

1326 North Park Avenue  
Tucson, Arizona

Dear Miss Tarbell:

Your gracious letter thrilled me and I am delighted that you love the beautiful old bracelet. You are right, it was worn by my great aunt to many White House balls and parties, besides on many other memorable occasions in Washington and New York during the 60's.

I shall briefly tell you of my aunt. She was the eldest daughter of the Rev. J. W. Paddock, a scion of an Albany family, prominent in its time. My great grandfather was a lawyer before he went into the ministry. At the time he was a minister they lived in Oneonta, New York. Besides my aunt there were two other daughters, my grandmother, who became the wife of Hon. Jonas A. Hughston, and after his death in China, to which far away post he had been appointed by President Lincoln in 1861, in the diplomatic service, she a few years later became the wife of Cornelius J. Bushnell, who furnished the funds to build the Merrimac. She lived in New Haven then, rather after her marriage to Bushnell. My great aunt married a young and brilliant young lawyer, John B. Steele. Her name had been Ann Eliza Paddock. The youngest sister, Charlotte Louise, married a merchant, a member of the noted "manor" Livingston family.

John B. Steele was born in Delhi, Delaware County, New York, March 28, 1814 and was the second of seven sons of Nathaniel Steele, who was among the earliest of the settlers in that county. Educated at the Delaware Academy, and at Williams College, he commenced the study of the law and was admitted to practice in 1839. Locating himself, soon afterward, in Otsego County, in 1841 he was appointed District Attorney, in which position he continued until 1847, when he removed to Kingston, Ulster County, where he pursued his profession with marked success.

In 1850 Mr. Steele was elected Special Judge of the county; and, in 1850, he was the candidate of the Democratic party for the office of County Judge, failing of an election by only a few votes. In 1860 he was elected Representative to the Thirty-seventh Congress, serving on the committees on the District of Columbia and on Revolutionary Pensions. In 1862 he was re-elected by a largely increased majority; serving with decided efficiency on the Committee on the Pacific Railroad, in addition to the committees above named. In 1866 the candidacy of the Democratic party for Representative in Congress was the object of an active canvass, and Mr. Steele became identified with the nomination early in the season. The remarkable and characteristic energy of the man gave assurance to his friends that the issue of the contest( which was to have been determined three days subsequent to that of his death - Sept. 23, 1866) would not be unfavorable.

But I am getting ahead of my story: During the years that John B. Steele was in Congress, he with his wife and only daughter Ella Steele lived at Willards Hotel, my cousin Ella Steele having been born in 1845 or 1846 and therefore was a young girl during all the stirring days of the War. During all the

years of the Civil War, Mr. Steele was a member of Congress from New York and as a war Democrat, as a powerful speaker and a sturdy and patriotic Unionist was able to give valuable and needed support to the Administration and was held in the highest esteem by the President and his Cabinet. Naturally enough for that reason, but more because of her fine presence, her eminent charm of manner, her high breeding and tact and her conversational powers, my Aunt, Mrs. Steele was an intimate friend of the Lincolns, and the families of the Cabinet officials, the Justices of the Supreme Court and many of the more distinguished members of Congress. Their daughter, Ella, was a young and beautiful girl, making her debut in Washington during war days, and was a favorite.

My aunt was one of the most beautiful and distinguished of the women in Washington, as was also my Grandmother, Mrs. Hughston some years previous when my grandfather was a member of Congress from New York. The lovely old bracelet was only one of many beautiful things my aunt had. I know that she treasured the bracelet, as did her daughter because of the memories it linked with the days when they were part of history in the making. Many times she wore the bracelet to the White House and the great Lincoln has looked upon it and no doubt admired it in that day when she was a frequent guest at the White House. Robert Lincoln was one of my cousin's admirers and in my Lincoln collection I have his card accompanying an invitation to his graduation which reads as follows:

The pleasure of your Company is requested at  
Stoughton Hall, Nos. 5, 6, 7 and 8,  
ON CLASS DAY, JUNE 24, 1864,  
immediately after the exercises in the Church.

A. Gorham  
F. P. Anderson

R. T. Lincoln  
S. Storrow

R. L. Perkins  
H. I. Huidököper

General Frederick Steele was a brother of John B. Steele and my cousin was his favorite niece. He went to West Point Military Academy and was the class mate there of General Grant, served with great distinction in the Mexican and Civil wars and as Major General Steele was the trusted lieutenant of General Grant at the siege of Vicksburg.

Naturally my cousin being young and beautiful and talented, as she grew older she was much sought after by both old and young. For instance under the escort of Schuyler Colfax, she stood on the platform while Lincoln was inaugurated for the second time and pronounced his historical address. During the war a great Sanitary Fair was held in Washington or New York, and my cousin being so closely allied with the prominent families of Washington thru her father's position in Congress and because of her Uncle Frederick Steele, she was able to come in contact with these people and so for the Fair she got up a wonderful autograph collection and other historical documents. The autographs were of all prominent civil and military men of the day, and also included the original draft of ~~the~~ Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. The collection was sold for a tremendous sum for the benefit of the Fair, and my cousin never enjoyed getting up anything more than she did that collection.

Inasmuch as Miss Steele had gotten a lot of pleasure out of the collection of autographs for the Sanitary Fair, she decided to make another collection of autographs of those famous people who were their most intimate friends and associates, this collection for her own. This is the collection that I am now

proud owner of. I am enclosing another newspaper clipping about the collection, although I sent you one when I wrote you early in 1932. Besides the letters which are contained in a beautifully bound leather autograph album of the period, with my cousin's initials M.E.S. 1865 on the back, the collection also contains autographed and unautographed photographs of practically all the prominent civil and military people of the day and their wives. Autographed photos include

James B. Ricketts  
D. Y. Sickles  
John A. Logan  
J. S. Poland  
U.S. Grant  
Schuyler Colfax  
D. E. Farragut  
Genl B. McClellan  
M. Blair  
Winfield S. Hancock  
George G. Meade  
J. M. Schofield  
A. Doubleday

There are several others that are autographed that I cannot make out the signatures. Besides the above mentioned photos there are about forty additional ones of generals, officers, also Cabinet members and House and Senate, among them the following:

Abraham Lincoln  
Maxwell  
Stockbridge  
Morris  
H. Hamlin  
"Sunset" Cox  
Stephen J. Field  
General Burnside  
General Hunter  
General Fred B. Steele  
Edwin M. Stanton  
Will H. Seward

Then there is a group photograph of five officers, one of whom is sitting in a chair having lost a leg in some engagement and his crutch is standing near. There are four photographs of Payne, alias Wood, alias Hall, which were sent to my cousin by Secretary of War Stanton. Also there are photographs of many beautiful women of the 60's, wives of officers and cabinet members, all of whom would probably be very familiar to you knowing that period so well in all the research you have done.

The autographed photos are on this order:

For Miss Steele  
with the compliments of  
D. Y. Sickles, Maj. Gen'l.

Your friend  
John A. Logan  
U.S. Gen'l.

D. E. Farragut  
Rear Admiral

U. S. Grant  
Lt. Com. U.S.A.

I know the collection is a valuable one as well as a most interesting one. It is one that should be in a library collection, a private collection or a museum, and I should like to have it in the safe keeping of someone who would treasure it for its real worth and would like to know that it is safely harbored for all time. Of course I am not eager to part with it, but I have no immediate family left and am badly in need of money and for that reason I should like to dispose of the collection for whatever it is possible to bring. The past three years has brought to me, like many others, financial reverses that have brought me to a desperate strait, so that whatever I can now turn into money readily I am willing to do in order to satisfy demands upon me that must be met if possible. After all one can always keep one's memories, so one loses little in the long run. However, I do want the Lincoln collection safely placed.

I shall be only too happy to send the collection, including the photographs, on to you for examination if you would be interested in seeing it, and of course it really ought to be seen to be appreciated. It fairly breathes of the old days and there is a faintly fragrant mellowness about the pages of the Album and of the photographs that is startling to one who reverts those things.

I thought you would like a picture of my aunt to whom the lovely bracelet belonged, and so I am sending one or two of her, as well as her husband, General Fred Steele and of Ella Steele. You will note that in one of the pictures she is wearing beautiful pearl ear rings and pin. I enclose also a picture of this particular set of pearls, seed pearls, which came from Galt's Jewelry Store in Washington during the 60's. The photograph is about three quarters the actual size and they are perfectly enchanting. These I should also be willing to dispose of. You will note from the photo they are in perfect condition, as for about twenty-five years they were in a safe and not brought out only occasionally.

At your suggestion in 1932 I wrote to Dr. Louis Warren, Mr. Oliver Barrett and Goodspeed's in Boston, and while all were interested in the collection were not in the market. Goodspeed's said to wait about two years before attempting to sell it and they thought then the market would be fairly good to put it out. Another one wanted to know how much I would take for it etc. I know its value lies in its desirability to a collector, and I haven't the slightest idea what it is worth, but I do know that I would willingly sacrifice it for a nominal sum if I could dispose of it now without much delay as I need money now much worse than I shall probably ever need it again.

I am hoping that you will be able to help me in this matter, dear Miss Tarbell, for I feel that the bracelet in a way links us together. I am so contented and happy that you are the possessor of it now and there is no one else whom I would rather it had gone to.

I am sending you a war-time picture of my Aunt and also one that was taken several years later while she was abroad with my grandmother. You will note that she was a very lovely woman, and her fine character and spirit shines forth in her face.

I hope you will let me send the collection on to you for examination, and I hope that you will be able to interest someone in it or tell me to whom to write about it. Please keep in mind that I will be willing to dispose of it entirely on your recommendation and also at any price you may see fit to suggest or put on it. I have not the slightest idea what it is worth, but I do know it is valuable.

It was so sweet in you to write me so graciously about the bracelet and Mrs. McCormick wrote me from California how pleased and delighted you were with the bracelet. This naturally made her very happy. She has been a good kind friend to me and I value her friendship more than I can express.

With all good wishes for you and hoping that your summer has been a happy one, I am

Sincerely yours,

*Caroline Mary Hugheston*

P. S. The picture of General Frederick Steele is in the safe deposit vault, along with many others so I do not have an extra one to send you. Besides the pictures in the vault with the remainder of the collection there are many here at my house of famous people of that time but I do not know how to identify them. If you would permit me to send them to you, perhaps you would be willing to write the names upon them for me. I am enclosing several pictures and you may keep them if you wish, except the three that I have marked with my name - these I would appreciate your returning at your convenience.

At the time of the death of Hon. John B. Steele, letters of sympathy were sent to my aunt and her daughter ~~from~~ by Alexander M. Randall, Postmaster General, Montgomery Blair, Ex-Postmaster General Hon. Henry G. Stebbins; Hon. Levi S. Chatfield, of New York; Hon. A. Bryn Hasbrouck, of St. Remy, Ulster County, N.Y.; William H. Seward, Secretary of State; Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, and many others. I quote the letters of Stanton and Blair, to show you the high esteem in which the Steeles were held.

"War Department - Washington City, 1867

Dear Madam;

late  
It was with profound sorrow I learned your husband's death from the public prints, and only abstained from expressing my sympathy from unwillingness to intrude upon your attention at the period of your deep affliction.

My acquaintance with Mr. Steele was formed soon after my entrance upon the duties of the Department. He was then representing his district in Congress. In earnest, devoted patriotism he was unsurpassed, and all the energies of his strong heart and vigorous intellect were devoted to the support of his country. My esteem and confidence in him grew with our acquaintance, and I mourned his death as the loss of a faithful friend, a patriotic citizen, and a cultivated gentleman. By none will his memory be more respected than by

Yours truly,

Mrs. John B. Steele.

EDWIN M. STANTON "

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(From Mr. Blair)

My dear Madam:

I was absent in Pennsylvania when the death of your husband was announced, and it is only within a few days that I have found, in turning over the mass of my correspondence accumulated during my ten weeks of active canvass in the elections, a letter from his friend communicating the sad intelligence. It is rare that I have lost a more valued friend, and deeply have I deplored his death on my own account; but my thoughts have turned to you and your daughter and to the country, when I have reflected on this entirely irreparable loss. I had not been intimate with him many years, but I had become warmly attached to him for the genuine manhood and patriotism and the fine practical sense which characterized him. I felt that in him the country really had a brave, true-hearted, and sagacious friend; that in these troubled days he was needed more than almost any man of my acquaintance. It was this appreciation of his real character that attached me to him. I felt also that he was my friend because I believed and sympathized with him in his feelings.

But to you and to his daughter, to whom this character endeared him, he was rendered still more dear by that unostentatious but devoted tenderness with which his heart turned to you. Nothing can be said which will be consolatory to you, and I speak of your loss only to assure you of the sincere sympathy of

Yours very truly,

Washington, November 25, 1866

M. Blair



John B. Steele

VALLEY'S  
NEW GALLERY,  
No. 13 Wall St.,  
KINGSTON,  
N. Y.

Cost of Valleys \$1.00 per doz. — American \$1.00  
per doz. — Valleys \$1.00 per doz. — American \$1.00  
per doz. — Valleys \$1.00 per doz. — American \$1.00



Mrs. John B. Steele

MAISON FONDÉE RUE DE LAVAL



PEINTURE & PHOTOGRAPHIE D'ART.

J. TOURTIN

CRÉATEUR DU PORTRAIT

REMBRANDT-CARTE

52, RUE LOUIS LE GRAND, 52.



PAS DE SUCCURSALE

Les Clichés sont conservés.



Mary Ella Steele

12 years old -

Photo of oil painting  
life size

