

# The Lincoln Room

65 Pearl Street

Newton, Mass.

Feb. 22, 1940

Miss Ida M. Tarbell.

Dear Miss Tarbell;-

Your kindness in sending me your photograph with the wishes for the success of my Lincoln Collection inscribed thereon is greatly appreciated. Please accept many thanks.

The picture has been put in a frame and I am proud to hang it in my little Lincoln Room.

I am now in the midst of reading Emanuel Hertz's "The Hidden Lincoln". What do you think of the sordid touches that has been brought out for the public to see and a great many of them to gloat over?

Seems to me that much of these papers should have been destroyed years ago. Perhaps I am biased, but the more I read of William Herndon's writings on Lincoln, the more I feel that his works should have been suppressed ere they reached the printing press.

He seems to be everlastingly stressing that he will print the truth at whatever cost to himself. In this, I think that he flatly contradicts his other oft repeated statements that he adores Lincoln and will give Mrs. Lincoln justice.

There are things in everyone's life that are too sacred and personal to flaunt before the public, no matter how great a figure in history they may become.

Generally speaking, I would say that Herndon aimed for the sordid and despicable back fence gossip of the people who had the least respect for the Lincolns. How much of the unpleasant qualities of Mrs. Lincoln, in particular, can be laid to Herndon's pen will never be known, but we can form our own opinions by reading his papers.

In Mrs. Lincoln's case, while she may have had an uncontrollable tongue, said many things and did many things that she thoroughly regretted, I feel that she had as many fine qualities as the average person, yet where can one read of them, except in Katherine Helm's "Mary, Wife Of Lincoln".

It would please me greatly if I could have your opinions on the subject.

Further, let me say that Herndon's or Weik's refusal to let either Dr. Barton or yourself have access to these papers was due to the fear that they well understood that they would be repulsive to both of you and perhaps may have never been placed before the public under these circumstances.

My estimation of Robert Lincoln grows apace with every phrase that Herndon uses against him.

With all kind wishes for your continued good health and happiness, I am,

Yours Very Sincerely,

Claude E. Simmonds.