

3/13/38

L. Smith

My dear Miss Tarbell :

"Main I am turning to you for information . Perhaps you heard "Believe it or not Ripley" give a dramatization of the assassination of Lincoln several weeks ago when he had a ninety^{eight} years old lady present who "claims" to have been present . The story was surprising to me . A mother and daughter on the stage the girl protesting she did not want to marry the man her mother was demanding she must marry . The shot rang out . Booth fell to the stage a rope was thrown to him from the wings and he was dragged off . Isaac Markens relates that Harry Hawk (as Asa Trenchard) and Laura Keene were on the stage and the audience was laughing at his retort to her when the shot was fired and Booth tripping on the flag fell within four feet of Hawk . In the

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horror of the moment no one moved as Booth with a broken leg rose and staggered off into the wings, mounting the horse an accomplice had ready at the door . He brandished a knife as he left shouting " The South shall be free . "

Is it too much to ask you to write just a line on the enclosed card saying whether Mr. Markens was right . He says that Hawk related this story .

I am sorry to say I still have the Lincoln material Mr. Markens left with me as no publisher wants it . I feel as you do that had he published it many years ago it might have been fresh material but not now since so much has been unearthed .

I want to pay my tribute to you not alone for the work you have done about Lincoln but for the other great achievements during your useful and active life .

(over)

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I may tell you confidentially that the lady Ripley had on his program has only of late years told her story of being present at the assassination . Her family discredit it entirely and had never before in their lives heard it . She has a vigorous and active mind but has little regard for the truth . About a year ago she was to tell it over the radio and a few Lincoln experts came to the studio to hear it . When they read the prepared script she was allowed to read it but does not know today that she was tuned off the air . Of course Ripley does not know this . It would only bring harm to me or her family to publish it .

Yours very truly

Kate Louise Roberts