

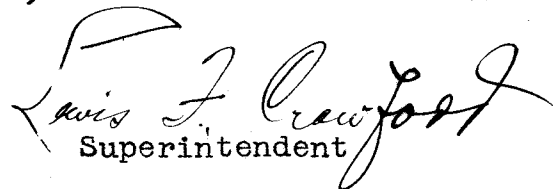
timers who presume to speak with the authority of experience on matters connected with Sitting Bull have no more actual information than would come from having seen him at some time when he was brought to Bismarck for a ceremonial occasion. It has been the custom for a writer to say anything he wished about an Indian, knowing that he would be unanswered; and, worst of all, the readers of such nonsense have usually swallowed it as truth.

Sitting Bull has been called a "coffee cooler", a "medicine man", and many other even less complimentary names by people who write merely from hearsay and have no knowledge of Indian life and character or of historic facts to check them.

High school and college students have taken to writing essays and theses on historical subjects without sufficient background, and their instructors seem to be encouraging them in their errors. Journalists have seized with avidity on anything smacking of the Old West and have made of it something unrecognizable by the historian.

I do not wish to seem unduly pessimistic, but having seen almost daily what a maze of misstatement inexperienced and ambitious writers have produced around the facts of our state's history, I have a certain hesitancy about encouraging even a serious writer in attempting to get at the real truth of Sitting Bull's life. An authoritative and final account could be made only at a cost of considerable time and money in investigation. No one can write with accuracy of Sitting Bull who has not an inner knowledge of the tribal life and the jealousy among the various bands of Sioux.

Sincerely yours,

  
Superintendent

LFC:HC