

STENOGRAPHIC OFFICE

PHONE GRAND 3335 HOTEL GILPATRICK

MILWAUKEE, WIS.

February 13, 1925.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
120 East Nineteenth St.,
New York, N.Y.

Dear Miss Tarbell:

You will not remember anything about me, altho I have had the pleasure of meeting you and conversing with you in the most casual manner in Washington City. Of course we all of us, millions of us, know you by your writing and I am presuming now to address you at the suggestion of our mutual friend, Miss Zona Gale, as per copy of her letter to me herein enclosed.

I am sending by this mail, copy of my address on Lincoln for your personal inspection. I also enclose copy of my letter of this date to Mr. Hanson Towne, agreeably to the suggestion of Miss Gale. I am too far along in years I fear to attract the attention of you excellent literary people, as I have never made a speciality of "fine writing." My composition has been principally for my own daily and weekly newspapers.

Please take note of what I say to Mr. Towne about the book I am writing in a most leisurely manner and if you think it would interest you, I would be very glad to have a copy of my first Chapter sent you as a sample.

Hoping that you are still in the mood to write for the enlightenment and exhilaration of the millions of your steadfast admirers, I am

Very sincerely yours,

R. M. Springer
R. M. Springer.

RMS/AAW

Soldier's Home,
National Home, Wis.

*Wrote you were away
for a few weeks &
would hold in till you returned
E.T. manuscript*

Digitized Image, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

by

R. M. Springer.

I hope that no one in this splendid assemblage will expect me to pronounce a fitting eulogium upon Abraham Lincoln. No orator of this or of the past generation has been found to be equal to such a task. The name Lincoln stands transcendent among men. His inspired edict sounded the death knell to human slavery. He preserved for all time the unity of the greatest nation ever conceived by the Wisdom of Men.

What you all expect of me on this occasion is to give you my personal impressions of the man as formed by a close-up view of him in the flesh. Comrade Coulter somehow learned, not from me, that I had the rare satisfaction of having heard Mr. Lincoln in his first memorable debate with Senator Stephen A. Douglas; a debate pronounced by a recent magazine writer, as "one of the greatest intellectual wrestling matches in history." That is how it comes that I find myself listed among such a distinguished array of eloquent speakers.

Those of us who have become octogenarians were privileged to witness, and in some humble spheres, to participate in the memorable scenes enacted during the greatest crisis that our country has ever passed through. Personally, I was under fire over 300 times during the Civil War, was wounded unto death on the battle field; liberated the first slave that gained his freedom on account of the Civil War; have met face to face nearly every one of the great men and the still greater Women of three generations; but no event, the appearance of no person ever impressed me as did the person and the speech of Lincoln. It is true that Wendell Phillips, the Demosthenes of American orators, had perfected himself as no other American had in the graces, the logic and the technique of oratory, and that Roscoe Conkling excelled in precise and effective diction, and Henry War Beecher and Robert C. Ingersoll possessed unsurpassed power to sway any audience for the moment; but none of these were in Lincoln's class. Lincoln was superior in logic, superior in reasoning and fundamentally sound as to the essence of things human.

Mr. Lincoln was nominated by a State Convention of the Republicans of Illinois, as their "first and only choice" for a seat in the United States Senate to succeed Judge Stephen A. Douglas. As the campaign progressed, Mr. Lincoln challenged Judge Douglas to meet him in joint debate in every county in the state, at that time an even one hundred. Judge Douglas knew better than any other living person the superior capabilities of Mr. Lincoln as a speaker and he hesitated to accept the challenge, but after some delay he replied to Mr. Lincoln that he would meet him once in each Congressional District in the state, there

being but seven districts then, and proceeded to lay down the order of each debate. Mr. Lincoln promptly accepted the terms offered him.

The first of these discussions was to take place at Ottawa, a brisk town 32 miles down the Illinois River, from my father's big farm, in LaSalle County. I at once began to urge my father to let me attend this meeting. He at first refused, but my mother interceded in my behalf and the night before the meeting, my father told me at the supper table that if I would load my wagon with fifty bushels of oats and have my team at the front gate at 4 A.M. the next morning, he would go to Ottawa with me. The team was ready and we started promptly after breakfast. I drove the premium team of the County and landed at the "tavern" a few minutes after twelve, noon. My father sold the oats to the landlord for twelve cents a bushel. While at the stable I heard the passenger train on the Rock Island approaching and knowing that Mr. Lincoln was expected on that train, I rushed toward the depot, three blocks distant. Just as the train stopped, I found myself opposite the front entrance of the front passenger coach. Almost the first passenger to step down to the platform was the towering figure of the man I longed to see. He dropped a heavy oil cloth bag to the platform and stood looking toward the throng of people in front of the depot. In a minute a well-dressed gentleman with a rosette pinned to his coat approached and said to Mr. Lincoln, "I am looking for Mr. Lincoln." Mr. Lincoln replied, "that is my name, and I suppose I am the man you are looking for." Thereupon this member of the "Reception Committee" took up the oil cloth bag and escorted Mr. Lincoln to the assemblage about the depot, where he introduced the other members of the Committee to Mr. Lincoln. I, of course, tagged along close to the heels of my idol and heard all that was said. Mr. Lincoln was given a seat in an open carriage, drawn by three span of fine grey horses and, accompanied by the reception committee, was driven to the residence of the Mayor, where he lunched and prepared for the debate. I forgot all about the dinner at the hotel to which my father cautioned me to partake as I ran from him to meet the train. My chief concern was to get a seat in front of the platform so that I could see and hear the speakers. I therefore hastened to the small park where the speaker's stand was, but found that every inch of the seating space was occupied; so I took a standing position in front of the speaker's platform and remained there over four mortal hours. At last the distinguished speakers arrived and were greeted in turn with unstinted applause. Shall I tell you how these very prominent men were dressed, and how they appeared to me, a rustic lad not yet far long in his teens? When Mr. Lincoln stepped from the train he wore a linen duster. This garment reached nearly to his feet, covering all other portions of his clothes except the coarse leather boots, which were freshly greased, as was the fashion among common people at that day. He wore the tall stove pipe hat that you have so often seen pictured. I imagine the hat cost about two dollars. On the speaker's stand the duster was laid aside, exposing a very ordinary looking suit of dark hue. The trousers were short at the bottom and bagged badly at the knees. Judge Douglas wore a broadcloth suit, the first I had ever seen. He "sport" a ruffled white bosom shirt, also the first garment of that sort I had ever seen. His small feet were encased in patent leather shoes, the first thing of that sort I had ever seen. Judge Douglas had married a rich North Carolina lady, owner of a fine plantation, well stocked

with slaves. This Southern beauty was proud of her distinguished husband and spared no pains to keep him dressed properly.

Mr. Lincoln was 6 ft. 4 inches tall, Judge Douglas just a trifle under my present height, 5 ft. 3 inches. Mr. Lincoln was slim of build. Judge Douglas carried an imposing front extension and his legs were short in proportion to his body, and thick, making a strange contrast to his slim-legged and tall opponent.

Judge Douglas opened the discussion in a roaring campaign speech of one hour, at the close of which he propounded seven carefully drawn questions, to each of which he demanded a categorical answer.

Mr. Lincoln replied for an hour and twenty-five minutes, but made no reference to the seven questions. He was too wary a debator to use up his valuable time replying to cunningly framed questions in an off-hand fashion. In Judge Douglas' closing speech he taunted Mr. Lincoln in caustic language for this omission. Told his audience that Mr. Lincoln had ignored the questions because he dared not to answer them. This bold assault on his antagonist greatly pleased Judge Douglas' admirers and it really dampened the ardor of Mr. Lincoln's supporters. But when Mr. Lincoln rose, rather out of order, to be sure, and stated that he intended to propound an equal number of questions for Judge Douglas to answer at their next meeting, and that he would frankly reply to the seven questions offered by his opponent if Judge Douglas would agree to reply to his, the Judge remained silent. He evidently discovered that he had been caught in his own trap. And the audience also saw the point, and Mr. Lincoln's friends were so delighted that they made a rush for the stand and carried their champion off in spite of his efforts to release himself. They carried him back to the house of Mayor Glover and deposited him on the wide veranda. From this standpoint, thousands of the Republican hosts rushed forward to take Mr. Lincoln's outstretched hand. I was among the number, and I thought that the giant, mental and physical giant, gave me an extra hard squeeze as I passed. I was the only boy that ventured to go forward in that excited throng, and I have always thought that the great man noticed it, and wished me to understand that he appreciated my call, although not a voter.

You modern politicians can hardly realize how political campaigns were carried on those early days. For instance, this meeting at Ottawa, was attended by 15,000 people at a time when the population of the whole state was not one-half the population of the city of Chicago as it stands today. Ottawa was but a scattering village and most of its inhabitants were of the Irish race who had come over but recently to take employment on the great Internal Canal, called the Illinois and Michigan Canal. I don't mean the present Great Drainage Canal, which for the most part was an enlargement of the original canal and was scooped out by modern machinery. I lived near the canal at that time in the suburbs of Chicago. Well, the people were so aroused by these proposed discussions that they came from long distances, like myself, and for the most part in processions, led by Marshall on horse back. They carried banners and there were two or three brass bands and fifes and drums. Now these people began to come in half an hour before the

the speaking was to begin and kept pouring in in increasing numbers until the meeting was underway.

Judge Douglas had spoken the day before at some interior town and came in soon after the arrival of Mr. Lincoln at the head of a long procession of his followers. He was taken to the leading hotel of the city, nearly opposite the Mayor's residence, where Mr. Lincoln was entertained.

What impressed everybody was the way the young Women of the country joined in these demonstrations. They were all good horsemen and would come as a cavalcade, mounted on spirited horses and across each girl's breast was pinned in large letters the name of one of the states. As there was being a great contest over the admission of Kansas into the Union at that time, one of these girls, would always dress in black and wore a black veil over her face. Across her breast the words; "Bleeding Kansas" would be written, because there was much blood shed in the contest in that territory before the state was admitted. Here is where John Brown, "Whose Soul Is Still Marching On" first came into prominence. His home was at Osawatimie, Kansas, and was the center of much strife. The poor man became so wrought up over the slavery issue, that he actually organized a movement to invade the Southern States for the purpose of abolishing slavery, and of course came to an untimely end on the gallows at Harper's Ferry, Virginia.

After this great campaign closed, Mr. Lincoln received hundreds of invitations to speak from every portion of the Union north of the "Mason and Dixon Line." I was anxious to have reports of these speeches and wrote to Mr. Lincoln to learn how to get them. At the same time I wrote to Judge Douglas for copies of his speeches, and to Horace Greeley for some documents he had put out. I received no response from either Mr. Greeley or Judge Douglas. I told each of them that I was a farmer boy but wished to study up on events as they occurred. Mr. Lincoln replied from Cincinnati, on his way east. He told me how I could get copies of his speeches, and expressed his thanks to me for the interest I manifested in public affairs. He reminded me that the boys of that day would have to administer all public affairs during the next generation. This letter, together with a letter signed by General U.S. Grant, and letters from other men of prominence, and Women too, were abstracted from my desk at my own hotel at Forest City, S. Dakota, during my absence, by some unknown person. I have always supposed that the person who took the letters, noting the importance of the writers, held them back for a reward. So far as money is concerned, I could get a good price for the Lincoln letter at this date as it was so characteristic of the man to give attention to a mere boy.

I ran away from the best home in Illinois at the first call of President Lincoln for troops and enlisted in Co. K. 20th Illinois Infantry. My regiment was soon sent to Missouri, and while on picket duty one night, as I walked my beat, along a blind country road, I heard a rustling in the bushes. I listened, but could see nothing in the darkness. I heard this movement repeatedly as I passed and it seemed to be getting closer to my beat. At first I decided it must be a pig rustling for acorns. Then I reasoned that no animal would remain

substantially in the same spot as long a time and I brought my gun to a charge and advanced into the timber. I had not proceeded many steps till I discerned a human form crouching on its hands and knees. I at once commanded, in true military fashion: "Who is there? Get up and come forward." At that a boy about my own age, rose and came up to me, trembling from head to foot. It was now just breaking daylight and I saw that the frightened being was a mulatto boy. I asked him what he was doing there. As soon as he could get his voice he replied. "My master gave me a terrible beating last night and as soon as he went to bed, I ran away and came here to see if the "Linkum" soldiers would not take care of me!" There I was, confronted on the one side with strict military orders to turn back any runaway slave or slaves, and my conscience on the other that forbade me to consign a human being to a life of servitude. This boy told me that he was "Col." Morgan's "boy," and that the "Colonel" was pursuing him on horse back, as he could hear the hounds. I could hear them very plainly myself and realized that in a few minutes they would be right on to their frightened prey. I required just three seconds for me to decide to take the chance of being Court Martialed and shot, or be dealt with in some such summary manner. I took 70 cents in silver coin out of my pocket, all the money I had, handed it to the frightened boy, gave him two "hard tacks" that I had left over, and my pocket knife. I said to him "run down that street, pointing to a cross street, to the river bank and on the left side of the street you will find a small row boat. Cut the rope and get out into the water as quickly as possible and go across, and in the village, find the Methodist Minister and I think he will care for you." I did not know whether there was a Methodist Minister in the village or not, but I supposed there must be one, and as my people were Methodists, I learned that nearly all of the ministers of that denomination were anti-slavery in sentiment. The fugitive boy lost no time and was soon out of sight. In less than five minutes the hounds came bellowing and bounding through the bushes, frothing at their mouths. They circled round the spot in the bushes where I first discovered the boy, then stopped a moment where I had equipped him for his uncertain journey and off they went down the street following the tracks of their quarry. It was now light enough for me to see out on the broad surface of the Mississippi, and I could discern the small boat as it was being propelled across the river. The hounds stopped at the water edge and bayed loud enough to awaken the dead. Five minutes later the pursuing Master came crashing through the brush on a fine blooded stallion, covered on portions of its body with froth, induced by the 12 mile ride. I was just in front of him as he emerged from the brush and I leveled my gun on him and commanded, "Halt!" The excited rider reigned his steed up instantly and sang out to me, "one of my niggers ran away last night and I want to capture him before the dogs kill him! I hear them down at the river now." I said, "You remain right where you are, Mr., no one can pass through this picket line." This high-strung gentleman fretted and his excited horse champed his bits and also ~~fretted, but that was all~~. In a few minutes the impatient man asked me "how long must I stay here?" I replied; "till the Sargeant comes to relieve me." It was half an hour when the Sargeant came with the relief. I said to the Sargeant; "this man attempted to ride through the line and I halted him." The Sargeant replied, "You did just right," and told the prisoner to follow him to

I went to my quarters, had breakfast and was just turning in for a good refreshing sleep when a headquarter orderly rode up and called for Private R. M. Springer. He said, "You are wanted at Headquarters." I accompanied him, of course, imagining that I was to be tried post haste. The Colonel of my own regiment was in command of the Post. Mr. slave hunter was present and the Colonel asked me if I saw a "nigger" cross my beat during the night. Now, I did not recognize that term "Nigger," as being applied to a human being, and I replied, "No, Colonel, I did not." I was the last of over 20 pickets that had been on duty around the town and the camp that night, and as I was the last of them quizzed, the Colonel turned to the prisoner and said, "That is all I can do for you," and went into his tent. This did not satisfy the Slave owner and he began to storm about losing his property. "Col." Marsh was himself a Democrat and rather sympathized with the Southern people, as far as their property rights were concerned, but he was a Chicagoian and a strict military man and wouldn't have any "back talk" from anybody. To this "Col." Morgan the commander said: "You get out of the camp as soon as you can or I will put you under arrest" whereupon "Col." Morgan went down to the river bank, called off his dogs and went home. It was not long after this incident till our regiment and two others were ordered out to intercept Jeff Thompson, the Confederate Raider. On the way into the country we passed this "Col." Morgan's home, a magnificent plantation, but the "Col" had received information we were coming his way and hastily loaded up several teams with household furniture, provisions, etc. and drove way out into the timber. Finding the property abandoned, our troops took possession of the fine home, and some of the boys were musicians of course, and one of them sat at the piano, a magnificent instrument just recently imported from Paris, and played Yankee Doodle and all the things they could think of, while all the rest of us joined in the dances. One of the boys thought we were not doing the "Col." quite justice, so he jumped on top of the piano and began to dance a jig. Of course he fell thru and the piano wasn't worth much after we left it. On such occasions, we were always looking out for something extra for rations, so Jimmy Coyle and myself went into the garden hunting for vegetables, but we accidentally noticed a spot where the soil had been disturbed and taking a pitch fork, we dug down a couple of feet into the earth and found a big box filled with fine smoked ham! Those extra rations tickled our pallets for several days.

My chum and I followed the wagon tracks, playing scouts as it were, until they turned out into the timber and by close scrutiny we could see the wagon tracks and the horses tracks, so that we could follow them and we finally came upon the "Col." and the family where they stopped and had breakfast. I should remark here that my chum and I each had secured a fine riding horse on the plantation, but there were no bridles or saddles. As a substitute, we made bridles of hickory bark and when we came upon the "Col." and his family and his slaves, we rushed forward and had them under our aim before they realized that we were present as we were away without orders, we did not feel like taking the crowd prisoners and giving ourselves away, so asked for a souvenir and the "Col." told me to take anything we wanted. I took a fine silver cup and Comrade Coyle some other trinket and left them. It is in order to say in continuation that within two

or three weeks, the Chicago and St. Louis papers came down with big headlines announcing that a slave had escaped thru the Union lines at Cape Girardo, Mo. and somehow got on the "underground railroad" and landed in Canada. This greatly pleased me for I knew in all reason that it was the same boy I had started on the journey for freedom; but I did not dare to mention the fact of the case until after the war closed, fearing I would be punished for disobedience of orders. It seems strange, this late date, how the American people, enlightened and intelligent as they were, could have harbored such an institution as long as they did; but so it was.

Abraham Lincoln, years before he became President learned that slavery as practiced in the U.S. at that time, was but one phase of the age-old struggle between Capital and Labor and after he had abolished slavery, he wrote a friend, Col. William P. Elkin of Illinois as follows:

X "I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country. As a result of war, corporations have been enthroned, and an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until all the wealth is aggregated in a few hands and the republic is destroyed. I feel, at this moment, more anxiety for the safety of my country than ever before, even in the midst of war. God grant that my suspicions may prove groundless."

How startlingly true this farseeing man's prediction! At this moment, as every observing person realizes, corporations are "enthroned" and an "era of corruption in high places" is threatening the foundations of government, and of the social structures as well.

Had Abraham Lincoln been our President at the time of the World War this nation never would have entered that terrible conflict. He knew that we, as a nation, were invincible, and that no other nation, or combination of nations, would ever even think of conquering us.

Had I the time, I would be glad to tell you of another event in my career connected with this same great man, Lincoln. I had become so wrought up over the election of Mr. Lincoln to the Presidency that I went about telling everybody in the neighborhood that Mr. Lincoln would be nominated for President at the forthcoming National Republican Convention at Chicago. Nearly everybody gave me the laugh because it was almost universally understood that Wm. H. Seward, of New York would be the nominee. Well, my father got so interested in the political situation that he and our nearest neighbor, Mr. Budd, a former New Yorker, decided to go to the convention, and it fell to me to drive them over to the railroad station nearest to our home. I had no thought of going to the Convention myself at that time, as I knew I was needed on the farm. But while waiting at the station for the afternoon train, I began to feel as tho I would like to see the convention myself, and importuned my father to let me go with them. Of course, he declined and started me back home with the team; but the train from the West came while I was still there and it was decorated

with banners and streamers and mottos, and the like. There was a brass band aboard, a rare thing those days; the band came out on the platform and played some patriotic airs, and a number of the delegates stepped out with their badges; a few of whom had Lincoln on them. These delegates were from Iowa and some of the Western territories, there being no state west of the Mississippi at the time except Iowa. This patriotic demonstration was entirely too much for my overwrought enthusiasm and I resolved then and there that I would go to Chicago the next day and remain there until Mr. Lincoln was nominated; but I had no money, on account of my father being pretty close with us children as to our expense money and I studied on the way home how I could raise the funds to buy a Railroad ticket. Now my father would allow me to go behind a threshing machine after the harvest was threshed out and gather up the waste wheat and sell it for spending money. I had thus secured nearly two bushels of wheat, but as wheat was only selling at 35¢ a bushel at that time, I saw I would be short so I resolved deliberately to take enough out of the big wheat bin to make up for what I needed to buy a ticket. I therefore filled a couple more two bushel bags from my father's bin of wheat and the next morning after breakfast instead of going to the field with my team, I put the wheat in the wagon I was accustomed to use and got into the seat and was just ready to start for the same station I had left the day before. My mother noticing the team at the barn door, while all the other teams had gone into the field, concluded there was something wrong with me and came down where I was, and said: "Richard, why are you not in the field?" I knew my mother was an ardent admirer of Lincoln and I quickly replied: "I am taking some wheat over to Plano to sell for money to buy a ticket for Chicago. The blessed Mother never said another word, but returned to the house. I went over and sold the wheat, put the team in the livery stable and took the same train 24 hours later that my father had taken to Chicago. Now mind you, Chicago was not much of a city at that time and I only knew of one hotel in the city, the Myrick House, situated on Cottage Grove Avenue and 34th Street as the city now stands. There were no houses beyond 12th Street at that time and just a wagon road thru the deep sand leading out to Indiana. I asked a policeman how I would get out to the Myrick Hotel and he pointed me to State Street and said to "go out to 12th Street and there you will find a country road leading past the Myrick House. It will be about the first building you come to of any consequence." Of course it was pitch dark by this time and I started to find the hotel. I think it was about 12 o'clock at night when I arrived there and the clerk was asleep in a big arm chair. I awakened him and told him I wanted to go to bed with James Springer. He looked me over and said gruffly: "Mr. Springer don't want to be bothered this time of night." I thought that ended the matter and sat down in a chair expecting to spend the remainder of the night in that position; but the clerk thought better of himself afterwards and came to me and said, "If you will slip into the bed without disturbing your father, I will show you up." I knew my father was a good sleeper and I told him I would do so. He thereupon lit a piece of a tallow candle and took me up one flight of stairs and showed me the open door to my father's bed. I quietly stripped off my clothes and crawled in beside my father, who happened to be lying well back on the other side of the bed. I was up before my father awakened, dressed myself and went down to the office. There I met our neighbor, Mr. Budd, and when I told him what I had done, that I had

come to see Mr. Lincoln nominated, he laughed heartily and said, "you will be disappointed. Mr. Seward will be nominated on the first ballot." I said to Mr. Budd that I expect my father will give me a good thrashing as soon as he sees me and I want you to intercede in my behalf. He promised he would do so. It was not many minutes before my father came down and while washing his hands in a little tin basin, he discovered me with a newspaper in front of my face. He came up to me and said: "Richard, what are you doing in here?" And being all concerned in the affairs of the farm, the next question was: "Where is your team?" I replied that I left it in the livery stable at Plano. "After Mr. Lincoln is nominated I will go home." At that critical moment, neighbor Budd, who had been listening, came forward and took "Uncle Jim," as my father was always called, by the arm and led him away to another corner of the room. They talked excitedly for some ten minutes, when Mr. Budd got my father mollified to the extent that he came back to me and said: "Have you enough money to go home with, to pay for your team?" I answered that I had but 25¢ left. Then he said: "If you are bound to go to the convention, here is money to buy your return ticket, and tell the livery man that I will pay the bill when I come out. As soon as breakfast was over at the hotel, I retraced on foot the three or four miles that I had made during the previous night and never stopped until I reached the famous "Wigwag," a large temporary structure erected for the purpose of the convention, at the corner of Lake and Franklin Street. At the early hour of my arrival, there were two or three hundred people waiting at the door for admission; but they began to come rapidly from all directions and long before the Convention hour had arrived, there was a mass of humanity extending clear across the street and into the cross streets. I took a position right in front of the big door and the crowd behind became so dense and were pushing so hard, that I was obliged to kneel in order not to be crushed to death. Well, the moment came for opening the door and the rush was so tremendous that the front row of those standing at the door were actually thrown to their feet, as there was a slight incline to the floor downward toward the stage. I was as spry as a kitten and ran and jumped down the main aisle, never stopping until I came up against the speaker's platform. The delegates from the various states were all seated and I found myself in front of the New York delegation. One of the delegates, noticing my predicament, asked me to take a seat next to him, remarking that it was the seat assigned to Wm. M. Evarts, who afterwards became so noted as a lawyer and diplomat. This delegate, and I would give anything to know who he was, as all of the New York delegates were then or became very distinguished men afterwards. You will see that I was pretty well fixed, as I was only three seats back from the platform and the New York delegates on both sides of me and in front and back, had lots of fun asking me questions. One of them asked me where I was from. I answered that I was from Illinois, whereat they laughed heartily and one of them said ~~that Illinois~~ was a pretty large state.

Well, the time came finally to nominate the candidate for President and one of my neighbors asked me who would be nominated and I said promptly, "Mr. Lincoln." Then they had another good laugh at me and asked me who I would have for Vice-President, and I told them I thought it would be Cameron of Pennsylvania. I had the satisfaction of seeing the gentleman whose seat I occupied get up and nominate for

President Wm. Henry Seward; and of course the convention, and especially the New Yorkers, followed this up with a great hurrah. But the Lincoln fellows had packed the convention with shouters, and when Mr. Lincoln was nominated, Bedlam broke loose. The delegate next to me said: "Your candidate has some friends here any how." Well, on the third ballot, Mr. Lincoln was nominated and my near neighbor said: "Well, Bub, you are a prophet." The convention adjourned after the nomination of President and I went to the various hotels to see what was going on. I remember at the old Tremont House, where the New York delegates were quartered, Horace Greely came along thru the hall and the New Yorkers, to tease him, pinned a Seward badge on the back of his coat. Everybody knew that Mr. Greely opposed Seward and supported Judge Bates of Missouri for the Presidency. Mr. Greely had a proxy from the territory of Oregon and of course did not train with the New York delegation. I followed Mr. Greely thru the densely packed halls, until some friend called his attention to the Seward badge. Mr. Greely reached around and took it off his coat and threw the badge on the floor and carefully put the pin under his coat lapel. I took that as a lesson in economy from a very distinguished economist, and ever since I pick up solitary pins as I find them on the floor or on the street.

I will not weary you with further details of this important event, but desire to say in conclusion that thru the kindly, motherly ~~persuasion~~ of my maternal ancestor, my father forgave me for stealing the wheat, the only thing I ever did steal, and apparently forgave me for losing a day's labor in the field. I doubt if there is any other person present that attended that great historical convention, except my friend J. Wesley Ball, who is present. Mr. Ball tells me that he visited the convention; and he is two years younger than I am; holding tight to his father's hand and that when they got inside the "wigwam," there being no seat, his father boosted him up onto the frame work of one of the posts supporting the roof where he could see everything that went on. You must be weary of my talk by this time, but I would advise you to give my Comrade, Ball, a chance to tell of his experience. At that convention, as Comrade Ball will tell you, we saw nearly all of the great men of that day. Events whom I have already mentioned, Joshua Giddings, the white haired Abolitionist from Ohio, Norman B. Judd of Chicago, U.S. Senator Lyman Trumbull, Judge David Davis of the Supreme Court, and scores of other men who participated in the councils of the Nation at that period, and many of whom participated in the Civil War.

I have said that had Mr. Lincoln been President at the time of the World War this nation never would have entered into that terrible conflict. More than 60 years previous to that war Mr. Lincoln delivered an address before the "Young Men's Lyceum," at Springfield, Illinois, in which he discussed at length the future destruction of this Government. He considered the possibilities of internal discord, a disruption of the Union, as attempted by the Slaveocracy later and then took up the possibilities of foreign invasion. This is what he said on that subject:

Shall we expect some transatlantic military giant to step the ocean and crush us at a blow? Never! All the armies

of Europe, Asia, and Africa combined, with all the treasures of the earth (our own excepted) in their military chest, with a Bonaparte for a commander, could not, by force, take a drink from the Ohio, or make a track on the Blue Ridge, in a trial of a thousand years!"

Every sane American knows this to be true, and every half-way sane American knows now that it was only by the expenditure of millions of dollars of foreign capital, that our people were whipped into a frenzy of fear of foreign invasion in 1917-18. Great newspapers and magazines, and thousands of Pulpiteers and leading Politicians were paid fabulous sums to preach this cowardly stuff! And the dastardly scheme worked! And we are paying the cost now, and our children and our children's children will continue to pay it. And note well this prophetic picture of an ever-present danger to our great nation:

"Many great and good men, sufficiently qualified for any task they should undertake, may ever be found whose ambitions would aspire to nothing beyond a seat in Congress, a gubernatorial or a presidential chair; BUT SUCH BELONG NOT TO THE FAMILY OF THE LION OR THE TRIBE OF THE EAGLE. What! Think you these places would satisfy an Alexander, or Caesar, or a Napoleon? Never! Towering genius disdains a beaten path. It seeks regions hitherto unexplored. It sees no distinction in adding story upon story to the monuments of fame erected to the memory of others. It DENIES that it is glory enough to serve under any chief. It SCORNES to tread in the footsteps of any predecessor, however illustrious. It thirsts and burns for distinction; and, if possible, it will have it, whether at the expense of emancipating slaves or enslaving freeman."

Less than three-quarters of a century, the very character of man that Lincoln describes appeared in our history.

NOTE: I should have mentioned the "Wide Awakes" which included only the young men as a marching contingent in all of the public demonstrations. I belonged to one of these organizations, as did nearly every young Republican in the northern states. I think those who organized these marching clubs had in mind the possibilities of the Civil War. We were drilled not only in the manual of arms, using our kerosine lamp staffs as substitutes for muskets, but were also put thru the military evolutions as provided in the Upton Military tactics. It seems to me that those at the head of the campaign felt that there was likely to be a Civil War and they were getting us young fellows qualified for the service to some extent. At any rate, when we actually did go into the Army, it was a very easy matter for us to work into the requirements of the drill master.

I hope you will accept this poor tribute to the "Greatest American" as coming from one of his greatest admirers.

This paper was read before the meeting of the Spanish-American War Veterans, of Robley D. Evans Camp No. 33, National Soldier's Home, Milwaukee. Feb. 13th, 1924.

February 13, 1925.

Mr. Hanson Towne,
The American Play Co.,
33 West Forty-second Street,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

I am presuming to address you at the suggestion of Miss Zona Gale as per copy of her letter to me herewith enclosed.

This hastily prepared address of mine on the great Emancipator has never been offered for publication, tho a number of friends have suggested the same thing as Miss Gale so partially presents to me.

As for the facts recited in the address and as to my personal reliability, I can give you thousands of references. If you can find a market for the matter, I would be very pleased to accept whatever terms you offer, and I might say in this connection that I am writing a book at my leisure which is already attracting considerable attention among people who know me. If you feel the slightest interest in this matter, I'll instruct my stenographer to forward you copy of Chapter I as a sample.

Hoping to hear from you in due season, I am

Yours very truly,

RMH/W

R. H. Springer.

Address care of this office.

C O P Y.

Dear Mr. Springer:

interested me.

Thank you so much for this material which greatly

I want to tell you what a happy and significant memory I have of your appearance both at the Cleveland convention in July and at the Milwaukee luncheon in October. I feel as if your enthusiasm and your loyalty were a splendid example to everybody who was interested in the same cause. I feel as if Ida M. Tarbell ought to see your personal reminiscences of Lincoln. If you have an extra copy of it, will you not send it to her at 120 East Nineteenth Street, New York.

If this has not been printed I suggest also that you send a copy to Mr. Charles Hanson Towne, The American Play Company, 33 West Forty-Second Street, New York. Tell him it is at my suggestion you do so and ask him if he cares to try to place it in a magazine. He is a literary agent who will do the very best he can for this interesting and valuable work.

Faithfully yours,

(signed) Zona Gale.