S.Y. ROSSITER AND T.P. DUNN
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
906 ERIE TRUST BLDG.
ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA

WILLIAM F. ILLIG

January 19, 1931.

Miss Ida Tarbell,
120 E. 19th Street,
New York City, N. Y.

My dear Miss Tarbell:-

Some time back I became interested in the question as to whether Daniel Webster was a real lawyer, as lawyers understand that term, or whether his legal reputation was simply more or less a reflection from his public career. To this end I made a rather exhaustive study of his life and came to the conclusion that his legal reputation was thoroughly justified and that his current leadership of the American Bar was well merited, and I further found that the converse of my premise was the fact rather than the premise itself, namely, that it was his legal mind that reflected itself into his public actions rather than his public action reflecting itself into his legal activities; that his legal mind is entitled to credit for the greatness of his replies to Hayne and that likewise his legal mind is entitled to whatever credit or discredit resulted from his 7th of March 1850 speech and that therefore, Daniel Webster, the lawyer, made the substantial contribution to American history in his defense of the constitution and maintenance of the Supreme Court.

When you were in Erie about a year ago I asked you, whether in your opinion, Lincoln, in the positions he took on the burning questions of his day, was not, to a large extent, influenced by Webster and your reply to me was that he was more influenced by Clay than by Webster. I might argue with you that Clay never did attach the importance to a strong constitutional position that either Webster did or that Lincoln did, but that is neither here nor there for the real purpose of this letter is to ascertain whether in your opinion the following excerpt which Webster made in the Hayne reply might not be the source of Lincoln's conclusion of his Gettsburgh address. "It is sir, the people"s government, made for the people, made by the people and answerable to the people."

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Kindly pardon this intrusion and also kindly be advised that it is not for purely personal or academic reasons that I desire this information but for the reason that I might use your name, if granted your permission, as authority on the same if such is the fact in an address I may give before the Bar Association. At your convenience I will be glad to hear from you on the matter.

With my personal regards, I am,

Yours very truly,

S. Y. Rossiter

SYR-GG

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