

July 1, 1929.

Mrs. Gertrude Bonnin,  
President, National Council of American Indians,  
c/ Good Housekeeping Magazine,  
New York City.

Dear Madam:

May I introduce myself and make a request?

As a small boy I lived on a ranch within three miles of a village of Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians in western Oklahoma. The ranch belonged to my uncle, who had adopted an Indian boy. Afterward, my father was Head of a State School at Weatherford, within fifteen miles of Colony, Oklahoma, where I had many friends. Later still, when my work at Oxford as Rhodes Scholar was over, I became a teacher at this University, and for years was an honorary member of the Indian Club on the campus. And I have published a number of volumes of prose and verse on Western history, and especially about the Plains Indians, whom I love. My best books are HAPPY HUNTING GROUNDS, and a biography of KIT CARSON. Much of the material for these volumes I obtained from the Cheyennes and Arapahoes and other Oklahoma Indians.

Recently my friend Dr. E.E.Dale has returned from his tour of the reservations, and I have been reading the Report of Meriam and Associates (THE PROBLEM OF INDIAN ADMINISTRATION) and the articles in Goodhousekeeping Magazine. Dr. Dale, as you know, was one of the authors of that report. Familiar as I was with many of the abuses of the Indian Bureau, that report made my blood boil. I intend to make use of it to point the moral of the book I am now working on - the life of Sitting Bull.

I am informed that you are a relative of that great man, and I wish to ask you to help me. During the past year I have been searching all the records and books I can find and studying the history of the Dakota Indians, but there are many gaps. Much of the material is wholly unreliable as you can well imagine. Before I get through I hope to visit the Dakotas again, both those in the States and in Canada, and clear up many of these points.

Will you be kind enough to help me with any information you may have regarding Sitting Bull, his character, his words and deeds, any of the intimate details of his life? Most of the books express opinions, but tell no stories of the man. What I need are facts about him, about his family, his doings and his beliefs. In my opinion, no public man in American history has been more misrepresented than Sitting Bull. My biography of him will, I trust, be not only an addition to history, but an act of justice.