

(14)

Another point that McLaughlin tries to make is that Sitting Bull was a coward and did not take part in the battle against Custer. On the other hand, I find that some say he was not in the camp. Others say he was and quote his speech urging the warriors to defend their families. This is one of the most important points to be cleared up, since most of the adverse criticisms on Sitting Bull have been based upon this point.

If he was there, what part did he take (a) in the attack on Reno (b) in the attack on Custer. Did he supervise the flight of the women and children instead of taking part in the battle? Or was he far away at the time. Some say he was off somewhere "making medicine", but so far as I can learn there was no way of making medicine for the success of a battle. A man might make medicine for himself alone, but not for the tribe in such a case. If you can definitely learn where Sitting Bull was in that fight, you will be giving great aid.

.....
These are some of the problems I have to solve in writing the later life of this great man Sitting Bull. For, as you see, he was not only a great patriot and statesman, but also a father, a husband, a priest, a warrior, a hunter, a friend to the poor and unfortunate, a protector of captives, and an orator. He was also a great lover of horses. All these phases of his life I must establish in order to bring him to life- a MAN- ~~humanity~~ before the reader.

For I am determined to present the life of Sitting Bull as I would the life of Lincoln or Washington-- a full-length portrait, with every characteristic outlined and proved. Only in this way can I bring him to life as he was, and convince the world of his essential greatness and ability. No mere propoganda, no mere praising, no mere opinions, will do. And the facts have to be gathered. Sitting Bull, like all men, had his limitations due to the society in which he was reared, his education, the hardships and experiences of life. And these, too, must be presented. For no one will accept a biography these days which ignores such things. Nobody is perfect, and a picture of a man without fault would be hooted at. Sitting Bull can stand being presented truly. I have spent a year and more in research(2 years and more, to be exact), and I know. He may have made some mistakes, but he was always honest, and nine times in ten he was right. His opinions in his own words are the best criticism of the old Indian Bureau that I have ever seen. Now they are trying to put some of his ideas into practice! Mrs. Bonnin, this book is going to be a knock-out blow to the old abuses and to the enemies of the Indian!

I have already read hundreds of volumes, reports, unpublished manuscripts, and consulted everyone I could find who might help. But, after all, only the Indians themselves(and especially those who were close to Sitting Bull through thick and thin--who followed him to Canada, and into prison and stuck to him and fought with him at his death) can give me the live facts that will make the book the success it ought to be. Here is where you can aid me.

I wish I had the funds to finance your expedition to Dakota. However, I have not. My little daughter has had pneumonia four times in the last year,