March 25, 1927.

Walter B. Beals, Esq.,
Court House,
Seattle, Washington.

My dear Judge Beals:

I have your letter of March 15th asking if I found any new facts of Lincoln's mother and supposed grandmother, Lucy Hanks. No! nothing since Mr. Warren's book. I am not at all convinced that he is right in his reading of the document which would establish Lucy Hanks as a widow. Dr. Barton hoots at it and the facsimile published is not convincing. I am withholding my opinion until I have an opportunity to look up the original. If it shows even faintly the couple of letters which Warren claims I shall feel that he has done a great deal to clear up the puzzle.

The chief difficulty now is a satisfactory genealogy of the Hanks family. There are two or three competent people working on it and every now and then they send me data which I file away, not having had the time to give to the problem as complicated as this is. There are a number of missing links yet, but you know how the missing links have been filled in in the case of the Lincoln genealogy. One of the serious drawbacks in my judgment is that a number of people in position to help in the problem have made up their minds they have solved it and possibly have put themselves in a frame of mind where they are unable to see fresh material with the open mind that it requires.

Up to the time that Mr. Warren advanced his widow theory, the burden seemed to be that ~~Lucy~~ Nancy Hanks was born out of wedlock but I do not think that the evidence brought into court by any means proves this. A new document may be turned up any day which may upset that theory. If anything conclusive should come to my attention, my dear Judge Beal, I shall be glad to pass it on to you. I shall be grateful if you will call my attention to anything that seems to you worthwhile.

Very sincerely,

IMT BWK.

Digital Images, 2010. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944. Allegheny College Pelletier Library.