

Never Too Old for New Ventures: Ida M. Tarbell's "Second Profession"

WHEN the *American Magazine* changed ownership and editorial policy in 1915, Ida Tarbell found herself out of a job. She was probably the most famous woman journalist in the world—her monumental *History of the Standard Oil Company*, published more than 10 years earlier, had contributed greatly to her celebrity—but there was no place for her kind of reporting on the new *American*. To earn money, Tarbell decided to go on the lecture circuit, something she had resisted for years.

Since 1882, when she joined the staff of *The Chautauquan*, a magazine published in Meadville, Pennsylvania, she had always felt herself to be a writer, not a speaker. Not surprisingly, she had little confidence in her ability to hold an audience. In spite of her doubts, she signed a contract with the Coit-Alber Lyceum Bureau, one of the best-known bureaus in the country. It was a decision that would make a dramatic change in the life of the fifty-seven-year-old spinster from Titusville, Pennsylvania.

For the next sixteen years, much of Tarbell's time and energy went into her new career. She became a "talent" who criss-crossed the country speaking before audiences large and small. Her experiences not only tell us much about what it was like for a woman to be on the demanding lecture circuit of her day, they give us a unique view of an America which depended on public speakers for ideas, news, and culture.

In those days, the lecture circuit demanded incredible stamina as well as ability. Tarbell's initial contract, for instance, required that she make forty-nine speeches in forty-nine days in forty-nine different places. This was a prospect which filled her with "fear and

trembling."¹ It was December, 1915. Her first lecture was scheduled for the following June.

In characteristic fashion, Tarbell resolved that she would face up to the challenge. First she visited Franklin Sargent at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and asked him to test her voice. Sargent's test confirmed her worst fears that she could not be heard and that her voice would probably fail her in the middle of a lecture. He told her that she had to strengthen her diaphragm muscles and assigned a series of exercises. Tarbell followed his advice to the letter, walking about her New York apartment for hours on end shouting Ma Me Mi Mo, and then lying on the floor with books on her stomach, breathing in and out until she could lift several volumes at a time.²

Next she turned her attention to the speech she would be giving. Her subject was industrial conditions in the country, something she knew a great deal about from personal observation and previous writing assignments. She knew she did not want to write and then memorize her speech. Her good friend George Kennan had warned her of the dangers inherent in giving the same speech night after night. He told her how one evening, after he had given his memorized lecture on Siberia hundreds of times, he found himself ending his lecture after he had only just begun it: "I unwittingly used five or six identical words to end different sentences—one near the opening, the other near the closing of my talk."³ Instead of picking up what followed his introduction, he had jumped to his conclusion.

But even without Kennan's sage advice, Tarbell would doubtless have been reluctant to trust her memory on a lecture platform: "I realized that, since I was no orator and never should be, my only hope was to give the appearance of talking naturally, spontaneously. I put together what seemed to me a logical framework and decided to drape it afresh every day. . . ."⁴

¹ Ida M. Tarbell to C. D. Brooks, May 28, 1918, Tarbell Papers, Reis Library, Allegheny College, Meadville, Pa. All references to the Tarbell Papers are to the collection in the Reis Library. Brooks had written to Tarbell to inquire about her current lecture topics, and asked if she remembered meeting him years earlier in Syracuse, N. Y., when she spoke there. In her reply, Tarbell reminisced about her first speaking tour.

² Ida M. Tarbell, *All In The Day's Work* (New York, 1939), 301.

³ *Ibid.*, 302.

⁴ *Ibid.*

As the time for her first lecture neared, Tarbell met her fellow performers and traveling companions on the 1916 summer Chautauqua circuit—a quintette of young people who would sing for forty-five minutes before her lectures, and Sydney Landon, an “evening entertainer.” “Scoffing eastern friends,” she recalled years later, “told me there would be bell ringers, trained dogs, and Tyrolean yodelers.” Instead, she found her fellow performers gay, kind, hard-working, and thoroughly professional.⁵

Certainly they were more self-assured than Tarbell the day she arrived in Niles, Ohio, to face her first audience. En route to the khaki and red tent in which she was to speak, she felt a great sensation of alarm as she passed scores of people hurrying to “the Chautauqua.” Her alarm grew as she walked from her little dressing room at the side of the tent and climbed onto the stage which was erected before high-banked tiers of seats: “I had come to talk about the hopeful and optimistic things that I had seen in the industrial life of the country; but face to face with these men, within sound of the heavy panting of great furnaces, within sight of the unpainted, undrained rows of company houses which I had noticed as I came in on the train, the memory of many a long and bitter labor struggle that I had known of in that valley came to life, and all my pretty tales seemed now terribly flimsy. They were so serious, they listened so intently to get something; and the tragedy was that I had not more to give them. This was my first audience. I never had another that made so deep an impression upon me.”⁶

Some years after her Niles lecture, Tarbell remembered that night with wry amusement. She shared her feelings with Arthur Coit of the Coit-Alber Bureau, who had written to tell her of his impending retirement: “If you ever had a greener lecturer than I was or one more scared by what he had undertaken, I am sorry for him and for you. . . . You did not by word or look intimate that here was somebody who didn’t know the ABC’s of the business. . . . But I knew it . . . and it was sheer bravado that kept me from running away.” She told Coit she regretted that she did not feel strong enough to do another Chautauqua circuit—by then she had made

⁵ *Ibid.*, 304.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 305.

four—since “I never did anything in my life which interested me more, and, on the whole, which had been more consoling to me.”⁷

Indeed, it is astonishing that Tarbell’s strength did not give out on that first Chautauqua tour in the summer of 1916. During the two months she was on the road, she spoke before assemblies in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan. She had not thought she would mind the constant traveling, but soon found herself much concerned with her physical surroundings and creature comforts. Never a prima donna, she was astonished to find herself inquiring constantly about the hotels where they would be staying—“Are there bathrooms? If so, am I to get one?”—the food they would be served, and noises and drafts and a host of other “unmentionable worries.”⁸

Tarbell’s pay was \$2,500 paid in six installments, plus railroad fares. So, in addition to the rigors of traveling and speaking, she had a fair amount of personal business and bookkeeping to attend to. Every evening she had to record her expenses methodically—Corropolis to Irwin, 53¢, Irwin to Ligonier, 73¢. And she had to collect her fee from the local arrangements committee. In view of her inexperience, it is not too surprising that she had a first week deficit of \$31.94.

Then, of course, there was the weather, about which in those days very little could be done. As the tour drew to a close, Tarbell’s little Chautauqua company encountered a heat wave. Travel was unbearable and sleep almost impossible. By then she had learned to request a second-floor front room, and she would drag her bed to the window to take advantage of any breeze that might find its way into the room. If she could not fall asleep, she would lie in bed and listen to the group which always seemed to gather in front of whatever hotel she was staying in—men who would sit for hours discussing whether or not America would or should be drawn into the European war.

That summer of 1916, Tarbell discovered that her audiences were not really interested in industrial conditions in the country. What they wanted to hear and talk about was the war. But she could not

⁷ Tarbell to Arthur Coit, Oct. 24, 1923, Tarbell Papers.

⁸ Tarbell, *All In The Day's Work*, 303.

bring herself to talk about it, at least not then. She could only listen, and be moved, by the patriotism of the people she met in the Midwest. Their quiet trust and apparent willingness to do whatever might be required of them should America go to war—"beside the continuous agitations and hysteria to which the East had treated us" in the past two years—more than made up for the physical discomfort she endured that summer.⁹ At any rate, on July 29, 1916, her ordeal was over. She boarded a train in Tiffin, Ohio, and returned to New York—carefully recording her railroad fare as \$15.16.¹⁰

In her autobiography, written when she was eighty, Tarbell observed that she had supposed her 1916 Chautauqua tour would be a "temporary adventure." In fact, she had agreed to go on a 1916–1917 fall-winter tour at the same time she agreed to make the forty-nine-day Chautauqua circuit. She was to give five lectures per week, at \$100 per lecture. By mid-August, 1916, Tarbell was already preparing for this next tour, one that would take her through the South. She sent off a flurry of letters to her lecture bureau, and to the head of their southern affiliate who would be in charge of her schedule. Would her subject, "Industrial Idealism," be acceptable in the South? Yes, of course. And could she please end her November-December tour in New Orleans, since "I very much need two or three days there this Fall for a little investigation?"¹¹ (Tarbell the lecturer was still very much an investigative journalist.) Again, the answer was yes, for already it was obvious that she was well on her way to becoming a major lecture talent, someone who could indeed draw and hold an audience.

Even before she set out again in the fall of 1916, Arthur Coit was importuning her to write an article for the Affiliated Lyceum Bureau's trade journal, *Lyceum Magazine*. Just a little piece, he begged, expressing her enthusiasm for the country-wide Chautauqua programs: "If you will give us permission to have the article printed as though it were simply a letter you had written to us, it will be read by a great many committeemen, Chautauqua managers, as

⁹ *Ibid.*, 316.

¹⁰ Tarbell's Expense Report for the week ending July 29, 1916, Tarbell Papers.

¹¹ Tarbell to S. R. Bridges, president of the Affiliated Lyceum Bureaus, Atlanta, Aug. 24, 1916, *ibid.*

well as all the people on the Lyceum platform.”¹² And Coit’s partner, Louis Alber, wrote to assure her that any bookings made for her for 1917–1918 would be “contingent upon your attending the proposed Paris Peace Congress Assembly.” Alber, too, had a favor to ask. When she visited the Ford plant in Dearborn that fall, would she please ask her friend Henry Ford to take over one of “our Chautauquas” for the benefit of his employees during the summer of 1917?¹³

Tarbell still harbored real doubts about her lecturing ability, but she was quick to grasp the business implications of the almost constant stream of letters sent to her by Coit and Alber. Of course she would write the piece for *Lyceum Magazine*, try to interest Mr. Ford, have new publicity photos taken, keep on the lookout for new talent. She particularly sympathized with Alber’s failure to come to terms with young Walter Lippmann, who loftily dismissed the idea of doing any “promiscuous lecturing.”¹⁴

Late in January, 1917, after the briefest of respites, Tarbell was off once more, this time talking about “Our Tariff.” Again, this was a subject she knew a great deal about because of work that she had done for *American Magazine*. One of her first assignments on the *American* had been to write a history of the making of United States tariff schedules. There was a growing popular demand for the revision of prohibitive tariffs, and President Wilson, acknowledging her expertise and the importance of her magazine articles on the subject, invited her to become a member of the Tariff Commission he formed in December, 1916. She had refused to serve on the commission for professional reasons—her lecture and writing commitments came first—and also because she despaired of the good

¹² Arthur Coit to Tarbell, Sept. 1, 1916, *ibid.*

¹³ Louis Alber to Tarbell, Oct. 3, 1916, *ibid.* Tarbell had met Henry Ford in May, 1915, when she was preparing a series of articles on the Ford plant for *American Magazine*. They became good friends, and late in 1915 he tried unsuccessfully to interest her in his Peace Ship project.

¹⁴ Louis Alber to Tarbell, Dec. 21, 1916, Tarbell Papers. Alber said Lippman pretended to be very much interested in speaking before groups of businessmen, “but not before the usual mixed Lyceum and Chautauqua audiences.” Alber thought this was because Lippman “doesn’t know any better.” The 1921–1922 Coit-Alber list of “Speakers Available,” however, included “Mr. Walter Lippman, Brilliant Editor of *The New Republic*,” and Ida M. Tarbell, “America’s Leading Woman Journalist and Publicist.”

that the commission, however well-intentioned, could do. But she was not at all reluctant to speak on the subject.

Her tour began in Illinois, and took her to Iowa, Missouri, Idaho, Utah, Oregon, Washington and California. She was in Iowa when word came that relations between the United States and Germany had been broken off, and, like everyone else, she knew that war was imminent. Again, her spirits were buoyed by the people she encountered, although she felt dismay at the prospect of what she knew was ahead for the country. Soon the woman who, in 1916, could not bring herself to even talk about the possibility of war was finding it almost impossible to speak on any other subject.

When war against Germany was declared in April, 1917, President Wilson appointed Tarbell to the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense. She felt it was her duty to accept the appointment and, for the duration of the war, she lived in Washington, working with Dr. Anna Howard Shaw and the other distinguished committee members. But she could and did honor the lecture commitments she had made. Lecturing seemed an appropriate adjunct to the work she was doing in Washington.

An immediate problem for lyceum bureaus was justifying the existence of the Chautauquas during the summer of 1917. Louis Alber felt that they could be "potent agencies for mobilizing the mind of America to the great task that lies before her," and proposed that those assemblies be directed be "largely patriotic rallies." He asked Tarbell to draft a statement that could be released to the press emphasizing this fact.¹⁵ Busy in Washington with her war work, but sharing Alber's feelings, Tarbell responded promptly:

One of the best institutions in this country is the Chautauqua Summer Platform. Certainly in the stress of these times it should be preserved if any institution is to be preserved. It does a variety of things that we have great need should be done now. It brings to people who are harassed by the thought of the future health, entertainment, something different from what they get in their towns. It brings a fresh element into the social life of the town—a very desirable thing particularly in the smaller community. It will give stimulating ideas about the great questions that the country must understand and study. Everything now depends upon the country keeping its mind steady and active and inspiring people to a full co-

¹⁵ Louis Alber to Tarbell, May 9, 1917, Tarbell Papers.

operation in the undertakings of the Government. The Chautauqua Platform will do that in a wonderfully direct way. Every community ought to be willing to sacrifice if necessary to keep the Platform alive.¹⁶

From the time America entered World War I until Tarbell sailed for Paris in January, 1919, to work for the *Red Cross Magazine* and to observe the Peace Congress, she escaped from Washington to lecture whenever she could—speaking chiefly in the South, the Midwest, and the Southeast. A frequent topic was “The Inner Line of Defense,” a speech emphasizing the duties of civilians in war-time. In this speech, she urged those at home to think of themselves as the inner line supporting the outer line—the troops abroad. “The activities and practices of daily life,” she said, “must be put on a war basis. We must force our minds to deal actively with the variety of new problems while remembering the kind of spirit with which we should view the great undertaking to which our country is committed.”¹⁷

Reading the speech some fifty years after it was written and delivered, it is easy to charge Tarbell with mouthing obvious and expected patriotic platitudes. But it is impossible, while recognizing the limitations of the speech, to question her sincerity or the appropriateness of her remarks in an America eager to do everything it could to help the Allied effort.

During 1917–1918 Tarbell would, she told lecture committees who wrote to her, speak on “Industrial Efficiency” or “The Fear of Efficiency,” both speeches dealing with industrial problems. But she felt strongly that all her professional work—and by now she considered lecturing part of her professional work—should be turned to the subject of the war.¹⁸ In addition to these two topics, and “The Inner Line of Defense,” she prepared a fourth speech in 1918—“American Women In the War.”

Once America was officially “at war,” the platforms from which Tarbell spoke were almost always draped with flags. Often there were so many flags covering the stage that she had to watch her step entering and leaving. And she found that most lecture com-

¹⁶ Tarbell to Louis Alber, May 23, 1917, *ibid.*

¹⁷ Tarbell to John H. Vaughan, Feb. 27, 1918, *ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.* In May, Tarbell wrote that all of her speeches dealt “more or less directly with the war,” and that “I find myself not able to talk on anything else.”

mittees presented her with a flag for her lapel, not a corsage as they had so often done in the past.

As she journeyed across the country by trains that always seemed filled to overflowing with young soldiers, there were new hardships to endure. Now there were long waits in remote, often freezing railroad stations, last minute arrangements to make because a snow storm or flood made travel risky or impossible. Sometimes she could find an intrepid young man who was willing to drive her over roads that were considered impassable, sometimes she had to cancel her appearance and reschedule it for another evening. On one occasion, determined to keep a date, she rode in a freight car behind an engine on the first train to penetrate into the isolated, snow-bound town where she was expected.¹⁹

During 1918, much rescheduling had to be done because of outbreaks of "Spanish influenza." "War and the influenza are certainly hard on lecture bureaus and their attractions," Tarbell lamented.²⁰ But in Little Rock, Arkansas, it was the carelessness of the lecture committee chairman that interfered with her plans. She arrived in town to find that her lecture had been canceled and rescheduled without her knowledge. Furious, she told the president of the Dixie Lyceum Bureau that "the complete lack of any sense of moral obligation in regard to a contract which women sometimes show makes me despair of my sex—but that is not for publication, even in Little Rock."²¹

Then, suddenly, the war was over and Tarbell prepared to sail for France. Reluctantly she canceled her February, 1919, tour. But before she left New York, she made plans to lecture on her observations upon her return from Europe in May. She signed a contract to speak in the Northwest during the summer of 1919—the Midwest would be too hot, she thought—and notified Alber that she would also be available in January and February of 1920 if he could guarantee her \$2,000 a month. She could hardly afford to average less, she felt, because she needed time before a tour to "get in shape," and because she knew "it is sure to lay me up for a little time afterward." While she was in Europe, she promised, she

¹⁹ *All In The Day's Work*, 390.

²⁰ Tarbell to Louis Alber, Dec. 16, 1918, Tarbell Papers.

²¹ Tarbell to M. C. Turner, May 14, 1918, *ibid.*

would keep her eyes and ears open for good foreign speakers—perhaps Clemenceau could be persuaded to come to the United States.²²

On the day she sailed, January 7, 1919, she dashed off a note to the bureau head in Portland who would direct her summer tour. She told him she would join his circuit on June 15th, and that she would be talking about what she learned from observing the work of the Peace Congress. As for advance publicity—he might say in a press release that her latest book, *New Ideals in Business*, was being translated into French. “It was out of the work done for this book,” she confided, “that came the lecture which I gave in your territory two years ago.”²³

The four months Tarbell spent in Europe did indeed provide material for the speeches she made in the Northwest during the summer of 1919. What she did not decide until she returned home and discovered how bitter was the debate over the proposed League of Nations, however, was that more than anything else she wanted to speak out in favor of the Covenant. She knew that the League might very well fail, but believed with all her heart that such an attempt had to be made. She also told herself that her business as a journalist and as a lecturer was to explain the intent of the Covenant, what it was supposed to do, and to plead for time for it to work. Ever a crusader as well as a reporter, she determined she would carry this message to the people.

Would audiences in “the land of Borah” listen to her? Her worries on this score were quickly dispelled as she made “probably the most interesting trip of my life.”²⁴ Audiences and the press gave her a most respectful hearing. She was the first person to come into the region who had actually been to the Peace Conference. People wanted to hear her out and make their own judgments.

For two of the ten weeks she was on tour in the Northwest,

²² Tarbell to Alber, Dec. 16, 1918, *ibid.* Alber asked Tarbell to “sound out Clemenceau.” She later reported that it was impossible to make any proposition to him, and that his doctors would not permit him to undertake a lecture tour.

²³ Tarbell to J. B. Hurd, of the Ellison-White Chautauqua System, Portland, Oregon, Jan. 7, 1919, *ibid.* The bureau’s publicity manager had asked her for suggestions regarding the advance notices he intended to distribute on her behalf, and for some “shiny, unmounted photographs.” Patronize a theatrical photographer, he had suggested.

²⁴ *All In The Day's Work*, 352–353.

however, she had to "tone down" her speech. The order to do so came from no less a personage than William Jennings Bryan, with whom she appeared for a fortnight in midsummer. First, she was instructed to cut her time to forty minutes, and to go on half an hour earlier than usual. Then, when Bryan learned that he was coming on stage after Tarbell to condemn proposed League guarantees just after she had endorsed them, he took her aside: "He in no way tried to influence my opinion," she said, "only to shut it off." When she insisted that it was good for audiences to hear both sides, he told her that people came to hear him, and that it was important that they should know his views. Bryan did not think audiences should be "confused." "Of course," observed Tarbell, "Mr. Bryan did not say 'You are of no political importance, and I am of a great deal,' but that was what he meant. It was quite true, and I bowed for the time being to the demands of politics, but only for the moment."²⁵

When her summer circuit ended, Tarbell returned home and pondered her future. She was sixty years old, she had no steady source of income. She would have to keep lecturing and writing to support herself, that much she knew. But she wanted to write and speak on those subjects that interested her deeply: "Industrial Life," "The Remaking of the World," "Contributions of Women to Society"—and Abraham Lincoln, the President for whom she had such great reverence.²⁶ This she explained to her lyceum bureau management, and to the secretary of the Colorado Education Association, who had asked her to speak before that organization: "My work has always followed historical and economic lines, and the speaking I have done has followed my writing, being an attempt to emphasize and spread ideas which have seemed to me sound."²⁷

Surely Tarbell needed the "annual sure if modest money crop" that only lyceum work could guarantee her. But she would speak only on those subjects that interested her, subjects that were an

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 354.

²⁶ Tarbell to Louis Alber, Dec. 19, 1919, Tarbell Papers. See also *All In The Day's Work*, 360. Tarbell's *Life of Lincoln* had appeared in *McClure's Magazine*, and she wrote a number of articles and books on the President.

²⁷ Tarbell to H. B. Smith, Aug. 3, 1920, Tarbell Papers.

outgrowth of her personal concerns and work.²⁸ During the winter of 1922–1923, for instance, her themes were the unemployment situation—she was a member of the President's standing committee on unemployment—the Washington Conference on the Limitation of Armament (which she had observed), and "Possible Contributions of Women to a Higher Civilization," a favorite topic. "I am not an entertainer," she reminded lyceum committees, and would speak in "popular fashion" only on those questions she felt good citizens should be thinking about.

From 1921 until 1932, when at the age of 73 she decided to retire completely from the lecture circuit, Ida Tarbell continued to make an annual speaking tour—usually during February and March.²⁹ After her first season on the road, she had developed what she termed "a stoical acceptance of whatever came." If there was no lower berth available on a train, she would climb into an upper. If no berth at all was available, a bench would do. She had learned that a lyceum tour was, in many respects, far more trying than a Chautauqua tour. On the Chautauqua circuits, she would simply walk to the platform and speak when she was given her cue. On the lecture circuit, however, there were committees to placate—often someone wanted her to change her topic at the last minute—and long introductions to endure. She was a celebrity, and as such was invariably "presented" by one or more of a town's leading citizens who wanted to talk at length about her personal life and career. Over the years she had to listen to herself being introduced as the author of George Kennan's Siberian books, and as the author of Edna Ferber's Emma McChesney stories. She heard a long explanation of why she had never married. She heard herself described as a crusader and a reformer and a muckraker.³⁰

Tarbell also learned that her audiences, though almost never hostile, were frequently critical. Even the smallest towns, after all, had heard Dickens and Emerson and Alcott and Twain, plus a host of other celebrities with whom she could be and was compared.

²⁸ *All In The Day's Work*, 388.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 388. Tarbell spoke during these months because, beginning around Lincoln's birthday, many "dinners and celebrations called for speakers."

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 391.

But this was one aspect of lecturing that never really troubled her. Like many professional speakers, she encouraged and even looked forward to a heated question-and-answer session following her formal remarks.

The thing that did come to bother her more and more as she made her annual tours was the increasing standardization of life she witnessed. Always a keen observer, she deplored the loss of individuality and charm that she had found in American towns when she first began to travel about on the lecture circuit. She also deplored what she considered to be the devastating results of prohibition: what she thought it was doing to the young, the "unexpected dangers it brought to a woman traveling alone at night, both in stations and on trains."³¹ This latter observation was in her opinion one of the most important ones that she made while she was traveling about lecturing, and she wrote an article on the subject that brought her much bitter criticism. She had sold out to the liquor interests, it was said. But this criticism Tarbell accepted as "one of the things that one who says what he thinks must be prepared to meet."³²

Looking back on her "second profession" when she was in her eighth decade, Tarbell accepted with a feeling of satisfaction and relief the fact that she no longer had the strength to run about the country giving lectures. That, she declared, was the job of young people. She could only hope that those who did so would learn as much about people as she believed she had learned: "The humility which that will engender will be all to their good."

Tarbell's humility was something she never lost, even if she did overcome the fear and trembling she felt when she first began to speak in public. The following statement of Allan Nevins serves as a fitting summary of the kind of lecturer Ida Tarbell became:

When I became professor of history at Cornell . . . I decided to persuade her to come up to Ithaca and speak. She did so, staying overnight with Mrs. Nevins and myself. I recall that we gave a small dinner for her, after which she was scheduled to speak at one of the moderate-sized halls on the campus. . . . After dinner we drove her up . . . to the University, and on arriving at the main campus roadway, were astonished to see a

³¹ *Ibid.*, 393.

³² *Ibid.*, 394.

huge throng of students and faculty filling it and moving determinedly toward the main University auditorium. We stopped and inquired. "Oh, the crowd to hear Miss Tarbell was so tremendous they had to transfer the meeting to a bigger hall," we were told. I recall the tremor of nervousness which seized Miss Tarbell as she heard this intelligence. But she spoke on Lincoln for a full hour, without notes, with all her usual poise, holding the audience in rapt attention. I doubt whether Cornell ever had a more successful lecture.³³

Indiana University

LYNDA BELTZ

³³ Allan Nevins to Dr. Philip Benjamin, Oct. 16, 1953, Tarbell Papers.