St. Louis University
Grand Ave. and W. Pine Boul.

St. Louis, Feb. 23, 1922

Mr. M. J. Fitzgerald
Attorney-at-Law
Assumption, Ill.

Dear Mr. Fitzgerald:

I have not seen the Sunday Visitor for some months and missed the recent article you refer to. But I am pleased to know that what I wrote for the Visitor some years ago about Lincoln's step-mother has not gone into oblivion. I did not think I was writing anything new, but that I was refurbishing the memories of people about a matter that was worth remembering. I see now that it was a good thing that the knowledge was revived on that occasion by me for I realize the Time is burying many interesting facts of American Catholic History too deeply to hope for their resurrection.

Let me give you my authority. Father Ireneus J.M. St.Cyr was sent from St. Louis to recommence the spiritual reign of Catholicity over Illinois about 1832. He was the first Pastor of Modern Chicago, but he also visited the neighborhood of Springfield and covered the whole of northern Illinois in his ministrations to the far scattered flock.. In his advanced years he used to tell of his pioneering days and some persons gave it out that he said that Abe Lincoln was a Catholic. But Archbishop Ireland interviewed him on the point and took down in writing what the venerable priest said. It was that he used to sayMass at the house of Thomas Lincoln, and that Tom and his wife Sarah were Catholics, but that Abe never was, though he at one time fixed up special seats for the neighbors who came to Mass to the house.

You see my authority is Archbishop Ireland. He published this fact in the American Catholic Historical Researches of Phila. Vol. XX11, pages 207-211. You see I was merely reciting what was already written, but you also see how nearly it had been forgotten.

I may add that I have given the matter long thought, and am convinced that it is true, I've theard all the objections. The chief one is that there was a family of Lincolns, cousins of Abe, in Hancock County, Ill. who were all Catholics, and that one was named Abe and that Fr. St. Cyr got this family and that of the President of the U. S. confused. I say Fr.St. Cyr could not make such a mistake, for the Abe in Hancock County was a Catholic and his father was not named Thomas etc.

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It is also said that Tom and Sarah were Baptists. There was a Baptist minister in Indiana whose political or social ideas they encouraged. That is not religion.

Very sincerely,

(Signed) (Rev) Laurence J. Kenny, S.J.

P. S. I may go into this matter more fully someday in the Ill. Cath. Historical Review.

L. K.

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