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Digital Image, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

Athens, Illinois,
June 19th,
1934

Miss Ida Tarbell,
Author of Lincoln Biographies,
New York City

Dear Madam:

In your history of Abraham Lincoln, Volume One, page 171, you speak of the "LONG NINE" being banqueted in Athens, for their achievement in having the capitol moved from Vandalia to Springfield, Illinois. I have read the complete account of this in the Sangamo Journal of that time.

There is now in Athens, still standing, a two-story frame mercantile building (the upper story being used as a hall), which is one hundred two (102) years old, in which this banquet is alleged to have been held. This building is known as the Louis Salzenstein Building, and was erected by him in 1832. It is now owned by the Masonic Lodge in Athens, and they contemplate razing it. In order to preserve it for its historical value, I am trying to obtain documentary evidence that the banquet was held in this building.

I am wondering if you have among your files through your personal interviews with some of the older residents of this community who spoke of in what building this banquet was held.

Any information that you can give me about this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Very truly yours,

G. C. Whitney

G. C. Whitney,
Secretary Van Meter Lodge #762
A. F. & A. M.