

HARRISONBURG STATE NORMAL SCHOOL
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE
HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

March 6, 1928

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
New York City.

My dear Miss Tarbell:

Thank you for the advance sheets of your interesting work on the Lincolns. All have been received - the first two in separate package and later five numbers, including the first two, in a second package.

In reference to the probabilities of the Lincolns being (or not being) slave-holders - I must confess to a good deal of uncertainty.

The majority of the people in this part of the Valley were of German stock, and the Germans did not seem to indulge in slave-holding as much as the English and Scotch-Irish. Witness the difference in the proportions of slaves as between the Valley and the country east of the Blue Ridge; also, as between the German counties of the Valley and Rockbridge (the Scotch-Irish County) and Clarke (largely an English county). If the Germans opposed slavery because of anything in their race, it was accentuated here by religions also; for many of the Germans here were Mennonites, Bunkers, and United Brethren, all of whom were opposed to slavery, as a rule.

But the Lincolns were English, so what I have been saying about their German neighbors here in Rockingham would perhaps not much affect them. Yet, if the Lincolns were or had been Quakers, this fact might even up with others.

I recall that Miss Kate Pennybacker tells how the father of Jacob Lincoln's wife, Rebeson, sent her a slave girl (at least a Negro girl) to help take care of her baby while Jacob Lincoln was away in the Revolutionary army. Perhaps Miss Pennybacker would know by tradition whether or not the Lincolns had slaves.

With kindest regards and best wishes, I remain,

Yours very truly,

John W. Wayland