

## Who Was Nancy Bowen? A Reading List



On March 6, 1930, Henri Marchand, Jr. came home to 576 Riley Street in Buffalo to discover the lifeless body of his mother Clothilde Marchand on the stairs.

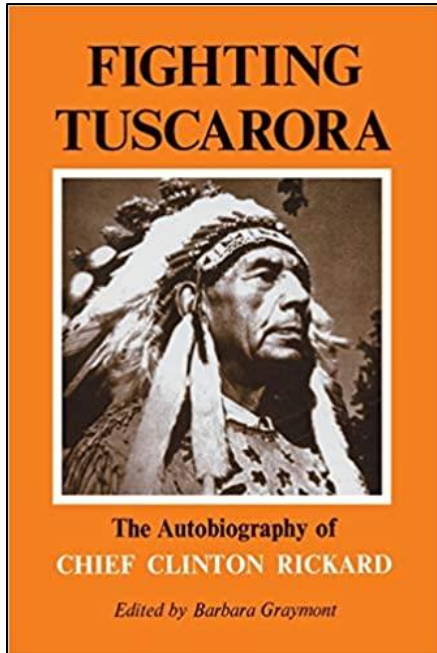
Police investigations revealed that Henri Marchand, Sr. (1887-1951), the husband of the victim, had been conducting an affair with Lila Jimerson (ca. 1884-1972), a member of the Seneca nation who lived on the Cattaraugus reservation.

Marchand, a sculptor from France, was employed at the Buffalo Museum of Science as a designer and builder of dioramas. He traveled often to the reservation and had hired Lila to model for him. She hoped, or had been led to believe, that Marchand was going to leave his wife for her.

Prosecutors accused Lila of recruiting her friend Nancy Bowen (ca. 1866-1960), a traditional healer and member of the Cayuga nation, to travel to Buffalo. While Lila was on a car ride with Henri, Nancy confronted Clothilde at her home, accusing her of witchcraft against Indians, and struck her with a hammer.

The defense argued that Henri manipulated and exploited the two women and was responsible for the murder. Racism and stereotypes of "primitive" Indians characterized much of the trial. Lila was eventually acquitted and Nancy was sentenced to time already served.

*Illustration from The Buffalo Evening News Financial Edition, March 7, 1930, p. 1*

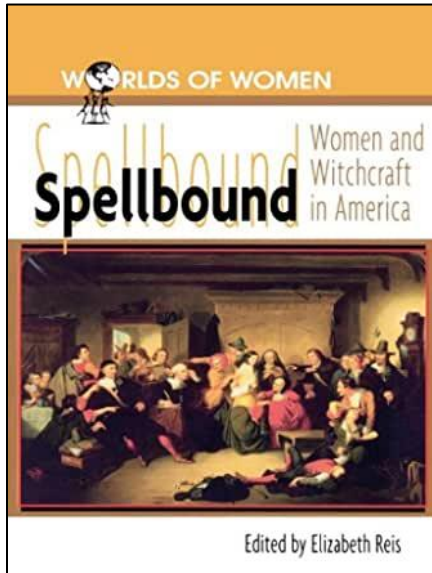
**Cover & Link(s)****Description**

**Graymont, Barbara, ed.**

**Fighting Tuscarora: The Autobiography of Chief Clinton Rickard**  
Syracuse University Press, 1973

Chief Rickard (1882-1971) mentions the case on pages 98-100, with photographs from the *Buffalo News* of Lila Jimerson and Nancy Bowen. The federal government got involved in the case because Chief Rickard argued that according to U.S. law, the U.S. district attorney was obligated to defend Nancy Bowen and Lila Jimerson.

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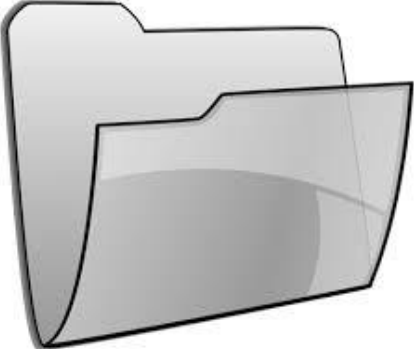




**Reis, Elizabeth, ed.**

**Spellbound: Women and Witchcraft in America**  
SR Books, 2004

The most thorough account published to date on the Marchand murder is chapter 9 (pp. 183-199) in this volume, *Red lilac of the Cayugas: traditional Indian laws and culture conflict in a witchcraft trial in Buffalo, New York, 1930*, by Sidney L. Harring. He originally published this article in 1992.

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	<p><b>Newspapers.com</b>  <b>On-site access only</b></p> <p>Buffalo newspapers covered the Marchand crime and trial extensively. If you are in our building and on our Wi-Fi, you may bring your own laptop, search our Newspapers.com account, and download articles at no charge. At home, you need to have a subscription.</p>
	<p><b>Ready Reference: Crimes – Murder – Marchand</b></p> <p>We have two folders of offline articles and clippings about the case ready to browse in hard copy. Ask our librarian to get them out for you.</p>
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