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SUSAN LAFLESCHÉ PICOTTE, M.D.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY PHYSICIAN AND REFORMER

VALERIE SHERER MATHES

She was laid to rest beside her husband on a fall Sunday in a small Nebraska town. Three clergymen performed the simple service, the pastor of the Walthill Presbyterian Church, the pastor of the Blackbird Hills Mission, and a member of the Presbyterian Home Missions Board. The closing prayer was given by an Omaha tribal elder. That afternoon a moving graveside service was performed by members of the Amethyst Chapter of the Eastern Star. This diverse assemblage, paying their last respects on 19 September 1915 at the family home and at the Bancroft Cemetery, represented only one facet of the remarkable life of the fifty-year-old woman they were honoring. She was a respected

medical doctor, and she was an Indian reformer, but above all Susan LaFlesché Picotte was a proud Omaha Indian who moved easily between two cultures. She had successfully bridged the two worlds, becoming acculturated without totally sacrificing her Indianism.¹

Shortly after her death, the Walthill Hospital was renamed in her honor by the Home Missions Board.² Three-quarters of a century later, the Walthill-based Center for Rural Affairs purchased the former hospital. Now renovated and placed on the National Register of Historic Places, it has been rededicated as the Susan LaFlesché Picotte Center. On 15 September 1990, the second annual open house was held and visitors toured the recently completed LaFlesché Family Room.³ Who was Susan LaFlesché?

Valerie Sherer Mathes has been teaching history since 1967 at City College of San Francisco. She has published several dozen scholarly articles and her book, Helen Hunt Jackson and Her Indian Reform Legacy won the 1991 Spur Award from Western Writers of America for the best Western non-fiction.

CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION

Born in June 1865 she was the youngest of the four gifted daughters of Joseph LaFlesché, son of a French fur trader, and his Indian wife, Mary Gale, the mixed blood daughter of army physician Dr. John Gale.⁴ In one sense, Susan's eventual success in the white world was no

accident; it was attributable to her father's progressive attitude, a new government Indian policy, the emergence of the Women's National Indian Association, and of course, to her own extraordinary talents.

Although Joseph LaFlesche, the last recognized chief of the Omaha tribe, embraced Christianity, lived in a frame house instead of the traditional Omaha earth lodge, and farmed a quarter section of land, he did not abandon all Omaha traditions. He raised his children to respect their Indian heritage, but he was also aware that his people would have to adjust to the ways of the dominant white society. Concerned about their future welfare, he refused to have his daughters tattooed or his sons' ears pierced. "I was always sure that my sons and daughters would live to see the time when they would have to mingle with the white people," he said, "and I determined that they should not have any mark upon them that might be detrimental in their future surroundings."⁵ But his most enduring legacy to his children was his emphasis on education.

Susan's schooling began at the white stone mission school and continued at the Omaha Agency, initially under Presbyterian missionaries, later with Quaker teachers. Following in the footsteps of their older sister Susette, in September 1879, Susan and Marguerite began their studies at the Elizabeth Institute for Young Ladies in Elizabeth, New Jersey; and in 1884, they attended Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Virginia. Although founded by General Samuel C. Armstrong in 1868 to educate Negro freedmen, the Institute enrolled its first Indian students in 1878, thus beginning a long experiment in Indian education.⁶

For the next two years, the LaFlesche sisters attended classes in Hampton's disciplined atmosphere where more emphasis was placed on domestic chores than on academic studies, a common practice at off-reservation boarding schools. Since both sisters spoke fluent English, they were placed in the normal course of study and tutored those with less formal education. Female students were expected to care for their

own clothing and to clean both their own rooms and Winona Lodge, their dormitory.⁷ There were, fortunately, lighter moments, and both girls participated in the school's social life. Susan took music lessons, learning to play the piano.⁸

Susan LaFlesche graduated from Hampton on 20 May 1886—as salutatorian. Following the presentation of her address, General Byron M. Cutcheon, Civil War medal of honor winner, awarded her with the Demorest prize, a gold medal given by the faculty to the graduating senior who had achieved the highest examination score during the junior year. Alice Cunningham Fletcher, an ethnologist and fellow of Harvard's Peabody Museum who attended the commencement, noted that Susan "looked well, spoke clearly and every one was delighted with her. I am so glad that she is to go forward in her grand career. She is I think the first Indian girl to advance so far."⁹ Having worked closely with Susan's brother, Francis, as a major recorder of Omaha culture, Fletcher was intimately familiar with the entire LaFlesche family.

Thus far, her father's progressive ways and her own strong desire to become a physician were what fostered her achievements;¹⁰ subsequently, however, her advanced medical training, her future medical practice, and her service as a reformer were a result of two emerging forces: the federal government's new focus on Indian policy and an Indian reform movement that spawned several major reform organizations.

THE QUAKER PEACE POLICY

The chain of events that propelled Susan to national prominence began in 1865 when Congress, responding to continued frontier warfare, created a Peace Commission composed of civilian and military leaders directed to establish peace, settle tribal members on reservations, remove the causes of Indian wars, provide for the safety of frontier settlements and railroads, and institute a plan for civilizing the Indians.

The government promised to provide schools, domesticated animals, farming equipment, and instruction in agriculture and mechanic arts.

This new approach to Indian affairs reached its zenith with the inauguration of Ulysses S. Grant in 1869 and was commonly referred to as "Grant's Peace Policy." Success hinged upon the quality of Indian agents assigned to assist Indians in the transformation from a nomadic to a "civilized" life. Quaker reformers, believing that only Christian influence and civilian control could save the Indians from extermination, requested that Christian and philanthropic organizations suggest names of potential agents.¹¹

The implementation of this reform, called the "Quaker Policy," affected the Omaha tribe, which historian Clyde Milner described as "already a society in cultural transition" at the time of Quaker arrival.¹² In 1869 the Hicksite Friends, one of the two branches of the Society of Friends or Quakers, were assigned the Northern Superintendency, which included the Omaha Agency. Susan was four years old when the first Quaker agent arrived in June 1869. The Quakers implemented their program of educating and civilizing Indians for the next dozen years, making an indelible impression on young Susan and charting the course of her life.

WOMEN'S NATIONAL INDIAN ASSOCIATION

The final key to Susan's success was the financial support she received from the Connecticut branch of the Women's National Indian Association (WNIA). Founded in 1879 initially to protest the invasion of Indian Territory by white settlers, the WNIA, along with the Indian Rights Association (1882) and Lake Mohonk Conference of the Friends of the Indians (1883), helped shape Indian policy during the later half of the nineteenth century.¹³

The missionary-minded members of WNIA applied their techniques of child rearing and housekeeping to the care of the Indian woman, her child, and her home because they believed non-Christian women lived degraded lives.

These female reformers were fulfilling their vision of the Victorian woman's role—piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. Home was a private refuge in which women "dispensed domestic comforts" to husbands and children.¹⁴ But this new vision did not remain only at home. Through various church-dominated organizations, women became "social housekeepers" doing for society what they had formerly done for their family. And reformers expected nothing less of Indian women and children. This vision—made manifest in deliberate as well as unconscious ways—imparted the Victorian "role of domesticity" and the "cult of true womanhood" to Indian women and children. The missionary work of the WNIA sometimes singled out specific young Indian women for advanced education, and it was as a result of this practice that the Connecticut Indian Association, a WNIA auxiliary, sponsored all of Susan's medical expenses.

In this spirit of domesticity Susan wrote in a June 1886 letter that she hoped to go into the homes of her people and "help the women in their housekeeping, teach them a few practical points about cooking and nursing, and especially about cleanliness." Reflecting not only Omaha tradition but also the Victorian philosophy of Catharine Beecher's well-read *Treatise on Domestic Economy* and her *American Woman's Home* (1868), Susan continued, "I feel that as a physician I can do a great deal more than as a mere teacher, for the *home* is the foundation of all things for the Indians, and my work I hope will be chiefly in the homes of my people."¹⁵ Furthermore, because she knew the language, customs, and habits of the Omaha people, she would have an advantage over a white physician.

MEDICAL EDUCATION

The initial support for Susan's medical education came from Alice Fletcher at the Peabody Museum. From July to October 1883 Fletcher had suffered a serious bout of inflammatory rheumatism and was cheerfully nursed back to health by young Susan. The following

year Fletcher attended her first Lake Mohonk Conference where reformers and government officials gathered annually to discuss Indian policy. There she met Sara Thomson Kinney, president of the Connecticut Indian Association and her husband, J. C. Kinney, editor of the *Hartford Courant*. They probably discussed Susan, for Fletcher and the Kinneys combined their efforts to locate a medical college and to obtain financing for her to attend.¹⁶ General Samuel C. Armstrong, principal and founder of Hampton, also recognized Susan's "unusual ability, integrity, [and] fixedness of purpose . . ." and encouraged her to study academic subjects, as did Dr. Martha M. Waldron, Hampton's physician. Dr. Waldron, a graduate of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, wrote on Susan's behalf to Alfred Jones, secretary of the executive committee of the college.¹⁷

Following Jones's instructions, Susan hand wrote all applications and included testimonials to her health, character, and educational qualifications. Having used the train ticket that Kinney had sent her, the young Omaha woman detrained in Philadelphia during the first week of October, weary and suffering from motion sickness but eager to begin her medical education. She was welcomed by Mrs. Seth Talcott, chairman of the business committee of the Connecticut Indian Association, and by Dr. Elizabeth Bundy, a professor at the college. Susan was immediately placed in suitable YWCA housing and provided with supplies and necessary clothing.¹⁸

For the next three years Susan's home would be the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania. Established initially as the Female Medical College of Pennsylvania "to instruct respectable and intelligent *females* in the various branches of medical science," the college was chartered by the Pennsylvania Legislature and opened its doors on 12 October 1850.¹⁹

With the exception of the \$167 a year provided by the government for Indian students at boarding schools like Hampton and Carlisle, the remainder of Susan's expenses were financed by the Connecticut Indian Association.²⁰ Founded in 1881, the Association's aims

included "aid [to] Indians, in civilization, industrial training, self support, education, citizenship, and Christianization."²¹ Susan's medical training was appropriate to their program. Upon learning she would receive financial assistance, a delighted Susan wrote Sara Kinney on 16 June that "it has always been a desire of mine to study medicine ever since I was a small girl for even then I saw the needs of my people for a good physician."²²

In an association pamphlet, Kinney appealed to the people of Connecticut for donations, noting that Susan's education should appeal "particularly to the hearts of women." "In undertaking it," she continued, "we feel that we shall be doing real missionary work, and that in helping one woman, we shall, through her Christian influence, reach, help and elevate her people." She described Susan as gentle, refined, and unselfish, noting that "in her sweet, quiet way, we feel she would minister not only to the physical needs of those for whom she cared, but for all their deeper wants would strive to lead them to the Great Healer."²³

For the next three years Susan wrote lively letters to her sister Rosalie, telling of people she met, classes she took, her fear of tests, and her delight in the city sights. Traveling on streetcars, she frequented the Philadelphia Academy of Arts, commenting particularly on the paintings of Benjamin West; attended musical performances; enjoyed literary and theatrical events, including *The Mikado* and a performance by Lily Langtry in *Wife's Peril*; and sat through church services with school chums, noting in one letter how "grand" the music was during one Catholic service. She accompanied her brother Francis to the Mummer's Parade and mused about the masqueraders disguised as Indians.²⁴

Anxious to maintain her Indian friends, she traveled to Virginia to spend time with her sister Marguerite at Hampton and visited the Indian boys at the Educational Home in West Philadelphia and the Indian children at Philadelphia's Lincoln Institute.²⁵

Susan's letters reflect the acculturation she was experiencing. At Hampton her daily contact



FIG. 1. Susan LaFlesche, upon the occasion of her graduation from the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, 1889. Courtesy of Medical College of Pennsylvania.

had been with Indian girls; at the medical college she associated with white students. She was accepted by them, participated in all social gatherings, lived with a white roommate, and was chosen corresponding secretary of the Young Woman's Christian Association. She dressed like her classmates, even wearing her hair piled on top of her head as they had suggested.²⁶

She also made friends outside of the college community. The W. W. Heritage family of Philadelphia took a special interest in Susan, inviting her often to their home for tea or dinner or to spend the night. Their daughter Marian, a teacher at Girard College, was her frequent companion.²⁷ While she spent most of

her time with female friends, Susan was extremely fond of one young man. Her letters speak frequently of Thomas Ikinicapi or TI as she called him, a young Sioux she had met at Hampton. She journeyed from Philadelphia to Hampton frequently, not only to see her sister, but to spend time with Thomas. "He was," Susan once remarked, "*without exception* the handsomest Indian I ever saw."²⁸

In her first year she attended lectures in chemistry, anatomy, physiology, histology, *materia medica*, general therapeutics, and obstetrics.²⁹ In addition, she attended daily clinics at the Woman's Hospital; took weekly examinations in chemistry, anatomy, and physiology; and attended classes in dissecting cadavers. Apparently Susan did not mind the latter for in a letter home she humorously noted she was going to wield the knife tonight—not the scalping knife though." In the same vein, she described an incident in which female students had been joined by male students of the Jefferson Medical College. Just as the surgeon prepared to operate, a young man passed out and was carried from the room. "I wasn't even thinking of fainting," wrote Susan, nor for that matter were any of her female classmates.³⁰

Following her second year as a medical student, she returned home to help her ailing parents. As well as doing the household chores and the field work that summer, she nursed the Omahas through a serious measles epidemic. She informed Sara Kinney that her people "have so much to learn not only about cleanliness but about business, land, money, & horses. . . ." ³¹ Many of her letters prescribed medical advice to family members. When her mother developed a sore on her hand, Susan sent a packet of carbolated vaseline and castile soap. She was constantly advising her oldest sister, Rosalie LaFlesche Farley, to get plenty of exercise, fresh air, and sleep. To Ed, Rosalie's husband, Susan prescribed less quinine and more restful meals.³²

On 14 March 1889 Susan graduated at the head of her class of thirty-six young women.³³ In his commencement address Dr. James B. Walker praised her, noting that she would

"stand among her people as the first woman physician. Surely we may record with joy such courage, . . . and ability."³⁴ Susan was selected by competitive examination to serve as an assistant to the resident physician in the Woman's Hospital in Philadelphia.³⁵ Before beginning her internship on 1 May, Susan spent several days with members of the Connecticut Indian Association and lectured before various Association branches.³⁶

THE DOCTOR RETURNS HOME

On 13 June 1889 Susan LaFlesché wrote the Commissioner of Indian Affairs requesting an appointment as government physician at the Omaha Agency Indian school. She believed she could "do a great deal to help" her people because she knew both their language and their customs. On 5 August, she returned permanently to the Omaha Reservation. In December Omaha Agent Robert Ashley requested that she be allowed to treat adults as well as children. Indian Commissioner Thomas Jefferson Morgan agreed, and Susan was soon in charge of the health care of the 1244 Omahas.³⁷

Susan devoted her life not only to teaching the Omahas about modern hygiene and the dangers of alcoholism but also to protecting their land rights. Susan's desire to become a medical doctor was not uncommon for Indian women. In some hunting and gathering tribes, Indian women could become recognized and trained medical practitioners. Among such tribes as the Crows, Poncas, Caddos, Arapahoes, Gros Ventres, Assiniboines, Mandans, Coeur d'Alenes, and Comanches, women could become medicine women, while among the southern Okanagon of Washington and various northern California groups such as the Karoks, Yuroks, Maidus, Wiyots, Shastas, and Miwoks women could attain the position of shaman. Medicine women operated on the theory that disease was caused by the presence of foreign objects that needed to be removed, while shamans were diviners or miracle workers who gained power by being possessed. Although women could acquire healing skills at any point

in their lives, they could not practice until after menopause because menstruating women were believed to possess incredible, often dangerous power. They were required to leave the family home and remain in specially constructed huts until the menses were completed. Because the LaFlesché family, as well as many of the Omahas, were already acculturated, Susan did not have to wait to practice medicine.³⁸

During the four years that she served as tribal physician, Susan lived at the government school where her sister Marguerite was principal teacher. Her office, built at the school by the government, contained a drug counter, cabinets full of games, scrapbooks, picture books, and magazines, some of which were supplied by various branches of the WNIA. Before long her office was full not only of school children but of adults, who came to ask for advice on business and personal affairs and on questions of law.³⁹

The thirty by forty-five mile Omaha Reservation, with its network of bad dirt roads, was a challenge to the young and energetic but frail Susan. Since many of her patients could not come to her office, she went to them, walking to those homes within a mile. To travel longer distances, she hired a team and buggy until she was able to purchase her own. Her day commonly began at 8:00 A.M. and continued until 10:00 in the evening while she treated diseases ranging from consumption, influenza, dysentery, malaria, and cholera to an epidemic of conjunctivitis, an eye ailment spread by unsanitary conditions. During her first winter, there were two epidemics of influenza. Between October 1891 and the spring of 1892 she attended more than six hundred patients, sometimes in fifteen to twenty degree below zero weather.⁴⁰

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMER

Susan not only cared for the physical well-being of her people; she nurtured their souls as well. She personally exemplified Christian beliefs, thereby serving as a role model while carrying out the government's assimilation

policy. Her exposure to Christianity began with her father's influence and later that of Presbyterian missionaries. Her commitment continued and strengthened; during her school years in Philadelphia she attended a variety of services. Susan had been groomed as a Victorian woman, and church work was part of the Victorian woman's role. As Catharine Beecher noted, "It is Christianity that has given to women her true place in society. And it is the peculiar trait of Christianity alone that can sustain her therein."⁴¹

The late nineteenth-century Indian reform movement was part of the strong evangelical movement that reflected a large segment of Protestant America.⁴² The WNIA itself was an outgrowth of the work of Mary Lucinda Bonney and her Women's Home Mission Circle. During its third year, the association established a missionary department and prescribing religion became one of their main goals. Because they had supported her medical education, in 1891 the WNIA appointed Susan as their medical missionary to her tribe. To earn the \$250 per year (the WNIA added to her physician's salary of \$500), she was expected to write annual reports and speak before various auxiliaries; in return, WNIA members supported her efforts with boxes of clothing, gifts, supplies, and money.⁴³

When time allowed Susan continued her religious work, attending Sunday services in which she and her sister Marguerite often assisted by singing and interpreting. Sometimes they spoke before church groups on various topics, encouraged Omaha couples to marry by license and with church sanction, and advocated Christian services for the dead. Susan's devotion to Christian work was ever-present. In 1905 the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions appointed her their missionary to the Omaha tribe and provided her with housing and a small stipend. Working out of the Blackbird Hills Presbyterian Church, she held church services, read the Bible in her native tongue, interpreted hymns, and held simple Christian services for those who died.⁴⁴ When she moved to the newly established town of Walthill,

which the railroad had carved out of Indian land, Susan helped organize the new Presbyterian Church where she also taught Sunday school.⁴⁵

ILL HEALTH AND MARRIAGE

On 20 October 1893 Susan LaFlesche resigned as government physician. The long buggy rides over rough roads in inclement weather had taken their toll on the frail young doctor. Her health had never been robust. In college she had decided her numbness and breathing difficulties must be psychological, but by early January 1893 she was bedridden, suffering severe earaches accompanied by neck and back pain. For the remainder of her short life, Susan was afflicted with the ailment that eventually caused her deafness and death.⁴⁶

Much to the surprise of her family and friends, in the summer of 1894 twenty-nine-year-old Susan reversed her earlier commitment to stay single and announced her forthcoming marriage to Henry Picotte, a Sioux Indian from the Yankton Agency and brother of Marguerite's late husband, Charles.⁴⁷ Writing from the Medical College in the spring of 1887, Susan had reminded Rosalie that she had promised not to marry. Several times in letters to Rosalie, Susan referred to herself as "the dear little old maid." Another time she mentioned that her former Hampton teacher, Cora M. Folsom, was concerned about the relationship with Thomas Ikinicapi. Folsom wanted Susan to remain an "old maid" because she believed her too good for any of the Indians boys. Susan's letters do not reveal the reason for her promise to stay single. She may have believed that she could best serve her father's desire to advance the Omaha tribe by devoting herself totally to her profession or she may have promised the Connecticut Indian Association to stay single.⁴⁸

Little is known about the relationship between Henry Picotte and Susan since letters from that period are not available; therefore, one can only surmise that Susan began to feel the years slipping away and wanted a family of her own. Or possibly the recent death of her

first love, Thomas Ikinicapi, had forced her to reconsider her earlier promise to remain an “old maid” doctor.

Not everyone was pleased with her decision. Aware, no doubt, of the physical demands of marriage and rearing children, Susan’s old Philadelphia friend Mrs. Heritage wrote her expressing concern that her marriage would be injurious to her health. Because she believed that Rosalie LaFlesche Farley also disapproved of the marriage, on 22 June Marian Heritage wrote to ask Rosalie’s opinion. “It is because I wish for Susie only the best things in this world with the least suffering and trouble that I wish she had decided not to take this step,” she explained.⁴⁹ In spite of all this well-meaning concern, Susan and Henry Picotte married. Following her marriage, Susan became more intimately involved with Indian life than previously.

Recurrent bouts of ill health did not deter Susan from practicing medicine in the town of Bancroft among both Indians and whites while keeping house for her husband and two young sons, Pierre and Caryl. She quickly won the respect of local doctors and of her patients. Their devotion became especially apparent in 1897 when her health declined so dramatically that family members feared for her life. Neighbors, both Indian and white, rallied to her side, bringing food, flowers, fruit, good cheer, and heartfelt thanks for all of her good work. Many times in the past she had felt her work had gone unappreciated, but as she commented to one of her Hampton teachers, “This summer taught me a lesson I hope I’ll never forget.”⁵⁰ Her work was truly appreciated, and the townspeople had openly and unabashedly proved it to her.

PUBLIC HEALTH REFORMER

Following her recovery Susan moved gradually into the arena of public health concerns, helping organize the Thurston County Medical Association, serving several times on the Walthill town health board, and joining the State Medical Society. As Chairman of the State Health Committee of the Nebraska Fed-

eration of Women’s Clubs for three years, she worked effectively to get health-related bills through the state legislature. She lobbied for required medical inspection of schools, for sanitary ice cream dishes and spoons, for school drinking fountains, and for the establishment of a playground for Walthill children. But she especially campaigned against tuberculosis, the house fly, and the common drinking cup.⁵¹

Susan had witnessed the destructive nature of tuberculosis, including the recent death of Thomas Ikinicapi. She began an intensive personal study of the disease and lectured on the subject at the Indian church and to townspeople. When Walthill observed National Tuberculosis Day, other doctors were invited into the two local churches to speak, and their talks were printed in the newspapers to reach a wider audience. When writing to Indian Commissioner Cato Sells in 1914, Susan suggested that children at the government school be examined monthly for the disease. She told of an eighteen-year-old school girl who had returned with tuberculosis and infected both her mother and grandmother; all three subsequently died.⁵²

Susan’s article on the “evils of the [common] drinking cup” was printed in the local paper, and the women’s club health committee’s energetic campaign resulted in legislation abolishing its use. Susan designed an attractive anti-housefly poster encouraging people not to allow flies in their homes or near food. She pointed out that sprinkling lime or kerosene where flies might collect would eliminate their breeding grounds, and she encouraged the use of screens for doors and windows. Fly traps were soon selling at local hardware stores.⁵³

Susan’s most determined reform was her crusade against “demon rum.” She probably initially acquired her prohibitionist tendencies from her father. Until Joseph LaFlesche’s death in 1888 very little liquor was to be found on the Omaha reservation, but in subsequent years, liquor changed the reservation; the church stood empty and farms were either abandoned or neglected. The Omaha, described by Susan as “a fine specimen of manhood,” had

degenerated physically because of excessive alcohol use. The Indian child had become "a weak puny specimen of humanity," she wrote, thus becoming an easy prey to tuberculosis.⁵⁴ Susan recounted numerous horror stories of street brawls, bizarre deaths, and poverty. Even "little children were seen reeling on the streets of the town."⁵⁵

Alcoholism affected Susan personally. In 1905, after years of hard drinking, her husband Henry died, leaving her to support an invalid mother and two small boys. Fortunately for the Omahas, the year after Henry's death their condition improved, partly because they had become disgusted with themselves but also because agent John M. Commons visited their homes, showed them how to plant gardens, and became a tireless fighter against bootleggers on the reservation. "Very few agents or superintendents sent here have interested themselves enough to accomplish anything in this way," noted Susan in a letter to Indian Commissioner R.G. Valentine.⁵⁶

One of Susan's major successes was the building of the Walthill hospital. Years of town living had not erased from her memory the long days and nights spent in horse and buggy, hurrying to reach a desperately ill patient. Since those days, she had dreamed of a hospital to serve the Omahas.⁵⁷ In January 1913 her vision became a reality. After several efforts to interest local philanthropic organizations, she approached the Home Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church, which donated \$8000. The Society of Friends, through the Presbyterian Church, gave an additional \$500. Marguerite and her second husband, Walter Diddock, donated an acre of land, and equipment and furnishings came from other individuals and organizations. A benefit concert was held to raise more funds. The new hospital contained two general wards with a capacity of twelve beds, five private wards, a maternity ward, an operating room, two bathrooms, a kitchen, and a reception room. Both Indians and whites were served; in 1915 the hospital admitted 448 patients, 126 of them Indians.⁵⁸

THE FIGHT FOR OMAHA ALLOTMENT

Not content with her successes in health care, Susan stepped headlong into the volatile world of politics for the sake of her people. Her most important battle in behalf of the Omahas was fought while she was recovering from what she described as neurasthenia, adding that she had almost died.⁵⁹ By June her health was sufficiently improved to enable her to begin her letter-writing campaign to government officials, calling for the final allotment of Omaha lands. Since the Omahas' final allotment papers had been delivered in 1885, the twenty-five year trust period, during which their land had been inalienable, expired in 1910. But, convinced that all Indians were uneducated and backward, government officials arbitrarily decided to add ten more years to the trust period. Land allotment, which broke up Indian reservations and allotted land in severalty to tribal members, was a cherished goal of nineteenth-century reformers who attempted to turn nomadic as well as horticulturalist Indians into small yeoman farmers as part of the assimilation process.⁶⁰

The General Allotment or Dawes Act, which allotted most Indian lands, was passed in 1887, after six years of debate in Congress. Five years earlier Congress had passed the Omaha Allotment Act, for which Alice Cunningham Fletcher had lobbied actively. The Omaha treaties of both 1854 and 1865 had provided for the allotment of 160 acres to families and fewer acres to individuals. When Fletcher arrived at the reservation in 1881, she discovered that few Indians had any faith in certificates issued them under their last treaty. She circulated a petition requesting "a clear and full title to land" for each petitioner. Signed by fifty-three of the more than thousand tribal members, the petition was presented to the Senate by John R. Morgan of Alabama. Fletcher succeeded in gaining support of the Nebraska delegation because the proposal included a provision for the sale of part of the uninhabited land on the western edge of the reservation. The Omaha

Severalty Act became law on 7 August 1882, and Fletcher was appointed to carry out the allotment of land, a task that took until June 1884.⁶¹ Unanticipated problems later arose over the disposal of tribal funds, the legal rights of allottees (they were not yet citizens), and the leasing of lands—problems that Susan had to deal with.

Extension of the trust period caused extreme hardship for the Omahas. Susan rose to the defense of her people, who had a higher literacy rate than that of many tribes. She described them as “independent and self-reliant . . . [and] as competent as the same number of white people.” In addition to extending the trust period, the government had consolidated the Winnebago and Omaha agencies, which meant longer travel for tribal members carrying out agency business. Susan remarked that the two tribes were quite different and the government was mistaken if it thought it could “govern both tribes alike.” She continued proudly, “You can never push an Omaha down or pass a thing over his head; he will light on his feet facing you.”⁶²

To make matters worse, Agent John M. Commons had been replaced. Susan protested to Commissioner Valentine that certain liquor and land interests, whom she named, had exerted pressure to get “Commons out of the way so they can do as they please with the Indians,” but unfortunately, she failed to convince government officials to reinstate Commons. Shortly thereafter, the government even replaced the new Omaha superintendent, A. G. Pollock, despite the tribe’s unanimous confidence in him. Ultimately the government added so many paternal restrictions that Omahas were unable to lease their lands or obtain tribal monies without going before a competency commission.⁶³

Susan was the Omahas’ unanimous choice to appear in Washington before the Secretary of the Interior and the United States attorney general. Initially she declined because of poor health, but when tribal members threatened to put her bodily on the train, she agreed. “The

Omahas depend on me so, and I just have to take care of myself till this fight is over,” she wrote to a friend at Hampton. Appearing before the interior secretary on 7 February 1910, Susan and the delegation were successful, and most of the Omahas were subsequently considered competent to rent or lease their lands and to receive their share of tribal monies.⁶⁴

SUSAN’S LAST YEARS

In the fall of 1906 Marguerite’s husband, Walter, and Susan bought house lots in Walther, where Susan had a modern home built, complete with fireplace, furnace, windows for light and fresh air, and an indoor bathroom. She and Marguerite became charter members of a new chapter of the Eastern Star; they supported community projects, lectures, concerts, and special events at the county fair. Susan became a major organizer of the new Presbyterian Church and remained active as president of the church missionary society, urging townspeople and businesses to give freely of their time and money for her various projects. John Neihardt, author of *Black Elk Speaks*, impressed by her skill as a public speaker, noted she had “a most effective way of increasing the impact of a climactic sentence by withholding it in silence.” The tension in the room would build, and then her face grew lighter, and “she seemed to vibrate with intensity of feeling. Then, in a low voice, she said it!”⁶⁵ Along with her many public obligations, Susan always maintained direct contact with her people. She continued to serve as teacher, preacher, physician, and field worker and at the Omaha agency’s Blackbird Hills Presbyterian Church.

In addition to her professional duties, as a single parent she was continually concerned about the education of her two young sons, Caryl and Pierre. Totally committed to the assimilationist education program she had been a product of, as well as fondly remembering her Hampton days, Susan wrote the school in August 1910 in hopes of enrolling her sons, twelve and fourteen years old. Informed that they were

too young to attend Hampton, Susan instead enrolled them in the Nebraska Military Academy in Lincoln, Nebraska, a private institution for young white boys that made "individualization their aim." For the extravagant sum of \$800 annually, Caryl and Pierre would "have manual training, athletics, Christian training, languages with an academic course, military discipline, with up to date sanitary surroundings."⁶⁶

The diary Susan wrote between 20 September 1910 and 19 January 1911 reflects the busy schedule she hoped to escape temporarily at Hampton. Her days were filled with visiting patients in their homes; writing letters, including formal complaints to government officials requesting land fee patents and trust fund monies, for the illiterate; reading leases; and interpreting for Harry Keefe, a Walthill attorney and village councilman, when he drew up wills or other legal documents. She served on the Cemetery Association, raised money for church windows, attended church regularly, and held prayer sessions for the sick. But her entries also reflect her increasingly poor health.⁶⁷

Susan's ear infection had worsened steadily and by 1914 it was diagnosed as "decay of the bone," probably cancer. In June, following operations in February and March, her brother was informed by her surgeon that she had only a short time to live. Her sons, Caryl and Pierre, were home from school that summer and, along with Marguerite's eldest daughter, cared for their mother. Susan died on 18 September 1915. Her medical advice, her prudent counsel, and her unfaltering devotion were no doubt sorely missed by the small community of Walthill.⁶⁸

CONCLUSION

This remarkable woman's life spanned not only the decades of the "social housekeeping" that expanded the sphere of middle and upper class women but the decades of reform that emphasized the forced assimilation of the Indians. Susan did not challenge the Victorian woman's role nor leave the woman's sphere; she merely expanded it by shifting her doctoring

skills from her family to the extended tribe and to neighboring white residents. She accepted the ideals of the reformers and became assimilated; in turn, she used her skills to help her people assimilate. Once reformed, she became a reformer, fighting against alcohol, securing rights for the Omahas, and working with missionaries to bring Christian principles to the reservation.

Unlike white reformers, who regularly criticized all Indian traditions, including those of the Omahas, Susan only criticized particular cultural practices she believed were detrimental. Despite all of her acculturation, she was still an Omaha Indian and remained "attached" to her people.⁶⁹ It was not uncommon for her to speak publicly on her childhood, to write articles on the home life of the Indian for readers of the Women's National Indian Association's magazine, *The Indian's Friend*, or to publish Omaha stories and legends in local newspapers. While leading her people toward acculturation, she was also preserving Omaha Indian traditions.⁷⁰ Her marriage to an Indian, unlike the marriages of her three sisters, who eventually married outside their culture, also marked Susan's devotion to her heritage.

Susan LaFlesche Picotte walked with dignity and grace in a world that encompassed both her reservation and American cities and towns; she was at home in the fields of the Nebraska prairie as well as in the halls of Congress. She attained a position in medicine that few contemporary white women reached. By any cultural standards, she was a remarkable nineteenth-century woman. Her story may be one of the few positive achievements of the myopic Indian reform movement that saw little value in Indian culture and intended, through the process of assimilation, to replace it completely.

NOTES

1. *The Walthill Times*, 24 September 1915.
2. "Pioneer Medical Woman: Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte," *The Medical Woman's Journal*, 37 (January 1930): 20, courtesy of the Archives and Special Collections on Women in Medicine, the

Medical College of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (MCPA).

3. *The Pender Times*, 6 September 1990. Four important goals have been set for the center: to commemorate Dr. Susan, to celebrate the cultural diversity of the community, to learn about local residents, and to improve community relations.

4. There is some confusion over her birthday. Her tombstone at the Bancroft, Nebraska, cemetery reads 17 June 1865, but the questionnaire she completed in November 1888 indicates she was born at Oakland, Nebraska, in June 1866. Collis P. Huntington Memorial Library Archives, Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia (HIA). For a detailed study see Valerie Sherer Mathes, "Susan LaFlesche Picotte: Nebraska's Indian Physician, 1865-1915," *Nebraska History* 63 (Winter 1982): 502-30; Mathes, Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte: The Reformed and the Reformer," *Indian Lives: Essays on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Native American Leaders*, ed. L. G. Moses and Raymond Wilson (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985), pp. 62-90; Norma Kidd Green, "Four Sisters: Daughters of Joseph LaFlesche," *Iron Eye's Family: The Children of Joseph LaFlesche* (Lincoln: Johnsen Publishing Company, 1969), pp. 122-62; Green, "Four Sisters: Daughters of Joseph LaFlesche," *Nebraska History* 45 (1964): 165-76; Laurence M. Hauptman, "Medicine Woman Susan LaFlesche, 1865-1915," *New York State Journal of Medicine* 78 (1978): 1783-88; Peggy Ann Pascoe, "The Search for Female Moral Authority: Protestant Women and Rescue Homes in the American West, 1874-1939," (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1986), pp. 199-330, published as *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); and Jerry E. Clark and Martha Ellen Webb, "Susette and Susan LaFlesche: Reformer and Missionary, Being and Becoming Indian: Biographical Studies of North American Frontiers, ed. James A. Clifton (Chicago: The Dorsey Press, 1989), pp. 147-59.

5. Alice C. Fletcher and Francis LaFlesche, *The Omaha Tribe*, vol. 2 (1905-06; rpt. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972): 634. See also Mathes, "Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte" (note 4 above) p. 63-65, and Green, *Iron Eye's Family* (note 4 above), pp. 17-55.

6. Susan LaFlesche, "My Childhood and Womanhood, Salutatory by Susan LaFlesche, of the Graduating Class," *Southern Workman* (July 1886), p. 82, and Douglas Street, "LaFlesche Sisters Write to St. Nicolas Magazine," *Nebraska History* 62 (1981): 522. Susan's letter on her academic training is published in this article in full. The *Southern Workman* was the school newspaper at Hampton Institute.

See also *The Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute and Its Work for the Education of the Indian* (ca. 1892-93), HIA; and Mary Frances Armstrong and Helen W. Ludlow, *Hampton and Its Students* (New York: 1874).

7. For a discussion of Indian girls' education, see Robert Trennert, "Educating Indian Girls at Nonreservation Boarding Schools, 1878-1920," *Western Historical Quarterly* 13 (July 1982): 271-90.

8. Susan LaFlesche to Miss Richards, 7 August 1885, HIA.

9. Alice C. Fletcher to Rosalie Farley, 21 May 1886, LaFlesche Family Papers (LFP), Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln (NSHS). For a detailed study of Fletcher's Indian work, see Rebecca Hancock Welch, "Alice Cunningham Fletcher, Anthropologist and Indian Rights Reformer," (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1980) and Joan Mark, *A Stranger in Her Native Land: Alice Fletcher and the American Indians*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988).

10. In her salutatory address to her graduating class at Hampton, she remarked that she hoped to go to medical school. See "My Childhood and Womanhood" (note 6 above), p. 82.

11. For the Peace Commission and the resulting Peace Policy see Francis Paul Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis: Christian Reformers and the Indian 1865-1900* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), pp. 14-102; Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984) vol. 1: 479-606; Robert H. Keller, *American Protestantism and United States Indian Policy, 1869-82* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), pp. 1-216; Robert Winston Mardock, *The Reformers and the American Indian* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1971), pp. 25-228; and Henry E. Fritz, *The Movement for Indian Assimilation, 1860-1890* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1963), pp. 56-221.

12. See Clyde A. Milner, *With Good Intentions: Quaker Work among the Pawnees, Osos, and Omahas in the 1870s* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), p. 154, see also pp. 1-26, 153-85.

13. See Helen M. Wanken, "Woman's Sphere and Indian Reform: The Women's National Indian Association, 1878-1901," (Ph.D. dissertation, Marquette University, 1981), especially pp. 59-74 for information on Susan; Valerie Sherer Mathes, "Nineteenth Century Women and Reform: The Women's National Indian Association," *American Indian Quarterly* (Winter 1990): 1-18; William T. Hagan, *The Indian Rights Association: The Herbert Welsh Years, 1882-1904* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985); and Larry Y. Burgess, "The Lake

Mohonk Conference on the Indian, 1883-1916," (Ph.D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1972).

14. Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood 1820-1860," *Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976), pp. 21-41. See also Glenda Riley, "The Cult of True Womanhood: Industrial and Westward Expansion 1816-1837," *Inventing the American Woman: A Perspective on Women's History* (Arlington Heights, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1987), pp. 63-87; Barbara Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism and Temperance in Nineteenth Century America* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1981), pp. 2-7, 67, 75, 84-85; and for a detailed study see Mary P. Ryan, "American Society and the Cult of Domesticity, 1830-1860," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Santa Barbara, 1971).

15. *Lend-a-Hand*, 1886 (n.p.; apparently a missionary society bulletin), see also *Southern Workman* (July 1886), p. 83, both HIA. Catharine Beecher, eldest daughter of Lyman Beecher and sister of both Henry Ward Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe glorified domesticity in her "Treatise on Domestic Economy" first published in 1841 and reprinted nearly every year to 1856. Beecher defined the home as the base from which women influenced culture.

16. Fletcher to Rosalie Farley, 21 May 1886, LFP, NSHS.

17. Samuel Armstrong to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs (CIA), 20 August 1886, Office of Indian Affairs (Record Group 75, Letters Received from Susan LaFlesche, 1886-1893, #22530-1886), National Archives and Record Service, Washington, D.C. (hereinafter cited as NA, RG 75, OIA, LR). Alfred Jones to Martha Waldron, 26 March 1886, Fletcher-LaFlesche MSS, National Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (xerox copy supplied MCPA). See also Armstrong to Sara Thomson Kinney, June 1886, included with Kinney's letter to CIA, 6 September 1886, NA, RG 75, OIA, LR, #23847-1886.

18. Kinney had asked her family to have Susan arrive in time for the start of classes on 7 October. See Francis LaFlesche to Ed Farley, 27 September 1886, LFP, NSHS; Kinney to Rosalie Farley, n.d., LFP, NSHS. See also Kinney to CIA, 16 September 1886, NA, RG 75, OIA, LR, #24837-1886; Ellen Terry Johnson, *Historical Sketch of the Connecticut Indian Association from 1881 to 1888* (Hartford: Fowler & Miller Company, 1888), p. 13.

19. "The Medical College of Pennsylvania Archives and Special Collections on Women in Medicine" brochure, MCPA. In 1969 the college began admitting male medical students; a year later it became known as the Medical College of Pennsylvania.

20. Kinney, with a personal recommendation from Armstrong, had convinced Commissioner of Indian Affairs John D.C. Atkins to provide \$167 a year. See Kinney to CIA, 6 September 1886, NA, RG 75, OIA, LR, #23847-1886. On 10 September the Connecticut Indian Association contracted with the government for Susan's support. See Kinney to CIA, 10 September 1886, NA, RG 75, OIA, LR, #24280-1886. On 15 September 1886, the government agreed to pay \$167 per year if the Connecticut Indian Association agreed to "clothe, feed, lodge, and care for, and educate . . . from October 1, 1886 to June 30, 1887. . . . Susan LaFlesche." These agreements and the government vouchers are in Box 4, the Sara Thomson Kinney Collection, Connecticut State Library (CSL), Hartford, Connecticut. The following year the government reduced its share to \$125. For that controversy see Mathes, "Susan LaFlesche Picotte" (note 4 above), p. 511. See also Kinney to Ed Farley, 10 October 1886 and Alice C. Fletcher to Rosalie Farley, 21 May 1886, LFP, NSHS; *Lend-A-Hand* (note 15 above) and Kinney to Miss Richards, 14 May 1886, HIA.

21. Johnson, *Historical Sketch* (note 18 above), p. 3.

22. *Lend-A-Hand* (note 15 above).

23. Quoted from a pamphlet enclosed with Kinney to CIA, 6 September 1886, NA, RG 75, OIA, LR, #23847-1886.

24. Susan LaFlesche to Rosalie Farley, 1 December 1886; 17 November 1886; 4 April 1887; 19 January 1887; and 4 January 1888, LFP, NSHS, are just a few examples of her letters.

25. LaFlesche to Rosalie Farley, 9 March 1887; 12 January 1887; 19 and 26 January 1887; and 24 October 1886, LFP, NSHS. The Lincoln Institute for Boys, incorporated in 1866, housed orphans of Civil War soldiers. Another institution, organized in the 1880s, housed Indian children. The Educational Home was incorporated in 1871 in connection with the Lincoln Institute and cared for and educated orphans and destitute children. Scharff and Wescott, *History of Philadelphia* vol. 2 (1888): 1457, 1487, archives, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

26. Kinney to CIA, 29 June 1887, NA, RG 75, OIA, LR, #16996-1887; LaFlesche to Rosalie Farley, 12 January 1887, LFP, NSHS.

27. LaFlesche to Rosalie Farley, 24 October 1886; 19 January 1887; 9 March 1887; 4 April 1887; 5 April 1887; 24 December 1887; and 4 January 1888, LFP, NSHS, are just a few letters in which Susan mentions this family.

28. LaFlesche to Rosalie Farley, 24 October 1886, LFP, NSHS. For other references see LaFlesche to Rosalie Farley, 12 and 26 January 1887 and 2 February 1887, LFP, NSHS. For additional

information on her relationship with TI, see Mathes, "Susan LaFlesche Picotte" (note 4 above), pp. 517-18; Pascoe, "The Search for Female Moral Authority" (note 4 above), pp. 251-53; and Green, *Iron Eye's Family* (note 4 above), pp. 133-34, 146.

29. Kinney to CIA, 29 June 1887, NA, RG 75, OIA, LR, #16996-1887, and *Thirty-Eighth Annual Announcement of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1887), p. 5.

30. LaFlesche to Rosalie Farley, 5 November 1886 and probably January 1888, LFP, NSHS. For additional information found in her Philadelphia letters see Mathes, "Susan LaFlesche Picotte" (note 4 above), pp. 508-11, and Mathes, "Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte" (note 4 above), pp. 69-72.

31. LaFlesche to Sara Kinney, 19 November 1888, Sara Thomson Kinney Collection, CSL.

32. LaFlesche to Rosalie Farley, 29 October 1886; 17 November 1886; 2 February 1887; probably 1-4 January 1888; and 2 March 1887, LFP, NSHS. See also Mathes, "Susan LaFlesche Picotte" (note 4 above), p. 509.

33. *Fortieth Annual Announcement of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1889), p. 1; Susan LaFlesche Picotte Alumna File, MCPA.

34. "The First Woman Physician Among her People," *The Medical Missionary Record* 4 (1889): 126, MCPA.

35. LaFlesche to CIA, 13 June 1889, NA, RG 75, OIA, LR, #15736-1889.

36. Wanken, "Women's Sphere" (note 13 above), p. 71.

37. LaFlesche to the CIA, 13 June 1889, #15736-1889 and 5 August 1889 #21752-1889 NA, RG 75, OIA, LR; Robert H. Ashley to CIA, 10 December 1889, NR, RG 75, OIA, LR, #35955-1889. See also Susan LaFlesche, "My Work as Physician Among My People," *Southern Workman* (August 1892), HIA.

38. Valerie Sherer Mathes, "Native American Women in Medicine and the Military," *Journal of the West* 21 (April 1982): 41-48.

39. "Report of Susan LaFlesche, M.D.: Medical Missionary of the Women's National Indian Association Among the Omaha Indians," (Philadelphia, WNIA: 24 October 1891), p. 6-7, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts; and Susan LaFlesche, "My Work as Physician" (note 37 above). See also *Annual Report of the WNIA* (Philadelphia, November 1891), p. 13.

40. "Report of Susan LaFlesche, M.D." (note 39 above), pp. 4-6; Susan LaFlesche, "Report of Physician for Omahas, 20 August 1893, U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs," *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior* 1893, (Washington: Gov-

ernment Printing Office, 1893), p. 197; and WNIA, "Present Medical and Hospital Work," *Sketches of Delightful Work* (Philadelphia, January 1893), pp. 46-51; Susan LaFlesche, "My Work as Physician" (note 37 above); and Cora M. Folsom, *The Congregation & Christian World* (12 March 1904), HIA. For more details of her medical care see Mathes, "Susan LaFlesche Picotte" (note 4 above), pp. 513-16.

41. *Women and Religion in America: The Nineteenth Century: A Documentary History*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), 1:311.

42. See Valerie Sherer Mathes, *Helen Hunt Jackson and Her Indian Reform Legacy*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), pp. 7-10.

43. *The Indian's Friend* 4 (Philadelphia, December 1891): 17. For example Susan spoke before the Washington D.C. Auxiliary, see WNIA, *Annual Report of the WNIA* (Philadelphia, December 1892), p. 21.

44. "Present Medical and Hospital Work" (note 40 above), pp. 51-52; "Report of Susan LaFlesche, M.D." (note 39 above), p. 6; Susan LaFlesche Picotte, "The Varied Work of an Indian Missionary," *Home Mission Monthly* 22 (August 1908) n.p., Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia; and Joseph M. Commons, Omaha agent, 2 October 1907, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, p. 2.

45. Theodora Finks, ed., "The First Indian Woman Physician," *Home Mission Monthly* 38 (February 1924), n.p., Presbyterian Historical Society.

46. Reports Changes in School Employees, 29 October 1893, NA, RG 75, OIA, LR, #40940-1893; LaFlesche to Rosalie Farley, ca. 1887; Rosalie Farley to Francis LaFlesche, 1 January 1893, LFP, NSHS. Susan's illness was probably osteomyelitis, an infection of the bone now easily cured by antibiotics.

47. *Southern Workman* (August 1894); "The First Indian Woman Physician," *Bulletin of Council of Women for Home Missions*, p. 447, MCPA.

48. LaFlesche to Rosalie Farley, 2 March 1887; 2 February 1887; and 12 January 1887 LFP, NSHS. Green, *Iron Eye's Family* (note 4 above), p. 134 argues that the promise related to her father while Pascoe, "The Search for Female Moral Authority" (note 4 above), p. 251 suggests the Connecticut Indian Association.

49. Marian B. Heritage to Rosalie Farley, 22 June 1894, LFP, NSHS. For additional information see Green, *Iron Eye's Family* (note 4 above), p. 146.

50. LaFlesche to Miss Richards, 9 December 1897, HIA.

51. Susan LaFlesche Picotte, "Report of Chairman of State Health Committee," State Federation

of Women's Clubs, c. 1913-14, LFP, NSHS; "Pioneer Medical Woman: Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte," *The Medical Woman's Journal* 37 (January 1930): 20; H. Winnett Orr, "The Colorful Dr. Gale," *History of Medicine in Nebraska* (1952), p. 28, MSS #4660, MCPA; and S. James Rowland, "Susan LaFlesche: Princess, Physician, Prairie Preacher," A.D. 4 (November 1975): 40, MCPA.

52. LaFlesche to Commissioner Cato Sells, 29 April 1914, LFP, NSHS.

53. Susan LaFlesche Picotte, "Diary, 20 September 1910 to 19 January 1911," LFP, NSHS, MS2026, see entry for 11 January 1911; "War Declared on the Fly: From Breeding Place to Feeding Place," poster, HIA.

54. Fletcher and LaFlesche, *Omaha Tribe* (note 5 above), 2: 618-19 and "Testimony of Susan LaFlesche Picotte, investigating the death of Henry Wagner," 22 May 1914, LFP, NSHS (quoted). For Susan's prohibition activities see Mathes, "Susan LaFlesche Picotte" (note 4 above), pp. 519-21; Mathes, "Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte" (note 4 above), pp. 74-77; and Pascoe, "The Search for Female Moral Authority" (note 4 above), 217-19.

55. LaFlesche to CIA, 27 January 1900, HIA. See *Talks and Thoughts* (July 1893), HIA; Francis LaFlesche to Caryl Farley, 3 February 1901, LFP, NSHS; "The Varied Work of an Indian Missionary," and WNIA, "Another Appeal," *The Indian's Friend* 12 (no. 7, Philadelphia, March 1900): 8.

56. LaFlesche to R. G. Valentine, 2 July 1909. See also LaFlesche to Valentine, 13 July 1909, both in HIA.

57. Her diary entry for 5 December 1910 reflected her trip to Ashland to speak in the local church on Indian customs and the need for a hospital. Picotte, "Diary, 1910-1911" (note 53 above).

58. *Southern Workman* (April 1913) and *Indian News* (January 1913), both in HIA; see also "Pioneer Medical Woman" (note 51 above), p. 20.

59. LaFlesche to Cora M. Folsom, 15 February 1910 and LaFlesche to Miss Andrus, 24 June 1909, both in HIA. Neurasthenia, a functional nervous disorder primarily regarded as a disease of middle class women, was first described in 1869. Lorna Duffin, "The Conspicuous Consumptive: Woman as an Invalid," *The Nineteenth Century Woman: Her Cultural and Physical World*, ed. Sara DeLamont and Lorna Duffin (New York, 1978), pp. 37-39. See also Ann Douglas Wood, "The Fashionable Diseases": Women's Complaints and Their Treatment in Nineteenth-Century America," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 4 (Summer 1973): 25-52.

60. For a discussion of reformers' views on allotment see Francis Paul Prucha, ed. *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the "Friends of the*

Indian," 1880-1900, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 7-145; Wilcomb E. Washburn, *The Assault on Indian Tribalism: The General Allotment Law (Dawes Act) of 1887* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1975); and D.S. Otis, *The Dawes Act and the Allotment of Indian Lands*, ed. Francis Paul Prucha (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973).

Although many tribes practiced horticulture, in areas where planting was a secondary subsistence activity, women did the farming. This gender role did not please reformers because Indian women were to become models of True Womanhood like their white counterparts.

61. For the text of the petition see Fletcher and LaFlesche, *The Omaha Tribe* (note 5 above), 2: 636. See also Welch, "Alice Cunningham Fletcher" (note 9 above) pp. 51-63, and Mark, *A Stranger in Her Native Land* (note 9 above), pp. 64-79; 88-101.

62. Susan LaFlesche Picotte, "Dr. Picotte Discusses the New Policy," *Walthill Times*, 28 December 1909 (originally written for the *Omaha Bee*).

63. LaFlesche to Commissioner Valentine, 2 July 1909 and 13 July 1909, and LaFlesche to Cora M. Folsom, 15 February 1910; see also Robert C. Ogden to Dr. Frissell, 30 June 1909, all in HIA. The latter included a curt telegram from Susan to Ogden ordering him to hold up the transfer of Commons until an investigation could be held.

64. LaFlesche to Folsom, 15 February 1910 and postcard stamped 27 January 1910, HIA. For additional information on her activities in behalf of the Omahas, see Pascoe, "The Search for Female Moral Authority" (note 4 above), pp. 226-27.

65. John G. Neihardt, *Patterns and Coincidences: A Sequel to All Is But a Beginning* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1978), pp. 39-40.

66. LaFlesche to Cora M. Folsom, 26 August 1910; LaFlesche to Miss Andrus, 17 September 1910 (quoted), HIA.

67. Picotte, "Diary, 1910-1911" (note 53 above).

68. *New York Sun*, 19 September 1915; *Washington Post*, 19 September 1915; *Peace Pipe*, September 1915; *Southern Workman*, November 1915, all in HIA.

69. "Report of Susan LaFlesche, M.D." (note 39 above), p. 7.

70. LaFlesche, "My Childhood and Womanhood," (note 6 above), p. 82-83; WNIA, "The Home Life of the Indian," *The Indian's Friend* 4 (no. 10, Philadelphia, June 1892): 39; and Susan LaFlesche Picotte, various legends found in LFP, NSHS. See also "The Origin of the Corn: Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte Relates Some Interesting Legends," *Walthill Times*, 8 March 1912.