

April 12, 1939

Dear Mr. Eisenschiml:

I have your letter of March 30th asking me what I make of the quotation from John P. Usher taken from "The Education of Linton Usher" in the December issue of the Indiana Magazine of History.

I confess that it does not seem cryptic when you recall the experience of Indiana through the War with the various copperhead societies so strong in the Middle West. These societies attempted, as you know, to engineer the separation of Illinois, Indiana and Ohio from the Union. They were in more or less close touch with the Confederates in Canada. You know of course their efforts to seize the government of Indiana, also set free the Confederate prisoners in their country and return them to the Southern Army. All of these things were scotched. Lincoln regarded them as foolish rather than criminal.

But they did involve many men in the State, men who when the War was over settled down to orderly living with greatly subdued spirits and probably no little alarm. How far was the investigation of the conspiracy which had resulted in Lincoln's death to be pushed? If it had been pushed out into the States where these organizations had been in sympathy with the Confederacy and from the beginning of the War had been active it would have brought in hundreds of men who were now willing to accept the outcome of the War, glad to do it to save their scalps.

Usher, I think, agreed with Lincoln in his policy of not making mountains out of what he regarded as mole hills.

There was immense political dissatisfaction, as you know, in the North with Lincoln's conduct of the War. Bitter and unwise things were written, said and done. When a catastrophe such as the Civil

War and the death of Lincoln comes to a head a wise statesman does all he can to restore peace, to forget, to bear no malice. No doubt Usher was under the influence of Lincoln's memorable last words, "malice towards none, charity towards all." He did not want to see his fellow Indianians pursued and punished. He was quite right when he said the ramifications were so far-reaching that it was well that investigation had gone no farther. Personally, I agree with him, the more strongly because I believe Booth's plot was of his own making.

Very sincerely yours

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