

United States Post Office

CLASS

assured that it had at one time, belonged to Sitting Bull, but this morning, I find the name of Tatonka Ohitika (Brave Bull) filed along one edge. While this does not prove that S.B. never owned it, it does not give me much confidence that it really ~~###~~ was his property. Since you were here, I have secured a Ghost Dance dress, worn by a woman of his band on the Grand river. It is supported by affidavits and has been identified by several Indians of more mature years, so I believe I have an original dress. There are no beads upon the shoulders and in several other ways, it differs from the ordinary buckskin womans dress.

Please know that I am not "peeved" because you have decided that I have been misled in my S.B. information. I have made a close study of the old man and his life story for at least 19 years, for I was fortunate enough to see him liberated on the Great Sioux Reservation in South Dakota, in 1882 and the actions of the people at that time, greatly impressed my childish mind. Several writers have been here and spent a week or two among the Sioux and then gone back to Boston or Philadelphia to write the story of Sitting Bull and his people, and this a dangerous thing to do. I have always refused to lend them my assistance and could almost write their Chapter titles without reading the manuscript. Information ^{by men} under fifty years of age along this line is dangerous and nearly always misleading. Men of that age are loath to talk about another mans exploits while younger people will often render an apparently plausible life story of the old man and his deeds of valor. Fact is, that before 1876, he was a very ordinary Indian, but since then, he has taken much of the glory of a far greater and valorous Indian, Gall. When such authority as Major McLaughlin came to me for discussion of historical events of Sioux life (after he had spent his life time since 1872 or 1873, among them) and Ohiyesa (Dr. Eastman) accepted my Hidatsa story of Sakakawea against that of Idaho and South Dakota and North Dakota authorities, I have some idea that, perhaps even I, have entre by which I am able to get at the bottom of certain disputed affairs of Indian history among the Great Plains tribes. I am not arguing, but am sorry that I have lost your confidence in my source stories and facts.

With kind regards, I am,

Yours sincerely,


A. B. Welch