Lincoln-Hank(s) subject at such length and with such frankness. One can see that she is deeply interested, notwithstanding the fact that she has published so much on the subject. The fact is, the case is not closed. Until one side drives the other out of court, as Miss Tarbell puts it, it will remain an open question.

While I cannot discuss the matter in detail at this time, I must unload one thought: If Rev. Barton has made a serious investigation and has come to an honest conclusion, he should neither be sneered nor laughed out of court. If he can be put out of court by better evidence than he can produce for his contention, well and good. But, if he "has the goods" to prove that Nancy Hanks Lincoln was the illegitimate daughter of Lucy Hanks, then, in the name of truth and justice, do not let a nonsensical prejudice divert the investigator from truth to error. If there was a Lucy Hanks and if she "misbehaved" herself as a girl, but was, in fact, the grandmother of Abraham Lincoln, she should have the credit due her. Such a fact could not, in this day, be debited either to the innocent Nancy or to her famous offspring. If Lucy were alive today, she could command \$10,000.00 per week from the biggest theatre in New York and pack the house 366 nights of a leap year. I have no patience with that false virtue which covers truth with a lie in order to make it appear virtuous. Therefore I would not ask any investigator to strain the truth in order to make a better story of it. We want the story in its truth. Miss Tarbell is divinely right when she says the way to beat Barton is by making a better case than he makes,--not by getting angry with him.

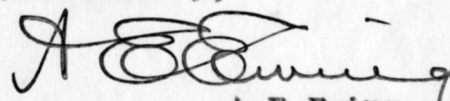
I have talked with five of Caleb Hank's children on the Lincoln subject,--to wit, Alvin E. Hank, John W. Hank, Isabell Hank Ewing, Rebecca Hank Rice, and Nancy Ann Hank Ewing (my mother). They all came from Monroe Co., W. Va., back in the forties when it was Virginia, when they were children. Alvin E. was the oldest. It was after they were grown up and after Lincoln became prominent that their father, Caleb, born in Rockingham Co., in 1789, began to talk about the Lincoln-Hank connection. They had all heard the story and repeated it with the usual minor variations, but in the main it was just as Alvin E. stated it to be, that Caleb had an aunt Nancy Hank that had moved to Kentucky (or Kaintuck) and had married a man by the name of Lincoln (pronounced as if spelled and accented Linconn); that they had not heard from

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her, but when publicity was given to the fact that Lincoln's mother was a Hanks, my grandfather Caleb assumed a very natural conclusion that Lincoln's mother was the "aunt". I agree with you in every word that Caleb would not have differentiated between an "aunt" and a "great aunt". My children at the present time refer to my uncle John W. Hank as their uncle, and fifty years from now they will be telling their grandchildren of "old uncle John Hank" who sang war songs for phonograph records at the age of 78. I wish to again repeat what I have before written you concerning the character of the witness, Caleb Hank. He grew up in the mountain country of Monroe Co. Va. He was self educated. He was of an inventive turn of mind. He was always doing something that no one else had thought of. He was a hunter, surveyor, road builder, farmer, and became known as Doctor Hank because he studied Thompson Medicine books which made in a "Thompsonian" doctor. He had a wide practice, traversing the mountains on horseback, and often gone days and nights at a time, ministering to the sick. He was a man of fine intelligence. Was a strict prohibitionist. Did not even use tobacco, and his sons grew up like him. He was also a strict abolitionist. I suppose that was what first interested him in ~~Lincoln~~ Lincoln. He was a devout religionist of the Methodist Episcopal church faith. I have every reason to believe that he was absolutely sincere in his belief concerning the Lincoln-Hanks relationship. His brothers were educated, influential men of their day. Jehu was a singer and preacher of the M.E. church. Jehu had a son Josiah who was a minister of the M.E. Church South until his death a few years ago. I saw Josiah once, over twenty years ago. He was a southerner in thought and appearance, and politics as well. I tried to get something on the Lincoln tradition, but he was an iceberg on that subject. About all I could get out of him was that Mrs. Hitchcock had been through there looking up the Hank matter and that she was trying to connect the family with "Old Lincoln". I am sure from his attitude that he would have sidetracked Mrs. Hitchcock if he could, if he thought she was going to prove such a discreditable thing. He would sooner have been related to Jeff Davis.

William Hank, father of Caleb and others, married Susanna Berry, presumably in Rockingham Co. There is much said in the Lincoln stories about the Berrys. We have neglected that line. We might possibly find some Hank sidelights by looking into the Berry records. Caleb Hank, for his third wife, married Mary Ann Mathews, another Rockingham Co. woman, whose father was William Mathews, and whose mother was Jane Berry Mathews. Whether Jane Berry and Susanna Berry were of the same Rockingham family, I do not know.

Very sincerely,


 A. E. Ewing