1910-02-26

Letter: Frances Ellen Burr to Ida M. Tarbell, February 26, 1910

Burr, Frances Ellen

http://hdl.handle.net/10456/18993

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I02 Windsor Avenue, Hartford, February 26, 1910.

Mrs. Ida M. Tarbell,
341 Fifth Avenue,
New York.

Dear Madame:

Yours of the 23rd at hand. Please excuse delay in replying.

I presume the pamphlet you read about the Smith sisters was entitled, "Abby Smith and Her Cows," as I know of no other about them. I knew them well and have spent a night in their old family homestead more than once. On one occasion Susan Anthony stopped there with me over night.

"What became of the old ladies?" you ask. They died peacefully in their beds in the good order of nature. Abby, the youngest of the five sisters, died in the old Glastonbury home on the 23rd of July, 1878. Julia, the elder of the two remaining sisters, died in Parkville, a suburb of Hartford, on March 6, 1886.

They refused to pay taxes on the ground of non-representation, the same as our ancestors refused a century before them, and four of their seven cows were driven to the sign post and sold to pay the taxes in 1876. The three others were disposed of later. At the age of 87, Julia married Mr. A. A. Parker of New Hampshire, a year or two older than herself. After her marriage, she paid her taxes, or her husband did for her with her money. She quietly submitted. As Elbert Hubbard says: "There is nothing like marriage to tame a woman."

The history of these old ladies has a little of the picturesque in it, and I have thought of writing it up for some magazine, but have delayed it, as I do many things. I would write it up and share the profits with you if you care to get it published.

Please excuse haste as my time is limited.

Yours Cordially,

[Signature]

Francis Ellen Burr