

1020 Fairview Boulevard
Portland, Oregon
October 10, 1929

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

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Dear Mr. Campbell:

Your favor of September 25 received in which you ask certain questions regarding Sitting Bull, the Sioux medicine man, known by reputation as the Sioux leader against the U.S. forces during the Indian troubles of 1876-1880.

During those troublous times I was a second lieutenant, 5th Infantry under General Nelson A. Miles, young to the service and of little experience. I saw Sitting Bull but twice in my life, in October 1876, at a distance only, and at Fort Buford in 1881, when he surrendered to Major D.H. Brotherton on his return from Canada where he had remained after being driven from the United States in 1876. But I had seen many photographs of him and had talked with men who had seen him closely, who knew him.

Sitting Bull, so I was told, never claimed to be a warrior, a fighting man. He always called attention to the fact he was a "medicine man," an adviser, a maker of medicine or magic, a physician, a lawyer, one to be consulted, a foreteller of events, an oracle, an orator, a great man, yes, but not a fighting man. He could plan, he could advise, but he could not fight. One tale told of him during the Custer fight was that he left camp in such a hurry he left one of his twin children behind, and had to send back for it. During the fight he was in the hills as far away as he could get and only returned after the fight had ended. But with all this he had foretold the defeat of the soldiers and of the killing of them.

At the time of the surrender of Sitting Bull in 1881, I was at Fort Buford on my return from my wedding trip in the east, which lasted from October 1880 to April, 1881. With my brand new wife I was on my way up the Missouri river to join my regiment at Fort Keogh on the Yellowstone, and it was waiting for the arrival of the boat, that Mrs. Bowen and I were guests of Major and Mrs. Brotherton, at the time of the surrender.

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The Indians, several hundred of them, surrendered just outside the post, and were put into camp there, under soldier guard. Sitting Bull was a "Blanket Indian" and wore this garb rather than the gayer trappings frequently pictured. I did not talk to him personally