

Outline of Conferences on Biography - its writing
and its uses to be given at Allegheny College, Meadville,
Pennsylvania, April and May, 1939, under the direction of
Ida M. Tarbell.

I What is Biography - Why do Men write Biographies -
Plutarchs Lives - Their Influence - Lives of the
Saints - Political Biography - Family Lives -
Modern Biography - Reasons for Recent Outpouring -
Influence of Great War - Popular Interest in Human
Behavior - The New Psychology and its Effects on
Biographical Writing - Imitation.

II Value of Biography to Students

- 1) Career Value to the Writer - the journalist -
as a tool in scientific commercial pursuits
- 2) Guide to Living - Physical and material handi-
caps - mental development - Human relationships -
Capacity for growth

Materials for Autobiography:

- III Autobiography - Letters - Confessions -
Diaries - Looking for a Man's Autobiography
in his Works - the Autobiographical Novel - the
Modern Hunt for Rabelais.

- IV Classification of Material - Calendars - Maps -
Physical surroundings - opportunities in them
particularly for books and men.

- V Background - Character of Ancestors - Lincoln
Pilgrimage - Dispels legends of squalid ancestry -
Gains and losses of pioneer living - Are they
greater than those of wealth? - Herndon -
Quote J W B's last letter.

- VI Use of Contemporary Sources - Printed or
Manuscript Documents - Newspapers - Recollections -
Eulogy and Criticism - Interviews - Caution to be
observed in using these Sources - Forgeries.

VII Ready for what others have done - Biography
of Lincoln - Campaign - Howell - Holland -
At death - mild interest - Herndon - Nicolay
and Hay - Lord Charnwood - Binn - Sandburg -
Beveridge - A definitive biography not possible.

VIII Secondary Characters - Mary Lincoln - Herndon -
Douglas - Seward - Stanton - Theory that he
fostered plot to assassinate.

Writing:

IX Saturation - not ready until saturated -
Lincoln and saturation - Examples - Racine -
Frees Imagination - Illumination

X Certain essentials - Sound construction -
Must hold together - Stand tests - Sense
what is wrong - Accuracy - An Error may under-
mine the structure - Value of Hypotheses -
Must be tested by Facts - When are we Slaves to
Facts - Not their Masters - Danger of Pedantry.

XI Dramatic values - Every life a drama - No
commonplace in Life - Possibilities so great -
Defeat so tragic - Example of successful dramatic
use of his life - "Abe Lincoln in Illinois" -
Here spiritual facts take precedent over actual.
Binet - Nancy Hanks

XII Estimate of Character and of Self.