

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

January 24, 1925.

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

Dear Miss Tarbell:

There is an incident relating to Lincoln about which, in view of your great familiarity with his early life, I make bold to write you.

When I was a very small boy, in Ashtabula County, there were copies of the "New York Weekly Tribune" in the garret. I remember reading in one of those a paragraph substantially as follows: "Mr. Abraham Lincoln, a former member of Congress from Illinois, states that he was a hired man in Illinois and during that time his lot was no less severe than that of a slave."

Did you ever hear of this utterance by Lincoln? I am quite sure the paragraph was before he had become nationally known. My recollection is that the paragraph was about contemporaneous with the account of the Burdell murder.

Do not give yourself any trouble about this, but if you have any recollection of such a statement by Lincoln, I should be very glad to hear from you as it is certainly an interesting one. I am very sure my recollection is correct, although I do not remember the exact length of time when he said he was a hired man. Of course this may have been one of those paragraphs containing an erroneous statement which occasionally appeared in the newspapers.

Very sincerely yours,

Theodore E. Burton

teb/w