“Former” typed in upper right corner

February 22, 1974

Dear Dr. Kemp:

I am very, very glad you wrote. Your questions have made me change my former position. Heretofore, I have been unwilling to part with my research files and library until after my death. I now see that the sensible thing to do is to ship my material to you while I am still able to select material and to make sure you receive what you should receive. Let me tell you a bit about my present situation and then ask you some questions which I’ll number and you can answer by number.

I will be 84 next August 15th. I live alone in a 10-room house with three adoring cats. I have a beautiful flower and vegetable garden and do a rushing wild bird business with a flock of crows who come daily for their suet, a tame mockingbird who comes to my front door five or six times a day for raisins, and a multitude of other birds who come to feeders for various seeds, chicken mash, and other delicacies. I am entirely alone in the world – no close living relatives. My close Washington friends have died or moved to retirement or nursing homes so that I have no one to carry out my wishes when I die. My internist and long-time friend is my Executor, but obviously is too busy to do anything about my files, etc. Thus far, I have given away most of my person effects, all my mahogany furniture, including cherished heirloomed pictures. My once beautiful home is a shambles.

After 60 years of business and professional life, I am in straightened circumstances. My husband was an invalid for 16 yrs. before his death in 1960 and I spent half my retirement capital on his high-cost medical care -- $10,000 one year. Then I spent $30,000 of my retirement capital fighting Medicare and related bills. Financially ruined and in debt, I finally stopped publishing my weekly paper, Challenge to Socialism, and wrote my book, Wilbur J. Cohen: The Pursuit of Power, which put me further in debt.

Late in 1965 some good friends of mine among the top officials of the AMA recommended to the Board of Trustees that they award me a research fellowship of $7,500 a year for life, in recognition of my contributions to American Medicine and to enable me to go on writing. I was then 75 years old. They turned me down. I sent out my renewal notices for subscriptions to Challenge for 1966. AMA had been my first subscriber in 1947 and had gradually increased their subscription till it amounted to $500 a month in 1965. They continued to send me that amount in Jan. and Feb. 1966. Then, on one week’s notice, they cancelled their subscription. I was by then obligated to publish for the rest of that year. Without AMA money, I was forced in time to use $5,000 of my retirement capital to make up for what they failed to pay. By the time I had completed that year of Challenge and had published two editions of the Cohen book in 1967, I was left $5,900 in debt to my faithful printer. He cannot collect until my estate is settled. I have cashed in all my life ins. (cremation without services will be covered by social security death benefit) and, aside from small savings in terminal-illness kitty, I have no other assets save my home which should be worth $50,000 were it not in terrible disrepair because I cannot afford to pay for upkeep and badly-needed repairs.

[At top of second page, it says “EK 2/22/74.” No closing.]