

*Informant Testimony Reported in
William H. Herndon's Letters to Jesse W. Weik*

Some of the following entries have been extracted from letters, for which the date is given, and some were apparently written out separately and included in letters. The reader should note that while some of these entries report recent conversations, others appear to be recollections of something related at a much earlier time, and that all were written more than twenty years after the death of AL.

609. James H. Matheny (WHH interview)

Jany 87

Judge Matheny tells me this story of Mr. & Mrs. Lincoln: the story was told him by one of the parties to it. About the year 1850 there lived in this city a man by the name of Tiger,¹ who was a personal friend of Lincoln: he was a kind but a powerful man physically. Tiger heard that Mrs. Lincoln was without help and Knowing that Mrs. Lincoln was a tigress and Could not for any length of time Keep a girl, thought that he had a niece, who was a fine girl, industrious, neat, saving, and rather handsome, who could satisfy any body on earth. So he sent the girl down to see Mrs Lincoln: she, Mrs L, was anxious to get a girl and arrangements were made between the two that Sarah² — the girls name, should stay and help Mrs L. Everything went on well for sometime, Mrs L bragging on her Sarah all the while to her neighbors & visitors. Sarah herself was no Common hired girl, but a fine woman and rather intelligent, pleasant, and social. Mrs. Lincoln at last got on one of her insane mad spells, insulted and actually slapt the girl, who could and would not stand it —: So she quit Mrs Lincoln — went home to her uncle Tiger's and told her story weeping and crying all the while. Tiger felt bad about the matter, but knowing that all quarrels generally have two sides to them, he was determined to find out the truth of the matter — So he went down to Lincoln's and when he got there he saw that Mrs. Lincoln had thrown the girls trunk and clothes out of the house and on the pavement in the street. On approaching the

1. Jacob Taggart, according to JWW's notes on this story. See §555, note 1.

2. A Sarah E. Taggart married Upton Crow in Sangamon County in 1850. See Power, 236.