

June 15, 1942

Mr. John S. Wright
4411 Washington Boulevard
Indianapolis, Ind.

Dear Mr. Wright:

I was interested to get your letter of June 11 asking about Sitting Bull. It is a pleasure to discuss such matters. Thanks very much for your kind praise of my book.

The book was published during the depression and I was compelled to make it one volume instead of two as I had intended. A good deal of the material omitted from the biography afterwards appeared in my Wapath and particularly in New Sources of Indian History 1850-1891, The Ghost Dance - The Prairie Sioux, A Miscellany, published by the University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1934. In the latter book beginning on page 263 is a section "Sitting Bull As Prisoner of War" which gives Colonel George P. Ahern's account of the contact with Sitting Bull. That section will answer most of your questions.

So far as I know Sitting Bull never even learned to write in his own Sioux language, though his nephew, White Bull did while Sitting Bull was yet alive.

A good many people both in Canada and the States were under the impression that they had taught Sitting Bull to write his name. The Old Chief was a thorough diplomat. However, as you will see from my book, Sitting Bull could already write his name in English in 1882 soon after his surrender, some years before he settled at Fort Yates. I personally believe that he learned this while in Canada before his surrender. You can always test the genuineness of his signature by the dot over the "i" resembling a bird in flight.

Sitting Bull was not a prisoner at Fort Yates though, of course, confined to the reservation.

Thanks again for your letter. If I can be of any further service in such matters I shall be happy to hear from you.

Yours cordially,

P.S. I am considering writing a book on the Missouri River. If you know any good anecdotes connected with life on or along the river I shall be very happy to have them.

WSC/fo