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March 9,1922

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
120 East 19th Street,
New York City.

Dear Miss Tarbell:

You will pardon me, I am sure, for not answering before your letter of February 7th. My reason is that I wanted to talk the matter over with Mr. Brainard and he has been a rather hard man to get hold of for any length of time.

I am glad that my enthusiasm in regard to the "In the Footsteps of Lincoln" series pleased you. I want to assure you that this enthusiasm is genuine and that I felt the series would be one of the greatest features that has ever been offered to the newspapers.

I quite appreciate the difficulty of not being able to give yourself exclusively to it but I hope that when you return to New York you will have gone over the matter in your mind thoroughly and have some idea of when you would be ready to go ahead with the project.

You ask me how much of the work it would be necessary for us to have in hand in order to come to a decision. What we should have is a complete outline of this series. As I understand it, you intend to start in at some place where Lincoln's grandfather was born and lived and to follow Lincoln's career from that point thru, until the tragedy at Ford's Theatre in Washington in 1865, step-by-step. I don't suppose there is a managing editor in the United States who can visualize (except in a very hazy way) what that means. You know, of course, just where you will have to go, what you expect to get at each place, what the high lights will be, and what the incidental material will be. You, undoubtedly, will discover material you have never dreamed of, but, in the main, you have a pretty concise idea of the whole series.

From what conversation we have had together on this subject, it seems to me that this is a series that could run for fifty-two weeks illustrated, i.e. we would have fifty-two newspaper page stories (each about 4500 words) with photographic illustrations wherever possible. If you could map out for us an outline of the series to cover

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the fifty-two instalments, giving us, say, 25 to 50 words of descriptive matter as to what each instalment would be, I think that would be all that would be necessary for us to begin our selling campaign. We do not have to prove to an editor by concrete finished manuscript the quality of your literary production. That was established long ago. What we want to show him is a complete outline of the scheme - with that in hand we can make sales.

You also ask how long a time we should have in order to place the series to the best advantage. As soon as we have the outline mentioned above, Mr. Brainard and I will probably make trips to from six to ten of the biggest cities, such as Boston, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Detroit, St.Louis, Philadelphia, Washington, etc., and before making any general announcement we will talk over the plan with the leading papers in these cities and get them lined up. This will take, probably, a month. Then, having these papers lined up, we will begin an intensive circularizing and advertising campaign, which will probably take two months longer; however, the sales from our preliminary campaign with these initial cities would indicate very clearly how the series was likely to appeal over the country at large.

I cannot conceive of our not being able to sell this series to Chicago and Boston - each for a minimum of $100 per week. There is $10,000 in two cities. Detroit, St.Louis, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Cincinnati and Washington ought to come in for a minimum of $50. per week each, which is, at least $15,000 more; then we would sell the other cities of the country at a price ranging from $3.00 a week to $35 or $40 a week, and we ought to line up forty or fifty more cities at least , so you will see, Miss Tarbell, there is going to be some very big money in this thing for both of us on the basis of our splitting with you on a 50-50 arrangement.

You say what you can eventually make out of it would have some influence in determining when you went at it. Of course, I am not a prophet, but I cannot conceive of your making less than $25,000 out of the syndication of this material, and there would also be a lot of money in the book rights. It is more than probable that your share in the syndication would be more than $25,000, but I am trying to be conservative in this estimate. What I want to do is to make a great deal more money for youthan I predict. This is not unselfish because, of course, every dollar we make for you would be a dollar for ourselves as well.

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I am sending this letter to your New York address, understanding it will be forwarded to you wherever you may be.

I hope when you can do so you will 'phone me as soon as possible and arrange to have lunch with Miss O'Dell and myself and talk the matter over further.

With kindest personal regards,

Yours faithfully,

THE McCLURE NEWSPAPER SYNDICATE

P. Clearwater

Vice President

PCE:B

Pleased that you were in most & letter forwarded!!!

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