

JOSEPH G. MASTERS PRINCIPAL

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Dear Friend:

I have been going over very carefully the accounts of the Custer battle which you have put into your "Sitting Bull" and Warpath". I have been working on <sup>Custer's</sup> ~~the~~ material for a number of years and have often gone over the battlefield both alone and with many who pretend to understand a good deal about it, and have <sup>recently</sup> ~~now~~ dug through every possible source that I can find, with the thought of writing ~~the~~ sketch of the battle.

Perhaps you have Volume 15 of the South Dakota Collections which deals with the Sioux Wars and which purports to have gathered together practically all of the significant materials or accounts of the battle. After all, the *writer* ~~editor~~, Deland, does shift and shape the material to suit his point of view: namely, in defense of Reno and for Benteen as over against Custer. Almost every time he quotes Godfrey when Godfrey is fair or favorable at all to Custer, he challenges the material or distorts it. If Godfrey gives a sentence or two which is reasonable or favorable to Reno and Benteen, he says that this is good material.

Seemingly, nowadays most of the white men who attempt to write the tale are partison one way or the other. With all of this as a sort of prelude, I am writing in reality to congratulate you upon the fairness (and I think also accuracy) with which you have approached the several difficult problems or points of view in the battle. It seems to me that the Indian accounts (and yours is probably the best) are after all our best source of reliance in the whole situation. As I read your account and the other Indian accounts, I get the fairly clear impression that the Reno episode was pretty well finished and Reno had crossed the stream and climbed the steep hill to the east before the big stir took place down the river at the north and against Custer. Custer's biographer, Whittaker, is of course interested in carrying through the situation favorable to Custer. Nevertheless, he does seem to reveal some rather clear situations in some of the quotations which he makes.

By the way, I am wondering if you ever got into the Sacajawea situation. Ghent of Washington is trying to prove to me again the old old situation that she is not buried at all in Wyoming. I have never worried about the matter and am not now, for my own several contacts in and about Fort Washakie long ago convinced me that Sacajawea lived there the latter years of her life and now lies in the Indian cemetery up on the hill, as I have described in my story. If means of further proof were wanted, it might be available *from several competent sources.*

By the way, if you have encountered any errors, big or little, in my "Stories of the Far West", I shall be glad if you will write me about them. I have caught three or four, most of them very small, and was able to get all but one corrected for the second printing. If you have not done so, perhaps I could offer a word of helpful advice: viz. that you descend from your exalted