May 25, 1939

Begin.

Dear Mr. Lyons:

I have just returned to my desk and find your letter of May 12th. I am glad you called my attention to the article contending that the story of Lincoln's blighted love for Ann Rutledge is all a myth. It challenges me for I have spent the last five weeks preaching Lincoln to a class of young people at my old College - Allegheny - in Northwestern Pennsylvania. And one thing I have told them with confidence was that this romance was no myth. I have been told, though I have never followed it up, that there was a branch of the Rutledge family, none of them ever having lived in New Salem, who disputed the truthfulness of the Lincoln-Rutledge story. It did not as your correspondent declares depend alone on Herndon's lecture of 1866. His papers contain many letters and reports of interviews with old settlers who had lived side by side both parties, among them two or three or more Rutledges. It seems to be a generally accepted fact that the two young people were genuinely attracted, probably engaged. There is so much evidence to this that I personally would find it harder to disprove that there was no such romance than to prove that there was.

have been

Frankly, I am probably influenced by my desire that the man should have had such an affair in his early life. How could you expect that a young man of a strong emotional nature such as Lincolns, and his was strong and unusually well controlled, should live side by side with a girl who everybody reported charming and not fall in love. It was a natural thing to do. I sometimes think people who dispute early romances have lived so long that they have forgotten their youth.

whom

Digital Image, 2009. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

at

However, you are not to quote me on all this. But if you publish the article I will if I have time come back on it. At any rate I should like to know more of the paper and if your professional ethics allow it to read it. end here

Thanking you for calling my attention to the matter, believe me

Very sincerely yours

Mr. Eugene Lyons
570 Lexington Avenue
New York City

x if not published.

Digital Image, 2009. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library