Thomas Henry Tibbles papers, 1850-1956 [1875-1905]

Rachel Menyuk

2014
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Collection Overview

Repository: National Museum of the American Indian
Title: Thomas Henry Tibbles papers
Identifier: NMAI.AC.066
Date: 1850-1956
(bulk 1875-1905)
Extent: 2 Linear feet
41 Photographs
Creator: Tibbles, Thomas Henry, 1840-1928
Language: English.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information
Thomas Henry Tibbles papers were originally donated to the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation in 1960 by Vivien Barris, wife of Tibbles's grandson Chester Barris.

Separated Materials
The photographs have been moved to cool storage.

Related Materials
The dress of Susette "Bright Eyes" LaFlesche, wife to Tibbles, was also donated by Vivien Barris in 1984 and is a part of NMAI's Ethnology object collection. It has catalog number 25/2192.

Processing Information
Processed by Rachel Menyuk, Archives Technician, in 2014.

Preferred Citation
Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Thomas Henry Tibbles papers, Box and Folder Number; National Museum of the American Indian Archive Center, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions
Access to NMAI Archive Center collections is by appointment only, Monday - Friday, 9:30 am - 4:30 pm. Please contact the archives to make an appointment (phone: 301-238-1400, email: nmaiarchives@si.edu).
Biographical / Historical

Thomas Henry Tibbles was born May 22, 1840, near Athens, Ohio to parents William and Martha (nee Cooley) Tibbles. In 1856, at the age of 16, Tibbles fought with anti-slavery Free-Staters in the Bleeding Kansas conflicts under James Henry Lane. Lane's troops disbanded the same year and Tibbles went on to study at Mt. Union College in Alliance, Ohio from 1858-1861. During the Civil War Tibbles served as a scout and newspaper correspondent in Missouri and Kansas and continued newspaper work until 1871 when he became a circuit preacher. Between 1874 and 1879, Tibbles worked on the staffs of various newspapers in Omaha, Nebraska eventually reaching the post of assistant editor of the Omaha Daily Herald. It was during his time at the Herald that Tibbles was instrumental in bringing the case of Standing Bear and the Ponca Indian people before the United States District Court at Fort Omaha. Standing Bear, along with thirty other Poncas, had returned to their home in Nebraska after being forcibly removed to Indian Territory 1878. They were being detained at the Omaha Reservation on an order from the Secretary of the Interior and Tibbles began to circulate the story of the plight of the Ponca to major newspapers gathering the support of the public. Eventually Tibbles had attorneys John L. Webster and A.J. Poppleton help Standing Bear petition the court with a writ of habeas corpus. On April 30, 1879 Judge Elmer Dundy declared that an Indian is a person within the law and that the Ponca were being held illegally, setting Standing Bear and the Ponca free. Following the trial, Tibbles continued to report on violations against Native American rights. Tibbles was a witness to the aftermath of the massacre of Native Americans at Wounded Knee in 1891, and reported this tragedy to the world. From 1893-1895, he worked as a newspaper correspondent in Washington D.C. On returning to Nebraska, Tibbles became editor-in-chief of The Independent, a weekly Populist Party newspaper. He was the Populist Party nominee for Vice President of the United States in 1904. Though unsuccessful in this campaign Tibbles continued to write on Populist issues as well as editing The Investigator from 1905-1910 and returning to the Omaha World Herald from 1910 to his retirement.

Tibbles had two children with his first wife, Amelia Owen whom he married in 1861. Eda, born in 1868 in Kansas City, married Herbert Bates in 1894 and May, born in 1870 in Danville Iowa, married Allen Barris in 1891. Amelia died of peritonitis in 1879. On June 29, 1882, Tibbles married Susette "Bright Eyes" LaFlesche (Omaha), daughter of Joseph "Iron Eye" LaFlesche. Susette LaFlesche worked closely alongside Tibbles during the Standing Bear's trial in her role as chief interpreter. Together, LaFlesche, Tibbles and Standing Bear carried out a successful lecture tour in England and Scotland in 1886-1887 speaking on issues of Indian rights. LaFlesche became well known as an eloquent writer and orator. Following her death in 1903 she was eulogized in the US Senate and was later inducted into the Nebraska Hall of Fame. Tibbles remarried for a final time in 1907 to Ida Belle Riddle. She remained by Tibbles side until his own death in 1928.

During his career, Tibbles wrote three books which included Ponca Chiefs (1880), which was written under the pen name "Zylyff", Hidden Power (1881) and The American Peasant (1892). Tibbles had also composed his memoirs titled Buckskin and Blanket Days which were eventually published in 1957 through the efforts of his grandson Chester Barris.
Scope and Contents

The Thomas Henry Tibbles papers include documents that span Tibbles career as a journalist and lecturer on Indian rights from the 1870s until his death in 1928. Of particular note are the documents related to his work on the Standing Bear vs. George Crook Habeas Corpus trial. This includes articles, essays and talks written by Tibbles as well as copies of a lecture given by Susette LaFlesche Tibbles. Notable correspondents include; Robert Clarkson, Joseph Cook, General George Crook, Robert N. Price and William Jennings Bryan. Examples of materials related to the Ponca land case and Standing Bear trial include reports from the Ponca Relief commitee, a petition from the Ponca people, minutes from the Council Concerning Ponca Land Right and additional documents and writings sent out by Tibbles to gain support from both the church and politicians. Also included in these papers are several drafts of *Buckskin and Blanket Days*, Tibbles' autobiography that was written in 1905 and published in 1957. There is a significant amount of correspondence between Chester Barris, grandson to Tibbles, and publishing houses between 1939 and 1956 in the search for a willing publisher. There is also correspondence between Barris and his aunt Theadora "Dora" Cogswell who worked on editing the manuscript. Cogswell conducted a large amount of research on the historicity of the events described by Tibbles and her notes are included in the collection. The photographs in this collection include portraits of the Tibbles/LaFlesche family as well as portraits of freinds and acquaintances. These include photographs of Edward Everett Hale, General George Crook, Governor Benjamin Butluer, Wendall Phillips, Thomas Watson, William Jennings Bryan and Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged into three series. **Series 1: Subject Files** and **Series 2: Buckskin and Blanket Days** are both arranged alphabetically. **Series 3: Photographs** is subdivided into three subseries; **Subseries 3A: T.H. Tibbles Portraits**, arranged chronologically, **Subseries 3B: Family and Friends** and **Subseries 3C: Presentation Portraits to Bright Eyes**, both arranged alphabetically.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:
- Habeas corpus -- United States -- Cases
- Omaha
- Ponca
- Ponca Indians -- Legal status, laws, etc.
- Wounded Knee Massacre, S.D., 1890

Cultures:
- Omaha
- Ponca

Types of Materials:
- Articles
- Autobiographies
- Book drafts
Correspondence

Essays

Names:
Bryan, William Jennings, 1860-1925
Crook, George, 1829-1890
La Flesche, Susette, 1854-1903
Omaha World-Herald Company
Standing Bear, Ponca chief
Watson, Thomas E. (Thomas Edward), 1856-1922
Series 1: Subject Files, 1867-1939

1 Linear foot

The materials in this series span the life and career of T.H. Tibbles from 1867 until his death in 1927. This includes articles, essays and talks written by Tibbles relating to both his work among the Ponca and Omaha tribes as well as his later political work as a member of the populist party. There is a small amount of correspondence in this series including letters from Robert Clarkson, Joseph Cook, General George Crook, Robert N. Price and William Jennings Bryan. Materials related to the Ponca land case and Standing Bear trial include reports from the Ponca Relief committee, a petition from the Ponca people, minutes from the Council Concerning Ponca Land Right and additional documents and writings sent out by Tibbles to gain support from both the church and politicians. Also included in this series are essays and lectures written by Susette "Bright Eyes" LaFlesche Tibbles (Omaha) who served as Standing Bear’s interpreter during his trial.

Box 1, Folder 1  Articles of Agreement, 1871
Image(s): Articles of Agreement: 1871

Box 1, Folder 2  Book List: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1932
Image(s): Book List: Nebraska State Historical Society: 1932

Box 1, Folder 3  Bright Eyes, Susette La Flesche: Law is Liberty, undated
Image(s): Bright Eyes, Susette La Flesche: Law is Liberty: undated

Box 1, Folder 4  Bright Eyes, Susette La Flesche: Letters, 1879
Image(s): Bright Eyes, Susette La Flesche: Letters: 1879
Includes letters dictated to Bright Eyes by Joseph "Iron Eye" LaFlesche and several Ponca Chiefs.

Box 1, Folder 5  Bright Eyes, Susette La Flesche: Speeches, 1880
Image(s): Bright Eyes, Susette La Flesche: Speeches: 1880

Box 1, Folder 6  Bright Eyes, Susette La Flesche: Statement by White Eagle, 1879
Image(s): Bright Eyes, Susette La Flesche: Statement by White Eagle: 1879

Map-case 12, Folder 1  Certificate: State of Nebraska, 1901

Box 1, Folder 7  George Crook: Letters and Clippings, 1871, 1879, 1882
Image(s): George Crook: Letters and Clippings: 1871, 1879, 1882

Box 1, Folder 8  Department of the Interior: Council Minutes, 1879
Image(s): Department of the Interior: Council Minutes: 1879

Box 1, Folder 9  Department of the Interior: Omaha Documents, 1883, 1899
Box 1, Folder 10
Department of the Interior: Standing Bear Certificate, 1877
Image(s): Department of the Interior: Standing Bear Certificate: 1877

Box 1, Folder 11
Grasshopper Scourge Aid, 1873-1875
Image(s): Grasshopper Scourge Aid: 1873-1875

Map-case 12, Folder 2
"His History" Folio and Cartoon of Standing Bear, undated

Box 1, Folder 12
Letters of Introduction: Ponca Aid, Jun. 1879
Image(s): Letters of Introduction: Ponca Aid: Jun. 1879

Box 1, Folder 13
Letters of Introduction: Ponca Aid, Jul. 1879-1880
Image(s): Letters of Introduction: Ponca Aid: Jul. 1879-1880

Box 1, Folder 14
Letters of Introduction: Miscellaneous, 1886-1887
Image(s): Letters of Introduction: Miscellaneous: 1886-1887

Box 1, Folder 15
Letters Received: A-C, 1879-1907
Image(s): Letters Received: A-C: 1879-1907
Correspondents: Allen, Bourke, Bryan, Buffalo Chip, Cabot

Box 1, Folder 16
Letters Received: D-J, 1880-1905
Image(s): Letters Received: D-J: 1880-1905
Correspondents: Davis, Dawes, Edgren, Goddard, Hale, Harsha, Jackson

Box 1, Folder 17
Letters Received: K-T, 1879-1881
Image(s): Letters Received: K-T: 1879-1881
Correspondents: Kingsley, Lincoln, Price, Riggs, Stickney, Thomas

Box 1, Folder 18
Letters Received: V-Y, 1879-1905
Image(s): Letters Received: V-Y: 1879-1905
Correspondents: Vincent, Watson, Webster, Yellow Horse

Box 1, Folder 19
Letters Sent, 1885, 1887
Image(s): Letters Sent: 1885, 1887

Box 1, Folder 20
Letters to the Editor, 1881-1897
Image(s): Letters to the Editor: 1881-1897

Map-case 12, Folder 2
Map of Omaha Reservation, undated

Box 1, Folder 21
Medicine Lodge Creek Indians, 1867
Image(s): Medicine Lodge Creek Indians: 1867

Box 1, Folder 22  Omaha Ponca Relief Committee, 1880  
Image(s): Omaha Ponca Relief Committee: 1880

Map-case 12, Folder 2  Omaha World Herald: Cartoon of Tibbles, 1939

Box 1, Folder 23  Pamphlets by Other Authors, 1880, 1888, 1906  
Image(s): Pamphlets by Other Authors: 1880, 1888, 1906

Box 1, Folder 24  Ponca Land Dispute: Clippings and Articles, 1879  
Image(s): Ponca Land Dispute: Clippings and Articles: 1879

Box 1, Folder 25  Ponca Land Dispute: Clippings and Articles (Photocopies), 1879  
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 26  Ponca Land Dispute: Scrapbook, 1879-1880  
Image(s): Ponca Land Dispute: Scrapbook: 1879-1880

Box 7  Ponca Land Dispute: Scrapbook, 1879-1881  
Image(s)

Box 8  Ponca Land Dispute: Scrapbook, 1880-1881  
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 1  Ponca Land Dispute: Statements and Petitions, 1879  
Image(s): Ponca Land Dispute: Statements and Petitions: 1879

Box 2, Folder 2  Ponca Land Dispute: Writings, 1879  
Image(s): Ponca Land Dispute: Writings: 1879

Box 2, Folder 3  Petitions, 1880, 1886  
Image(s): Petitions: 1880, 1886

Box 2, Folder 4  Religious Sermons, undated  
Image(s): Religious Sermons: undated

Box 2, Folder 5  F. Schwerzer: "The Limitations of the Law", 1905  
Image(s): F. Schwerzer: "The Limitations of the Law": 1905

Box 2, Folder 6  Standing Bear: Letter to the Editor, 1879  
Image(s): Standing Bear: Letter to the Editor: 1879

Box 2, Folder 7  Standing Bear vs. Crook: Argument of G.M. Lambertson, 1879
Standing Bear vs. Crook: Argument of G.M. Lambertson: 1879

Standing Bear vs. Crook: Argument of A.J. Poppleton, 1879

Standing Bear vs. Crook: Argument of J.L. Webster, 1879

Standing Bear vs. Crook: Notice of Appearance, 1879

Standing Bear vs. Crook: Testimonies, 1879

Writings: The American Peasant, 1892

Writings: "A Chapter of Moral Science", undated

Writings: "Colonel Spotted Tail", undated

Writings: "How a Poet Wrote History", undated

Writings: "On the Need for Civil Law Among the Indians", 1885

Writings: "One Man's Part in the Making of a Nation", undated

Writings: "Pipe Dancing the Sioux", 1881

Writings: Poetry, Miscellaneous, undated

Writings: The Ponca Chiefs, 1879

Writings: "Riding Through the Hostiles", undated

Writings: "Social Life Among the North American Indians", undated
Image(s): Writings: "Social Life Among the North American Indians": undated

Box 3, Folder 3  Writings: "The Story of Sunshine", undated
Image(s): Writings: "The Story of Sunshine": undated

Box 3, Folder 4  Writings: "Three Professors", undated
Image(s): Writings: "Three Professors": undated

Box 3, Folder 5  Writings: "Two Reporters Try High Finance", undated
Image(s): Writings: "Two Reporters Try High Finance": undated

Box 3, Folder 6  Writings: "Wrong Principles in Indian Government", undated
Image(s): Writings: "Wrong Principles in Indian Government": undated

Box 3, Folder 7  Writings: Untitled, Miscellaneous, undated
Image(s): Writings: Untitled, Miscellaneous: undated

Box 3, Folder 8  Writings: Untitled, Story on Inflation, 1895
Image(s): Writings: Untitled, Story on Inflation: 1895

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Series 2: Buckskin and Blanket Days, 1934-1956

1 Linear foot

This series contains material related to the publication of Tibbles' autobiography *Buckskin and Blanket Days* in 1957. This includes several drafts of the manuscript as well as correspondence between Chester Barris and publishing houses between 1939 and 1956 in the search for a willing publisher. There is also correspondence between Barris and his aunt Theadora "Dora" Cogswell who worked on editing the manuscript. Cogswell conducted a large amount of research on the historicity of the events described by Tibbles and her research notes, including clippings and articles related to events described in the book, are included in this series.

- Box 3, Folder 9: Agreements: Barris and Cogswell, 1936
  - Image(s): Agreements: Barris and Cogswell: 1936
- Box 3, Folder 10: Biographical Preface, undated
  - Image(s): Biographical Preface: undated
- Box 3, Folder 11: Correspondence: Barris and Cogswell, 1939
  - Image(s): Correspondence: Barris and Cogswell: 1939
- Box 3, Folder 12: Correspondence: Barris and Cogswell, 1940
  - Image(s): Correspondence: Barris and Cogswell: 1940
- Box 3, Folder 13: Correspondence: Barris and Cogswell, 1941-1951
  - Image(s): Correspondence: Barris and Cogswell: 1941-1951
- Box 3, Folder 14: Correspondence: Barris and DeFrance, 1936-1937
  - Image(s): Correspondence: Barris and DeFrance: 1936-1937
- Box 3, Folder 15: Correspondence: Publication, 1934-1938
  - Image(s): Correspondence: Publication: 1934-1938
- Box 3, Folder 16: Correspondence: Publication, 1942-1947
  - Image(s): Correspondence: Publication: 1942-1947
- Box 4, Folder 1: Correspondence: Publication, 1947-1950
  - Image(s): Correspondence: Publication: 1947-1950
- Box 4, Folder 2: Correspondence: Publication, 1951-1956
  - Image(s): Correspondence: Publication: 1951-1956
- Box 4, Folder 3: Correspondence: Research, 1939
  - Image(s): Correspondence: Research: 1939
- Box 4, Folder 4: Foreward, Biographical Sketch Questionnaire, undated
Image(s): Foreward, Biographical Sketch Questionnaire: undated

Box 4, Folder 5  
Manuscript I, p.1-57, undated  
Image(s): Manuscript I, p.1-57: undated

Box 4, Folder 6  
Manuscript I, p.58-123, undated  
Image(s): Manuscript I, p.58-123: undated

Box 4, Folder 7  
Manuscript I, p.124-164, undated  
Image(s): Manuscript I, p.124-164: undated

Box 4, Folder 8  
Manuscript I, p.165-232, undated  
Image(s): Manuscript I, p.165-232: undated

Box 4, Folder 9  
Manuscript I, p.233-315, undated  
Image(s): Manuscript I, p.233-315: undated

Box 4, Folder 10  
Manuscript I, p.315-364, undated  
Image(s): Manuscript I, p.315-364: undated

Box 4, Folder 11  
Manuscript II, p.1-77, undated  
Image(s): Manuscript II, p.1-77: undated

Box 4, Folder 12  
Manuscript II, p.78-156, undated  
Image(s): Manuscript II, p.78-156: undated

Box 5, Folder 1  
Manuscript II, p.157-229, undated  
Image(s): Manuscript II, p.157-229: undated

Box 5, Folder 2  
Manuscript II, p.230-309, undated  
Image(s): Manuscript II, p.230-309: undated

Box 5, Folder 3  
Manuscript II, p.310-380, undated  
Image(s): Manuscript II, p.310-380: undated

Box 5, Folder 4  
Manuscript III, p.306-380, undated  
Image(s): Manuscript III, p.306-380: undated

Box 5, Folder 5  
Manuscript III, p.381-447, undated  
Image(s): Manuscript III, p.381-447: undated

Box 5, Folder 6  
Research: Eda Bates Recollections, 1935  
Image(s): Research: Eda Bates Recollections: 1935

Box 5, Folder 7  
Research Notes: Bright Eyes and "A Continent Lost", undated
Box 5, Folder 8  Research Notes: "Hidden Power" and Ponca Chiefs, undated
Image(s): Research Notes: "Hidden Power" and Ponca Chiefs: undated

Box 5, Folder 9  Research Notes: "Indian Life", undated
Image(s): Research Notes: "Indian Life": undated

Box 5, Folder 10 Research Notes: Sitting Bull, Wounded Knee, Circuit Riding, undated
Image(s): Research Notes: Sitting Bull, Wounded Knee, Circuit Riding: undated

Box 5, Folder 11 Research Notes: Miscellaneous, undated
Image(s): Research Notes: Miscellaneous: undated

Box 5, Folder 12 Research Notes: Miscellaneous, undated
Image(s): Research Notes: Miscellaneous: undated

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Series 3: Photographs, 1861-1920

41 Photographs
There are four oversize prints that are located in Box 6 of the collection. The rest of the prints are located in folders in climate controlled storage.

The photographs in this series have been organized into three subseries. The first subseries includes portraits of T.H. Tibbles from the 1860s until late in his life. This includes photographs of Tibbles with family members as well as populist presidential running partner Thomas Watson. The photographs are of varying formats through the years and of particular note are two tintypes of Tibbles from the 1870s. The second subseries includes photographs of the Tibbles and LaFlesche families including photographs of Tibbles' daughters Mae and Eda. There are also photographs of family friends such as William Jennings Bryan and family. The final series is comprised of portraits inscribed to Birght Eyes and presented as gifts. These include portraits of Edward Everett Hale, General George Crook, Governor Benjamin Butluer, Wendall Phillips, Thomas Watson and Harriet Beecher Stowe.

3A: T.H. Tibbles Portraits

Folder 1
T.H. Tibbles and Amelia Owens Tibbles, 1861
1 Photograph
Image(s)

Folder 1
T.H. Tibbles, 1860s
1 Photograph
Image(s)

Folder 1; Box 6
T.H. Tibbles, 1870s
4 Photographs
Image(s)

Folder 2
T.H. Tibbles, 1886
3 Photographs
Image(s)

Folder 3
T.H. Tibbles, 1900s
4 Photographs
Image(s)

Box 6
T.H. Tibbles and Susette La Flesche with Friends, 1901
1 Photograph
Image(s)

Box 6
T.H. Tibbles and Tom Watson, 1904
2 Photographs
Image(s)

Folder 4
T.H. Tibbles and Ida Riddle Tibbles, 1910s
1 Photograph
Image(s)

Folder 4  T.H. Tibbles with Eda and Friends, 1910s
1 Photograph
Image(s)

Folder 4  T.H. Tibbles in Nebraska and on Farm, undated
2 Photographs
Image(s)

3B: Family and Friends

Folder 5  Mr. and Mrs. William Jennings Bryan and Grandchildren, undated
4 Photographs
Image(s)

Folder 5  Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Davis, undated
2 Photographs
Image(s)

Folder 6  Rosalie and Marguerite La Flesche, undated
2 Photographs
Image(s)

Folder 6  Eda and May Tibbles (Daughters), 1889, 1893
3 Photographs
Image(s)

Folder 7  Ida Riddle Tibbles (Wife), undated
1 Photograph
Image(s)

Folder 7  Martha Tibbles (Mother), Eliza Tibbles (Sister) and Husband, undated
3 Photographs
Image(s)

3C: Presentation Portraits to Bright Eyes

Folder 8  Henry Beecher, Gov. Benjamin Butler, Joseph Cook, George Crook, Edward Everett Hale, 1887, undated
6 Photographs
Image(s)

Folder 9  Rev. W.J. Harsha, Mrs. Higgins (Teacher), Wendell Phillips, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Unlabled, 1886, 1880, undated
5 Photographs

Image(s)

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