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April 13, 1932.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
120 E. 19th St.,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Miss Tarbell:

I am making a little study of Lincoln and the liquor question, and I shall be exceedingly obliged for your advice upon the following matter:

You will recall that at Ottawa Douglas referred to Lincoln's association with liquor at New Salem, and said that he was a grocery-keeper, and that Lincoln emphatically denied that he had ever been a grocery-keeper. Now, I am having difficulty in reconciling this statement of Lincoln with the statements made to you by Daniel Greene Burner, Parthenia Hill, McGrady Rutledge and John Potter, to the effect that the store of Berry and Lincoln was a grocery and sold whiskey by the drink, all of which may be found in your "The Early Life of Lincoln", 172-174. In fact, Burner says that he slept in a little rear room with Lincoln, and that "while I was there they had nothing for sale but liquor. They may have had some groceries before that, but I am certain they had none then."

Assuming that the term "grocery" was used at that day and time to describe a place where liquor was largely sold, together, however, with provisions and other commodities, I do not see how Lincoln could have denied that he had kept a grocery, especially in the face of Burner's statement.

I am just wondering whether or not you have run across anything in your subsequent research which would cause you to doubt the credibility of Burner's testimony and the testimony of these other witnesses. If Burner's evidence is to be believed, then I think we must conclude that Lincoln not only kept a grocery, but also that the establishment was operated at the time Burner was there under a tavern license issued to Berry on behalf of the firm of Berry and Lincoln. I think this must be so or else we are driven to the conclusion that Lincoln violated the law, inasmuch as a grocery was permitted to sell liquor, under the Illinois law, only in quantities of one quart or more, and Burner says that liquor was sold there by the drink. Personally I would rather believe that Lincoln did not sell liquor by the drink but only in quantities, but if he did sell it by the drink I would prefer to believe that he sold it lawfully under the

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tavern license than unlawfully.

Inasmuch as I do not know any better way to obtain an impression as to the credibility of these witnesses than to consult the person who took these statements, I am writing you in the hope that you may be able to tell me something which will clarify the situation, and I am particularly concerned with Burner's testimony, which if true makes Lincoln not only a grocery-keeper, but in fact a saloon-keeper, at New Salem.

You may be sure that I shall be very grateful to you for any assistance you may be able to render me in this matter, and I shall neither use your name nor any material that you may furnish me except by your express consent.

With very best regards, I am,

Sincerely,

WHT:EFD.

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