THOMAS HENRY BOYD

Evanston, Illinois
September 28, 1941

My dear Miss Tarbell :

Your letter of September 17th came during myabsence and I now write to express my appreciation of your kindness in replying to a stranger with a strange request.

You might be interested in my most recent trip. I went to Springfield, Ky,, and to the Lincoln Park some seven miles north. Quite a disappointment as all it contains is some nice rolling Kentucky hills, a reconstructed log cabin to duplicate the so-called "marriage cabin" now on display at Harrodsburg. However, the caretaker was priceless a d his distortion of history was almost a classic. He knew that Abraham was born in the cabin now at Harrodsburg, was three years old when the family moved to the Nolin River site. Also Grandfather Abraham was killed here, the exact place and spring is dramatically shown. He was most vociferous however that Thomas and Nancy were married when Abraham was born and did know about the marriage/in Springfield. Bond

Then I asked for the Berry, Richard, site, and he was my friend. I really doubt if anyone for years has tried to find it. I found it, met all the natives, heard many a weird historical story, and I can assure you that Beach Fork natives really believe Abraham was born there. The Berry log cabin is still there, terribly dilapidated, about ready to fall down. It's in the middle of a tobacco patch, unreachable except by a long, hot dusty walk across fields. I have just written the Department of Parks of the State of Kentucky begging them to save that cabin before it is too late and move it to the present Park two miles away. They won't do it as Kentucky has little interest in Lincoln, part of their tradition in trying to maintain their legendary "Southern connections". Yet they are putting on great campaigns to attract tourists, and getting them.

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Then on to Elizabethown and I had a fine day tracking down the Thomas Lincoln Farm on Mill Creek; the old Brumfield Place where grandmother Bathsheba is supposed to have lived and died; the old Mill Creek Cemetery and other places of interest. I found them all and it is safe to say that few people ever get to those sites, neighbors a mile or two away nothing of them, and care less. But I enjoyed it, and the best part was in talking to the natives and getting their stories and interpretations of history. One thing I will admit, and that is that while you are received somewhat coldly on first meeting, yet when they hear you are interested in Lincoln, theywarm up, invite you in, and I had the experience of visiting in presently occupied log-cabins, just the size of the old Lincoln ones. I just wonder if the Lincolns were as poor housekeepers and dirty as present day log-cabins' occupants.

Then I tried to drive home over the old traditional route to Indiana. It can almost be covered in a car, but some stretches are impassable. However I visited Vine Grove, Flaherty, Big Springs, Hardinsburg, Patesville, Pellville and the Ohio river crossing sites--well, at least three out of eight. Again I enjoyed the natives and their distortions of history. The amazing thing was how primitive the country gets, just a mile or two away from the main highways.

So much for that. It has gotten to be a long letter when I started to just to suggest to you what I had been doing.

I still hope to get in a trip to New Jersey this fall but right now it is not too promising. I shall follow up every lead that you have given me, and rest assured that I will tell you the results in due course.

Thank you for metioning me to Mr.Grundy? My letter to the New Jersey Historical Society was referred to him, he replied most graciously and invited me to call upon him. I shall do so without fail if my plans carry through at all.

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THOMAS HENRY BOYD

I note what you say about the lack of interest by the New Jersey Historical Societies. I am afraid that is true. The Monmouth Society referred me to you and even stated that they had never been able to locate anything definite except Court records. I also found a wooden fence around the little grave of Deborah Lincoln in the Covel Hill Cemetery. That showed interest. A native told me he thought a newspaper man in Trenton had gotten the Trenton Historical Society to build that fence. Letters to the newspaper and the historical society were never answered.

Now I have an idea. Princeton requires each Senior to successfully write an acceptable thesis on some original subject and here is a good one for some history senior to tackle. The Princeton Library has nothing on the subject except your book. When I get all my notes collected I shall send it to the History Department and tell them here is a subject worthy of some really hard work. If Mr. Grundy would cooperate with Princeton out of it might come something worth while. Anyway it is a possibility and something I should love to tackle personally except that one can hardly do research in New Jersey and try to earn a living in Chicago six days a week.

Thank you again for your interest and trouble in my behalf. Don't try to answer this letter as it does not call for an answer. Sometime, in the near future I hope, I will report to you on progress made.

Sincerely,

T. Henry Boyd

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