

Digitized Image, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

file

443 - 43rd Avenue,
Milwaukee, Wis.
March 9, 1927.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
120 East 19th St.,
New York, N.Y.

Dear Miss Tarbell:-

Volume 2 of your wonderful biography of Abraham Lincoln reached me by registered mail two days ago. I never can tell you how much I appreciate your action in this matter, for the volume you sent me contained for me the most interesting record of Lincoln's whole life. The way you describe the proceedings at the Chicago Convention which nominated Lincoln in 1860 to the Presidency, brought to my mind a thousand interesting recollections of the things I personally observed on that occasion.

Now, Miss Tarbell, if you care to write on the subject I intend to suggest, I can give you the facts about one of the most interesting incidents in Mr. Lincoln's whole career. I have in mind his wonderful work in providing the country at the beginning of the Civil War with the circulating medium known as the Greenbacks. It so happened that I became acquainted with Hon. Alexander Campbell, who was really the author of the Greenback, which Mr. Lincoln sponsored and put thru Congress, against the most strenuous opposition of all the banking interests of this country and of Europe. I know but one living person, and I am not sure he is living, who had inside information about this great measure that I speak of. Briefly Mr. Campbell loaned Lincoln \$500 during his great campaign for the U.S. Senate against Stephen A. Douglas and when Mr. Lincoln found he couldn't carry on the Civil War purely for the lack of funds, he wrote Mr. Campbell and I had a photographic copy of the letter, to come on to Washington on the first train. Mr. Campbell told me all about the circumstances of his interview with President Lincoln and how the President, after hearing Mr. Campbell's explanation of how to put out Government Legal Tender money, ordered Secretary Chase of the Treasurer to provide a bill at once for that purpose. Mr. Lincoln had the greatest struggle of his whole life to get Congress to enact this law, because he ^{was} instantly pounced upon by the whole banking interests of the whole country who loudly proclaimed that it was not within the province of the Government to issue Legal Tender Money. But Mr. Lincoln had common sense enough to put the measure thru and I, in connection with thousands of other Union soldiers, can remember very vividly when after serving the Government for six months, we received our pay down in Missouri in crisp new greenback bills and that

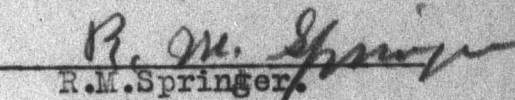
was the only kind of money we saw for the balance of the Civil War.

I am taking due note of the legislation that has just recently been enacted in Washington to give the banking interests still further power over the issue of additional money, none of which is legal tender, but fictiously redeemable in gold coin. I can foresee plainly enough that a panic is already underway, created by the bankers that would sweep the fortunes and savings away from millions of industrious people.

I think I have written up some phases of this question, and shall make it a point to look it up.

Thanking you earnestly for volume two, and asking you if you have time to read carefully the Gustine letter and also the enclosed, I am

Very respectfully yours,


R.M. Springer

RMS/W

COPY.

443 - 43rd Avenue,
Milwaukee, Wis.
March 9, 1927.

Editor

Wisconsin News,
Milwaukee, Wis.

Dear Sir:-

The News, of course, wants to enlarge its immense circulation.

The undersigned desires to become a millionaire and has promised his friends for the last two or three years that he would enter that class before giving up this life.

Now let's see if we can't co-operate to the advantage of each other.

If you will take the time to run thru the enclosed correspondence I am having with Comrade Gustine, you will see that I have been within reach of a fortune on several different occasions, but I do not intend to cease my efforts until I succeed. I don't care a snap for money as money. I am in my 86th year now and have a pension that will sustain me thru life in comfort, but there are two ways that I can yet achieve the fortune that I have promised my friends I would make. Let me first say that I have been promising the Steno Girls from one end of this country to the other, who have served me so well, that I would build a home for those of them who do not care to marry. I have also promised the nurses, as I have encountered so many of them that they should have a department in this home. I have also promised the feminine School Teachers that they should also have a department in the capacious home. These three classes of noble women have served me in many ways and that is why I have them in mind, not mentioning others who are equally worthy in their respective spheres.

Now I have two ways of achieving this ambitious result, that is, of procuring the very large sum of money that would be necessary to carry it out. First I began two months ago, after leaving the National Soldiers' Home here in Milwaukee to save not less than \$10.00 a month. With this fund, I intend to patent a device for preserving crops of fruit, vegetables, and cereals from early frost all over the world and for conserving the surplus rain water with which to irrigate land in cases of extreme drought. My mind has been on this subject for five years and I know just what I am doing, but will not weary you regarding details of the matter here. The best I can do on this plan will carry me along from three to five years, but I certainly shall succeed let the time be longer or shorter.

Here is the alternative proposition that I wish you would consider. You send an intelligent reporter up to see me at 443 -43rd

Avenue, preferably a lady, and I will show her a model of the invention that will make me all the money I can ever need if I succeed in patenting it in this and other countries. Then I will call her attention to an immense volume of matter that I have written up during the last five or six years, in type form, which will demonstrate that I have lived an unusual life so far and have shown capacity to deal with large undertakings. Upon this Reporter's survey, you will be able to decide whether you can afford to commission me as your special representative to procure subscription to the paper and incidentally advertising matter. My suggestion would be that you supply me with an automobile and a driver and a Stenographer and start me out over the country to solicit subscriptions, etc and as compensation, allow me as liberal a commission as possible. With this commission, I will procure the patent on the device I mention and at some point in the South, I will begin the manufacture of the covered movable roof and sell it all over the universe. Otherwise, after having patented it I will offer it to Gov. Lowden of Illinois or some other extensive farmer and preserve a liberal royalty.

This is the briefest sort of a statement I wish you to consider, but it seems to me you can get an idea of what I am aiming at and if you do not feel like passing upon the subject in the matter I suggest, I request that you send it on to Mr. Hearst, who at one time knew me personally, as I supported him for Mayor in the City of New York in a way to attract his favorable attention, or you might first submit it to Arthur Brisbane, whom I used to meet in Washington City during the World War and with whom I have had some correspondence quite recently as per the enclosed.

I am in dead earnest about this matter and I don't want you or anyone who has to do with this proposition to take any account of my advanced years. I am living in a way that will insure me ample time to carry out this sort of a program and I have had wide enough experience with women and men to know how to handle this or any other proposition that my judgment approves of.

You will see by the enclosed letter from Miss Ida M. Tarbell, who contributes such valuable matter to the Hearst Daily papers that she has promised to do whatever she can in furtherance of my laudable purpose.

If you conclude to start me out over the country, I will supply you with matter from day to day or from week to week as you may decide, already in typed form, that will show you plenty of romance, any amount of suffering, and endless courage in my life so far. I have prepared this matter during the last five years to be eventually incorporated in a biographical sketch of my life. If the Reporter comes up to see me, I will provide her with various chapters of this matter that will enable her to judge of its interest as reading matter in your long chain of newspapers. My Stenographer has just suggested to me that she intended to offer some of my matter that she has copied and knows the nature of to one of the leading magazines of the country. But I prefer to deal with Mr. Hearst and his chain of papers to any other medium. Should you decide to use any of my matter, I will leave it to you as to the amount of compensation.

Hoping for an early reply, I am

Very earnestly yours,
R.M. SPRINGER

RMS*W