

1735 DeSales Street, N. W.,
Washington, D. C.,
Dec. 6, 1933.

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

My dear Miss Tarbell:

Dr. Jameson, the American-history consultant in the Library of Congress, has suggested my writing to you for possible light on a Lincoln incident that has come to my notice. Will you bear with me while I tell you what is in my mind?

Recently I met a Mr. F. L. Matthews of Chicago, who told me this:

His father was W. S. Matthews, born in Poland, Ohio, later of Youngstown, who was a member of the Sixth Ohio Volunteers in the Civil War. A day or two before Lincoln was shot (if not on that day), he wrote in his own hand a citation of W. S. Matthews for surpassing bravery in action. Lincoln died without having signed the paper, and it was signed by President Johnson, with a notation on it of the circumstances. This paper is now in possession of the widow, the mother of F. L. Matthews.

As a writing man, the possibilities of this appealed to me: a paper in the script of two presidents and treasured by one of those numerous families which, some time, some place, the hand of Abraham Lincoln had touched, however lightly or casually, and ennobled forevermore. Mr. F. L. Matthews could not say whether the paper had ever been reproduced or whether the incident had ever been treated in any national way other than in a publication of the Loyal Legion. He did remark that his family knew you, but he did not know whether you had made use of the story. I fail to find it in your published work.

If you have made use of it, will you please give me the reference; and if you have not used it but recall the details, will you say anything as to its authenticity? I should consider a word from you a great kindness.

Yours sincerely,

Thomas Malone

(My home address is 2205 West 52nd Street, Minneapolis, Minnesota, where I shall be after December 15.)