

July 31, 1929.

Colonel Charles F. Bates,  
33 Park Avenue,  
Bronxville, N.Y.

Dear Sir:

Colonel S.C. Vestal, Chief, Historical Section, Army War College, has informed me that you are at work upon a biography of General Custer, and suggests that I communicate with you. As it happens, I am working on a life of Sitting Bull. It may be that we can aid each other.

I shall be very grateful for your help, in any case, and will be happy to give you full credit when my book appears.

But perhaps I should introduce myself before going further. I have been known since childhood by the name of my step-father, Campbell. But I prefer to write under that of my own father, Vestal. My best work has been a life of Kit Carson.

If you can suggest any officers to whom I might apply for first-hand information about Sitting Bull, or any unpublished sources, or newspapers containing interviews with him, they would help. His whereabouts at the battle of the Little Big Horn also seem to be in dispute.

Do you happen to know the initials of the interpreter Girard, who was with Reno? He passed part of the night with De Rudic and others in the timber, having been left behind by the command when it took position on the bluffs, you remember. Was this the same Girard who was a fur trader at Fort Berthold and elsewhere? The initials of the fur trader were F.F. He is mentioned in Father De Smet's journals, and at one time Sitting Bull was his subordinate in gathering the furs of the Sioux. They quarrelled, and I am trying to run down Girard and get the facts.

Can you refer me to De Rudic's account of his experiences?

Do you consider Dixon's book about the Custer battle (as told by the Indians years afterward) authentic? What Indian accounts are the best, anyway? I am anxious to get the opinion of a military expert like yourself on this point.

Please help me. If I can aid your own researches, I shall be glad to do so.

Faithfully yours,

W.S. CAMPBELL  
(formerly Captain, 335th F.A., A.E.F.)