

July 31, 1929.

Mrs. Gertrude Bonnin,  
National Council of American Indians,  
37 Blinn Building,  
Washington, D.C.

My dear Mrs. Bonnin:

I can never thank you enough for your great kindness in sending me information regarding Sitting Bull. And I shall be grateful for Captain Bonnin's legal advice and aid. The publisher will have to be protected from libel suits, of course. It is very kind of you to offer to help me. And certainly your aid will prove invaluable.

In the South, bitterness is still strong for wrongs of Reconstruction fifty years old. What wonder that the Indian--whose Reconstruction still goes on-- is suspicious and wary when a stranger approaches him? You-- who have the confidence of those who knew Sitting Bull-- those who stuck to him through thick and thin-- can render me aid as no one else can. I appreciate your eagerness to do so. And I don't think your cause will lose anything in the effort. Sitting Bull will be vindicated, and the Indian set right in the public mind when my book comes out, I am sure.

What you say about McLaughlin agrees admirably with my understanding of the facts. His own book- "My Friend the Indian"- condemns him, and I have some ammunition now that will shoot it full of holes. But as you say, that part of the story must be made solid and proof against all attacks. And it is there that you can help me most.

I am especially anxious to clear up some points about Sitting Bull's life at Standing Rock, after he was released from confinement at Fort Randall. I wish to run over some of the things which need to be cleared up.

(1) I need information regarding the correspondence (War Department) of the officers in command at Fort Randall (1881-1883) leading up to the release of Sitting Bull. I want to see a copy of the orders releasing him. And I need to know on what terms the release was made, what- if anything- Sitting Bull agreed to, and what was expected of him. Also, what promises were made to him, if any. McLaughlin's report leads me to believe that Sitting Bull had expected to be chief of his band- as before- and that McLaughlin told him "nothing doing" and put a hoe in his hand.

(2) McLaughlin had Sitting Bull arrested and charged with assault on an Indian named Shell. Both were fined - the fine being the weapons used in the quarrel. McL. boasts of this as showing that he(McL) was "no respecter of persons." But, owing to the fact that the Court of Indian Offenses at Standing Rock kept no records, only McLaughlin's story is in print. I want some information about this quarrel, its causes, what really happened, and who tried Sitting Bull. Only Indians who were close to him could give these facts.