Ida Tarbell Collection

George R. Hill
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JOLIET, ILLINOIS
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May 27, 1939

Miss Ida M. Tarbell
Connecticut

My dear Miss Tarbell:

I have just finished your "All in the Day's Work". This interesting book has a fascination for me and to say it short I think you are an expert psychoanalyst with an "eye" for the inner parts that have made great men tremble in your mental grasp.

I remember the Standard Oil Company of fifty years ago.

I have said that I have read all I intend to about Lincoln. I read Emanuel Hertz "The Hidden Lincoln" published last year and now I shall surely read your "Lincoln".

About three years ago I endeavored to find out where Lincoln got his first minutes of the Constitution of 1787. His "Cooper Institute" speech showed he had been a keen student of that document even to the roll calls. I had written to Bruce Barton, The University of Chicago, The Illinois Historical Society, but had no result. Finally I wrote to Justice Oliver Wendel Holmes, 94 years old and retired, and by his secretary replied at once stating "you are again doomed to disappointment, he does not know the answer but would be pleased to hear from you and your findings." In two days after the Justice was

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stricken and shortly died. This man belonged to the "horse and buggy days." His mind and brain was as young as a man of fifty.

I did get an answer from the Chief Librarian of the Congressional Library who stated that Congress, while Lincoln was there, published the minutes which were available to Congressmen at twelve to fifteen dollars apiece. I heard a high school teacher here state that Lincoln became a student after he was 21 and located at Springfield, a few copies printed by Madison ~~which~~ sold for $200 each. Lincoln was always poor and this started my question. Do you know if Lincoln had access to this document before he went to Congress?

The Cooper Institute speech captured the imagination of the scholarly East and must have had great influence in making him the successful candidate.

I too have a garden and am in it about 5 a.m. every morning in summer. The first thing that Leo Tolstoi said to Jane Addams was "Have you a garden?"

Since starting this letter I have read two thirds of "In the Footsteps of the Lincolns" I must state that the people of this country owe you a debt of gratitude because many thousands like myself have taken the record of Mr. Herndon as authentic when he was in daily contact for twenty-

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two years. What an illumination from living witnesses and official documents.

I would esteem it a great privalege to hear from you.

Yours sincerely,

George R Hill

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