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CITIZENS NATIONAL BANK BLDG.
TELEPHONE 312
EVANSVILLE, IND.

June 13, 1925.

Miss Ida Tarbell,
130 E. Nineteenth St.,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Miss Tarbell:

I took the liberty to read extracts from your last letter to me, giving your conclusions after reading Mrs. Bacon's poem and Mrs. Ehrmann's paper, and our members at the regular meeting of the Society held at Newburgh were greatly pleased and encouraged. I will try and send you a copy of my remarks of welcome, in which I took occasion in response to a suggestion made in the address of welcome to refer to our Society and to read some extracts from your letter.

There was present at our meeting a Vincennes delegation representing their county historical society, two automobile loads of interesting people, one of whom was Miss O'Flinn. I learned accidentally that she was the person whom you had sent many years ago to Spencer County to interview the then surviving people who had known Abraham Lincoln. I had her lunch with me at the officer's table, and was greatly interested in her. She is in fine health and mental vigor, and was greatly interested in our work.

There are certain possibilities still existing of reclaiming that which belongs to the past, and the importance of it becomes greater now in view of the fact that there is a school of would-be-historians, who, as intimated in my last letter to you, are somewhat critical and inclined to emphasize I think the minor details, not to say that for some reason which it seems hard to understand there is a want of sympathy with our work in quarters where it ought not to exist, and where we ordinarily would not expect it.

However, referring to the very valuable work of Miss O'Flinn, which she says she reported to you and to which you refer in a former letter to me in 1923 when you do not mention her name, but of which you say you gave her credit for what you used, I am quite interested to know whether you have preserved it, whether you treat it wholly as confidential, beyond her right to talk to us about it, and whether there is any objection to our including her with others in a proceeding something like the following, which I have in my mind:

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Miss Ida Tarbell,
#2,
June 18, 1925.

You know Mr. Will Fortune, who at the request of General Veatch, who knew Lincoln as president, made a similar investigation in Spencer County, with the co-operation of General Veatch, talking to people who had known Lincoln, and he told me recently that his papers were in the hands of a magazine publisher, and he had not yet determined what would be done with them. There is Rev. J. Edward Murr of New Albany, who published no doubt as you know in the Indiana Magazine of History a history of the life of Lincoln in Indiana, from which it appeared that he had spent the better part of his life, much of the time as pastor, among this class of people, and had from time to time through a period of years in a most painstaking way interviewed, talked with, and cross-examined these old people. Professor Chewning, superintendent of our public schools, interviewed one of the leading associates of Lincoln in his youthful days, and published an article in a newspaper, which I have not so far been able to get. Mrs. Bess V. Ehrmann, whose paper you have read in the last Indiana Magazine of History, shows by her appreciative remarks her deep interest as to the character of these old people who constituted the environments in a substantial degree of Lincoln in Indiana, and she is acquainted with many of their descendants, and I know of no person more competent than her to co-operate with the persons mentioned, and several others no doubt, including Judge Kiper, and men like Dr. Logan Esarey and George R. Wilson, who have a wealth of knowledge in this field, with a vision unsurpassed by any of our Indiana workers and writers.

I have it in my mind with all due diligence to obtain from these persons mentioned such statement of matters as have not been published and which are not in process of publication, and what I regard as of greater importance probably, to obtain an estimate from each of these persons as to the individuals whom they interviewed who are known to have been among the acquaintances or associates of Abraham Lincoln in Indiana.

There has been so much loose stuff written, so much irresponsible descriptions of people of the lower class and the rough habits of the people by careless travellers, who obtained their information much around the tavern at night, perhaps under the influence of the liquor

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Miss Ida Tarbell,
#3,
June 13, 1935.

about which so much is said, and such misunderstood fiction such as "The New Purchase", and Eggleston's dialect novels, which were intended merely as a description of the dialect of low life, that the libels and slanders against the people of this section are threatened to be imposed upon our literature as a correct description of the better class of our people. In all of my addresses I have referred to this subject with a good deal of feeling.

Mrs. Ehrmann of Rockport, Mrs. Johnson of Mt. Vernon, Mrs. Bacon of Evansville, Judge Kiper of Boonville, and others of our ablest writers have expressed the same view.

Better than all this, now, before it is too late, would in my judgment be a careful statement presented from each of the persons above named, giving their estimates both in detail and generally of the character of these people who were the associates, and in part among the environments of Abraham Lincoln in Indiana.

What do you think of my idea?

Miss O'Flinn would co-operate with us subject to any obligation she owes to you, of course.

Sincerely yours,

John E. Iglehart

JEI:MM

Quoting you as above stated I did not refer to the subject of Lincoln mentioned in each of our letters.

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