

Kissimmee, Florida,  
May 3, 1929.

Mr. M. V. Hartranft, Pres.,  
California Home Extension Society,  
Tujunga, California.

Dear Mr. Hartranft:

I am just in receipt of your letter per air mail and I hasten to reply.

First, I wish to say that nothing could please me more than to know that someone capable feels as I do about my hero, Osceola; that he is worthy of a major place in American History as a great character in American Drama.

I rather think that the book you purchased in Ocala, Florida, must have been my publication, "The Seminoles of Florida." I am inclosing you a circular of my new and revised edition which came out in December. In this, I add another chapter on the life of Osceola. You possibly do not know that my entire life almost has been devoted to writing for the Seminole Indians, for their betterment, and with the object in view of securing for them permanent homes in Florida.

Because Florida officials of Tallahassee have controlled the great Everglades of Florida (5,000 square miles) and have unfortunately exploited this area which I have insisted should belong to the bird life of Florida, to the forest creatures, and have insisted it was the home, by treaty right, of the Seminole Indians, and also because I want it preserved in its original beauty, I have naturally become very well known all over the country. Just now, Congress, in both houses, has passed a bill for a survey of two million acres in the Southern part of the State, to be used for a National Park. They have not mentioned the Seminole Indians and I, in my later writings, have insisted that the Seminole's interest must be considered and that they shall not be exploited.

How delighted I would be to see this wonderful drama of Mr. McGroarty, and I wish that it had been my privilege to have met and talked with you and the author when he first had the conception of this American drama. I see in his characters how great correct he has followed history and I wish it were possible for this play to be produced in the East because of the great interest that our Everglades have created throughout the East, and the Romance, saying nothing of the pathos that is attached to the Indian life. Such a play would receive the greatest attention in

our Eastern cities and would make a wonderful pageant for both St. Augustine and Tampa, where they have on each Spring a great celebration, at which time our thousands of winter tourists are here.

As you do, I see in the character of Osceola a dramatic hero, as great as any that America has ever produced. I have to acknowledge that I have kept so closely to my special subject, "The Indians of Florida," that I am not versed on other lines, and it is only my visits to New York that I get a touch of the outside world.

I will be very glad, indeed, to know more about this drama and whether it can be brought to the Eastern States, even if a revision was necessary. When I go to New York, every paper is eager for news of the Seminoles and my name is before the press of Florida constantly and I always feel that it is because of the interest of these people. The Everglades drainage alone, with its many failures and the treatment the Indians have received every year, and I might say, almost every month for the past twenty-five years, makes the subject a most vital one to every humane heart.

I note that you have an exhibit of Art in the Lobby of the Playhouse and I have boxed, ready for shipment, at Kingsport, Tennessee, 500 copies of my new edition, and they could be gotten to you very quickly. The books sell at \$2.50 and if there was a way that you could handle these books, I would make them to you for \$1,000.00.

During the past winter I have had a very unique program that I have presented before organizations in Florida - "Music of the Seminoles, - Song and Story of a Vanishing Race." So far as I know, I have the only recorded music ever gotten from these Indians and this music in transcription is used in this program where a singer in Indian costume adds greatly to my talk. In your drama, you speak of the Feast Dance and Chants of the Seminoles. My husband who is the Indians best white friend has been with these Indians during their ceremonies and knows the songs as they sing them today. I am wondering what style of music you use in this drama.

At this time I can congratulate you upon the subject chosen for the great American Drama and I know of no subject that surpasses it, with its romantic setting and the magnificent spirit of the captured Chieftain.



I have a brother-in-law in Los Angeles, Mr. N. A. Ross, who is in the Real Estate business, whose home is in Hollywood, Detroit Avenue; and a young niece living in San Diego, but I don't feel that these people would be of any special benefit to you.

I hope to go to New York very soon but in the meantime will be glad to hear from you here and I believe there is a place in drama for Mr. McGrearty, possibly in a more modified scale, leaving out, if I may be permitted to say so, considerable of the negro part, as I think Osceola only protected the negroes; it was for his own people he was working.

I thank you very much for calling my attention to this new drama. I would be glad to hear from you as we may be able to work together in it.

Wishing you great success,

Sincerely yours,

Minnie Moore Willson.  
(Mrs. J. M. Willson, Jr.)

MMW/ir

P. S. I note that Mr. McGrearty is connected with the Los Angeles Times and I believe he could help our Indians to a better life by using some of his space for these neglected and illy treated people.

M. M. W.