THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

THE CROWELL PUBLISHING COMPANY

EDITORIAL ROOMS — 381 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

March 22nd, 1923.

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

Dear Miss Tarbell:

Many thanks for the work you have done in connection with helping us to get a good photograph. I return herewith all the pictures that you sent me. We will use the two pictures that were published in a Newark newspaper. Miss Perrine, manager of our Art Department, had Mr. Heller on the telephone today. He says that if you will write him a note saying that you want us to have the two pictures of Lincoln, we can have them -- the one taken in 1860 without the beard, and the one taken in 1864 with the beard. But he insists that he must have a letter from you saying that you would like to have these pictures to go with your article. So I am awfully sorry to say that I am afraid we shall have to trouble you to drop him a line.

Now about the finished copy of your manuscript. I suggest that you go over the copy of the manuscript you have and make your final corrections, and send it to me promptly. I am ready to go right ahead and have the thing set up.

I return herewith the inventory of the estate which you were kind enough to loan me. I suggest that you write and put into your article a paragraph containing a statement of some of the interesting points about this inventory. My first thought was that we would print the inventory as it is, but I don't believe that would be satisfactory. It would take up a good deal of space and besides it is not complete and in certain respects might confuse the reader somewhat. So as I say, I suggest that you write and insert in your article a paragraph summarizing some of its interesting points. To me for example, it is very interesting that he had so much invested in bonds, at 6%. It is also interesting that he had a note bearing interest at 10%. I observe that he had two or three worthless securities. I think you might refer to the real estate he had in Illinois and Iowa -- also to the house he owned. At least those points are interesting to me.

As you can well imagine I am tremendously enthusiastic about your making an immediate effort to get at Robert Lincoln. I can just see as the leading feature in next February's American Magazine the following:

"ROBERT T. LINCOLN'S PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF HIS FATHER"
AS RECORDED BY IDA M. TARBELL,
Author of "The Life of Lincoln", "He Knew Lincoln", etc.

Of course it would be great stuff if it were a one article, or two articles, or three articles, or four articles, or six articles. And obviously it would make a wonderful book.

About once in thirty days I get steamed up over this great story which is lying around the world and which nobody has yet obtained. As I was telling Mr. Phillips I don't think a journalist is much good if he can stand it to have

Digital Image, 2009, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

this thing existing in the world and make no effort to get it -- or at least be disturbed in his mind because he hasn't got it. Anyhow as I say, about once in thirty days for a long, long time, I have taken it up and done some hard thinking and worrying about it. I have talked to Bruce Barton about it and Miss Mullett, and others. The other day I talked to H. H. Kohlsaat about it. A few months ago, for about the fifty-eighth time, I looked up Robert T. Lincoln in Who's Who and I discovered that on August 1st, 1923 he will be eighty years old. Somehow I wondered if that might not mark a turning point in his determination not to talk about his father. At any rate, I wondered if it couldn't be used by a writer as a sort of entering wedge in taking up the thing with him -- my point being that the writer might begin by getting Lincoln interested in talking about himself at the age of eighty. It is a curious fact that human beings are often moved by a strange and trivial forces.

Now I want you to understand that I have no plan of sending any of the people I have named to try to see Robert Lincoln. There isn't any chance of this magazines getting anything from him unless we get it through you. That I absolutely know. So don't worry about my rocking the boat by trying to send somebody else to see him. There is nobody in the world that I would [redacted] see get the stuff than you, because of course you would know what to do with it if you got it, and because it would also be more valuable if presented by a recognized Lincoln historian. So I am just sitting in the grandstand, rooting for you with all my might. And honestly I can't for the life of me see why the man should not now at the end of his life be willing to open up his mind and heart and talk freely and fully with Miss Tarbell. And God knows no audience in the world could be as responsive to fresh Lincoln material as these 2,000,000 people who buy the American Magazine every month. They are the very folks for this kind of material.

So here's wishing you the best of luck on the great new adventure!

Faithfully yours,

S:D

Digital Image 2009. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library