

January 9, 1929

(Weeden)
Mrs. Mamie L. Weeden
Shields, North Dakota

Dear Mrs. Weeden:

I am very sorry to learn that your father is gone, but I am sure that you find some comfort in the writings that he left behind him, and I quite understand your desire to have these published as a memorial to him, and for the good of posterity. You do not need to bargain for my assistance. I shall be glad to help you if I can.

So far as I know there are only three ways of getting a book published. The first is at your own expense. I do not know much about this, as I have never attempted it myself, but I believe you would have to deal with some local publisher or printer, or perhaps get bids from various publishers for the job. I think you would find it quite expensive, and if you are ignorant of the publishing business, you might find that you had paid more money than you should have paid. There are publishers who do this kind of thing as a business, but as they stand to gain nothing by a good sale, you would have to advertise and sell the book yourself. Nine times out of ten any book worth publishing should not be published at the author's expense.

Another way of publishing, without expense to you, would be to get some museum or historical society or perhaps the University Press of your state to undertake to publish the material. Such organizations usually have funds for this purpose, though never enough to publish all the material they have. You might have to wait a number of years to see this thing in print, and of course there would be no profit to you or to them from the sale of the book. However, if your material is valuable historically I have no doubt the historical society of your state or one of the neighboring states would be glad to get it. Publication in this way gives a book a wide circulation among people interested in history, and will insure a worthy memorial to your father.

The third method of publishing books is as a business venture. The usual contract is to the effect that the publisher bears all the expenses of printing, advertising, and selling the book, and pays the author or owners of the manuscript a royalty of about 10% on every copy sold. This relieves you of the expenses of publication, and offers a chance of profit. Most books bring in only a few hundred dollars, and of course a publisher will not make a contract with you on this basis, unless he feels sure he can get his money back or make a profit.