

Military

2445 East Broad Street
Columbus 9, Ohio
October 4, 1956

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Norman, Oklahoma

Dear Dr. Campbell:

Thank you very much for your letter of September 26th. I am glad that you found of interest Don Rickey's summary of the account of the Custer Battle furnished him by the Cheyenne, John Stands-in-Timber.

Per your advice I wrote to Judge Frank Zahn on September 23d and today have received from him a most interesting letter, a copy of which is enclosed. I am surprised to learn that so many of the old Sioux warriors still live. How I wish that I could head for Dakota right this minute! In September of '53, on the Tongue River Reservation, Montana, Mr. Rufus Wallowing (half Cheyenne, half Sioux) took me to see two old Cheyennes, Edward Gray and Billy Yellowrope, both of whom were present in the great encampment on the Little Bighorn when the 7th Cavalry attacked in 1876. Edward Gray was an infant at that time. Yellowrope, however, was about eight years old then and he remembered the event very well. He and his numerous progeny lived in a little log cabin on Tongue River when I saw him; a jovial old fellow, wearing his hair in braids, with bright blue sunglasses and a Boy Scout badge ("Tenderfoot" class), he appeared to be in excellent health.

It is really very kind of Judge Zahn to go to so much trouble. As you see, he states that he will go on interviewing the old warriors as they come into the agency. Perhaps some of these oldtimers may come up with something of real value. I would like to do something nice for Judge Zahn in an effort to show him that his pains are appreciated. But I know nothing of his situation, of how such things are conducted out there at Standing Rock, etc. I hope you won't feel that I'm trying to put you on the spot but, as you are acquainted with Judge Zahn, perhaps you can suggest what I might do that would please him.

As Judge Zahn's father served in the 17th U.S. Infantry in the 70's, I intend to send to him, for one thing, a remarkably good photograph of a number of men of the 17th Infantry, taken at Fort McKean, D.T., in the summer of 1877. Fort McKean, as you know, was the infantry post on the hill just north of Fort Abraham Lincoln. I believe that Fort McKean was sometimes referred to as "Fort Lincoln On The Hill."

As you suggested, I have checked the annual reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior. The annual report for 1874 contains a report by William W. Alderson, agent at Milk River Agency, Fort Peck, dated September 1, 1874, addressed to Hon. E. P. Smith, Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Checking the reports for 1872 and 1873, I found no report from any agency at Fort Peck. Evidently 1874 was the first year the Fort Peck Agency was in operation. At any rate, Alderson opens his 1874 report by stating that this is his first annual report.

In Alderson's 1874 report, he states in part: