

4

Michigan, N. Dak.
October 25, 1939

Stanley Vestal
Norman, Oklahoma
Dear Sir:

As this is our 50th Anniversary of statehood some of the papers have put out special jubilee editions. A certain young man who writes historical material with much research but little understanding of the subject put out several of the editions. In a feature article headed by a large picture of Sitting Bull he makes the following statement:
"Sitting Bull, a Sioux, is the best known of the early Indians of the state. A bandit, who waylaid mail carriers and government agents in his early career, he became an influential leader, although only ranking as a medicine man....."

To this was later added a few insuations in regard to his carrying the flag at the Bismarck celebration. Now, as a friend and student of the Indian past and present, I resent this old type of false propaganda. I have challenged the validity of the statement and now they reply that it is on the authority of old military records from Fort Totten. I recall similar statements emanating from this source as well as the old woman's kitchen stories of him a half-breed and once attending parochial school in Winnipeg. We are out for blood in this battle. It is a question of whether or not people can make libelous statements about dead Indians and get away with it.

Now I am not asking you to become involved in this dispute unless of your own free will you cared to voice an opinion. But, in your work on Sitting Bull, did you in any way come across evidence that would hold water in regard to Sitting Bull leading attacks on government men in the territory between Ft. Berthold and Ft. Totten? Don't think that I am without influence in North Dakota and that the newspaper in particular has the advantage but here is an opportunity to slap down a nauseous ghost tale, that might bring a new focus of attention on your book Sitting Bull.

I am going to present the matter to the Indians to get affidavits and alibis for the specific occasions if I can get the exact dates of the various charges...

Sincerely,

Edward G. Milligan
(He Tope)