July 30, 1923

Hon. John E. Iglehart,
Evansville, Ind.

My dear Judge Iglehart:

Thank you heartily for your kindness in sending me a carbon of the manuscript of your Evansville Chamber of Commerce address read last February. I have read it twice, with very real interest.

First let me apologize for misspelling your name. I shall charge it neither to the stenographer nor the printer - it was my own carelessness. You can depend upon its being correct in my book.

I was amused by the statement of the Indianapolis Star that I spent but"one day in Indiana personally inquiring among Lincoln's neighbors." As a matter of fact I never spent any time myself personally inquiring among Lincoln's neighbors. When I came to that period of Lincoln's life I looked upon research which would show what kind of influences he came under there as much more important than interviewing his old neighbors, all of which had been thoroughly done again and again. However, lest there might be something fresh to be gleaned among them and in order to verify what had been printed by previous biographers, notably Lehman and Herndon, I secured the coöperation of a woman writer who had spent considerable time already in Spencer County, and she went from person to person of the old inhabitants and wrote me fully what she had found. Whatever of her material I used I credited in my "Early Life of Lincoln" and later in my two volume Life.

The points on which I spent my time were, first, the physical life of the Lincolns in Spencer County from 1816 to 1830, and here I studied the records of pioneer life that are to be found in Washington and the exhibits of the National Museum of History. If you will look at my "Early Life," you will find that I have copied for my volume numbers of articles that are in the Pioneer Museum at Washington. The second point which interested me and on which I spent considerable time was the anti-slavery influences that Lincoln was under in Southwestern Indiana.

For a book like mine it was necessary to get even a single paragraph that was entirely authentic to go through a large mass of

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material, and that I did in regard to this particular point.

I spent much time investigating the river life, for I have always considered Lincoln's experience on the Ohio and the Mississippi the most stimulatingthat he came under during this period. These influences seem to me much more important than interviewing men and women who, although they had known Lincoln as a boy, were by this time old and garrulous, and whose stories had all been told years before when their memories were clearer. But, as I say, I had an associate do that very task. You can see the charge that I never spent but a day in Spencer County does not seem to me particularly important. I was spending many days on records connected with Lincoln's life in this part of the world which seemed to me vastly more important. It was a kind of work which makes me value so highly what you are doing.

In this article which you quoted from the Indianapolis Star, the writer says that "it is known that Lincoln read law in the office of Judge John Pitcher at Rockport." Do you not think, dear Judge Iglehart, that that is over-stating his contact with Judge Pitcher? Nothing that I have been able to gather makes me feel that we are justified in saying that he "read law" with Judge Pitcher. No doubt he may have borrowed books, but to "read law" means more, does it not? Moreover, we have Lincoln's word for it that he first studied law in 1834, after his election to the Illinois legislature, though no doubt he had read law books before this. I should be glad of your judgment on this statement.

I was much pleased to have you raise the question of the verses which Herndon declares Lincoln wrote beginning "When Adam was created he dwelt in Eden's shade." In the back of my mind I always questioned Herndon's statement, and when I was working on my Life of Lincoln I tried to find the lines in collections of old ballads, but failed. When I wrote my "Boys' Life" two years ago, I used part of the verses to make the point I wanted and attributed them to Lincoln, although at the time I had it in mind that it would be wiser to say that Herndon credited them to Lincoln. I shall be much interested in the result of this investigation. I want to quote what you have said here if you do not object in my forthcoming book.

Altogether I think your address one of the most suggestive things that I have read on Lincoln in [illegible]

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things that I have read on Lincoln in Indiana.

You ask if I wish any changes made in regard to the references to myself. No, I think it is hardly worth while for your touching up on the one day in Southwestern Indiana. What I wrote before in regard to that is entirely for you. As to my letter which you refer to, I leave it entirely to you as to whether or no it is of importance enough to be included.

Sincerely yours,

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