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ATTORNEY AND COUNSELOR
OSKALOOSA, IOWA

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Miss Ida M. Tarbell
New York, N. Y.

My dear Miss Tarbell:

You are a very dear friend of mine, of long standing. I know you don't know this, but I do. It commenced back in the nineties when your Life of Lincoln was running in McClure's Magazine. Then when it came out in book form I got the work, in four volumes. Later came other books and magazine articles and I read them all, and the friendship grew--all because you seemed to understand Lincoln and had the rare knack to tell it in print.

With this introduction, to prove my good standing with you, I come to you for some information on the Lincoln subject in the hope that you may be able to help me.

It is this: Did Lincoln read and revise Scripps's Campaign Life of Lincoln? In other words did he read and revise the manuscript for that work before it was published?

It has been stated a number of times that Medill said he did read and revise it; that Medill so stated in a letter he once wrote. It is also stated that it is a tradition in the Scripps family that Lincoln did read and revise the manuscript.

There are a number of Lincoln fans in the eastern part of Iowa and central Illinois among whom I am counted as one, and a controversy has come up among us over that question. Mr. Paul M. Angle, of Springfield, Ill., is one of that number. You perhaps know him or know of him at least as Secretary of the Illinois State Historical Society. Mr. Angle claims that there is no proof that Medill ever made such a statement, and that if Medill ever wrote a letter containing such a statement, as has been asserted, that letter is not to be found. He argues also that since it has been shown that Medill made some other errors in statements of fact about Lincoln his testimony is not be depended on, nor can the tradition in the Scripps family because it is nothing but tradition.

I know that you have made a deep search into the Lincoln facts. Can you help me on the point mentioned? Do you know of any source material proving or tending to prove that Lincoln read and revised the Scripps manuscript? I would thank you for any help you can give me.

To me there are some sound reasons to support the claim that he did read and revise it. Both Medill and Scripps were inti-

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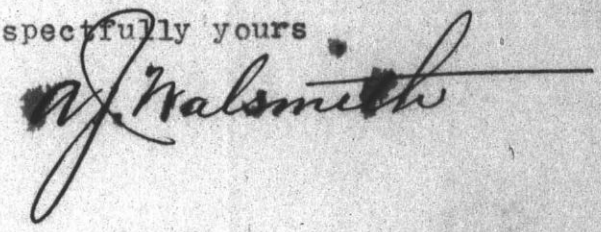
mate personal and political friends of Lincoln. Both well knew Lincoln's almost fanatical trait for exactness in statements of fact, and especially as to anything that touched his political life and utterances. They knew that Lincoln knew more about his own life than any other person, and to me it is unthinkable that Scripps would have assumed to prepare and send that work out to the country without consulting him. And it seems to me to follow that if consulted Lincoln would correct any misstatement of fact, if any there were. Further, the work contains copious excerpts from Lincoln's speeches and arguments against the extension of slavery, and no man then living could have been so good a judge of what was to go into the work of those speeches.

Then too there is much in the Scripps life that sounds like Lincoln's language, clearly indicating that he actually wrote some of it at least. But this is argument and not facts.

If you have anything in the way of facts that can shed a ray of light on the point I would be very glad to hear from you.

My mother, then a girl in her eighteenth year and living at Ottawa, Illinois, heard Lincoln and Douglas in the first of their seven set joint debates at that place, in August 1858. Then later my father enlisted from that place as a soldier in the civil war. But this is personal and perhaps I should not mention it. Somehow, both my parents taught me to love Lincoln and for more than forty years I have been a rather close student of his life. Your writings have helped me on the road.

Very respectfully yours



P. S. I am forced to send this just to New York, as I have no copy of "Who's Who" at hand and can not recall your street number.

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