

September 30, 1931.

Dear Aydelette:

I wish to ask for your advice, and, if my project interests you, your help.

My biography of Sitting Bull is now complete, after three years of hard slogging. I first spent almost an academic year on the printed sources. Then I spent a summer in Dakota talking with old-timers, and especially old Indians. The following winter I consulted some 2000 correspondents, and had a stenographer busy making transcripts and notes. I also sent reliable Indians (men who had worked for the experts of the Bureau of Ethnology) out to ~~xxxxxx~~ scout for likely lines of investigation. One of these men, a former friend of Sitting Bull, came and spent six weeks with me in Oklahoma, and went over all the matter I had gathered, dictating his comments to the stenographer. The following summer I visited the Dakotas and Montana on my way to Canada, talked with other old men for weeks on end, and opened lines of investigation which I then had no time to explore. This among all the tribes in the States which had had contact with Sitting Bull. I had to pinch myself at times to believe in my amazing luck, which no one has ever had in equal measure among the Sioux- if indeed among the men of any tribe whatever. After thirty years of work with Plains Indians, I had never encountered any luck remotely comparable.

My work in Canada included talk with the old men of all the tribes there with which Sitting Bull had contact- Assiniboin, Canadian Sioux, Saulteaux, Cree, and Red River Breeds, besides work in the provincial archives of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Dominion archives and records of the Royal North West Mounted Police at Ottawa. I also combed the files of the Bureau of Ethnology, the War Department, State Department, and Library of Congress in Washington. D.C.

As a result, I think I may fairly claim to have a sounder and more comprehensive ~~xxxx~~ knowledge of the Sioux and their history than anyone living. Very little has been done on this people, and the most of what has been printed is, to put it mildly, misleading.

For the first time in fifty years, the old men have talked. And for the last time they may be made to talk again- to me. They will not live long enough, most of them, to allow another man to gain their confidence. Already two of my best informants- Gray Whirlwind and Red Tomhawk- have died since I last saw them, and One Bull's memory is failing. I am the only man who can gather that harvest, and I wish to take advantage of this opportunity, which can never come again.

All that is required is a few dollars to finance research. Interpreters--good ones-- draw four dollars a day. Informants expect presents and expenses, though I never pay outright for information. There are long distances to cover (last year I drove 8000 miles), and as haste is essential, I must have compensation which will enable me to obtain leave- which, under our Governor, is inevitably without pay. I figure that \$2000.00 would enable me to do the job. It is a job well worth doing and one that no one else can do. Moreover, it is one that cannot wait.