

EASTERN ILLINOIS STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE

CHARLESTON

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

LIVINGSTON C. LORD

June 13, 1930

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
120 East 19th Street,
New York, New York.

My dear Miss Tarbell:

Knowing of your interest and your profound knowledge of the history of the Lincoln family, I am writing to you on what seems to me a matter of much importance.

You doubtless know of the movement to construct a Memorial Highway from Hodgenville, Kentucky, to Beardstown, Illinois. Our legislature at its recent session requested the Governor to recommend the route of said highway in Illinois. Their Joint Resolution suggests two instructions. The route is to follow (1) whenever practicable the general route followed by the Lincoln family, and (2) touching other historic shrines that are closely associated with the early life of Abraham Lincoln.

The engineers of the Department of Public Works and Buildings recently recommended to Governor Emerson a route passing slightly south of Mattoon and continuing in a southeastern direction to Shiloh Cemetery where Thomas Lincoln and his wife are buried and past the old Lincoln homestead. This report roused such serious criticism for leaving Charleston off the main route and at other points that Governor Emerson has recently appointed a commission of five able men with Dr. Otto Schmidt of Chicago as chairman to consider the problems involved and report to him a route for the highway.

We here believe there are no points on the route between Springfield and Vincennes more intimately associated with the lives of Thomas Lincoln, Sarah Bush Lincoln, and Abraham Lincoln than Charleston, Shiloh Cemetery and the old Thomas Lincoln homestead and the old road connecting these points over which each of them traveled many, many times. And that the main line of any such Memorial Highway should pass through and connect these points. That Charleston, the market place for Thomas Lincoln, the point from which Abraham Lincoln made his many visits to his parents, where he practiced law for many years and where he met the "Little Giant" in joint debate should not be left off the highway for a side trip.

A citizens' committee has asked me to prepare a statement of these views and the reasons for them to be presented to the commission.

I would be very glad to receive a statement of your views on the above points with permission to quote such parts of your letter as you will permit. I am writing letters similar to this to a few other of the most distinguished living scholars interested in the life of Abraham Lincoln before 1861.

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Miss Ida M. Tarbell - Page 2
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I am sending you a copy of a paper read here at the semi-centennial celebration of the Lincoln-Douglas Debate in 1908 and published as a bulletin with an introduction in 1924. And if you are interested, I will send you a copy of my report when finished.

Very sincerely yours,

S.E. Thomas

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Eastern Illinois State Teachers College.