I am Miss Thompson, a retired teacher, 35½ years here in Pub Sch., 12 as a principal of a district, and the last 15 yr. as a M.T. H.S. teacher of Civics + English

230 East Pratt St., Apt 408
Indianapolis, Ind., 4-6-23.

Dear Mrs. Hitchcock

After so long a silence I am glad to learn you are get-at-able and not in other grave than retirement from scandal blasts etc. We may be able to proceed as a good white team after debris is gone for perhaps for ever and aye. But get your Hanks line to rise up from Joseph Hanks into his ancestry by records and names + dates; it will be very important yet I am sure, even if he did have a missing, an errant Lucy and Nancy — but did he? Proofs are as yet promised.

I never even considered Herndon, Lamon, nor their ignorant (badgered into sense) Dennis (Hanks) — I would have nothing to do with any such writings even by readings, of those paternity scandals. I truly blessed those Springfield, Ky. documents + very innocently judged that all claims + falsities would just naturally be sloughed off.

Digital Image, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.
Please inform me when I shd

I had seen before my letter to you I think just one article, but not understood it, the Ass. Press address made on Lincoln Birthday in Chicago by W. E. Barton, of whom I then knew absolutely nothing, ~~nothing~~, nor had I even seen any mention of his "The Paternity of L." till I recently, very recently, read his "Soul of Lincoln" which I liked as a mode of treatment; and, tho' I think Lincoln was no creedist, ~~that~~ he probably late in life had quieted into some religious beliefs and saw fit to attach himself within varying church circles, such attachments largely for sake of Mary, I believe. In Barton's bibliography at close of that book, I saw the very first mention of "The Paternity" and obtained the book about 2 weeks ago and a terrible moral and other shock came therefrom, putting me in a whirlwind of uncertainty as to any bearings of my own researches as to be offered publicity even under any kind of an investigator, of a known reputation.

I accept your advice & today after

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reading your letter, I sent a long letter to Ida M. Tarbell - I had previously sent to some publishers, one to try to find yourself, another to ask for Lea & Hutchinson's address, and for estimates of Wm E. Barton's book among eastern historians, not Southern, not scandal repeaters. I have not had time to hear from any one.

I am not ready as yet to surrender my finds - I stopped in 1918 in Sept., and tho. I intended to have remained in Va. & in the east, so as to go to other counties in Va., the flu in Richmond, the expenses during that awful year of war, the discomforts away from my apartment, etc. sent me back here. In 1919, I went to Colo. & Calif. and could not see my way to afford another trip to Ky., Va., & perhaps other places. I returned here to sell my property

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or to get other arrangements made
so I can return to Calif. to live.
I was preparing my notes for
a trip in May into Ky., working
on same for about seven weeks
ahead of this recent dynamic
shock from Wm E. Barton. How
full, careful pause is surely in for me.
I intend to visit him, I think now,
I do not like his having left over
in that book uncleared, the matter about (1) that "Lizzy (un-
proved); nor (2) do I approve his sug-
gestion, see pp. 305-307 of "The Paternity" that another scandal
is coming, but of what nature it
is, or of what connection with
the Thomas — Nancy union
of paternity or maternity illegitimacy? —
It seems to me only an evil mind
can even get a single clue for it.
I pass the case up to my betters or down
to my inferiors (2)! In which class Dr.
Barton will finally fall ask not me
Is his book in Boston's Public Library Shelves?

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I am just now written-into cramps in fingers and the reading of Weik's "The Real Lincoln" and Barton's "The Paternity" has put deeper cramps behind the pen into my mind and soul. But I find clarity of purpose in sight, and even sweetness in knowing that I myself have only sought for just facts, refused to publish anything at all ~~whatever~~ ~~I could also have~~ had "essays" out; I sure also have restrained others from adding aught of legendes or stories now, even I fear I offended dear Mrs. Cummins by my insistence that she in 1918 gave up all idea of relic-hunting and of stating kinships or legendary matter. I begged her to find documents along Berry lines supporting Shipley connections.

Can you give me her exact name and address? I met her in Richmond, Va. I met Mr. Cummins in Lunenburg

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and he gave me their Richmond address. She was ill & undergoing some operation there. He was seeking the Richard Berry records. I offered to give him all I had there found, He preferred to look them out for himself. I never could feel sure of the right Richard except as traced by his 600 A. tract from Gov't of Va. into Beechland, Ky. There are just dozens of Richard Berrys. I visited twelve Va. Counties; he was everywhere. His wife's name was Rachel & not "Lucy". I knew that Will-o-Wish name in Ky. would turn up definitely somewhere. I copied several tracings of "Lucy" signatures in Am. Co. Va. I believe (?) she the Ky. myth starts from a certain Lucy Allen into a Hanks marriage in Am. Co. no just perhaps not a "belief" yet. I wish we could meet & talk. But keep your records and finally land them. Excuse haste and waste of space. Yours Kate A. Thompson

Rich. Berry died in Ky. in 1837. Rich. B. Wm. was the guardian on Nancy's bond in 1806.

Digital Image, 2011. Tripod M. Tarbell Collection, 1830-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.