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Gernhart Stays In Spotlight

J. N. Gernhart, Burlington's 75-year-old retired farmer who received world-wide publicity when he conducted his own funeral services here on June 3, still remains in the spotlight. Tourists who are passing thru often stop to meet Gernhart, some of them staying for several hours to visit. Jim also reports that his correspondence continues to pour in nearly every day.

Several tourists have made it a point to stop here for the express purpose of meeting Gernhart, or of visiting at the state armory, where the services were held. Many of them take pictures of the individual and his home, and later send him the proofs when they are developed.

Last week a chartered bus, loaded with teachers from the state of Tennessee, routed their vehicle so that it would make a breakfast stop in Burlington. Local residents contacted Gernhart, at the request of the teachers, and he met them at the Rendezvous cafe, where he spent a considerable amount of time talking with the teachers who were headed for a vacation in the Rockies.

Nearly every day Gernhart receives several letters, some from old friends and some from people who are seeking to express their personal opinions about his funeral services. Many of the letters are written by women who are seeking money.

Gernhart's fan mail has come from all over the United States, England, Ireland, France and New Zealand. Many friends of the Gernhart family have written to Jim, recalling old times. He had not heard from some of the friends since the turn of the century.

In addition to widespread publicity received in daily newspapers and national magazines, Ripley's Believe It or Not syndicate has contacted Jim recently, requesting a picture of him and the casket.