

1012 Putnam Ave

Plainfield, N. J.

December 13, 1932.

Miss Tarbell:

My! how grateful I am -

a civil war Veteran, aged 86, for your letter of Dec' 9,
herein enclosed, inasmuch as it reminds me that my letter to
you in October (stamp enclosed) was not received; strange!
and how pleased I felt you would be to read therein an
interesting account of my novel hand shake in middle

Broadway with dear Abe Lincoln, especially as I learned
that you were "zealous Lincoln-ia, and had somewhere
publicly remarked that there were very few - if any - alive
who had shaken hands with the great Liberator, or even
seen him. I will try to re-write that experience, to wit: in the
late fall of 1864, I, a lad of 18, read in the papers that the
President, arriving in the city privately, might possibly
land by jerry boat at the Battery on his way to a hotel,
previous to making a candidating speech at Cooper Union
Hall. Of course, that brief notice resulted in the gathering of
a few folk along the street curb. After awhile one of those
old-time closed coaches came along, mixed with the usual
Broadway stage busses, with their steps thereinto, at the rear.
Any one could notice that but one person was in the coach,
and but one driver - not even the usual high-hatted door-
opener sitting on his stilted seat at the rear-top.

→ Alone! The great Pres^t of U.S. with not a military,
civil or social Escort. This solitariness unquestionably was
wisely ordained by the New York authorities who recalled the

terrible Draft riots of the previous year - 1863 - and avoided possible street attack. His carriage was close to the curb, and I quickly stepped to the middle-Broadway side of carriage, jumped on foot-board, thrust in my hand - and he grabbed it - and shook. (

No wonder I'm proud of such an honor!

By-the way, to me - a lad - one of the most startling surprises of the Draft year, was to see placed in the 2^d floor window of Tribune building, Cannon, each one loaded for instant use as the Irish opponent of the Draft law, threatened to burn the building.

Respectfully

Thomas H. Downing
born in Greenwich Village - 9th ward, N.Y. City