443 - 43rd Avenue,
Milwaukee, Wis.
March 4, 1927.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
New York, N.Y.

Dear Miss Tarbell:-

In reply to your favor of February 26th ult., from Detroit, Michigan, allow me to say that I met Col. Wm. P. Elkin several times, but always at some political convention or other public function.

I was first presented to him by Hon. Alexander Campbell, the "Father of the Greenbacks", whom I managed to send to Congress when I organized the Greenback party.

Col. Elkin lived down state while I lived at the time in Kendall County, Illinois. On the occasion of one of these meetings Mr. Campbell was reading Colonel Elkin and me some correspondence from Mr. Lincoln. Whereupon the Colonel took from his pocket and read to us the letter from Mr. Lincoln that you refer to. At the same time I read to him and Mr. Campbell the letter that Mr. Lincoln wrote me from Cincinnati which I mention in the "Reminiscence" address, which you have read. This was prior to the advent of the typewriter, and of the Steno girls, so that each of the letters I mention was in Mr. Lincoln's own handwriting.

I never heard the authenticity of this Elkin's letter questioned, and I feel quite certain that it was published in my own paper at the time I speak of, and in other local papers in Illinois, and in some other states, so that you are at liberty to use what I say here in any way you wish.

And you may feel free to quote from my Lincoln "Reminiscence" address at any length you desire.

The work you are doing for the Hearst papers will add greatly to their popularity. No other author understands Lincoln as you do. Your ability to discriminate and your power to analyze, make you easily the leading biographer of the present day.

If you will consider the matter of "doing" me as you did Comrade Wing, in the handsome little volume you sent me, "A Reporter for Lincoln", I should expect you to regard me first as the last survivor of the Civil War Veterans, and as the man who liberated the first slave as

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a result of that war.

I'll enclose copy of some recent correspondence I had with Arthur Brisbane on the subject of the last survivor.

You see this all means that you are to remain in the Editorial harness for more than a half century yet, more likely three-quarters of a century. On this subject, see my letter, or rather Postscript to my letter to my Comrade, Mr. Henry W. Gustine.

Earnestly and respectfully,

R.M. Springer

RMS/W

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P.O. Box 40,
National Home, Wis.
September 18, 1926

Mr. Arthur Brisbane, Editor,
New York, N.Y.

Dear Sir:-

Many thanks for your remembrance of the UNION Savers. Some of us feel at times that we are quite forgotten.

The undersigned expects to be the last survivor of the Grand Army of the Republic, but would shun the conspicuous attention you suggest.

Born December 10th, 1841, Lafayette, Indiana, transplanted to Illinois soil two years later. I inherited so much of the spirit of loyalty so impressively taught by Abraham Lincoln, Owen Lovejoy, Lyman Trumbull, Stephen A. Douglas, and Wendell Phillips that I enlisted in response to the first call of the great Emancipator for troops and continued in the service till 1865, being the last member of the Army of the Tennessee to be mustered out.

I am following your repeated suggestions in the "Today" articles as to diet, physical exercise and optimistic hopefulness, and as a result, am in perfect health.

I'll see you in 1941.

R. M. SPRINGER,

Late Sergeant Co. K. 20th Ills. Infantry.

RMS/W

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C O P Y.

LOS ANGELES EXAMINER,
Office of the Publisher,
Broadway at Eleventh St. Los Angeles.

September 28th, 1926.

My dear Sir:

Many thanks for your letter. I sincerely hope that you will be able to keep the appointment in 1981. I have some doubts as to my own ability to do so.

Yours sincerely,
(Signed) A. Brisbane.

R.M.Springer, Esq.,
Box 40,
National Home, Wis.

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February 28, 1927.

P.S.

I concluded my reply to your letter of the 2nd inst. rather abruptly on the 7th, owing to the fact that my stenographer was obliged to care for her father, Commander H.H.Witzel of the U.S.Navy, retired. Commander Witzel is subject to heart failure, and was suddenly prostrated by an acute attack at that stage, so that the dutiful daughter was obliged to go to his aid.

I intended to refer you to the noble women who literally forced President Wilson and the Congress of the United States to enfranchise the women of this country.

In my autobiography I relate in detail much of the inside history of this movement, as I was in the Government service at Washington at the time and saw Alice Paul, the quiet little Quaker Girl and her co-workers arrested repeatedly and thrust into loathsome jails for demanding the right to vote on all questions that men vote upon. I was a suffragest from the age of 10, and participated in a joint discussion at the country school house in Illinois where I lived.

The question was, "Should women be allowed to vote?" I took the affirmative, and this was my first point: "I believe that women ought to be allowed to vote because my mother knows more than my father." And that was true, although my father was as bright as any other man in all the country around.

I am asking my stenographer to mail you a late copy of Equal Rights, the ably conducted magazine which is edited and published by the women who forced President Wilson and the Congress to pass to the people the 18th Amendment of the Constitution, enfranchises all women of the prescribed age.

I risked my life and spent several hundred dollars aiding the noble band of women who put this amendment through. I suppose you, like many other stupid men was saving your dollars while I was handing mine out to advance this great measure. I hope you will live long enough to read what I say in my forthcoming book on this supremely important movement.

I am mailing you a copy of a lengthy letter I recently wrote to my brother. If you find time to read this letter you will learn from it how I was excluded from the State and National Soldiers' Homes by order of the late Jas. W. Wadsworth, former President of the National Board of Manager of said Homes.

That infamous act sent me to the Republic of Panama, as you will see, and from there to Washington, D. C. I mention this fact as it leads up to an incident connected with my ability to make money rather faster than the ordinary man makes it.

When I landed at Panama I had just twenty cents in my trousers pocket, and was 2,000 miles from any living soul who ever had heard of me. Of course I could not do any sort of manual labor on account of my wounded arm, so I took up with an offer to edit a daily paper, as related in the letter to my brother. When the business manager of the daily paper I was to edit asked me what salary I expected for my work, I said, "I'll start off with the same salary you have been paying the man I am to succeed; I may ask for a raise when I get used to the work expected of me." He replied, "we don't know if you can fill the bill. We have been paying the editor you are to succeed $150.00 a month. Can't you start on a salary of $100? I replied: "I have noticed the kind of work the retiring editor has been doing, and if I don't get out a better paper than he has been putting out, I'll not charge you a nickle." My bluff worked and I was put to work at $150.00 a month. But as I did not get this engagement till five days after my arrival at Panama with the twenty cents as the limit of my capital, you may well wonder how I managed to find shelter and food in the meantime. This is the way I did it.

It cost me ten cents street car fare from the steamboat landing to the city; the colored lads at the landing having charged me ten cents to lug my heavy suit case from the steamer to the street car. I was now completely broke. I asked a policeman on the street car where I could get board. As he spoke only the Spanish tongue, I was obliged to address him in Spanish. I made him understand with some difficulty, and he said I should accompany him to his boarding house, two blocks from the street car landing.

Mind you I was well dressed and sported a costly leather suit case, so the land lady, widow of a very prominate citizen of Panama, showed me a room, but said she could not supply me with meals as she was feeding half a dozen English young gentleman with their breakfasts and that was the limit. So I slept on an empty stomach, and when I left my room in the morning I saw the young gentleman seated at the breakfast table down the hall, and the sight of the victuals appealed to me rather urgently, so much so that I made bold to ask the one at the head of the table if he could not arrange with the landlady to supply me with my breakfast for a few days - until the arrival of my pension check. He asked, "do you speak Spanish?" I replied, "poco," which means a little, in Spanish. He then said, "I have lived in the States and if you are an Army pensioner I am perfectly willing to stand good for your bill here till you get the next pension check. I know that Uncle Sam never fails to meet his obligations."

So I went with him to the capacious parlor where the landlady sat and he told her to treat me as his amigo (friend) and he would pay all that was due her." This satisfied the good woman and I sat down and ate a hearty breakfast and repeated the exercise for several succeeding mornings, in fact till I made connection with the newspaper. You may depend upon upon it I ate several breakfasts at that table.

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I was on duty at the newspaper office from 6 P.M. till 6 A.M. Most of the copy intended for publication was written in Spanish, but I was assisted in getting it all into English by a well educated mulatto from Jamaica Island, a British subject.

I got along with my new duties without a hitch. After having presented the printers with sufficient copy to fill all of the space in the paper but one column on the editorial page, the first day, I rushed off what is known in Journalistic phrase as the leader. I had been around town in all directions and had read the daily papers and so selected as the theme of my leading editorial the proper way to develop that wonderful country. I talked as if I had been a resident of Panama for years, long enough to feel qualified to advise.

At 6 P.M. the next day I had just taken my seat at the editorial desk when the phone rang, and a Mr. Foley asked if I was the new editor. Upon giving him an affirmative reply he said, "I edited the Journal for several months a couple of years ago, and had been reading it for several years. I desire to congratulate you on your leading editorial, and upon the appearance of the paper generally. If you can maintain that gate you will soon make of the Journal the leading paper in Central America. I'll be down in an hour to meet you, as there are some things you ought to know for your own safety."

So in less than the hour named Mr. Foley came in. He was a fine looking young man of easy, gracious manners, and upon being seated proceeded to tell me that two American editors had been killed while sitting in the chair I occupied, and I, as their successor, was forcibly pulled out of a borouch in front of the leading hotel in this city and forwarded and kicked into insensibility by five or six bullies, none of whom I had ever before seen. The two editors who were killed and I, who was rescued by the police just in time to save my life were the victims of the man who owns the other daily paper. He is a multi-millionaire. He owns the National Lottery and the leading hotels, theatres and stores of this city. His illigâtimate sons have done the killing so far. His name is Duke. He is a citizen of the United States, but is an outlaw so far as this government is concerned. Everybody fears him. You better not antagonize this man as you value your life.

I replied to Lieutenant Foley, for he had been a Lieutenant in the regular army and was a graduate from West Point, as General Goethals later informed me, that I had served in the Union Army during the Civil War, and had tasted cold lead, and my friends would say that I did not know the meaning of the term fear. But, I added, as far as this paper is concerned I suppose I'll have to be governed by the edict of its owners, President Porris and his associates in the Panamanian Government.

In my letter to my brother, to which I refer, you will notice this sentence on page 8, 4th paragraph: "I am passing over some of the most thrilling incidents of my life, or of any other man's life to get back to the dead Wadsworth." In verification of this rather broad statement, let me give in detail my experience with this man Duke.

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As soon as I gave up the editorship of the Daily Journal and established my own paper,, The Link, as recited in the letter to my brother, I found that Duke's desperados were on my trail. I went about the street unarmed, but gave out that I carried an automatic revolver in each outside coat pocket, prepared to plug any person who might attempt to interfere with me.

The Duke people held mass meetings in the public park almost every night, while our people kept perfectly quiet. I attended these meetings in order to note the number and character of the attendants, and to get the names, and the pleas the speakers were making to the voters. I thus came to know most of the prominent speakers and workers in the opposition party. And one evening as I purposely stood on the rim of the assembled thousands in front of the speaker's stand, I noticed that some of the desperados, including Duke's grown-up sons were crowding close to me. I therefore worked my way out of the crowd and, keeping my hands in my light coat pockets, took my stand on the steps of the big hotel just across the narrow street from the speakers stand. In this situation no one could get behind me as my back was against the door casing at the hotel entrance. The rabble stood in front of me and kept up a running fire of taunts and threats at the Gringo, Spanish for a Yankee. I apparently took no notice of this performance but was convinced that if I had remained on the ground the plan was for one of the Duke sons to slip a/blade knife between my ribs and thus put me out of the way. The very next day General Goethals phoned me to call at his office at a certain hour.

I called and met Duke leaving General Goethals' office. His face was white and he looked like a corpse. General Goethals smiled as I entered his office, and motioning me to a chair beside him in front of his desk, he said:"I sent for Duke this morning and when he came in he sat in the chair you now occupy. I told him that if any one attempted your life I would put the city under martial law and would have you shot without trial." The General laughed and said, "Duke turned white and tried to talk but his voice failed him and he left just as you came in, unable to utter a word, he was so overcome with fear. Now, I want you to understand, Mr. Editor, that I have read your paper and that I approve of every word you say in your editorials." He then told me how Duke quietly bought certain tracts of land on the Canal Zone which he knew that the U.S.Government was obliged to have, and tried to have him take the land over for $100,000, the tract which he had recently bought for $2,000. The General added, "If you have the courage to continue the fight on the Duke gang, I'll back you to the limit. I assured him that I intended to go the limit, and assured him that many leading Panamanians had already sought me out surreptiously and assured me that they intended to vote for the President Porris candidate, and urged me to keep up the fight on Duke. And I should add here that right up to the day of the election, influential native citizens continued to call on me to assure me of their determination quietly go to the polls and vote for the administration candidate. They assured me that this revolt against the Duke domination was spreading all over the Republic.

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My paper was sold out as fast as I could deliver them from the press, each issue. I put out 5,000 papers the first issue, and raised the number to 7,000 the second issue. Every paper was sold by newsboys on the streets and at the newstands. My price was ten cents each, but the public was so eager for them that the price ran up to 25 and 50 cents a copy. One man, after election, told me that he paid $5.00 for a single paper to take out in the country, and added, I called a public meeting and from a stand read your editorials to the audience from beginning to end. The result was that Duke's candidate did not receive a single vote in that village.

I might say here that I could not get a paper for my file, as the printers sent out every copy as fast as they came off the press.

Wm. Jennings Price, the American Minister, came to me in the public park one day, just before election, and asked me if I could supply him with a complete file of my paper. Said he wished to keep them in his office for reference. I was obliged to say that I did not know where I could get a single copy, as I had been to all of the leading newstands, and did not find a single one. Each of the proprietors stated that they had to turn away many applicants for lack of papers. He warned me to look out for the Duke' assassins, and said he had just assured General Goethals that he would back him up as the representative of the United States Government

The unexpected result of the election completely upset Duke. Among other things I revealed to the people of Panama was the private life of the man Duke. His private Secretary, another well educated Jamaican mullatto, came to me repeatedly under cover of the night's darkness, to tell me all about the man he was serving. He told me it was Duke's habit to have a native woman, a xx wretched old hag, bring girls of 12, 13, and 14 years of age to his room at night and that Duke at that time was supporting forty-two girls that he had seduced. Some of this offspring were full grown at this time, and it was these illigitimate sons that murdered the two Editors I mention, and who nearly pounded the life out of Lieut. Foley. So completely did this gang dominate the city that no arrests were ever made nor was any attempt made to prosecute the murders.

So I was given the credit of defying the whole outfit, and I had thousands of friends among all classes and of all nationalties. Duke himself was so completely broken up and disappointed that he died a few weeks after the election, although he was just in the prime of life and in perfect health when I first saw him. I met him on the street ten days before his death and he looked like a ghost.

Now, Comrade, I assure you that but for the damnable World War I would have made millions in that country. And I even now feel that I could regain my pre-war position if I had a <u>few hundred</u> dollars to start in where I left off. But I don't feel <u>like going</u> through the strain on a margin of twenty cents at my present age.

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As I say in the letter to my brother, I went to Washington City instead of to Chicago, and as the Government at Washington grabbed all of the steamers plying between this country and Central America, I appealed to General Goethals, who had resigned from the Army, after completing the great Panama Canal, but at the beginning of the World War, accepted an appointment offered him by President Wilson, for some sort of a job. He secured for me the position of Captain of the Guard in the largest of the new government buildings at a salary of $1000 a year. In that position I soon larned that the government was to pull down all the buildings on a tract of about fifty acres, just north of the Washington monument and the Lincoln Memorial structure in order to make room for the temporary buildings to be occupied by the thousands of government employees brought to Washington on account of the World War. I foresaw that the influx of some 50,000 well paid men and women would need food, shelter and other conveniences near their places of employment. So I looked about the streets adjacent to the proposed new government buildings and found a three story and basement building just across the street from the new government tract north, that had not been used for years. It was rapidly going to wreck. I hunted up the owner, a rich and retired real estate dealer, and rented this property for two years, with an option for another year, at a nominal rental. I bought a large range, a full set of dishes sufficient to feed 100 people at a time. Chairs, beds and bedding, rugs, carpets and every other sort of furniture and supplies for keeping lodgers and for operating a restaurant. I was obliged to put new flooring in the main room, opening on to the street, to put on window blinds up stairs and down, dig a ditch and put sewer pipes from the basement to the street in order to drain off a cellar full of water.

I put a notice on the front door that at a given day I would open the building for lodgers, and would serve meals day and night. The rooms were all engaged in 24 hours at my own price, and from the time the restaurant was opened a corps of cooks and waiters were kept busy serving the roomers and transients meals at the table and soft drinks, cigars, tobbacco, candy, stationery, etc., etc. for two long years. Seeing that I could not begin to serve all that came, I rented another dilapitated building a block away, fixed it up and furnished it, at a cost of $1000 and operated it the same as the other one. I got this building at a nominal rental, also, for two years. I also rented the two upper floors of a building just across the street from my first building, furnished it and rented the rooms to lodgers.

I engaged to pay for all of this furniture on time, with a nominal sum down, and I paid every dollar of it long before it was due. I had a net income amounting to more than $50 a day at one stage, or nearly $20,000 a year. But this harvest did not last long, for other, private houses all around me opened their doors to all comers and reduced prices so that in a few months I was making only a moderate return on my large investment. I foresaw the end of the World War and sold out everything at the best price I could get. Mind you, I was drawing a salary of $1000 a year as Captain of the Guard at the War Trade Board Building, two blocks south of my property. I also drew my army pension, so that for months I walked about the streets of Washington with my pockets, even my coat pockets literally

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filled with money.

I had no use for banks since I lost all the money I had in five different ones at one of our periodical bank - made financial panics except one - the first National bank of Chicago.

You may be interested to know that while I was Captain of the Guard, and carrying on the side affairs I have set forth here, Major Ridley, of the Regular Army, custodian at the time, and until very recently, of all of Uncle Sam's public buildings, including the Washington Monument, and the splendid Lincoln Memorial structure, I won the enviable position of keeper of the Lincoln Memorial Building. This appointment came under the Civil Service requirements, and at a certain day applicants were required to take an examination showing their special qualifications for this important post.

With no very serious thought of gaining the position, I sat down and wrote out a page or two of the answers to the test questions. Most of these were intended to show the familiarity of the applicant with the leading facts about Mister Lincoln. I made reply to everyone of these questions and was marked 99 on the scale. No one else of the 50 odd applicants came up to 80. At the time I did not know that there was an age limit to the appointee.

But Major Ridley, who made the appointment, sent for me a couple of days after the examination, and when I reported he said, "Captain, this appointment belongs to you on the rating given you by the Board of Civil Service Examiners, but you are above the maximum age fixed by law. I regret this very much, as I see that you have made a marginal note there showing that you heard Mr. Lincoln in his first joint debate with Senator Douglas, and that you shook hands with him on that occasion. I am sure you would prove to be by far the best qualified of any of the other applicants to interest and instruct visitors about this great man; but the law cuts you out. I am really sorry but there is no way to circumvent the law."

So I missed an appointment that would have provided me with an $8,000 a-year salary, and living quarters more magnificent than I could get at any hotel in the world.

By-the-way, the next highest applicant asked me, during the examination, a dozen questions about Lincoln, which I correctly answered. He got the appointment because he was less than sixty, and because I helped him through with his examination. Thus such things go.

Had I been undersixty by one day, I would have no doubt been custodian at the present time, and in that case I could have saved $5000 or $6000 a year, and by investing in real estate I would probably be a very rich man today.

But, Comrade, I shall make the fortune yet, and it will run into millions, I promise you.

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You may answer that I am beginning too late in life, and that the Lord will call for me to come home long before I make the millions. But in answer to such a suggestion as that I can only reply as I did to an octogenarian comrade in the Soldiers' Home here just before I left it. I asked him his age. He replied, "I am 89, and am ready to go whenever the good Lord calls for me."

I said, in a tantalizing way, "why the Lord don't want you. He has more boarders now than he can well find room for. He never calls for any of us mortals. Most of us don't know how to live, prolong our lives, and go prematurely and impose on God!" This Comrade was really shocked, as I fear you will be, at my levity. But that is really the way I look at life. We are put here to <u>stay</u>, and to do something worth while.

Try and get my idea, and begin to live. Keep enough of your money to feed, clothe and shelter yourself. Spend at least two hours out of the twenty-four at energetic physical exercise, deep breathing and doing good.

When you get the copy of my autobiography, read about the trip I made to the Arctic Circle twenty odd years ago. Try and imagine yourself traveling with the dog teams on snowshoes with the thermometer ranging from 30 to 62 degrees below zero, from 30 to 80 miles a day, and without a bite of food for days at a stretch. I tell it all in detail in the book.

On the subject of longetivity, please read the following:

"THAT BODY OF YOURS.

By James W. Barton, M.D.

Growing Old.

Perhaps you have wondered just what it would be like to be old. A Berlin physician, Dr. Hirsch, says that if we keep up our usual habits of life we can defer old age for a long time. He points out that all parts of the body do not grow old at the same time. This would mean that an individual might have a heart with more reserve power than the muscular tone of his stomach or intestine, but where we really grow old is in our feelings, in our emotions.

It is acknowledged that young folks with their enthusiasm and strength, and old folks who have faced and defeated the difficulties of life, are better balanced mentally than folks from 30 to 60, and balance is a wonderful asset to us. As we grow older we do not get so many new thrills but live to a great extent upon the thoughts, emotions and thrills of the past. We lock these up in our heart or mind and no one but ourselves really knows about them. We don't talk about them, perhaps don't realize that we think about them as we do.

Therefore the man who has been a great student of literature,

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science, or anything esle for that matter, becomes more deeply immersed in his thoughts, and life remains very interesting to him. But the individual who has had little or no development along intellectual lines becomes less interested in life because he is without this inner food on which to live.

What happens? Dr. Hirsch tells us that all that remains is his physical instincts, like love of food and sleep, and a feeling of emptiness.

The secret of long life lies less in any particular method of living than in keeping strictly to one's regular habits of life. That "retiring" from work or business is the biggest mistake older people make.

The point, of course, is that we should keep up as far as possible our mental, physical and spiritual pursuits so that as we grow older we may continue to get all that this life can give us and give to this life all that we should give."

Now, Comrade, I could prolong this letter to five times its present length in a recital of my experiences as a money-maker, but what's the use.

I was amused at Comrade J.C.Coulter, who used to conduct the rather extensive Government printing shop at the Soldiers' Home here, when he pointed to his saving of $8,000 as the result of more than half a century of hard toil and a strict adherance to the saving habit you attach so much importance to. I have made more than $8,000 in eight months, more than once. It's all in knowing how to do it, and having enough nerve to venture.

I fully expect to enter the ranks of the millionaire class before I quit, and if you or any one else will put $500 in my hands during the next 60 days, I'll initiate a money-making project that inside of four years will exceed that of Henry Ford at the present time; and I'll contract to divide said income on a 50-50 basis with my partner, male or female.

You don't reply to my last letter, to which this is a mere postscript; why? I hope you are not ill.

Comrade, the next time you write me, or anyone else, go to some intelligent little Steno Girl and pay her 25¢ and have your stuff typed. I really cannot spare the time to decipher your copy, nor can I afford to pay my little Steno for the time it takes her, expert as she is, to unravel your tangled lines.

Fraternally,

R. M. Springer

RMS/W

R.M.Springer.

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