

October 9, 1925

Mr. William Fortune
Indianapolis, Ind.

My dear Mr. Fortune:

It is a long time since I have written you a Lincoln letter though I have had one in mind for a number of months. The only thing that has kept it back is that I have been laboring with a Life of Judge Gary - a more difficult task than I realized when I undertook it. It is just leaving my hands now, however, and I am turning, as I always do after a siege in business history, to the relief I find in Lincoln work.

And this is what I want to ask you about. As I think you know, I have never been satisfied with what has been done on South-western Indiana - certainly not what I have done. The limitations of my last book - the book to which you contributed so much - were such that I did not do there what I long had in mind, and that is to give a better idea of the influences under which the boy Lincoln came. I am quite convinced that there was a good deal more in the air than biographers have realized, or at least presented. The work that the Historical Society of Indiana has done has been very suggestive to me.

When I had the pleasure of last seeing you here in New York with the Rices, you told me that your notes made so long ago and which at the time I was writing my book you could not lay your hands on, had been found. I think you told me, though of that I am not clear, that you turned them over to Mr. Beveridge. I am wondering if there is any reason why I should not read them - unless, indeed, you have some special plans for their publication. They would be, I know, a great help to me. At any rate, in the article which I am contemplating, I want to use the material about Quinns' Jester which you gave me, of course crediting it entirely to you for you started me on the search into that kind of literature, which, I think, is going to make an interesting section in my proposed article, for it is an article not a book. I have in mind something that might be suitable for the Atlantic Monthly.

What do you think of the idea, dear Mr. Fortune? And if you approve, have you any suggestions? I shall be very glad to hear from you about it.

I hope you and Mrs. Lilly are both very well. I heard rather sad news from the Rices - I have no doubt that you have heard from Alice. They had a miserable summer. They had taken Mrs. Hegan, Alice's mother, to Colorado, hoping that the air would help her, but the altitude was too high and she nearly died before they could get her home. It was a ghastly journey, I take it, from what they write me. I cannot bear to think of trouble coming to Alice Rice. I think her one of the sweetest and bravest women I have known and she has had so many hard burdens to carry that it quite breaks my heart to think of her having another.

With all good wishes, believe me

Faithfully, and always gratefully, yours