

[page 1]

TELEPHONE—LINN CREEK 1930

WILLIAM M. LEDBETTER
LAKEWOOD COTTAGE
15 MALIBU BEACH
ZEBRA, MO.

April 26, 1935.

Dear Major Stark:

Your letter of April 23 was received yesterday.

I think you would have enjoyed the trip to Sikeston, but do not give up the idea of holding a regional meeting in Southeast Missouri as soon as it can be arranged. It should take in representatives of every county in the 10th Congressional District. Later a meeting for Central Missouri and one for the Joplin District and another for Northwest Missouri should be arranged. These meetings, with those already held at Springfield and Kirksville, will just about cover the state, and will pave the way for the grand slam, or barbecue, to be held in Louisiana, preferably on your farm south of town, just before T.J.P. gets back from Europe, or Just after he gets back perhaps would be better, so he can hear all about it.

With reference to Mrs. Francis Wilson, as per suggestion contained in Mrs. Bradshaw's letter, it seems to me the shorter and simpler the statement Mrs. Wilson gives the better it will be for later use. If she is able and willing to write you a short personal letter, in her own hand, it will be much more effective than a prepared statement signed by her. However, should it be necessary to have a typewritten statement, I have prepared a form, enclosed herewith, which might offer a suggestion. Perhaps one of the nurses at the hospital would copy it out in long hand before Mrs. Wilson signs it. Both

statement and signature should be in black ink on white paper, as it reproduces better, and it should cover not more than one page. However, I still hope Mrs. Wilson can write her own letter, or better still, that she will be able to take an active part in the campaign next year.

The arrangement for a conference at the Tiger hotel in Columbia next Thursday, May 2, about 4:30 or 5 o'clock is satisfactory to me and I will be there. We will drive over to Columbia Thursday morning and I will mix around with the editors during the day, so do not think it will be necessary for me to stay to the banquet, but will do so if it seems desirable.

Have heard no important news bearing upon the governorship since I saw you, except a rumor that John T. Barker, of Kansas City, was a receptive candidate. John handles most of the criminal cases in which Pendergast is interested, and from the very affable manner he has taken recently on his trips out in the state, I imagine he would not be averse to letting the lightning strike him. Of course his political fortunes would depend entirely upon getting the K.C. support, and I can not imagine a worse blunder the boss could make than trying to put his personal attorney in as successor to Gov. Park, who (rightly or not) is supposed to be merely his "rubber stamp". I do not believe T.J.P is that dumb.

As I have not received the notes on your Horticulture Talk before the Rotary Club in St. Louis, I think it would be just as effective (probably more so) for Mrs. Powell to send the notes direct to the following: Francis Douglas, city editor Globe-Democrat; Ben E. Reese, city editor Post-Dispatch and Frank W. Taylor, managing editor St. Louis Star-Times. I am enclosing a form which might be used for these letters.

[page 2]

With reference to letter of Mr. Hunt of the First National Bank in St.L

I think these fellows can do you a lot of good at the proper time and in the right way. It

seems to me it is a little early to start organizing them now. Many voters resent political advice from bankers, and the very suggestion that you were using them to further your candidacy would be harmful, if your opponents heard of it.

I am enclosing the item from Chillicothe paper, which I forgot to send with last letter.

Sincerely Yours,
W. M. Ledbetter

[page 3]

TELEPHONE—LINN CREEK 1930

WILLIAM M. LEDBETTER
LAKEWOOD COTTAGE
15 MALIBU BEACH
ZEBRA, MO.

April 29, 1935.

Dear Major Stark:

I noticed the Kansas City Star recently had a write-up in its Sunday edition of Lieutenant-Governor Frank G. Harris. We may be overlooking a bet there, so I have doped out the enclosed draft of a letter addressed to Roy Roberts, managing editor of the Star. If you approve the idea, have Morrison or Lynn Bryson write it on their stationery, with such changes as may be desired. Even if it does not bring the desired result, that is, a sketch in the Sunday Star, it will serve to bring your candidacy to the attention of Mr. Roberts and will do no harm. By the way, Roberts will be in Columbia, Thursday, and you will meet him, so better get this letter off before then, the idea being to avoid the appearance of following up a personal contact with a request of this kind.

Ed Orr was over yesterday and told me he had a talk with John Barker in Columbia a few days ago. Your name was mentioned and Barker said he did not believe Aylward and the other minor chieftains of the Pendergast clan were for you. As Barker put it: "Of course we will be for Stark of Mr. Pendergast is for him, but somehow we just cant see Stark at this time, although we have nothing against him." This may mean that Barker has the itch himself and is merely taking the position he does for the purpose of trying to throw cold water on your aspirations. It goes to show, however, that all depends upon the old man. If he says Stark the others will fall in line like good little boys. In any use you may make of the above information, do not mention Orr's name. Ed is strong for you, but can render good service by keeping his ears open.

We had a good rain last night and everything is bright this morning.

Sincerely Yours,
W. M. Ledbetter

P.S. If Roberts should turn down the suggestion for a write-up because of political angle, a good rejoinder might be that Frank Harris is as much a prospective candidate for Governor as you are, and they honored him.

W.M.L.