


GLADYS and REGINALD



Laubin 

INTERPRETATIVE INDIAN DANCERS

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"Cadaho"  
Colchester, Conn.  
December 12, 1936

Mr. W. S. Campbell,  
University of Oklahoma,  
Norman, Oklahoma

Dear Mr. Campbell:

I wonder if you have ever heard of Joseph Griffis, or Tahan. I met him three or four years ago at his home in Vermont, but he is an old-timer, eighty-six years old, who has led one of the most interesting and contrasting lives I have ever heard of. He is half Osage and his father was California Joe. He was captured by Kiowas when about two years old, and lived with them till a young man. He claims to have killed Major Elliot at the Washita affair and shortly after that was captured by soldiers and recognized as part white. He was put in the care of some farmers who were to "civilize" him, but he hated the confinement and escaped, joining a band of renegades, made up of outcast Indians and a few whites, who terrorized the Plains for several years. He finally served as a government scout, but had a fight with an officer who insulted his Indian wife, and deserted. He had a price on his head for a number of years but was eventually pardoned by President Cleveland. He fell in with the Salvation Army in Ontario, learned to read and write and was sent as a missionary to the Seneca Indians. Later he was head of the Presbyterian missions in Oklahoma, but he refused to abide by some of the church's regulations, such as demanding the Indians to cut their hair, cease painting their faces, etc., and resigned from the Board. He has been lecturing for a number of years now.

In 1915 Tahan wrote the story of his life, but in order to sell it had to agree to change a number of things which made the whites and the government look a bit off color. Recently he has written a new book, which is not entirely his biography, but deals with old times with which he was familiar, and where his personal memoirs are related he has told them as they really happened. He is now in New York trying to sell his book but is running into the same old thing; they do not want to print anything which takes away from the sainthood of the white race, the government and the army. But this time he refuses to change to suit the publishers' tastes and he cannot afford to print the book on his own.

So I am wondering if you would have any suggestions to offer as to publishers who might be interested in a real, personal story of the old west. Your stories certainly left out nothing of the truth to save a few silly feelings and so I thought of you. It is high time people learned the truth even if it does