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Article Summary: Susan La Flesche Picotte graduated from medical school at a time when very few women did so. As the only doctor serving her Omaha tribe, she traveled long distances to visit patients in their homes in all kinds of weather. In later years she also became politically active on behalf of the Omaha.

#### Cataloging Information:

Names: Susan LaFlesche Picotte, Joseph LaFlesche, Marguerite LaFlesche, Rosalie La Flesche, Samuel Armstrong, Alice Cunningham Fletcher, Martha M Waldron, Sara Thomson Kinney, Thomas Ikinicapi, Henry Picotte

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Photographs / Images: 1886 graduation class, Hampton (Virginia) Institute, including graduates Susan LaFlesche and her sister Lucy LaFlesche; ethnologist Alice Cunningham Fletcher; Susan LaFlesche Picotte about 1898; Picotte's Walthill residence, new in 1908; Omaha chief Joseph (Iron Eye) LaFlesche, Susan's father; Susan's sons Caryl and Pierre

# Susan LaFlesche Picotte: Nebraska's Indian Physician, 1865-1915

BY VALERIE SHERER MATHES

"Plenty of air and sunshine—that is Nature's medicine, but I have hard work to make my people understand,"<sup>1</sup> Susan LaFlesche, the first Indian woman physician, once remarked. Susan's people, the Siouan-speaking Omaha, had their origins in the Ohio and Wabash River area but had subsequently migrated westward to eastern Nebraska. Following the passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1830, they began ceding their claims to eastern lands. By 1854 they gave up their rights to hunting grounds west of the Missouri River and retained only a small tract bordering the river. In return for ceded lands, they received annuities, a grist mill, a blacksmith shop, and protection from hostile tribes. The treaty also gave the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church four quarter sections of land to continue missionary work among the tribe.

The Presbyterians had established their first permanent mission at Bellevue, Nebraska, in 1845, but when the Omaha cession required the Indians to move to their new reservation, the missionaries followed. In 1858 they built a new mission house as well as a boarding and day school where Omaha children, including those of Joseph LaFlesche, were educated.

The son of a French fur trader and his Indian wife, Joseph in 1853 was the last recognized chief of the tribe. Aware that the Indians would eventually have to learn the ways of the whites, in the 1850s he hired white carpenters to construct a two-story frame house near the site of the new mission. By abandoning the Omaha traditional earthen lodge, Joseph became an example for his people to follow. He laid out a town site, fenced 100 acres, and divided the land into smaller fields in order that each man in his village could farm.<sup>2</sup>

Joseph took another step in adopting white ways when he

refused to have his daughters tattooed and his sons' ears pierced. He explained, "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, and I determined that they should not have any mark put upon them that might be detrimental in their future surrounding."<sup>3</sup>

Joseph was remarkably astute, for several of his seven children not only mingled with whites but played important roles in bridging the gap between the two cultures. One son, Francis, became a well-known ethnologist with the Bureau of American Ethnology; Susette, the eldest daughter, became a prominent Indian-rights leader; and Susan, the youngest daughter, became the first Indian woman to graduate from a medical college and practice modern medicine.<sup>4</sup>

In 1865, the year of Susan's birth,<sup>5</sup> her father signed the last Omaha treaty, ceding the northern part of their reservation as a home for the Winnebago. The Omaha's shrinking land base made the adoption of the ways of the whites even more urgent.<sup>6</sup> Joseph, aware of the importance of education, sent his children to school in the East.

Susan's education began at the Omaha Agency<sup>7</sup> and the Presbyterian Mission School. In September, 1879, she and her sister Marguerite entered the Elizabeth Institute for Young Ladies in Elizabeth, New Jersey. In 1882 after three years in New Jersey, the sisters returned to the reservation. Susan spent the next two years working at the mission school, and for a six-month period taught a class of small children.<sup>8</sup> In 1884 Marguerite and Susan entered Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Hampton, Virginia.

The education of Indians at Hampton began in 1879 when Richard Henry Pratt, a young Army officer, arrived with 22 Indian students from Fort Marion, Florida. Well known for its education of Negro freedmen, Hampton had been established by General Samuel Armstrong in 1868. Armstrong welcomed the Indian students warmly, thus beginning a long and successful experiment in Indian education at Hampton.<sup>9</sup>

For the next two years Susan and Marguerite, dressed in uniforms, drilled on the parade ground and were imbued with the educational philosophy of Armstrong. He believed that labor was "a spiritual force, that physical work not only in-

creased wage-earning capacity, but promoted fidelity, accuracy, honesty, persistence and intelligence."<sup>10</sup>

Newly arrived students who could read and write English, like Susan and Marguerite, were automatically placed in the normal course of study and proceeded at their own pace academically while tutoring part of the day those who had less formal education. Beginning at 5 a.m. students put in a 12-hour day. There was, however, a more pleasant social side of school life in which both Susan and Marguerite joined eagerly.<sup>11</sup>

Graduating from Hampton on May 20, 1886, as salutatorian, Susan's address was entitled "My Childhood and Womanhood." General Byron M. Cutcheon, Civil War medal of honor winner, also presented her with the Demorest prize, a gold medal awarded by the faculty to the graduating senior who had achieved the highest examination score in the junior year. Dressed simply but neatly, "Susan looked well, spoke clearly and everyone was delighted with her,"<sup>12</sup> wrote Alice Cunningham Fletcher, an ethnologist who had journeyed from Washington, DC, to join the more than 1,000 people in the audience.

Susan's education to this point was little out of the ordinary, but her decision to attend medical college was unique. The fact that she eventually became a medical practitioner was not unusual, for in some western tribes there were medicine women and female shamans. All native medical practitioners gained their skills through visions and trances brought on by fasting as well as by special training. While Indians could acquire healing skills at any point in their lives, women could not engage in healing until after menopause.<sup>13</sup> What set Susan apart was her desire to graduate from a medical college, an accomplishment few women<sup>14</sup> could hope to achieve, especially Indian women. Later, too, she would practice medicine many years before the onset of menopause on the Omaha reservation.

At Hampton, Susan had been encouraged to concentrate on academic subjects rather than vocational skills. Both General Armstrong and Dr. Martha M. Waldron, the school physician, believed Susan capable of attending medical college. But first it was necessary to raise funds for tuition and expenses. Alice Cunningham Fletcher and Sara Thomson Kinney, wife of

the editor of the *Hartford* (Connecticut) *Courant*, would solve that problem.

Alice Fletcher was familiar with the LaFlesche family, having worked closely with Francis as her major informant on Omaha culture, and having been tended by young Susan during an attack of inflammatory rheumatism in 1883. While serving as missionary, teacher, and government official for the tribe, Miss Fletcher had also been a frequent visitor to reform gatherings at Lake Mohonk, New York. There she met Sara Kinney who, after some persuasion, agreed to approach the commissioner of Indian Affairs about the possibility of Susan's continued education.<sup>15</sup>

The Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, located in Philadelphia,<sup>16</sup> ultimately admitted Susan as a "beneficiary student." Established initially as the Female College of Pennsylvania "to instruct respectable and intelligent *females* in the various branches of medical science,"<sup>17</sup> it opened its doors on October 12, 1850. By the time of Susan's attendance, it was known as the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania.

On March 20, 1886, Dr. Waldron, a graduate of the college, wrote to Alfred Jones, the secretary of its executive committee, in behalf of Susan. Jones replied that it was impossible at that time to give her a "free scholarship." He added that applications had to be handwritten by prospective students, "stating age, accompanied by testimonials as to health, character, [and] educational qualifications."<sup>18</sup> Once her entrance into college was assured, money for tuition and living expenses as well as travel was needed. Kinney bought her initial train ticket and asked the family to send her to Philadelphia by October 1.<sup>19</sup>

Most of the expense for her education was paid for by the Connecticut Indian Association,<sup>20</sup> of which Mrs. Kinney was president. Founded in 1881 as an auxiliary of the Women's National Indian Association, the aims of the Connecticut group included "aid [to] Indians, in civilization, industrial training, self support, education, citizenship and Christianization."<sup>21</sup> Susan's academic support was appropriate to their program. In a meeting on May 21, 1886, at the suggestion of President Kinney the Connecticut Association agreed to undertake the entire expense of Susan's education for the next three years. General Armstrong had written an enthusiastic

letter about her abilities, for he regarded her as "the finest, strongest Indian character . . . at this school." He described her as "a level-headed, earnest, capable, Christian woman, quite equal . . . to medical studies."<sup>22</sup>

Well aware that the government paid \$167 a year for Indian students at Hampton or Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, Kinney wrote to John D. C. Atkins, commissioner of Indian Affairs, in hope of getting a similar grant for Susan's educational expenses. If the government would provide the \$167 per year, she said, the Connecticut Indian Association would be responsible for the remainder of her expenses.<sup>23</sup> General Samuel Armstrong, when writing the commissioner "respectfully suggesting" that the money be applied toward Susan's education, remarked that he had "no hesitation in speaking of her as a young woman of unusual ability, integrity, fixedness of purpose and well worthy in every respect of such aid."<sup>24</sup> Following the commissioner's agreement to this proposal<sup>25</sup> Mrs. Kinney sent out an appeal to the women of Connecticut for donations. By helping Susan, she noted, the Omaha tribe would also be elevated. "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."<sup>26</sup>

On learning of her good fortune, young Susan wrote to Mrs. Kinney from Hampton in June that it made her happy to have so many mothers caring for her. "It has always been a desire of mine to study medicine ever since I was a small girl," she wrote, "for even then I saw the needs of my people for a good physician."<sup>27</sup> She intended to teach the women of her tribe a few practical points about cleanliness, cooking, nursing, and housekeeping. In closing Susan noted that she and Marguerite hoped to spend most of the summer working among the sick at the church.

Suffering from motion sickness, a weary Susan alighted from the train in Philadelphia in early October. She was met by Mrs. Seth Talcott, chairman of the business committee of the association and Dr. Elizabeth Bundy, an instructor of anatomy at the college.<sup>28</sup> Susan was placed in suitable housing at the YWCA, with which she was extremely pleased, and was provided with necessary supplies and clothing. For the next three years she sent home lively and interesting letters to her



*The 1886 graduating class, Hampton (Virginia) Institute: Susan LaFlesche (seated on chair third from left), and Susan's sister Lucy LaFlesche (to right of Susan). Others (from left): Annie Hunter White (front row, seated on ground), Annie Kemble Jackson, Kate Baker Busey; Williams College president Mark Hopkins (seated with top hat), Alice M. Bacon, Susan LaFlesche, Lucy LaFlesche, E. Hyde, Miss Sherman, Miss Bentley; General Samuel Armstrong Chapman (standing at extreme left), Pinkney W. Dawkins, Thomas Lockery, Sarah E. Riddick, Julia Coles, Martin Woodlyn, Maggie I. Stevens, General J. B. Marshall (with beard), Dr. H. B. Frissell, Mary Mackie (white cloak), the Reverend Richard Tolman (black coat), C. L. Mackie (standing at extreme right); Willis F. Hodges (back row, standing), Leslie Talliferro, J. W. Greaves, H. H. Harris, Charles F. Picotte, M. Kenwill (standing on balcony), J. S. Worcester, Mrs. M. Baldwin McDowell, F. N. Gilman, Sara Wentworth, George L. Curtis, H. W. Ludlow.*

sister Rosalie about the people she met, her courses, and the sights she saw.

Susan and the other students registered in the office of Rachel Bodley, dean of the college and a professor of chemistry. She shook hands with all of the potential young doctors but greeted Susan with a kiss, saying, "We are very glad to welcome you, Miss LaFlesche . . . and are proud of your lineage."<sup>29</sup> The dean again welcomed Susan formally before the entire student body and several days later gave a reception for the class of 1889. The crowd was so great that Susan could not even get to the ice cream that was being served.

In her first year Susan attended lectures in chemistry anatomy, physiology, histology, materia medica, general therapeutics, and obstetrics.<sup>30</sup> Students were expected to take notes. Apparently Susan had difficulty with chemistry, for she borrowed a chemistry notebook almost every morning after lecture from a second-year student, Sarah Lockery.<sup>31</sup> Although attendance was not mandatory, Susan and the others rarely missed classes, especially on examination day, for they had to pass 90 percent of their tests.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to attending lectures, the students went to a weekly clinic at the Woman's Hospital. Susan humorously 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 fainted and had to be removed from the room. "I wasn't even thinking of fainting," wrote Susan, nor for that matter were any "of the girls."<sup>33</sup> Susan and her fellow students must have truly enjoyed that day, for they had often been teased about being faint hearted. Apparently Susan never minded dissecting cadavers and jokingly informed Rosalie she was "going to wield the knife tonight—not the scalping knife though."<sup>34</sup> During a typical dissecting session six students were assigned to one cadaver and in detail she described the procedure to Rosalie: "It is interesting to get all the arteries and their branches—everything has a name," she wrote, "from the little tiny holes in the bones. It is splendid."<sup>35</sup>

Examinations were dreaded at first, but as time passed Susan found them easier. During her March, 1887, exams, she wrote to Rosalie to pray for her to pass, but then added, "I

don't dread them very much though."<sup>36</sup> Seven days later she had passed her chemistry examination and described her anatomy exam as "lovely." "I had made a certain point to study certain bones," she wrote, "and we were asked to describe those very bones and one or two others, so I got on swimmingly."<sup>37</sup> In the spring of 1888, Susan passed her chemistry, anatomy, and physiology exams several times in her dreams before actually taking them. Armed with pens, pencils, and knives Susan and the other students descended upon the lecture room. She described the tests as "delightful" except for the suspense of waiting to be notified of the outcome. At 10 p.m. the students congregated in the halls to receive letters notifying them if they had passed. As second year students, Susan and her group had to wait for the graduating seniors to be informed first. As she opened her own letter, a sense of calmness swept over her, and when she saw she had passed, she wrote to Mrs. Kinney that she was "glad, so glad, . . . [she] could scarcely realize it."<sup>38</sup> She was glad for her parents, for the Indians, for the ladies of the Connecticut Indian Association, whom she called her Hartford "mothers" or "foster mothers," and naturally for herself. Now she and the other second-year students could look forward with anticipation to the same time next year when they would graduate.

She frequently wrote home, prescribing medicine and giving medical advice to her family. When her mother developed a sore on her hand, Susan sent a packet with carbolated vaseline and castile soap.<sup>39</sup> When Rosalie's husband, Ed, became ill, Susan wrote, "Tell him 'Dr.' Sue orders less quinine and more time for his meals. I am going to write him a letter some day in vacation, a sisterly doctorly letter."<sup>40</sup> During one of Rosalie's many pregnancies, Susan advised her not to work too hard, nor to lift heavy objects. She should get plenty of exercise in the fresh air, as well as enough sleep; and she must stop worrying over her work and spend more time reading and telling the children stories.<sup>41</sup> This was sound advice by any standards.

Unlike most Indian women of the 19th century, Susan was afforded the opportunity to learn about mainstream cultural activities. She frequented the Philadelphia Academy of Art, commented on the paintings of Benjamin West,<sup>42</sup> became fond of musical performances,<sup>43</sup> and attended literary and

theatrical events, including "The Mikado" and a performance of Lily Langtry in "Wife's Peril."<sup>44</sup> Accompanied by her brother Francis, she witnessed the Philadelphia Mummer's Parade, commenting that the masqueraders dressed as Indians looked "pretty well for Indians."<sup>45</sup>

She especially enjoyed getting out of the city and walking through Fairmount Park collecting pine cones,<sup>46</sup> but she did not ignore her Indian friends and visited Marguerite at Hampton at every opportunity. She also visited the Indian boys at the Educational Home in West Philadelphia as well as the Indian children at Philadelphia's Lincoln Institute.<sup>47</sup> She attended missionary meetings, went to church, and joined her friends in various social activities. Well respected by her fellow students, Susan was chosen corresponding secretary of the Young Women's Christian Association.<sup>48</sup> Out of a feeling of indebtedness for their support, she spoke before several branches of the Connecticut Indian Association. In October, 1887, she visited the Hartford group, meeting for the first time many of the women whom she lovingly called her "mothers."<sup>49</sup>

Susan participated in sports at the college, taking a gymnastics class and learning to skate and play 10 pins. She wrote that to keep in practice she would probably swing an ax or harness the horses the next time she came home. She would not, she emphatically noted, go anywhere near the cows, "for I am afraid of those critters."<sup>50</sup>

She spent a good deal of time with the W. W. Heritage family of Philadelphia. Mrs. Heritage took special interest in Susan, inviting her to their home often for tea or dinner. Susan also accompanied them to many social events. The daughter Marian, who taught at Girard College, invited Susan to various activities. One day the two went to a drill at the college. Susan was not only impressed with the drill, which was supposed to be almost as good as those at West Point, but also with the architecture at the college. The largest building resembled the Parthenon in Athens and was said to be the only American building which was purely Grecian.<sup>51</sup>

Holidays far from her family must have been a lonely time for Susan. Fortunately her first Christmas was spent at Hampton with former school chums and Marguerite.<sup>52</sup> Summer vacations were probably more difficult. During her first summer she accepted a teaching position at Hampton.<sup>53</sup> The

following summer she returned to Hampton to attend commencement ceremonies. Warmly welcomed by teachers and students, she served as role model for young Indian students, who eagerly looked forward to her visits. Following the commencement exercises Susan took the train home. She was welcomed at the Bancroft station on June 1 by her family.

Because her parents were both ailing, that summer she had to do much of the household and field work: harness horses, rack hay, measure land for a fence, cook, sew, and of course, some occasional nursing. When she arrived home, the Omaha were in the last stage of a serious measles epidemic. Almost every family lost a loved one that summer, and Susan did what she could to comfort and medicate the sick, helping Dr. and Mrs. Hensel in their rounds. Susan showed the Indians how to take medicine prescribed by the doctor, and handed out delicacies that her friends in Easton, Pennsylvania, had sent for the sick. Since the Omaha lived so far apart, Susan could rarely visit more than 10 families in an afternoon, while traveling as much as 25 miles. Seeing them in their home environment, she became vividly aware that her people had much to learn about cleanliness.<sup>54</sup> The Omaha had suffered another measles epidemic in 1900 and Susan, then a full-fledged physician, vaccinated many of the children.<sup>55</sup>

The financing for Susan's first year had been arranged by Mrs. Kinney and the commissioner of Indian Affairs. Her second year's expenses were temporarily placed in jeopardy when Mrs. Kinney, writing to the Office of Indian Affairs in hope of renewing the \$167 contract, irritated Acting Commissioner A. B. Upshaw. She had reported that both the association and the faculty at the college were satisfied with Susan's progress in the first year. "In competing with her white classmates, who have had the life long benefit of routine public school training, she has, of course," wrote Mrs. Kinney, "labored under great disadvantages. But she has been brave—studious—conscientious—through it all, and has more than 'held her own.'" <sup>56</sup> Commissioner Upshaw, taking offense at the criticism of Susan's earlier educational opportunities, informed Mrs. Kinney that Susan had "received good literary education at the expense of the government and had had two years of medical education at the same expense."<sup>57</sup> Fortunately the contract was renewed, but the government's share was reduced to \$125 per year.

Susan graduated on March 14, 1889,<sup>58</sup> at the head of a class of 36 young women. In his commencement address Dr. James B. Walker praised Susan highly:

Thoughtful of a service to her people, child though she was, she permits not the magnitude of her task to stay the inspiration, but bravely, thoughtfully, diligently pursues the course, and to-day receives her fitting reward. All this without a precedent. She will stand among her people as the first woman physician. Surely we may record with joy such courage, constancy and ability.<sup>59</sup>

Following a competitive exam, Susan was selected one of six women to intern at the Woman's Hospital for four months beginning in May. She took a brief vacation before her internship. Spending several days with her Connecticut "mothers," she was kept busy speaking before branches in Farmington, Guilford, New Britain, Norwich, Waterbury, and Winsted<sup>60</sup> before she made a quick trip home.

Susan returned to the reservation permanently in late 1889. She accepted an appointment as physician at the government boarding school on August 5, but in December Omaha Agent Robert Ashley requested that she be allowed to treat the adults of the tribe as well. Commissioner Thomas Morgan complied with his request. Although there was already another physician at the reservation, within three months of her coming, Susan cared for most of his Indian patients because she spoke their language. When the other doctor left, she was in charge of the health care of all the 1,244 tribal members.<sup>61</sup>

The government built an office for her at the school. A spacious building, it contained a drug counter, cabinets full of games and scrapbooks and picture books as well as magazines. Some branches of the Women's National Indian Association donated books and other reading matter to her library. Before long her office was full not only of school children but of adults, who came to ask her advice on business matters, personal affairs, and questions of law. Especially on cold rainy days, the older Omaha could be found spending a pleasant hour either visiting with Susan or looking through the magazines.<sup>62</sup>

Susan's living quarters were provided at the government school, where Marguerite was the principal teacher. Although most of their work was centered at the school, Susan and Marguerite also carried on their father's work, directing the

tribe along the path to assimilation. They advised the tribe, encouraging couples to marry by license and with the sanction of the church. Christian services were soon being held over the dead. Thus Susan was serving not only as physician but also as nurse, teacher, social worker, general adviser, and interpreter for church services.

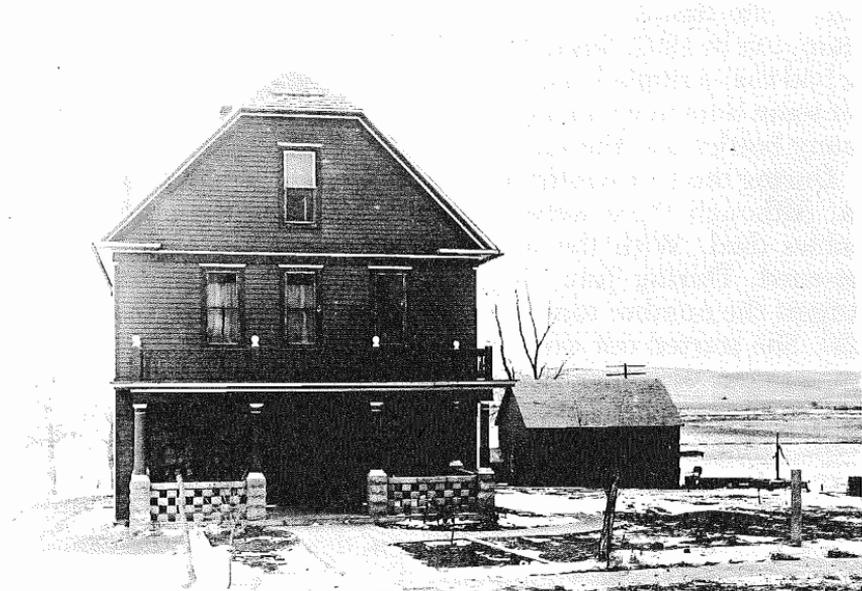
Religion had always been an important part of Susan's life, and partly for that reason the Women's National Indian Association appointed her medical missionary to her tribe. She attended church services on Sunday mornings, where she and Marguerite often assisted by singing and interpreting. Sometimes they spoke before church groups on various topics. Christian Endeavor meetings were held for the young people on Sunday evenings, prayer meetings were held on Wednesdays, and Sunday school was held for the children in the schoolhouse before church.<sup>63</sup>

But it is the medical record of this young Omaha woman that is legendary. Her patients, scattered over the 30x45-mile reservation, were reached by a network of poor, dirt roads. During her first year she was unable to make as many house calls as she wished because she did not have a team. If a patient was only a mile or so away, she walked. If the distance was greater, she hired a team, but patients often came to her.<sup>64</sup> She finally purchased a team and buggy. In a talk at Hampton in 1892, Susan told her audience that the roads were so bad that a single horse could not pull a wagon. "After trying for some time to go about on horse-back," she said, "I broke so many bottles and thermometers that I had to give that up."<sup>65</sup>

During the first winter there were two epidemics of influenza. Although there were no fatalities among the adults two babies died. With the arrival of summer, her patient load lessened. During July, 1891, she saw only 37 patients; in August the number rose to 111; and by September it soared to 130. She started out every morning before 8 o'clock, drove 6 miles in one direction, returned to the office by noon and then set out again on more rounds, returning sometimes as late as 10 p.m. with an exhausted team. Although she never spoke of her own weariness, her reports began to reflect more and more days taken off because of illness.<sup>66</sup> She treated both acute and chronic cases ranging from influenza, dysentery, and cholera, to an epidemic of conjunctivitis, an eye ailment spread



*Ethnologist Alice Cunningham Fletcher (left). . . . Susan LaFlesche Picotte, about 1898. . . . (Below) Susan's Walthill residence, new in 1908. It included a number of windows for light and fresh air and such modern conveniences as a furnace and indoor bathroom.*



because of unsanitary conditions. After she had instructed her patients to use separate towels and basins, the epidemic subsided. At the end of her second year, she summed up her experiences by saying, "I am enjoying my work exceedingly, and feel more interest in, and more attached to my people than ever before. I have not a single thing to complain of, for . . . my life here is a very happy one."<sup>67</sup>

December, 1891, brought an especially bad epidemic of influenza, *la grippe* as she called it. Susan saw a total of 114 patients that month during the epidemic. She wrote that the disease

raged with more violence than during the two preceding years. . . . Some families were rendered helpless by it, sometimes all the family but one or two being down with it. Almost every day during the month I was out making visits. Several days the thermometer was 15 to 20 degrees below zero, and I had to drive myself.<sup>68</sup>

Her first patient in December was an old man. With Marguerite driving, they arrived at the neat little house to find him lying on the floor in the corner on a blanket, breathing heavily, with no one to care for him. Susan returned two hours later with food. In a few weeks he was out of danger and gratefully sent the young physician another patient. To a Hampton audience she once related another more serious case. Quite late one night she got word that a young Hampton student was seriously ill. Starting out early the next morning in 20-degree-below-zero weather, Susan drove the 6 miles to the house. The whole family lived in one room, and the sick girl had been given a corner, where she lay in a bed surrounded by her Hampton mementos. "The girl and everything in her quarter of the room were clean and neat as could be," wrote Susan,<sup>69</sup> reflecting her rigid training at Hampton. Believing the girl could not possibly live through the day because of her previous history of tuberculosis, now aggravated by the flu, Susan left some medicine and promised to return. Hurriedly she drove the 9 or 10 miles across the reservation to see her other patients and returned home at 5 p.m. Accompanied by Marguerite and another teacher, she then set out in a sled loaded with food for the tubercular girl's home. For the next two weeks, while the young woman weakened and died, Susan saw her at least once every day, often cooking meals for the family and sometimes staying at night if she felt it necessary.

January, 1892, brought no relief as Susan cared for 120 cases in three weeks. The last week of the month she took off to care for members of her immediate family. When ladies from the Morristown, New Jersey, auxiliary of the Women's National Indian Association sent Susan money for the sick, she added it to funds of her own to buy food for her patients.<sup>70</sup> From October, 1891, to the spring of 1892, Susan saw more than 600 patients. The hard rides were becoming increasingly exhausting, but she never refused to make a call unless she was bedridden herself.

With the arrival of summer, 1892, Susan took a well-deserved month of rest<sup>71</sup> and attended Hampton's 24th anniversary. She gave the commencement address entitled "My Work as Physician Among My People." While in the East, she had an opportunity to meet more members of the Women's National Indian Association. As their medical missionary, she now had to make annual reports. In May she spoke before the Washington, DC, auxiliary on the spread of intemperance among her people.<sup>72</sup> One of her earlier reports had stressed the drinking problem, noting that the Omaha could obtain whisky almost as easily as water. Laws were needed to prevent crimes attributed to alcoholism, she believed: "If a drunken Indian smashes a buggy and assaults a woman and child by beating them and nothing is done, what can prevent him from doing it again."<sup>73</sup> The temperance movement was beginning to occupy much of her thought.

During the fall of 1892, Susan continued her arduous round of house calls, attending to children and numerous walk-in patients, but her own health began to suffer. She had complained of numbness and breathing difficulties in college but thought it was psychological.<sup>74</sup> Possibly it was an early indication of the disease that would later take her life. By the first of January, 1893, she was bedridden. "Susie has been sick for several weeks, her ears have been troubling her very much, she says she has pain in her head and the back of her neck constantly," wrote Rosalie to Francis.<sup>75</sup> On October 20, 1893, she resigned as government physician because of her health and that of her mother, who had recently become critically ill.<sup>76</sup>

In the summer of 1894, Susan surprised her family by announcing her forthcoming marriage to Henry Picotte,<sup>77</sup> a Sioux Indian from the Yankton Agency and brother of

Marguerite's late husband, Charles. Charles had died in 1892, and probably sometime shortly thereafter Thomas Ikinicapi, Susan's first love, died of tuberculosis. Only Marguerite and Rosalie knew of "TI," as Susan called him, for she had placed her education and career before marriage. After she graduated and began to practice, she met Henry, "a handsome man with polite, ingratiating manners, and a happy sense of humor."<sup>78</sup> Susan fell in love with him. When she expressed her desire to marry, her friends and the Heritages were upset. Learning of the intended betrothal on June 30, Mrs. Heritage wrote expressing regret, for she did not think it wise owing to Susan's poor health. Marian also wrote Rosalie of her concern over the matter. "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,"<sup>79</sup> she wrote.

Personal letters written by Susan about her romance with Henry have not survived, but there are numerous letters in which she revealed her feelings for TI. They had met at Hampton, and although he was deeply interested in Susan, she had decided that her career must come first. She visited Hampton several times while a student at the Woman's Medical College and spent as much time as possible with TI. She was afraid that he might return to Hampton already married but wrote Rosalie that would not break her heart, for she was not "made that way." She added, however, "He was *without exception* the handsomest Indian I ever saw."<sup>80</sup>

Her 1886 Christmas visit to Hampton found TI constantly by her side, as handsome as ever. They attended a band concert, and brought in the New Year together. At one point during her visit, TI was so overcome with emotion on seeing her that "he had his handkerchief up to his face and his eyes were shining—I felt so sorry for him—I felt like crying,"<sup>81</sup> she wrote. When her carriage departed Hampton, he stood with a handkerchief over his eyes again. He looked so forlorn that Marguerite broke down and another friend wrote that he "acted as if he had lost his right hand."<sup>82</sup>

In his letters TI told Susan he thought of her constantly. Her good friend, Hampton teacher Cora M. Folsom,<sup>83</sup> was convinced that there was no one good enough for Susan, and encouraged her to have only a "platonic friendship" with TI, for she feared he was getting into "deep waters" over her. "He is

so respectful to me & I like him for that & for his faithfulness," wrote Susan in reply.<sup>84</sup>

In January, 1887, Susan and a friend had gone to the Educational Home in West Philadelphia to visit the Indian boys. While there a young Dakota Sioux had paid a great deal of attention to her, but Susan wrote she did not "care to go with any one and . . . remembered someone at Hampton and wondered what he would think to see so much attention lavished upon [her]." When she attended morning service and Sunday school in the afternoon, the young Sioux sat next to her holding out his hymnal. She remarked to Rosalie, "That is the end of it I hope. I haven't any time or patience for such things nowadays. Doctors don't have much time, you know, and he will have to keep his place."<sup>85</sup>

Several days later she wrote, "I shall be the dear little old maid you know and come and see you . . . and doctor and dose you all." In the very next sentence, nevertheless, she spoke of TI: "Sometimes it seems to me I can see *him* looking at me with such a look—sometimes a smile on his face as he says, 'Come on Susie.' " But afraid her older sister might become concerned, Susan assured her that TI had helped her, had been a good influence, and that she only hoped her influence over him would be half as good. "I want to be his *friend*," she wrote, "and help him—I am a better girl for having gone with him." She ended by assuring Rosalie that "nothing will come of it dear, so be easy and at rest."<sup>86</sup> One wonders if her life would have been the same had TI lived and had they married, but that was not to be.

Susan, when almost 30, apparently decided she was tired of being an old maid. Following her marriage to Henry, she began to participate more directly in Indian life. She and Marguerite, who had remarried, drew even closer, both having their first babies within a few months of each other. Within a year Susan was seriously ill again. "Susie had been very sick, I had given up all hopes of her when she commenced to improve," wrote Rosalie to Francis.<sup>87</sup>

With her health on the mend, Susan and her husband lived part of the time in the town of Bancroft, across from the Presbyterian Church. Susan, now with two small sons, practiced medicine among both Indians and whites. She quickly won the respect of local doctors. One night at the urgent re-

quest of two doctors, she helped in a particularly difficult delivery. Later one of them reported that mother and child were doing well, "thanks to the skill of Dr. Susan."<sup>88</sup> In her Bancroft house and at her mother's farm, Susan placed a lighted lantern in the window to guide those who needed medical attention.

Again in 1897 her health failed, and that summer she became so sick that she was not expected to live. Neighbors, both white and Indian, rallied to her side, bringing fruit, food, and flowers, and constantly expressing their concern to her mother. That summer, when friends and neighbors came to her support, Susan realized how much she had helped them. Previously she felt that there was little use in trying to help people because it was not appreciated, but she recognized her error, for she received "such earnest heartfelt words of thanks . . . from people . . . [she] never expected such . . . [from]."<sup>89</sup>

Despite her poor health she became an active temperance speaker in place of her father. In 1856 Joseph LaFlesche had organized a police force of Omaha Indians who administered corporal punishment to any member of the tribe found drunk. Until his death in 1888, there was very little liquor on the reservation, but since that time liquor flowed freely, church attendance suffered and farm work was often neglected.<sup>90</sup>

As a young student at the medical college, Susan had attended lectures by noted temperance leaders including Frances O. Willard.<sup>91</sup> She was, therefore, exposed to the temperance movement and the effects of alcoholism early in her medical career. Later as a physician she saw the effects of alcohol from both medical and personal angles. Tragically, her husband had begun to drink excessively, and consequently she became even more active in the movement. During the four years she had tended the ill of the Omaha tribe, Susan always felt perfectly safe in making her appointments, but the increased use of alcohol had begun to change the situation. "Men and women died from alcoholism, and little children were seen reeling on the streets of the town," she wrote. "Drunken brawls in which men were killed occurred and no person's life was considered safe."<sup>92</sup> Women pawned their clothing, and men spent rent money on liquor instead of provisions and machinery. Congress passed a law that improved the situation and a commissioner or deputy was assigned to enforce it, but

his removal encouraged bootleggers to return. A death caused by alcoholism on January 26, 1900, prompted Susan to write to William A. Jones, commissioner of Indian Affairs asking what advantage any money saved from the removal of the deputy would be if her "people . . . [were] to be demoralized mentally, morally and physically."<sup>93</sup>

As the years passed, the liquor situation worsened, and a year before her death she wrote Commissioner Cato Sells that his department ought to prevent the liquor traffic. Several weeks earlier, an old Indian had been murdered by a young man who later committed suicide, "all through lemon extract." She charged, "The white man who sold it being well known—nothing has been done about it."<sup>94</sup> When called as an expert witness in the inquest of a man who had died as a result of the misuse of liquor, she was asked about the history of liquor traffic among her people. She bluntly stated, "We find the Omaha Indian before the advent of the white man a fine specimen of manhood, physically and morally of good health; . . . [but] with liquor, we find these conditions radically changed and reversed. We find physical degeneration of the Indian."<sup>95</sup> Alcohol reduced their resistance to disease, making them easy prey to tuberculosis. Susan added that the Indian child was therefore "a weak puny specimen of humanity."<sup>96</sup>

Domestic brawls were common, and Indian lands were sold for money to purchase liquor. One Indian, she explained, sold his land in 1904 for \$6000, and in one year spent the money, treating his friends to liquor, giving them money, and buying himself three buggies. She enumerated the deaths attributed to liquor from 1894 to 1914, beginning with an individual who fell from a buggy and was not missed by his drunken companions until the next morning, when his frozen body was discovered. The government's efforts to keep liquor off the reservation had failed miserably. Susan urged that the detectives appointed to patrol the reservation not be local men, and above all, should be moral, impartial, and above receiving bribes.

Whatever small victories she achieved elsewhere were not equalled at home, and in 1905, owing to complications from drinking, Susan's husband died. She was left as the sole support of an invalid mother and two small boys. For the remainder of her life, she continued her struggle against alcohol.

Following her husband's death, the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions appointed her missionary to her tribe, the first Indian to hold such a position. She was furnished housing along with a small stipend.

The degenerative ear disease from which she had suffered for years made her increasingly deaf; and the pain now extended down into her back. She continued, nevertheless, serving as teacher, preacher, field worker, and physician at the agency's 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.<sup>97</sup>

In November, 1906, Susan and Marguerite's husband, Walter Diddock, purchased house lots in the newly established town of Walthill, carved out of Indian land by the railroad. Largely through Susan's work, the secretary of the Interior Department ruled that no liquor could be sold in towns once a part of the Omaha Reservation, another small victory in her long struggle over alcohol.<sup>98</sup> On her town lot Susan had a modern home built, complete with fireplace, furnace, windows for light and fresh air, and an indoor bathroom. Upon its completion, Susan, her sons Pierre and Caryl, and her mother moved in. Once settled, Susan and Marguerite entered the social structure of the town, becoming charter members of a new chapter of Eastern Star. Susan, a major organizer of the new Presbyterian Church, also taught in its Sunday school. Her home was on occasion filled with family and guests, for she enjoyed entertaining.

The two sisters supported community projects, lectures, concerts, and special events at the county fair. At the latter Susan was in charge one year of the Indian department. She continued to be active as president of the church missionary society, urging townspeople and businessmen of Walthill to become sufficiently interested in projects to give freely of their money and time. Soon many people began attending the monthly church meetings of the study circle, which held talks on topics ranging from Mexicans to Negro freedmen. Concerts were held to raise money for missionary work.<sup>99</sup>

Susan also became politically involved when the government arbitrarily decided to extend the trust period for the Omaha an additional 10 years because it considered Indians in

general uneducated and backward. This was, however, not true of the Omaha, who had a higher literacy rate than most tribes. "They are independent and self reliant . . . [and] as competent as the same number of white people," noted Susan.<sup>100</sup> Their last allotment papers<sup>101</sup> had been delivered in 1885, and the 25-year trust period, during which time they could not alienate their land, should have ended in 1910. The decision to extend the trust term caused numerous hardships for the Omaha. In addition, a new system of supervised farming was instituted. The Winnebago and Omaha Agencies were consolidated, thus requiring longer travel distance for tribal members to transact agency business. A. G. Pollock, well-respected Omaha superintendent, was removed. Protests arose from both whites and Indians over the additional supervision. "Every business action of the individual is supervised and hedged about with red tape and paternal restrictions," wrote the editor of the *Walthill Times*.<sup>102</sup> All the Omaha wanted was to lease their lands and draw upon their monies themselves. But, as Susan had predicted, the entire tribe rebelled, depending upon her to free them of these new regulations.<sup>103</sup>

Unfortunately at this critical period in the history of her people, Susan was again stricken. During the spring of 1909, she was again close to death. Specialists visited her several times, a trained nurse stayed with her for almost six weeks, and the local doctor visited as often as three times a day.<sup>104</sup> By June her health had improved sufficiently to permit her to begin writing letters protesting the treatment of her tribe.<sup>105</sup>

In February she was the unanimous choice of Omaha men and women as one of the delegates to argue their case before the secretary of the Interior Department and the attorney general of the United States. When she originally declined to do so because of poor health, tribesmen threatened to place her bodily on the train. "The Omahas depend on me so, and I just have to take care of myself till this fight is over," she wrote to her friend Miss Folsom.<sup>106</sup> Despite a severe case of neurasthenia (nervous frustration), which prevented her from digesting food,<sup>107</sup> Susan protested the red tape which made it difficult for the Indians to get their own money and the problems imposed in travel to the new combined agency. Her efforts and those of the rest of the delegation were successful,

and most of the Omaha were deemed competent to rent or lease their lands and to receive monies.<sup>108</sup>

Susan occasionally wrote articles which contained light humor. Invited by the Burt County Farmer's Institute to speak on "Primitive Farming among the Omaha Indians," she put the history of tribal farming on paper. "There was no need for suffragettes in those days," she wrote, "for the produce of these gardens always belonged to the woman."<sup>109</sup> Her final draft was read by Marguerite on February 13, 1912, in Decatur, Nebraska, during one of the most successful meetings the association had ever held.<sup>110</sup> Susan continued recording the traditions of her people by writing an article on the origin of corn for the local newspaper.<sup>111</sup>

Susan always returned, nevertheless, to her first love, medicine. She was one of the organizers of the Thurston County Medical Association, served several terms on the health board for the town of Walthill, and was a member of the State Medical Society. For three years she served as chairman of the state health committee of the Nebraska Federation of Women's Clubs, working to get health-related bills through the state Legislature. She began to study tuberculosis more intensively, giving lectures on the subject at the Indian church as well as to local townspeople. When writing to Commissioner Cato Sells in 1914, she suggested that children at the government school be examined monthly for the disease. She told of an 18-year-old school girl who returned home with tuberculosis and infected both her mother and grandmother; all three subsequently died.<sup>112</sup>

When Walthill observed National Tuberculosis Day, local doctors were invited to deliver lectures on the subject in the two churches. Later their talks were printed in the local newspaper. Tuberculosis was not, however, Susan's only health worry; her other campaigns were against the use of the common drinking cup and the household fly. Her article on the "evils of the drinking cup" was printed in the local paper, and the committee's energetic campaign resulted in legislation abolishing its use. Disposable cups were soon sold in local stores and sanitary drinking fountains were built in all schools. Disposable ice cream dishes and spoons were used by the local drug store.<sup>113</sup>

Another one of Susan's important successes was the cam-

paign to eradicate the "troublesome household pest," the fly. Describing it as the filthiest of all vermin, Susan designed an attractive anti-house fly poster encouraging people not to allow flies in their houses or near food. By sprinkling lime or kerosene where flies might collect, she pointed out their breeding places could be eliminated; she also encouraged the use of screens for doors and windows. Fly traps were soon available at local hardware stores.<sup>114</sup>

Susan had always dreamed of a hospital where she could care for her patients and avoid the long trips to hospitals in Omaha or Sioux City. After several efforts to interest local philanthropic organizations in building a hospital, she approached the Home Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church. It granted \$8,000. The Society of Friends (Quakers), through the Presbyterian Church, gave an additional \$500. Marguerite and her husband donated an acre of land, and equipment and furnishings came from other individuals and organizations. A benefit concert was held to raise additional funds, and the hospital opened in January, 1913. It contained two general wards with a capacity of 12 beds, five private wards, maternity ward, operating room, two bathrooms, kitchen, and reception room. Both Indians and whites were admitted, and in 1915 a total of 448 patients were cared for, 126 of them Indians.<sup>115</sup> The presence of the hospital made it possible for Susan to reduce her patient load and avoid long drives in inclement weather.

Death took Susan LaFlesche on September 18, 1915.<sup>116</sup> The infection in her ears had worsened steadily, and by 1914 was diagnosed as "decay of the bone," probably cancer. Susan underwent two operations, the first in February, 1915, and the second the following March. By June her brother had been informed by the surgeon that she had only a month or so to live. Her sons, Caryl and Pierre, were home from school that summer and they and Marguerite's eldest daughter helped care for her. Caryl was the only one Susan would trust to give her hypodermic injections and medicines.

Her value to the community had been so profound that the *Walthill Times* of September 24 added an extra page to carry special eulogies of Susan. Funeral services were held on Sunday morning, September 19, in her home, where friends and relatives surrounded her casket. The simple service was per-



*Omaha chief Joseph (Iron Eye) LaFlesche (left), father of Susan LaFlesche Picotte. . . . Susan's sons Caryl (left) and Pierre.*

formed by three Presbyterian clergymen, the Reverend C. H. Mitchelmore, pastor of the Walthill Presbyterian Church, which Susan had helped to organize; the Reverend George A. Beith, pastor of the Blackbird Hills Mission, where she had spent years of hard work; and Dr. D. E. Jenkins, a member of the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions, which she had served for many years. The closing prayer was given in the Omaha language by one of the older members of the tribe. Interment took place at the Bancroft Cemetery, where she was laid to rest beside her husband. The Amethyst Chapter of the Eastern Star conducted a moving graveside service.

Hardly an Omaha Indian is living who has not been treated and helped by her, and hundreds of white people and Indians owe their lives to her treatment, care and nursing. . . . We are confronted here with a character rising to greatness, and to great deeds out of conditions which seldom produce more than mediocre men and women, achieving great and beneficial ends over obstacles almost insurmountable.<sup>117</sup>

After her death the Walthill Hospital was in tribute renamed the Dr. Susan Picotte Memorial Hospital by the Home Mission Board.<sup>118</sup>

## NOTES

This article won the Tunis Award for excellence in women's history at Arizona State University, April, 1982.

1. Theodore Finks, ed., "The First Indian Woman Physician," *Home Mission Monthly* 38 (February, 1924), 87.

2. Alice C. Fletcher and Francis La Flesche, *The Omaha Tribe* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), II, 626-633.

3. *Ibid.*, 634.

4. Norma Kidd Green, *Iron Eye's Family; the Children of Joseph LaFlesche* (Lincoln: Johnsen Publishing Company, 1969); Norma Kidd Greene, "Four Sisters: Daughters of Joseph LaFlesche," *Nebraska History*, 45 (June, 1964), 165-176.

5. Susan was born June 17, 1865, according to the tombstone at the Bancroft, Nebraska, Cemetery, but a questionnaire she filled out in November, 1888, indicates she was born at Oakland, Nebraska, June 1866, Hampton Institute Archives, Hampton, Virginia, hereinafter, HIA.

6. Alice C. Fletcher, ethnologist among the Omaha, wrote Sara Thomson Kinney on January 21, 1887, that Joseph had "led a company of Omahas to the polls." Sara Thomson Kinney Collection, Connecticut State Library, Hartford.

7. Susan learned geography, history, grammar, arithmetic, and spelling at the agency, Douglas Street, "LaFlesche Sisters Write to *St. Nicholas Magazine*," 62 *Nebraska History* (Winter, 1981), 522.

8. Questionnaire, November, 1888, HIA.

9. Francis Paul Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis: Christian Reformers and the Indian, 1865-1900* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 272-273; *The Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute and Its Work for the Education of the Indian* (c. 1892-1893); Mary Frances Armstrong and Helen W. Ludlow, *Hampton and Its Students* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1874). Pratt, unhappy with mixing blacks and Indians, established an Indian school at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

10. Laurence M. Hauptman, "Medicine Woman: Susan La Flesche, 1865-1915," *New York State Journal of Medicine*, 78 (September, 1878), 1, 784, Archives and Special Collections on Women in Medicine (hereinafter, Archives); The Medical College of Pennsylvania and Hospital, Philadelphia.

11. Susan LaFlesche to Miss Richards, August 7, 1885, HIA. Susan was taking music lessons, hoping to learn piano; Green, *Iron Eye's Family*, 126, 130.

12. Alice C. Fletcher to Rosalie Farley, May 21, 1886, LaFlesche Family Papers, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln (hereinafter LFP, NSHS); *Iron Eye's Family*, 128; Green, "Four Sisters," 173; Hauptman, "Medicine Woman; Susan LaFlesche," 1784.

13. Indians feared menstruating women and required them to stay in specially built huts until the menses were completed. In some cultures a mere glance from a menstruating woman was thought to destroy a man's hunting ability, or if she crossed a deer path, the deer would not return. Ruth M. Underhill, *Red Man's Religion: Beliefs and Practices of the Indians North of Mexico* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 82-95; Valerie S. Mathes, "A New Look at the Role of Women in Indian Society," *American Indian Quarterly*, II (Summer, 1975), 134.

14. Carol Lopate, *Women in Medicine* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968). The first woman doctor was Elizabeth Blackwell, who surmounted incredible obstacles to enter college. When she graduated at the head of her class, she found no American hospital willing to admit women. Finally she went to Paris and studied obstetrics and gynecology and returned to the United States and established a clinic.

15. Hauptman, "Medicine Woman: Susan LaFlesche," 1784; Rebecca Hancock Welch, "Alice Cunningham Fletcher, Anthropologist and the Indian Rights Reformer" (Doctor's dissertation, George Washington University, Washington, DC, 1980).

16. Philadelphia was a center of Indian reform—probably one reason the college was selected. The city was home to the Indian Rights Association, founded 1882, and the Women's National Indian Association, founded 1879. Helen M. Wanken, "Women's Sphere and Indian Reform: The Women's National Indian Association, 1879-1901" (Doctor's dissertation, Marquette University, Milwaukee, 1981).

17. "The Medical College of Pennsylvania," brochure. The first and only extant medical college founded for women; after admitting men in 1969, it became the Medical College of Pennsylvania.

18. Alfred Jones to Martha Waldron, March 26, 1886, Fletcher-LaFlesche MSS, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

19. Francis LaFlesche to Ed Farley, September 27, 1886, LFP, NSHS; Sara T. Kinney to the commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 16, 1886, Record Group 75, Bureau of Indian Affairs; Letters Received from Susan LaFlesche, 1886-1892, File 24837, National Archives, Washington, DC (hereinafter, RG 75, BIA, NA).

20. Sara T. Kinney to Ed Farley, October 10, 1886, Alice C. Fletcher to Rosalie Farley, May 21, 1886, LFP, NSHS; *Lend-A-Hand*, 1886, HIA.

21. Ellen Terry Johnson, *Historical Sketch of the Connecticut Indian Association, from 1881 to 1888* (Hartford: Fowler & Miller Company, 1888), 3; Wanken, "Women's Sphere," 65; Sara Kinney wrote to a Miss Richards, friend of Susan's, for information about family finances before committing the association to her support. Sara T. Kinney to Miss Richards, May 14, 1886, HIA.

22. S. C. Armstrong to Mrs. Kinney, June, 1886, RG 75, BIA, File No. 23847, NA; *Lend-A-Hand*, 1886; Wanken, "Women's Sphere," 65; Johnson, *Historical Sketch of the Connecticut Indian Association*, 13; Green, *Iron Eye's Family*, 135.

23. Sara T. Kinney to commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 6, 1886, RG 75, BIA, File 23847, NA. On September 10 the Connecticut Indian Association contracted with the government for Susan's support. Sara T. Kinney to commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 10, 1886, RG 75, BIA, File 24280, NA.

24. S. C. Armstrong to J. D. C. Atkins, commissioner of Indian Affairs, August 20, 1886, RG 75, BIA, File 22530, NA.

25. On September 15, 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 La Flesche." Four vouchers for \$41.75 were issued in 1887. Sara Thomson Kinney Collection, Connecticut State Library; Sara T. Kinney to commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 30, 1886, RG 75, BIA, File 26206, NA.

26. Sara T. Kinney to commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 6, 1886, RG 75, BIA, File 23847, NA; Wanken, "Women's Sphere," 67.

27. *Lend-A-Hand*, 1886.

28. Sara T. Kinney to Rosalie Farley, n.d., LFP, NSHS; Johnson, *Historical Sketch of the Connecticut Indian Association*, 13.

29. Susan LaFlesche to Rosalie Farley, October 24, 1886, LFP, NSHS.

30. Sara T. Kinney to commissioner of Indian Affairs, June 29, 1887, RG 75, BIA, File 16996, NA, *Fortieth Annual Announcement of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Jas. B. Rodgers Printing Co., 1889), 2.

31. Susan LaFlesche to Rosalie Farley, March 9, 1887, LFP, NSHS.

32. *Ibid.*, October 27, 1886.

33. *Ibid.*, probably January, 1888.

34. *Ibid.*, November 5, 1886.

35. *Ibid.*, November 17, 1886, LFP, NSHS.

36. *Ibid.*, March 2, 1887.

37. *Ibid.*, March 9, 1887.

38. Susan LaFlesche to Sara T. Kinney, April 1, 1888. Sara Thomson Kinney Collection, Connecticut State Library.

39. Susan LaFlesche to Rosalie Farley, October 29, 1886. LFP, NSHS.
40. *Ibid.*, March 2, 1887.
41. *Ibid.*, probably January 1-4, 1888.
42. *Ibid.*, April 4, 1887; December 1, 1886.
43. *Ibid.*, November 17, 1886.
44. *Ibid.*, January 19, 1887.
45. *Ibid.*, January 4, 1888.
46. *Ibid.*, March 9, 1887.
47. *Ibid.*, January 19, 1887; October 24, 1886. The Lincoln Institute for Boys, incorporated 1866, housed orphans of Civil War soldiers. Another institution for children, 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 from two years old and up. Scharff and Wescott, *History of Philadelphia* (1888) II, 1457, 1487.
48. Sarah Kinney to commissioner of Indian Affairs, June 29, 1887, RG 75, BIA, File 16996, NA.
49. Johnson, *Historical Sketch of the Connecticut Indian Association*, 29.
50. Susan LaFlesche to Rosalie Farley, probably January, 1888; Susan LaFlesche to My Dear Girls, n.d., LFP, NSHS.
51. Susan LaFlesche to Rosalie Farley, April 4, 1887, LFP, NSHS.
52. *Ibid.*, January 12, 1887.
53. *Ibid.*, March 2, 1887.
54. Susan LaFlesche to Sara T. Kinney, November 19, 1888, Sara Thomsen Kinney Collection, Connecticut State Library; Hauptman, "Medicine Woman: Susan LaFlesche," 1787.
55. Jack Farley to Caryl Farley, November 20, 1900, LFP, NSHS.
56. Sarah Kinney to commissioner of Indian Affairs, June 29, 1887, RG 75, BIA, File 16996, NA; Wanken, "Women's Sphere," 69.
57. Wanken, "Women's Sphere," 70; Sarah T. Kinney to commissioner of Indian Affairs, August 6, 16, 1887, February 14, 1889, Files 20883, 21822, 4400, RG, BIA, NA; J. D. C. Atkins, John H. Oberly, agreements for renewing Susan's grants, July 1, 1887, October 10, 1888, Sara Thomson Kinney Collection, Connecticut State Library.
58. *Fortieth Annual Announcement of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania*, 1; Susan LaFlesche Picotte Alumna File, Medical College of Pennsylvania.
59. "The First Woman Physician Among Her People," *The Medical Missionary Record*, 4:6 (October, 1889), 126, Medical College of Pennsylvania.
60. Wanken, "Women's Sphere," 71.
61. Susan LaFlesche to commissioner of Indian Affairs, June 13, 1889. File 15736, and August 5, 1889, File 21752; Robert H. Ashley to commissioner of Indian Affairs, December 10, 1889, File 35955, all in RG 75, BIA, NA: Susan LaFlesche, "My Work As Physician Among My People," *Southern Workman*, Hampton Institute school newspaper, August, 1892, HIA.
62. "Report of Susan LaFlesche, M.D.: Medical Missionary of the Women's National Indian Association Among the Omaha Indians," October 24, 1891, Women's National Indian Assn., 6, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts; Susan LaFlesche, "My Work As Physician Among My People," *Southern Workman*, August, 1892, HIA.
63. "Report of Susan LaFlesche, M.D.: Medical Missionary," October 24, 1891, 6; "Present Medical and Hospital Work," *Sketches of Delightful Work*, The Women's National Indian Association (January, 1893), 51-52, HIA.
64. "Report of Susan LaFlesche, M.D.: Medical Missionary," October 24, 1891, 5; C. M. Folsom, *The Congregation & Christian World* (March 12, 1904), HIA.
65. "My Work As Physician Among My People," *Southern Workman*, August, 1892, HIA.

66. *Ibid.*
67. "Report of Susan LaFlesche, M.D.: Medical Missionary," October 23, 1891, 7-8; "From Dr. Susan LaFlesche," *The Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute and Its Work for the Education of the Indian*.
68. "Present Medical and Hospital Work," *Sketches of Delightful Work*, 46-47.
69. "My Work As Physician Among My People," *Southern Workman*, August, 1892; "Present Medical and Hospital Work," *Sketches of Delightful Work*, 47-48.
70. "Present Medical and Hospital Work," *Sketches of Delightful Work*, 49; *Talks and Thoughts* (July, 1893), HIA.
71. Susan LaFlesche to commissioner of Indian Affairs requesting leave to attend Hampton Commencement, RG 75, BIA, File 15077, NA.
72. *Annual Report of the Women's National Indian Association* (Philadelphia: November, 1891), 20; *Annual Report of the Women's National Indian Association* (Philadelphia, December, 1892), 21; Annie E. K. Bidwell Collection, Box 31, California State Library, Sacramento.
73. *Talks and Thoughts* (July, 1893).
74. Susan LaFlesche to Rosalie Farley, c. 1887, LFP, NSHS.
75. Rosalie Farley to Francis LaFlesche, January 1, 1893, LFP, NSHS.
76. "Reports Changes in School Employees," RG 75, HIA, File No. 40940, NA; *Talks and Thoughts* (December, 1893), HIA; Susan LaFlesche, "Report of Physicians for Omahas," Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of . . . for the Year 1893* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1893), 197.
77. *Southern Workman*, August, 1894.
78. John G. Neihardt, *Patterns and Coincidences: A Sequel to All Is but a Beginning* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1978), 40.
79. Marian B. Heritage to Rosalie Farley, June 22, 1894, LFP, NSHS.
80. Susan LaFlesche to Rosalie Farley, October 24, 1886, March 2, 1887, LFP, NSHS. She apparently had promised the Connecticut Indian Association not to marry during her school years.
81. Susan LaFlesche to Rosalie Farley, January 12, 1887, LFP, NSHS.
82. *Ibid.*
83. Cora M. Folsom retired from Hampton in 1922 after 42 years as teacher, nurse, editor of *Southern Workman*, museum curator, and director of pageants, HIA.
84. Susan LaFlesche to Rosalie Farley, January 12, 1887, LFP, NSHS.
85. *Ibid.*, January 26, 1887.
86. *Ibid.*, February 2, 1887.
87. *Ibid.*, July 29, 1895.
88. Green, *Iron Eye's Family*, 148.
89. Susan LaFlesche to Miss Richards, December 9, 1897, HIA.
90. Testimony of Susan LaFlesche Picotte, investigation of the death of Henry Wagner, May 22, 1914, NSHS.
91. Susan LaFlesche to Rosalie Farley, January 19, 1887. LFP, NSHS.
92. Susan LaFlesche Picotte to commissioner of Indian Affairs, January 27, 1900, HIA.
93. *Ibid.*
94. Susan LaFlesche Picotte to Cato Sells, commissioner of Indian Affairs, April 29, 1914, LFP, NSHS.
95. Testimony of Susan LaFlesche Picotte, investigation of death of Henry Wagner, May 22, 1914.
96. *Ibid.*
97. Susan LaFlesche Picotte, "The Varied Work of an Indian Missionary," *Home Mission Monthly* 22 (August, 1908), Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia; *New Era* (November, 1908); *Indian Leader* (January 22, 1909); *Southern Workman* (February, 1909); *Arrow* (September 24, 1909), all in HIA; Green, *Iron Eye's Family*, 149-150.

98. Susan LaFlesche Picotte to R. G. Valentine, commissioner of Indian Affairs, July 2, 1909, HIA.
99. Susan LaFlesche Picotte to Miss Andrus, June 24, 1909, HIA.
100. Susan LaFlesche Picotte, "Dr. Picotte Discusses the New Policy," *Walthill Times*, December 28, 1909, written originally for *Omaha Bee*.
101. Congress in 1882 passed an act allotting land in severalty to each Omaha with a trust period of 25 years. In 1887 the Dawes General Allotment Act did the same for most other tribes.
102. Green, *Iron Eye's Family*, 155-157.
103. Susan LaFlesche Picotte to Clara M. Folsom, February 15, 1910, Washington, DC, HIA.
104. *Ibid.*; Susan LaFlesche Picotte to Miss Andrus, June 24, 1909, HIA.
105. Susan LaFlesche Picotte to Robert C. Ogden, June 27, 1909; Susan LaFlesche Picotte to R. G. Valentine, commissioner of Indian Affairs, July 2, 1909; July 13, 1909, all in HIA.
106. Susan LaFlesche Picotte to Clara M. Folsom, February 15, 1910, January 27, 1910, HIA.
107. *Ibid.*, February 15, 1910, HIA.
108. Green, *Iron Eye's Family*, 157.
109. Susan LaFlesche Picotte, "Primitive Farming Among the Omaha Indians," LFP, NSHS.
110. *Western Paper*, (February), 1912, HIA.
111. "The Origin of the Corn: Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte Relates Some Interesting Legends," *Walthill Times*, March 8, 1912.
112. Susan LaFlesche Picotte to Cato Sells, commissioner of Indian Affairs, Walthill, April 29, 1914, LFP, NSHS.
113. Report of chairman of State Health Committee, probably 1913-1914, LFP, NSHS.
114. "War Declared on the Fly: From Breeding Place to Feeding Place," pamphlet, HIA.
115. *Southern Workman*, (April, 1913); *Indian News* (January, 1913), HIA; Green, *Iron Eye's Family*, 159-160; "Pioneer Medical Woman: Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte," *The Medical Woman's Journal*, 37 (January, 1930), 20, Medical College of Pennsylvania.
116. *New York Sun*, September 19, 1915; *Washington Post*, September 19, 1915; *Peace Pipe*, (September, 1915); *Southern Workman*, (November, 1915), all HIA.
117. Harry L. Keefe, "The Mystery of Her Genius," *Walthill Times*, September 24, 1915.
118. S. James Rowland Jr., "Susan LaFlesche: Princess, Physician, Prairie Preacher," A.D. (November 1975), 40; "The First Indian Woman Physician," *Bulletin of Council of Women for Home Mission* (1932), 447; H. Winnett Orr, *History of Medicine in Nebraska*, (Lincoln, 1952), 24-29, Medical College of Pennsylvania; *Indian Craftsman*, (September, 1909); *Indian Leader* (November, 1915), HIA.