

An Omaha ‘Princess’ in Kilwinning

On the 20th of August 1887, while ‘American Exhibition - Buffalo Bill’ was proving to be the sensation of Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee year, sharp-eyed readers of the *Pall Mall Gazette* no doubt observed that this was not the only Native American presence in London to be highlighted in that day’s attractions column. For it was intimated that at the Great Assembly Hall on the Mile End Road:

‘Mrs T. Tibbles (“Brighteyes”) will lecture on Indian Life’.

Buffalo Bill Cody, with the aid of scores of Lakota Indians, cowboys and Mexicans, was engaged in a spectacular re-enactment of the defining episodes of the epic of conquest, which presented the process of aggressive western expansion as a heroic, salutary endeavour, in which savagery was by stages supplanted by civilisation. Simultaneously, a Native American lady who was - by any standard – civilised, educated and indeed refined, laboured to spread abroad her own tragic account of the self-same process, although in far less flamboyant and conspicuous manner.

Susette La Flesche (1854 – 1903), also known by her Indian name of Bright Eyes (*Inshita Theamba*), undertook an extensive lecture tour of Great Britain, in which she was accompanied by her husband, a white American named Thomas Henry Tibbles. Their lectures were for the most part delivered in churches belonging to a variety of Protestant denominations as they proselytised in support of the cause of Indian citizenship and endeavoured to create a sympathetic awareness of the bleak conditions prevailing on the reservations.

The Omaha tribe of Nebraska’s experience of the western progress of settlement provided the paradigm for the fate which was monotonously enacted amongst a myriad of other tribes, as the relentlessly rising tide of Euro-American migration engulfed one indigenous nation after another. Forced onto a reservation by means of a treaty which, as the old men observed, was akin to the compact which the buffalo makes with the hunter when it lies down and dies, the people were split into two opposing factions – pitting the ‘traditionals’ who pledged to resist to the last, regardless of consequence, against the ‘progressives’ who were pragmatic enough to recognise the hard reality that there was no turning back time and that, for better or worse, they were left with no alternative but to make their way, as best they could, in what was now irredeemably the white man’s world. It was during this period of transition that Susette was born on the recently established reservation in 1854.

Through her Indian grandmothers, the indigenous component of Susette’s ancestral heritage linked her to the Omaha, Ponca and Iowa nations.

Susette’s father, Iron Eye, the last principal chief of the Omaha, otherwise Joseph La Flesche (c. 1821 -1888), was the mixed-blood son of a French trapper and trader (also named Joseph La Flesche) and headed the ‘progressive’ faction in reservation politics. In his youth, he had led a peripatetic existence with his father during which time he lived among the Lakota before settling down with the Omaha, whose chief, Big Elk, adopted him as a son. During the 1850s, Joseph found himself at the forefront in devising a radically new form of tribal organisation upon the ‘civilised’ model, including the establishment of a tribal police force, which became the prototype for

agents on other reservations, and was responsible for many other such accommodations, including the encouragement of a Presbyterian Mission and the introduction of a Euro-American programme of education. More often than not, Joseph found himself treading a narrow no-man's land, falling foul of the traditional faction of his own people and the reservation authorities in equal measure. All the while, the tribe's indigenous power structure and time-honoured rituals were losing their meaning and fell into disuse.

Susette's maternal grandmother was the Omaha-Iowa daughter of an Iowa chief. She married Dr John Gale, an army surgeon at Fort Atkinson, Nebraska. Susette was thus a mixed-blood product of changing times in which ancient identities were dissolved and ostensibly permanent lines of demarcation were swiftly swept aside. Even her Indian and European names betokened a conflict of identities. Two different worlds held a claim to her in equal measure though at the same time leaving her partially estranged from both. Her personal circumstances inevitably melded to produce a world view whose defining element was a contradiction in which native people held no independent future and whose only hope of survival was to participate as one small element in the melting pot of irreversible cultural and racial assimilation. She therefore made no plea for the retention of the old ways but limited her aims to a promotion of the conditions in which the Indians might enter into a grand synthesis of the diverse racial elements in as painless and all-embracing a manner as possible.

Hers, in an age of transition, was certainly a remarkable family by any standards. A sister, Susan, would become the first Native American woman to qualify as a doctor of medicine in 1889, graduating at the head of a class of thirty-three. Brother Francis (Frank), also known as Woodworker, graduated as a Bachelor of Law in 1892 and took his Masters degree in the following year. He appears never to have practised as an attorney, making his name in the field of ethnology and enjoying some success as a published author. Another sister, Rosalie, died aged thirty-nine yet still achieved enough in conducting the business affairs of the tribe that she even had a Nebraska hamlet named after her.

Susette herself, always a reticent, physically frail individual but through the operation of some inner paradox consistently determined and articulate, proved to be a highly gifted pupil at the reservation school and later continued with her education, spending two years at the Elizabeth Institute in New Jersey, paid for through the generosity of white benefactors. In the face of stern opposition from the establishment, she was eventually appointed as a teacher on the reservation school. The agent arbitrarily denied her a permit to leave the reservation in order to sit the requisite examination but she went anyway. Needless to say, she returned with her certificate.

Thomas Henry Tibbles, several years his wife's senior, known to friends and family as T.H., was a man of conscience who, in his youth, had spent time among the Omaha prior to their confinement on the reservation and the first of whose many campaigns had taken place during the *antebellum* period in which he had personally associated with the liberationist John Brown, of Harper's Ferry fame. An eventful and parlous interlude as a Methodist minister on the borderlands followed. The zenith of his career as the conscience of the frontier had come in 1879 when, as a crusading newspaper editor in the town of Omaha, Nebraska, he won saturation publicity at both local and national levels for the plight of a dispossessed and fugitive fragment of the Ponca

tribe which was subjected to military arrest after absconding from Indian Territory and taking refuge on the reservation of their close relations, the Omaha. He then successfully co-ordinated a campaign to bring the landmark 1879 civil rights case of *Standing Bear v Crook* before a federal court, which upheld the interpretation that Indians were 'persons' in the eyes of the law and that the remedy of *habeas corpus* was therefore open to them.

The Standing Bear case proved to be the turning point of Susette's career. In its aftermath, a party of four toured the lecture circuits of the eastern United States and sought to build upon their earlier success by keeping the plight of the Ponca, the Omaha – a bill for their involuntary removal to Indian Territory was now before Congress - and recently subjugated native nations in general in the public attention. These four were Tibbles, Standing Bear himself, Bright Eyes as his interpreter and brother Frank, who travelled in the role of chaperone, on the insistence of their father, Iron Eye. The original local focus of the campaign was thus elevated to onto the national stage.

It was in the course of this otherwise highly successful tour that Tibbles received the crushing news that his wife had died suddenly. Tibbles and Bright Eyes subsequently became romantically involved and eventually married. Standing Bear never toured again but Tibbles and Bright Eyes continued to fly the flag. They campaigned in the east for several years, proving themselves as effective agitators capable of mobilising the public ire and exerting a powerful influence over the actual course of events. In the eastern cities, whence the native population had vanished long before and the inhabitants were therefore free of frontier interests and prejudices, the nation's slumbering conscience was finally awakened and the wave of outrage at the wholesale abuse of the Indians perpetrated in its name brought about the foundation of the Boston Indian Citizenship Committee and similar groups in other eastern cities which now stood shoulder to shoulder with the original Omaha Ponca Committee. With the passing of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, which established the citizenship of the recently emancipated Negroes, it seemed for a time as if the Indians were the only people in America who were still excluded from the protection of the law.

In addition to captivating vast audiences, Susette was called upon to testify before Senate committees and became the intimate of - and shared platforms with - such notables of the age as authors Dr Edward Everett Hale and Helen Hunt Jackson – whose own involvement inspired her to write the ground-breaking work *A Century of Dishonor* - jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes, abolitionist Wendell Phillips, ethnologist Alice Cunningham Fletcher and poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who presented Susette with a copy of *Hiawatha* and pronounced her as the living embodiment of his creation, Minnehaha.

A logical progression similar to that which had lately impelled Buffalo Bill – and Catlin before him - across the Atlantic next took Mr and Mrs Tibbles to Great Britain, where they solicited further support for their cause. There Susette met and impressed the Prime Minister, Mr Gladstone, and drew inevitable comparisons with Pocahontas, who had preceded her to England almost three centuries before.

Writing in 1974, Dorothy Clarke Wilson, at p. 389 of her biography, *Bright Eyes - The Story of Susette La Flesche, an Omaha Indian* (hereinafter cited as *Bright Eyes*), recorded:

‘Unfortunately exhaustive research in England failed to disclose corroborative evidence of the Tibbles’ year spent there, but Susette’s autograph album and a long account by Thomas Tibbles giving full details of the trip (much fuller than in *Buckskin and Blanket Days*) were treated by the author as reliable sources.’

Through the present-day wonders of the Internet and through further searches guided by the dates and locations recorded in Susette’s autograph book, a number of newspaper articles have now been identified. Regrettably, however, T.H.’s ‘long account’ to which Mrs Wilson refers is not at all apparent from her bibliography and what exactly it is that she has in mind has yet to be established. Mrs Wilson also makes mention of a scrapbook of newspaper cuttings from the British tour, which, it is regretted, disappeared under mysterious circumstances.

T.H., in his autobiographical work *Buckskin and Blanket Days* (at p. 382), recalled that he and his wife had set sail for England in May 1886 but Mrs Wilson, from the limited evidence then available, surmised that he was a year out and that the actual date of sailing was May 1887. The newspaper coverage which I have discovered vindicates Mrs Wilson’s estimate and positively establishes that the tour did indeed take place during 1887-88.

The first port of call was to ‘Rev. Dr. Frazier, then the head of the Presbyterian Church in England’ (*Buckskin and Blanket Days*, p. 385), to whom they had been given a letter of introduction.

Objections were raised on the grounds of Saint Paul’s injunction requiring women to remain silent in Church. However, Dr Frazier happily circumvented this obstacle by keeping the service proper to the minimum legal length and permitting Mr and Mrs Tibbles to speak immediately afterwards. (Much the same manipulation of the formalities, eight years previously, had permitted Standing Bear to speak for himself in open court, whilst technically not in session. C.f. Dorothy Clarke Wilson, *Bright Eyes*, at p. 194) Favourable notices in the London newspapers followed, after which further engagements came easily. (The account given in this paragraph is a paraphrase of T.H.’s own recollections and would benefit from further background research, particularly with reference to the ‘long articles in the chief London papers’ [*Buckskin and Blanket Days*, p. 386] to which he refers but fails to specify.)

This occasion also provided an introduction to members of the Scottish nobility, who frequented the church, apparently St Columba’s in Knightsbridge, during the London season. It was at the urging of Lady Ellen, sister of the Duke of Argyle, that the couple were persuaded to venture to include Scotland on their itinerary.

Regarding their travels, T.H. records:

‘In our whole English and Scottish year we spent very few days in lodgings or hotels. Almost always we were guests in private homes – visiting sometimes the nobility, and sometimes the middle class; three or four times we stayed with working folk. In all, we

found as many opportunities for studying actual English life as we had given to our ethnologist for studying Indian ways.’ (*Buckskin and Blanket Days*, p. 387)

Particularly since T.H. states (*Buckskin and Blanket Days*, p. 385) that he and Susette were kept busy five days a week for a year and in the light of the sparse nature of the newspaper coverage it probably remains a hopeless task to reconstruct a full picture of their itinerary but at least a partial outline can now be established.

The *Blackburn Standard* of the 30th July 1887 was one of several journals which published a syndicated item to the effect that on Sunday, the 24th:

‘The curious spectacle of a member of a tribe of Indians preaching Christianity to an English congregation was witnessed on Sunday evening, when the daughter of the chief of the Omahas, known through the States as “Bright Eyes,” with her husband (Mr. Tibbles), conducted special service at Hare Court Chapel, London.’

The Hare Court Chapel was situated in St Paul’s Road, Canonbury, north London, and the service conducted by Mr and Mrs Tibbles commenced at seven in the evening. *The Daily News* of the 23rd of July surmised that Susette was ‘probably the first American Indian lady who has ever taken part in an English service.’

The *Pall Mall Gazette* of the 2nd of August 1887 published an article with line drawings of the couple, the feature including the following elucidation of their mission:

‘They will tell of Indian life before it was hedged in and harassed by civilization, and when there were fierce inter-tribal wars; of the domestic life and the social and religious customs of Indians; of their unwritten literature and their traditions; of their terrible experiences, as white men occupied the old hunting-grounds and drove the red men before them, not caring what became of them. It is a strange, picturesque, sad history, full of interest, of dramatic scenes of tragedy and of wild beauty.’

As already remarked, on Saturday, the 20th of August, she was advertised to lecture at the Great Assembly Hall at Mile End Road in the East End of London.

By the middle of September, Mr and Mrs Tibbles had turned their attentions to Scotland, where they solicited invitations to preach the word of the ‘Indian Citizenship Society’ before congregations in the Glasgow area. A long-winded and mildly ridiculous article appearing in the *Glasgow Herald* on the 19th went somewhat overboard on the royal status to which Susette was ostensibly entitled by virtue of being a daughter of the Chief of the Omaha, delineating her, without any apparent sense of irony or ridicule, in such phrases as ‘a veritable scion of a Royal stock’ and ‘a genuine Princess’, going so far as to draw the corollary that T.H. ought properly to be referred to as her ‘Consort’ and her agent as ‘Prime Minister’.

In point of fact, Susette’s own personal inclination was strongly to discourage the use of the label of ‘Princess’ which certain white men from time to time ignorantly applied to her but she was pragmatic enough to recognise it as the means to an end. She had often enough been roundly abused as a ‘dirty savage’ or else a ‘thieving redskin’ (*Bright Eyes*, p. 141) by white farmers as she passed them working in fields which had recently been wrested from her people, so she was afforded some innocent

amusement by the discovery that elsewhere in the world there was a different set of white men entirely whose predisposition it was to elevate her to the opposing extreme in the spectrum of humanity. That there was during the same period a pantomime character also known as 'Princess Bright Eyes' would have done little to bolster her credibility.

An interview, appearing in the *Pall Mall Gazette* on the 26th of September 1887, accorded T. H. the opportunity to express something of the philosophy behind his mission to educate public opinion. He stated that he had brought the concerns of the 'Aborigines' Protection Society' (apparently a reference to the Society for the Protection of Aboriginal Peoples) regarding the deteriorating conditions in Canada, where wrongs had begun to be inflicted upon the Indian tribes in the name of the laws and government. Speaking of the Métis or mixed-blood Indians of Manitoba who had revolted just two years before, he opined that they had done so only after having been 'goaded into insurrection by wrongs of which you in England can have scarcely any comprehension.' He also drew attention to summary confiscations of land by the minority white population of British Columbia leaving the Indians with just 60,000 acres out of a total acreage of about two and a half millions. One tribe, the Metlekatla, which, over a period of twenty-five years, had been acculturated to a condition of more or less perfect civilisation, had even been driven to seek refuge in the United States.

T. H. and his wife demanded the abolition of the reservation system which placed the inhabitants at the mercy of the 'Indian Ring' – a nebulously defined complex of licensed traders, administrators and politicians, all of whom were alleged to derive huge and fraudulent profits from funds appropriated to be expended for the exclusive benefit of the Indians. Instead, they proposed that the Indians should be placed upon an equal legal footing with whites – 'law is liberty', as Bright Eyes wrote in her introduction to T. H.'s *The Ponca Chiefs* (Quoted by Dorothy Clarke Wilson at p. 244 of *Bright Eyes*). Instead of being a protection to them, confinement on the reservations kept the Indians in a perpetual state of misery and degradation, and isolated them from all progressive influences.

For those who would follow, this radical remedy was worse than the ills which it was intended to cure. Tribal identities withered away, followed at a short distance by the concept of Indianness itself. This meant oblivion as the only viable alternative to obliteration. The distinction was a slim one indeed but friend and foe alike now urged assimilation just as a generation before advocates and detractors alike had converged upon removal beyond the Mississippi as the unique common solution to the 'Indian problem'. Susette did not reach her fiftieth birthday but she lived long enough to call her own initial assumptions into serious question.

According to T.H. (at p. 387 of *Buckskin and Blanket Days*), Bright Eyes was repeatedly urged by Lady Somerset to lecture on behalf of the temperance movement and eventually did so in one of the large London theatres whose name he was unable to recall. This was the one and only occasion on which she lectured on any other topic than that of her own race. The demon drink was then looked upon with great disfavour as a principal cause of social collapse and this provided a further strong point of empathy between the Presbyterians and advocates for the Indians.

The Scottish Leader, for Wednesday, the 16th of November 1887, carried an account of a meeting which had been held on the previous evening at the Moray Free Church, located in the South Back Canongate, Edinburgh, the Rev. P. W. Paterson presiding.

Under the heading *An Indian Chieftainess in Edinburgh*, the article gave the title of the text delivered by Mr and Ms Tibbles as *Real Life in the Wild West and Mission Work among the Red Indians*. The use of the phrase 'Wild West' clearly underscores the speakers' conscious intention to provide a counterbalance to the visions of Buffalo Bill:

'In the course of his remarks Mr Tibbles said that the North American Indians were the finest aborigines, both morally and physically, that he knew of. They believed in future punishment and had never been addicted to idolatry. At first they covered the face of that great continent, but by gradual extermination they now numbered only some 300,000. Mr Tibbles then gave an account of the gradual breaking down of the wall of prejudice erected against the Indians by the American public. The usual *causus belli* of the fearful wars with the Indians was the breaking by the United States Government of the formal treaties entered into by them with the Indians. As a rule, Indians had a love of their country beyond anything that he had yet heard of. In the United States, out of the 110 Indian tribes there were about 60 who had never had a missionary, and had never heard the gospel preached to them. The address concluded with an appeal for subscriptions to the "Bright Eyes" Fund, for a school and church on his wife's reservation. "Bright Eyes" – a rather prepossessing woman, dressed in European garb also addressed the meeting, and gave an interesting description of her life among the Indians. Speaking of the introduction of the Bible among the Indian tribes, she said that it was a great puzzle for them to know why the white people, having only one Bible, should differ as to the interpretation of it. The first drunk man she ever saw was a white man. At the close of the addresses a collection was made on behalf of the fund already mentioned.'

The *Leeds Mercury* (28th November 1887) in its coverage of events taking place on the evening of Saturday, the 26th of November 1887, listed T.H. as a featured speaker at the annual conference of the Bradford Band of Hope Union, held in the Temperance Hall. On this occasion he proclaimed himself an advocate of the entire prohibition of the liquor trade, a movement destined to reach its calamitous fruition some four decades later. There was no mention of Susette but on the evidence of a signature in her autograph book, dated the 25th, she had remained behind in Edinburgh. She appears to have remained there for a time, since further entries were made in Edinburgh on the 1st and 9th of December.

On Tuesday, the 13th of December 1887, Mr and Mrs Tibbles appeared at the Brighton Street Church and on the following evening, Wednesday the 14th, at the McCrie-Roxburgh Church, both Edinburgh. On the latter occasion, a Mr G. A. Barclay presided, in the absence of Mr McNeill, the minister. Mr Barclay was apparently selected as he had recently sojourned in the United States during the course of which he had acquired an understanding of the plight of the Indians and their claim upon Christian sympathy. On the former evening, Susette launched a scathing attack upon religious hypocrisy and exposed the demoralisation it engendered:

'She complained bitterly of the inconsistency of the white (professing) Christians who go to her people. Many of the Indians who had accepted the Christian religion, and

lived devoted lives, when they saw the conduct of white Christians, turned away to infidelity. They had abandoned their own religion, and now they saw that the white man's religion was mockery.' (*The Scottish Leader*, 14th December 1887)

By the second week in January 1888, Mr and Mrs Tibbles were in Aberdeen. On consecutive evenings from Sunday, the 8th, until Thursday, the 12th, they appeared before large and attentive audiences.

On the first of these occasions, the 8th, the Gilcomston Free Church, with a seating capacity of 1,200, was crowded. At the conclusion of the evening service, Mr Mitchell, the Pastor, presided over the meeting which followed. T.H. described the character of the American Indian, which, he said, had been entirely misrepresented. Refuting the fallacy that the Indians were of a debased type of humanity and therefore incapable of civilisation, he discussed the need for renewed missionary endeavour and passed on the words of a chief according to whom the Indians had advanced further in the past fifty years than the Anglo-Saxons in a thousand. Susette next ascended the pulpit and outlined the principal incidents of her childhood and early career. The *Aberdeen Journal* (9th of January 1888) captured the essence of her address with the words:

'The time had come when her people must give way; civilisation was pushing them. They saw themselves as a nation melting away, and what was to become of them they did not know. Bright Eyes held that the only hope was to bring them under the power of civilisation and the influence of the Gospel.'

On the evening of the 10th, at the meeting held in John Knox's Free Church:

'Having given a summary of the statements which she had previously given in Aberdeen, "Bright Eyes" went on to speak of the laws and habits of the North American Indians, their forms of government, and modes of punishing crime. She said there was no difference in the essentials of humanity whether found in a cultivated or uncultivated state.' (*Aberdeen Journal*, 11th of January 1888)

Particular reference was also made to the indigenous spiritual life of the Indians, in which a strong belief in the afterlife was a predominant feature.

T.H. proceeded to develop the argument that all of the economic advantages derived by the people of Great Britain from the North American trade were enjoyed by virtue of lands which had been taken forcibly from their original owners, the Indians, without recompense. There was therefore a reciprocal obligation to send the blessings of the Gospel and the influences of civilisation amongst them, as the necessary means of permitting their continued existence.

It was a compelling echo of Scotland's own Reformation which was now being thundered from an Aberdeen pulpit. Susette's father had, many years before, been baptised by a Roman Catholic priest. In later years, he formed a clear attachment to Presbyterianism and brought many of his tribe, Susette included, with him. It was not merely a vaguely conceived and generic form of Christianity but Christianity as it had been specifically formulated and developed in the spiritual reawakening of Scotland's 'Great Cleansing' which was now advanced as the last hope and salvation of the American Indian.

Collections were taken in aid of the church and school buildings on the Omaha reservation, to which the contributions, yielding a total of £19-9/8d, were as follows:

(8th) **Gilcomston Free Church:** £5-8/6d

(9th) **Free West Church:** £2-11/6d

(10th) **Free John Knox Church:** £5-15/-

(11th) **Charlotte Street U.P. Hall:** £1-18/-

(12th) **Queen's Cross Free Church:** £3 16/8d

On the 24th of February 1888, the *Newcastle Weekly Courant* carried a report relating to the events of the previous Saturday, the 18th, under the arresting heading of 'An Indian Squaw at the Central Hall.' It was observed that Mr and Mrs Tibbles had 'attracted considerable, and perhaps curious attention, both as regards their important mission and peculiar personal history'. The success which they had met with in campaigning for the temperance movement was also remarked upon.

Writing of Susette's autograph book, Dorothy Clarke Wilson records (at pp. 323 – 4):

'Some of the memories were visual. G. Graham Thomson, of Werston Kilwinning, on the 1st of May 1888 drew a beautiful colored picture of a thatched cottage, "to remind Bright Eyes of her visit to Kilwinning."'

It must be observed that 'Werston' should actually be 'Weirston', now commemorated in the name of Weirston Road. In the 1891 census, George G. Thomson, originally from Glasgow, was living in Weirston Cottage on the Eglinton Estate with his English-born wife, Catherine, and their five unmarried children. Unsurprisingly, Mr Thomson was a professional artist, a 'Painter in Oil'.

The North Ayrshire town of Kilwinning did not have its own newspaper at that time but articles in both the *Irvine Herald* of the 4th of May 1888 and the *Ardrossan & Saltcoats Herald* of the 5th corroborate the autograph book's testimony that Mr and Mrs Tibbles did indeed appear in the Established Church of Scotland there on the evening of Tuesday, the 1st of May 1888, the Rev. Mr Ker presiding. As the latter source concludes:

'Mr and Mrs Tibbles were the guests of Mr and Mrs Thomson, Weirston, during their brief stay at Kilwinning.'

Further entries in her autograph book testify that on the 12th and 13th of May 1888 Susette was at Pollokshields, Glasgow. The former took the form of a transcription of Burns's *Selkirk Grace* by Alexander Brown of the Boys' Brigade.

Following their return to America, Mr and Mrs Tibbles were present on the Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota, at the time of the ghost dance troubles during the winter of 1890-91, in the capacity of special correspondents to the (Omaha) *World-Herald* and the (Chicago) *Express*. Their newspapers, growing impatient in

consequence of their steadfast refusal to join in the wholesale fabrication of sensationalist headlines relating to a non-existent war, cut off their expenses and ordered them home. In the interests of the truth, they stayed on.

T.H. gives an excellent eye-witness account of the unfolding events in *Buckskin and Blanket Days*, which provides the major source for the devastating final chapter of Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*. (Sam Maddra, in *Hostiles? - The Lakota Ghost Dance and Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, apparently misses this important source but, at p. 95, quotes with approval one of T.H.'s contributions to the *Morning World-Herald*, dated the 15th of January 1891.) T.H. was personally present at Wounded Knee during the hours leading up to the infamous massacre and was alerted by an explosion of gunfire as he rode back to Pine Ridge. The Indian survivors, five men and fifty-one women and children, were brought into the agency that evening. All but one old woman and a baby were injured. The men were taken for treatment in the soldiers' quarters but no one quite knew what to do with the women and children. It was at T.H.'s suggestion that the Rector was approached for permission to tend them in the Episcopalian church, where Bright Eyes laboured to comfort them. T.H.'s pronouncements on the subject, in which he mostly attributes blame for the tragedy to the army, were several generations ahead of its time for their enlightened and sympathetic perspective. The honest journalist got his story just the same, being one of the very first, or even actually the first, to break the news of the tragedy to the outside world.

Susette La Flesche died in 1903, aged just forty-nine. Eighty years later, in 1983, she was inducted into the Nebraska Hall of Fame. Today, busts of Susette and her friend Standing Bear are to be found in the Nebraska State Capitol.

In the following year, 1904, Thomas Henry Tibbles stood as the (defeated) Populist candidate for Vice-President of the United States of America.