

A. A. Culbertson's talk at Wattsburg, Pennsylvania on June 19, 1942 on the occasion of unveiling of the Ida M. Tarbell birth-place marker.

Introduced by Mrs. Kenneth Pulling, President of P. T. A. of Wattsburg.

Mrs. Pulling, Members of Wattsburg P.T.A., friends and admirers of Miss Ida Tarbell -

I notice that I am on the program as representing the trustees of Allegheny College but Dr. William P. Tolley, President of Allegheny College, is here and he can represent Allegheny College, the Board of Trustees and the entire Institution, so I will tell you a few things that Miss Tarbell has told me about her family and some incidents and stories that should be of interest.

I want to tell you first who proposed the Ida Tarbell Marker. Mr. Ned H. Goodell is a retired rural mail carrier of Edinboro. Mr. Goodell has been writing a weekly column for the Edinboro Independent for three or four years. About two years ago Mr. Goodell asked me for data on Miss Ida Tarbell for his column. I gave him some data - telling him Miss Tarbell was native of Erie County and that her parents attended Edinboro Academy in the 1850's. Mr. Goodell a week or two later suggested that a birth-place marker of Miss Tarbell be erected and asked me what I thought of it. I approved the idea 100%. Mr. Goodell thought P.T.A. of Wattsburg should sponsor it. I quite agreed and promised my help to completion. Mr. Goodell sold the idea to P.T.A. of Wattsburg and the result is the Ida Tarbell Marker.

Miss Tarbell's grandfather, Colonel William Tarbell, migrated with his family and others of the Tarbell clan from New York State into Erie County of Northwestern Pennsylvania in the 1830's. Some of the Tarbells settled in and around Erie, Some settled in southern Erie County around Edinboro and Colonel William Tarbell with his family located in the eastern part of Erie County near Wattsburg. Colonel William Tarbell took part in the battle of Lundy's Lane - the officer in command was killed and Tarbell took charge. That was where Colonel William Tarbell won his spurs.

There were McCulloughs who migrated a little earlier from New York State into Northwestern Pennsylvania and the McCulloughs also settled in the eastern part of Erie County.

Erie County supported several academies. Erie Academy, Waterford, Girard, Edinboro, North East, Springfield. Sarah Anne McCullough and Franklin Sumner Tarbell (the son of Colonel William Tarbell) both from eastern Erie County, went to Edinboro Academy in the early 1850's. They met for the first time in Edinboro and when Franklin Sumner Tarbell looked into the eyes of Sarah Anne McCullough a romance started that ended in their marriage shortly after leaving Edinboro Academy. They began their married life in a primitive farm home near Wattsburg. The stork first visited them on November 5, 1857 and they christened their babe Ida Minerva.

Miss Tarbell has always responded to requests to visit Erie County. Over twenty-five years ago when I was President of the Erie Alumni Association of Alleghenians I asked Miss Tarbell to speak at a dinner meeting we were having. She came on from New York and of course her address following talks by Mrs. Charles M. Hatch, Dr. William A. Elliott and President William H. Crawford of Allegheny,

made it an evening always remembered by Alleghenians present. Mr. and Mrs. F. S. Phelps were of the guests of the evening, Mr. F. S. Phelps, owner of the Erie Times, spoke to me afterwards of the evening as a cultural and intellectual mountain top. Ten or twelve years later Mr. Sam Rossiter was President of the Erie Allegheny Alumni Association and Mr. Rossiter again asked Miss Tarbell to come to Erie to address a dinner meeting of Alleghenians. Driving around the city in the forenoon, Miss Tarbell said to Mrs. Culbertson and me that she wished to call on a cousin at the Old Ladies Home (Sarah Reed Home) while in Erie. When I asked who the cousin was she told me Mrs. William P. Butterfield. I said this is most happy for Mrs. Butterfield (then nearly ninety) was from Edinboro - a friend of our people and we were in the habit of having her for dinner. We drove to the home - all went in - Mrs. Butterfield introduced Miss Tarbell to every one in the home. Just a twenty minute reception in the parlors there. Mrs. Butterfield showed Miss Tarbell her own room - everything delightfully informal. Mrs. Butterfield was Antoinette Tarbell, the daughter of Andrew Tarbell who built his home - the Tarbell Tavern - on West 8th Street. It is now the Burton funeral home. Mrs. Butterfield told us all that morning that she remembered so well when canal boats came in of running down the street to the canal which crossed Eighth Street just west of their home - Antoinette would see how many got off the canal boat and then hurry back to tell her mother that she might know how many would want dinner at the Tavern. Miss Tarbell said Andrew Tarbell was a favorite cousin of her father and that she and the other children always called him "Uncle Andy". Miss Tarbell said that when her father had gotten on so they could have a new and larger home in Titusville - that her father had "Uncle Andy", who was quite a builder in Erie, come down and build their new home in Titusville.

Mrs. Culbertson had a little luncheon that day in our apartment for about a dozen ladies. Miss Tarbell had been in Europe a few weeks before - had been granted a five minute interview with Mussolini who as the leader of the black-shirts was about the most conspicuous figure on the horizon. Miss Tarbell's interview with Mussolini lasted a half hour. Miss Tarbell told this and other experiences to the group of home women of lesser gift and experience, with a willingness, interest and satisfaction that were unmistakable.

Two years ago early last spring Mr. John Ray, President of Erie County Historical Society, asked me to take charge of a luncheon pilgrimage meeting of the Erie County Historical Society. Mr. George Moore gave an able and interesting address at the luncheon to a large gathering of members, State Historical Society officers and other invited guests. The luncheon date had been set during the time Miss Tarbell was giving a course of lectures at Allegheny College. Though Miss Tarbell had planned to accept no calls taking her away from the College, still she consented to come to the Erie County Historical Society luncheon meeting because ^{she had been a member of the Society for years, because} she was a native Erie Countian and because she was interested. She was willing to speak two or three minutes but really spoke ten or fifteen and took the pilgrimage to the old Customs House and around the city to all historical points. Miss Tarbell greeted nearly every one present including not a few distant cousins who were there and wished to have a word.

We are in Wattsburg - Wattsburg was the home town of Orlo Chapin. Orlo Chapin's father was the doctor of the Franklin Tarbell family. Orlo Chapin was a graduate of Allegheny College, a member of the law firm of Gunnison, Fish, Gifford and Chapin. Many here knew Orlo Chapin - we called him "Chape". If "Chape" were living he would be here this afternoon. I remember when we were getting Miss Ida Tarbell to Erie the first time over twenty-five years ago - I met "Chape" on the street - told him Miss Tarbell was coming on to the Allegheny dinner. "Chape"

said, "I'm sorry I will be out of the city, Andy, for I would like to be at the dinner. You know my father was the Tarbell family doctor and I have heard him tell the story so many times - he liked to tell it. I would like to be at the dinner and tell my father's story. My father was called to the Tarbell country home one cold, rough night. He took care of the sick person and then came out into the big living room and sat down with the family in front of the fire place. The little girl not over three years old came over to him with her doll baby in her arms. She wanted the doctor to give her doll baby some medicine. The doctor was a good man and she wanted him to help her doll baby."

And so that intelligence, that imagination, that sympathy and understanding, that interest in others, those prompting qualities of mind and heart have deepened, broadened and expanded with the years, until the desire and urge to help her fellow-men reaches round the world.

And that, my friends, is why we are here this afternoon.

Andrew A. Culbertson