October 12, 1934

My dear Miss Tarbell:

Mr. Scheide came to see me this week to find out more definitely about the cost of the Oil Creek History. While he could not speak definitely, he thought there was a possibility of interesting some of the men in the petroleum industry in underwriting the cost of the entire project and he therefore wanted some idea of what would be involved. I promised that I would get in touch with Professor Giddens and then communicate with you.

Professor Giddens feels that the Titusville committee did not realize when they first suggested that the history be written the length of time it would take to prepare a really accurate study. In view of what he found during the past summer he is of the opinion that even as much as five years might be spent in the writing of a comprehensive history. I gather, however, that the Titusville people are interested in pushing the matter forward as rapidly as possible and that they would be content with any volume that could be produced within the next sixteen months. Since time is so important a factor, I am wondering if they ought not to raise a rather substantial amount and set Professor Giddens free from academic responsibilities next year. If it does not seem like asking too much I would suggest that the friends of the oil industry raise between five and ten thousand dollars to make the history possible. If, for example, they could pay Professor Giddens at the rate of $4,000 a year and allow him up to $150 a month for stenographic and research assistence we would be willing to grant him a leave of absence from the college beginning either the second semester of this year or the first semester of next year and he could give his time continuously to the project. The alternative of this would be a series of summers spent on a long drawn-out project that might not be completed until 1940.

It has occurred to me that if the oil industry is not interested in backing the History of Oil Creek, the Guggenheim Foundation might be and Professor Giddens ought to apply to the Foundation for a Fellowship at the earliest opportunity. On the other hand, if the project is worth undertaking, and I am sure we all agree that it is, the oil industry ought to be glad to provide the financial aid needed.

Digital Image, 2009. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

In an earlier letter you indicated that you might not be able to be here for Home-Coming. In case you find you can come we should like to have you here for the tea in connection with the opening of Tarbell House on Sunday, October 28th.

Mrs. Tolley joins me in warmest regards.

Sincerely yours,

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

Digital Image, 2009. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library