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Springfield, Ill., March 17, 1899. 189

My Dear Miss Tarbell:

I have your letter enclosing stories about John S. Wilson and Albert Brooks, which were sent you by A.M.Swan, of Albuquerque, New Mexico. I think I have seen both of these stories in print, my impression being that they appeared in a signed article by Mr. Swan sent out by the Syndicate about three years ago. I know nothing as to the truth of either of them, but can very likely find out about the Petersburg man.

As to Swan, however, I know something. He lived for many years at Canton, Ill., where my newspaper career began. Although he was employed by the paper with which I subsequently became connected, I cannot say that I had any personal acquaintance with him, for he departed for New Mexico shortly before I commenced newspaper work at Canton; but the reputation which he left behind him made me feel fairly well acquainted. For truth and veracity his reputation was decidedly bad. Since becoming a resident of New Mexico, he has, as I have been informed, served a term in the penitentiary. Nevertheless, these stories may be true. Swan wrote a history of Canton, a copy of which I have, and which I think very good. The facts, so far as I know them, give it the appearance of reliability,

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although some of the older residents of the place tell me that "Old Swan" became imaginative here and there in the book. I should advise the corroboration of any of Swan's stories in which historical accuracy is of high importance.

Mr. Alpheus Davison, a clerk in the Pension Bureau, who lives at Anacosta, a very reliable man, can tell you all about Swan. He was proprietor of the Canton "Republican" at the time Swan was local editor of the paper. If you have much of Swan's material, it might be well to see Mr. Davison. He, of course, knows all about him, while I, as I tell you, know him only by reputation, and know perhaps only the worst things that can be said of him.

I will investigate the two stories which you send me.

very sincerely yours,

J. McCan Davis

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