1012 Putnam Ave'

Plainfield, N. J.

Nov. 7, 1932

Miss Tarbell: Somewhere, I came across a reference to you as a compiler of the names of those few civil war survivors who saw, met, or listened to Pres. Abraham Lincoln. The undersigned, a civil war veteran, aged 86, is more than proud of the joyous remembrance of having his hand in mine in the fall of 1864, to wit: Lincoln, coming to N.Y. City in October of above year to deliver his initial (New York City) response to the recent re-nomination for the Presidency, at "Cooper Union" in the evening, passed up lower Broadway in a closed carriage, unostentatiously; that is, minus any kind of parade or any pronounced laudatory official or public manifestation.

Not only the year before occurred the terrible draft riot started by (largely) Irish opposition to the draft law, manifestly it was arranged between Lincoln and the New York authorities, that his city entrance must be private not public. By the way, what a strange and startling sight to me — a lad of 18 — was to see protruding from the 2d floor windows of the Tribune building in the riot year (1863), cannon! The Irish had threatened to burn it down.

→ To continue: doubtless the daily newspapers must have hinted that Lincoln might come up from lower Broadway privately. Any how, a few scattered loungers began to stare at the gutters. I noticed that, and joined them.

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In a little while — preceded from further down the street, the sign of hat's off and some excitement. Soon the carriage was in front of me and no policeman in Visible. It didn't take long for a "Greenwich Village" lad to observe not only that there was no policeman at top or in the vehicle or nearby, so I ran to the middle — 13th — drawing side of carriage, jumped upon the foot-board, thrust in my hand — which he grasped!

→ But the strange part — seemingly rash situation — only one year after 1863 riot — not a visible escort; nobody but driver and passenger!?? Sitting alone — a President.

→ It now appeals to me there was wisdom in the effort made to make Lincoln's arrival as unobserved as possible.

Cordially
Thomas F. Fleming.

My Civil War — service discharge is No 1152071.