Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
120 East 19th Street,
New York.

Dear Miss Tarbell:

There is a file of the Knoxville (or Knox County) Republican in the Knox College Library, and when I go to Galesburg this fall I will examine it. If I find anything interesting, I will pass it on to you. Who knows! Perhaps I may unearth some hitherto undiscovered Lincolnia.

Perhaps I had better tell you what I am up to, for I am sure I can count on your sympathy, however dubious you may be about my ability to accomplish it.

Well, I am determined to write a history of Knox College and Galesburg, more in accord with modern ideas, linking it up with the movements and influences that peopled the Mississippi Valley, and taking more account of the effect on this little community of such broad impulses as the great religious revival in New York -- Finney, Weld, Beecher, Tappan, etc. -- of the Anti-Slavery Society, the railroad boom in Illinois, etc. In short, to try and show Galesburg against the stream of history. There were many communities with similar histories; their individual stories vary and are dramatic within themselves; but there is a likeness, a common experience, on which I rely to make the book appeal to a wider circle which has no vested interest in Galesburg. I would wish to do, if you will pardon the conceit, for this part of the old Military Tract, what
James Truslow Adams did for the country as a whole in his Epic; or, to put it differently, tell the story of the settling of the middle West in terms of Galesburg.

At any rate, it is a good mark to shoot at, and it will keep me out of mischief for a couple of years.

This enterprise is more or less confidential at present, until the psychological moment for making a public announcement some time during this commencement, I believe. I have hopes that Charles F. Gettemy will go in with me. We used to talk about some such scheme forty years ago. He has just finished an imposing account of the Ferris family, his ancestors, and has already done considerable research. But he has a job, and most of the work will fall on me, who, glory be, am footloose.

Yours cordially,

E. E. Calkins