

Now on this 22nd day of May, 1914, DOCTOR SUSAN LaFLESCHÉ PICOTTE was called and after being first duly sworn testified in the matter of the investigation of the death of Henry Warner, Deceased Omaha Indian, as follows:

(Examination by Harry L. Keefe)

Q. State your name and age?

A. Susan LaFlesche Picotte. Forty-seven.

Q. What acquaintance have you among the Omahas?

A. I am a member of the tribe, and have always lived with them with the exception of seven years which I spent in eastern schools.

Q. How intimate has your acquaintance and opportunity for acquaintance been among them during the time you lived with the Omahas?

A. I have lived right with them and have talked with them and I have worked among them for over twenty years practising medicine, attending the sick, helping them with all their financial and domestic business and anything that concerned their personal and family life.

Q. What do you know about the history of the liquor traffic and use of liquor among the Omaha Indians for the past twenty-five or thirty years?

A. They were a very moral people and they never made liquor, and did not know the taste of it until it was brought to them by the French voyageurs in trading. They first used liquor sometime before 1856. It brought them disastrous results. There were murders, lawlessness and vice. Joseph LaFlesche or Iron Eyes, my father, was chief at the time. Realizing the ultimate disastrous effects liquor would have on them, he took drastic measures to put a stop to the drinking. He organized a police force of the Omaha Indians in 1856 and the police administered corporal punishment to any member of the tribe who was found drunk. They stopped the drinking immediately and the people began to work on their farms and were very industrious and sober. There was no more drinking for they had a wholesome respect for Joseph LaFlesche and a wholesome fear of his disapproval. Also from that time until 1888 there was no liquor on the Reservation. It was during the year '88 when Joseph LaFlesche died, or the same year he died that

politicians came among the Omahas and told them that now since they could vote they had the same rights as the whiteman, and that they could drink just as much as they wanted to. For eighteen years from 1868 drunkenness ~~was~~^{reigned} supreme on the Omaha Reservation. Men and women gave themselves up to drunkenness. Liquor was given to children. There were about eight men who did not drink. The Church stood empty. Women who would not have dreamed of doing so while sober, committed immoralities. I will say here that there never had been any illegitimate children in the history of the Tribe until after 1868. Clothing was pawned for whiskey. Night and day were hideous with drunken brawls and people who went on the Reservation had to carry weapons for protection, where from 1860 to '88 they had tilled ~~and~~^{their} farms and raised fine crops and were a sober and industrious agricultural people, in this period their farms were abandoned and neglected and complete demoralization took place.

Q. What hygienic, physical and industrial effects did you observe from this eighteen years of the use of liquor?

A. The Omaha Indians had always been a very moral people. Every individual member of the Tribe was required to conform very closely to the code of ethics drawn up by the tribal organization; the prime object of the organization being to preserve the integrity and unity of the people as a whole. Therefore we find the Omaha Indian before the advent of the whiteman a fine specimen of manhood, physically and morally, of good health; his work and rest were properly balanced. He lived at peace with his neighbors with plenty for his household; content with his share of the gifts of God and more nearly attaining that goal which is the universal pursuit of mankind ~~is~~ happiness. After the advent of the whiteman with liquor, we find these conditions radically changed and reversed. We find physical degeneration of the Indian; the use of liquor producing lower resistance to any kind of a disease together with exposure; we find him an easy prey to tuberculosis, and the Indian child of today is a weak puny specimen of humanity, many of the children being marked for tuberculosis. The people having been idle for over eighteen years, we find a marked effect on them physically from this idleness as well as a disturbance of economic conditions

Q. What effect have you noticed upon the domestic relations from the conditions you speak of?

A. There were a great many domestic brawls and there were some separations brought about by immoralities that were committed at this time by many women. The children were taught to drink; no care was taken of them physically or morally, and we find that the home suffered much as a consequence.

Q. What effects did you notice from this condition upon industrial and economic life?

A. There was no work whatever done during this time except by two or three Indians. The Indian lived on the rent from his land. He made no provision for the future; lived only from day to day. He disposed of his property for liquor, pawning even the clothes on his back. In 1902 the politicians had a law passed whereby an Indian could be allowed to sell heirship land. This went into effect in 1903, and after this time we find land being sold and the proceeds used in dissipation. One Indian sold his land in 1904 for \$6000. He invited the Indians to a gathering at his house, treated the company to liquor, distributed to each person bills of money, also buying himself three buggies; the money was all spent within a year.

Q. What brought about any change in 1906 at the end of this eighteen years?

A. In 1906 came a wholesome social reaction from within the Indian himself. He had known what loss of self-respect was; he had tasted of disgrace; he had become thoroughly disgusted with himself. At this time, Mr. John W. Commons was agent or Superintendent, and an assisting factor in this reaction was also due to the fact that he held up their moneys and would not pay them their rents unless they behaved themselves. He also took a personal interest in each one who came into his office to do business with him. He told them to take a little of the money that he paid out to them and spend it for garden seeds. He visited them in their homes telling them how to farm these gardens. All over the Reservation you could see the signs of a reviving interest in industries. The Indian seemed to be anxious to take hold of anything that might assist him to climb upward again. They began to go to church and took

an interest in religion. In 1907 the mescal was brought to them and they seemed to find in it a physiological antagonist to liquor. They did not take it immoderately; no deaths took place from it, and it helped them to keep sober. They began to build up their homes; to save their money and became more thrifty.

Q. Have you noticed any re-ceding or dropping back from this bettered condition?

A. They continued to do without liquor for about five years. At their annual Pow-wow where all the Tribe are gathered together they appointed their own policemen from among themselves. Any man that was drunk, white or Indian, was put off. There were no fights or brawls of any kind as might be expected from 1300 people camped together. No one was allowed on the grounds who was drunk, and liquor was seized and thrown out if brought there by white men. Then in 1910 a few of the young men who had joined the mescal secured drink, mostly from Sioux City. The Competency Commission, appointed by Commissioner Abbott, released a few young men who had been drinkers and who ought to have been kept under restriction. At this time a great many patents in fee were released to the Indians, these young men being among the number. They immediately sold their land and proceeded to spend the proceeds in dissipation. Since, each year a few men have fallen away.

Q. Have you made any examination of the Tribal Rolls and examined the list of Omaha Indians with an idea of determining the effects of liquor among them, and if so what was the result?

A. Yes I have examined the Roll. Because ^{of} this condition prevailing just now, a retrogression to liquor habits again is very alarming on account of the helpless children involved. Without exception I know all of the deaths resulting from liquor, the accidents, and the deaths from exposure, and they are as follows: In 1894, Harry Edwards fell from a buggy, was not missed by his drunken companions and in the morning was found frozen to death. In the same year Alvin Reese, a young man, had a runaway while drunk and was dragged to death. In 1895 George Parker, an Omaha Indian was shot by a drunk Winnebago and died instantly. In 1895 Washington Baxter, a young Indian man, died in one night from convulsions from drinking alcohol. In 1894 Philip Watson, an

elderly men, while drunk died from exposure and pneumonia. In 1896 James Walker, an Omaha Indian, while drunk, was run over by a train in the City of Omaha. In 1898 William Parker died in a few hours from drinking alcohol. In 1902 Charlie Reese, a young man died from drinking alcohol. In 1903 James Black died in Emerson Nebraska very suddenly from alcohol. In 1904 Henry Guitar, a mere boy, while drunk, killed his father Stephen Guitar, and he was sent to the Penitentiary where he spent about seven years, being paroled in 1913. James Blankbird, while drunk, shot Gilbert Morris who recovered after a long and tedious illness. In 1905 Nathan Lyon was killed while drunk by John Walker who died in the Penitentiary in 1913. In 1905 Sam Parker killed Andrew Johnson, but escaped any punishment. Both were drunk. In 1906 Silas Wood while drunk, killed George Phillips, another Omaha Indian who was also drunk. ~~He~~ ^{He} escaped punishment. Wolf Chief while drunk in the State of Iowa was hung by the Vigilantes. Spafford Woodhull while drunk killed a New York Indian about 1896. He escaped punishment. In 1906 Stephen Walker died in a few hours from drinking alcohol. In 1890 Philip Porter or White Swan, died from drinking alcohol. Furnas Robinson while drunk lay in the fire and had his leg burnt so badly that it had to be amputated. In 1909 Richard White while drunk lay out in the cold and died from the exposure. Frank Grant died from drinking alcohol. In 1905 Brian Preston while drunk was drowned in the Missouri River. Arthur Hallowell, a young man, was killed in the runaway while drunk. Eli Sheridan in 1906 died from drinking alcohol. The following women died from the results of alcohol: Levi Levering's mother, May W. Walker, Henry Warner's wife, William Frosts wife, and William Callon's wife. In 1911 Louis Levering died from the effects of alcoholism and tuberculosis. In 1911 Sammie Freement who had served five years in the navy, shortly after his return from the navy committed suicide. While drunk he had signed away his patent in fee to W. E. Estill; after finding out what he had done, he shot himself. In 1913, Shagsduba, an old man while intoxicated drove into a ditch and was killed. The following died from alcoholism: George Grant, Ozeogacha, Willie Harlan, and Sioux Solomon. Joseph Drum while drunk was injured in a runaway so badly that he died. In 1912,

Jeremiah Parker while drunk was shot and killed by a whiteman. In March 1914, Joel W. Tyndall, an educated Indian, died of alcoholism and general dissipation. In April Henry Warner, an old man, was killed while drunk. The young man who was accused of killing him committed suicide. He was also drunk. These two deaths resulted from Lemon extract sold to them by George Phillips, a white man.

Q. What if any federal effort has been made to stop the use of liquor among the Indians?

A. The Government has tried from time to time to keep liquor off the Reservation, but there has been no concerted persistent effort. The detectives do not seem to have been able to accomplish much against the boot-leggers or the evil places in the Cities where liquor has been sold to the Indian. I know of no effort made by the Government to suppress the use of liquor among those who rent from and deal with the Indians.

Q. What methods have you to suggest for the suppression of liquor traffic and bettering of conditions.

A. I believe a great deal depends on the kind of man they appoint for their detective service. They should not be men who are local men or who have relatives that are interest^{ed} in or have business interests in the locality. They should be men who are above taking a bribe or showing partiality to these individuals whatever. There should be a man who would make it his business to do ~~nothing~~ ^{nothing} else but stay in this locality and attend to this matter alone. They should be men who have the real interest of the Indian at heart, and who are not in it for the fact of the salary alone. It would be only by living among the people both Indians and Whites, that they could gain a real knowledge of conditions affecting the question at issue. If they were the right kind of men their influence would go a great ways toward making the Indians keep from drink. Some of these so-called detectives that have been sent have given away their calling by the open methods they have pursued. It is a critical state of affairs just at this time for the Indian. These detectives could also accomplish a good deal by being given the power to cancel the leases of those white men who introduce liquor to Indian lessors and I know personally, for the Indians themselves have

told me that their hired men procure liquor for them. These detectives should be given the power to put such men off the Reservation and much will be accomplished in this way.

Witness excused.
