

December 12, 1922

Mr. T. A. Frank Jones,
1109 Gloyd Building,
Kansas City, Mo.

My dear Mr. Jones:

I am sorry that I have let your interesting letter of November 27 go so long unanswered. It is only a short time since I came back from a two months' Lincoln pilgrimage and I have found it a little difficult to catch up.

If I had received your letter while I was in Springfield I should certainly have had a look at the Lincoln deed and acknowledgment of signature to which you refer.

Although it was not his practice, Lincoln did occasionally spell his name Abram as in this case. I have never had a theory about it other than that he had not yet quite made up his mind which he liked the better, or that perhaps at the moment he was in a hurry. I take it he never was a rapid writer, although always a painstaking one, and he may occasionally have tried to save time by saving letters. It is an interesting point and I am glad you called my attention to it.

You bring up Herndon's story of Lincoln's failure to appear when a wedding had been prepared. Dear Mr. Jones, I did not dismiss that story with a paragraph. If you will look over my two volume Life, published many years ago, you will find that I collected a good deal of testimony from people who certainly were in a position to know more about it than Mr. Herndon. I had taken his story at full face value until I ran plumb into the surprise and indignation of a living relative of Mrs. Lincoln's and a great admirer of Abraham's. She at that time claimed that she had never read the Herndon book; but as for his staying away from a wedding, no such wedding was ever planned. I think I collected material from at least a dozen people who were in a position to know something about it, and all of them contradicted Mr. Herndon.

One of my most important witnesses, I think, was Mrs. Joshua Speed, to whom Lincoln wrote of his tragic first of January.

I have always believed that the reason of his despair was that he broke his engagement. That he did that, ~~and it was~~ unquestionably true. That he felt that he had done

thing is unquestionably true. He broke his engagement, in my judgment, because he felt the vast difference between his and Mary Todd's temperament and attitude towards life. They were utterly unsuited for sympathetic companionship. I doubt if Mary Todd had the faintest conception of the meaning of the words, though I have never doubted that in her way she loved Mr. Lincoln devotedly and was loyal to his interests, though she jeopardized them many times by her indiscretions and her hysteria.

I am going to return to the theme again before I get through with the piece of work that I have on hand. I have, however, found nothing in the years since I wrote what I did that has changed my views.

Thanking you for your letter and assuring you that I shall be glad at any time to hear from you on Lincoln themes, believe me

Very sincerely yours,