JOHN HILL,
MECHANICAL ENGINEER.

COTTON MILL ENGINEERING.
PLANS FOR COTTON MILLS.
STEAM, WATER OR ELECTRIC POWER APPLIED.
MACHINERY PURCHASED.

COLUMBUS, GA. April 4 1896

Digital Image, 2009. Special Collections, Pelletier Library, Allegheny College

Miss Ida M. Tarbell

Dear Miss:

I acknowledge yours 2nd inst and 27th ult. The autographs. Copy "Early Life of Lincoln", came to hand, was highly appreciated and at once acknowledged.

If anything I have written you as to Mr Lincoln can serve you, rest assured you have my permission to use the same. With the exception to the private portion as to what I knew as to Mr Lincolns relations with previous to the death of his son "Tad".

The effect of Mr Lincoln's arguments re you refer to, I but feebly expressed in my letter. The convincing power of Mr. Lincolns plain conversational method of address marvelous and cannot be estimated. Plain, candid and honest, without the slightest effort at display or oratory, he centralized his subject in the minds and thoughts of his hearers, and gradually carried them along to unanimous conviction. The benign expression of his face and his earnest interest in the subject, associated with such simplicity, secured sympathetic absorption. All listened in close attention to the end, and when he had finished there pervaded a momentary solemn

silence before his audience realized that it was the end.

As to the collection of Books - Maj. L. Harris was a college graduate (Trinity) and lived at Petersburg, Va. Scholar, rich energy, high class of mind - As opportunity afforded, he collected most of the books, & all during his life was on the look out for valuable & rare - He was a democratic politician, & for years prepared the ammunition for the great final contests of 1858 & 1860 - Just as the Canvas of 1858 was about to commence, he was taken to bed in the last Stages of Consumption He thought more of his "Library" than all else of property. At the time, personal relations between my father's family & his, had been interrupted by business complications - but for some reason Major Harris wanted me to own the Library & sent me word that he "wanted to see me". - I purchased, & the political material was used in those Campaigns - It may not be to my credit to say that in 1858 I made a speech at Petersburg, replying to Mr Lincoln As it was published, if I can find a copy, will send for one, simply as a curiosity - From 1858 until now, I have kept the books together, & now have them I thought to sell all together to some institution or Library, & hence the Catalogue. There is no financial reason whatever why I should sell, I have

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had numbers of offers to buy portions. & as high as $25 to 30 per vol has been offered for some of the Earliest Illinois Laws. A dozen or more have wanted the newspaper files — As I have kept them for over 35 years, have concluded unless they can be "kept together" as you mention to hold them to the end. If they can go together will let them go. Much one son about to come from Cornell an architect, and then an Electrician, & myself an Engineer, & all eschewing politics & law, there is no particular reason for holding the political & law portion of my library, which is quite sufficient in other directions where usefulness is had — If your acquaintance wishes to investigate will take pleasure in giving any information —

I will not close without saying, as to your Early Life of Lincoln, that I think you have done splendid service as Lincoln's biographer, and have better comprehended and described, as well as illustrated, the real man just as he was; and avoided to much greater extent, fictitious painting of facts, which any that have preceded. Have often heard references to your articles, and the concensus has been without exception highly favorable — You have honored Mr Lincoln as well as yourself in the production. Yours truly

John Hill

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