

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
FIELD SERVICE

Flandreau, South Dakota
August 22, 1938

My dear Mr. Vestal,

Once I was visiting at Bullhead and Mr. Old Bull told me that a friend of his was coming to see him "next summer" and he let me read a letter saying so. That friend's name was Campbell, as I recall it. He was from Oklahoma, and was a writer. Was that you, I wonder.

Well, that is not why I am writing. I am writing to say that I have just been reading your "New Sources of Indian History" which I find very useful and thorough, and I certainly appreciate the tone of your writing. I am not a hyperbolic type--no Indian is, I believe--but it is quite heart-warming to find a white man speaking for those who could not speak for themselves in print.

I better say who I am. I was born and brought up at St. Elizabeth's rectory, at the mission near Wakpala, and I know practically all the names that come out in your material on Standing Rock. I went to Oberlin, and to Columbia where I took my bachelor's degree. And have been working on Dakota--the language-- directed by Dr. Boas, for the last eight years. I was fortunate in that my parents were Yanktons so that I knew that dialect from them; I was reared among Tetons and talked the language of my playmates rather than my parents; and all my religious education that was in Dakota was in the Santee dialect. So you see I had an unusual opportunity to know all three dialects, and that was a big help when I began to work in Dakota, and had to do the language in a three column sort of way. The consonant shifts were very easy for me.

At present I am here teaching phonetic Dakota writing to an adult group of the Flandreau Sioux, (Santee, of course) and I find the response simply grand. Some of the teachers are taking the course too, because it is felt that if they had a better appreciation of the language of the students they have to teach, it might help them to respect it. The students and adult Indians themselves are very much impressed with Dakota, and proud to realize that in the University it is treated as a major study, a matter of academic consideration.