

July 21, 1929.

Colonel Samuel C. Vestal,  
Chief of Historical Section,  
Army War College,  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

I was much interested in your paper printed in the Proceedings of the Annual Meeting and Dinner of the Order of Indian Wars of the United States, 1929, recently sent me by my friend Major George P. Ahern. And your appeal for the preservation of material relating to the Indian campaigns makes me hope that you will lend me a helping hand just now.

As it happens, I am engaged on a life of Sitting Bull, and I find that most of the source material is fragmentary, unsatisfactory, and incomplete-- when not spurious or sensational. The journalists seem to have had it all their own way, while the officers who knew the facts have left little record of their impressions of the Indians and the campaigns. It is to them that we must look for the truth.

May I ask you to assist me in informing me of the addresses of officers of the Indian Wars, who can tell me something of the Sioux campaigns between 1855- and 1890? If so, I could appeal to these gentlemen directly. So far, whenever I have been able to trace such an officer, I have uniformly gained his aid. But without the names and addresses I am helpless. I especially wish to get in touch with officers who served on the border with Gen. Miles after the Custer fight(1876-1881) and with those who were in charge of- or on duty at- Fort Randall, Dakota Territory, during the time(1881-1883) when Sitting Bull was held prisoner there. Also officers on duty at Fort Yates from 1883-1891, or 1877-81.

May I ask also, whether your library contains unpublished manuscripts on the Sitting Bull campaigns to which I might gain access or of which transcripts could be made for my use?

I shall be most grateful, if you will assist me. The Regular Army has never received the credit it deserved for the duty on the Plains against the Indians, and as Indian agents.

Perhaps I should add that my own father's name is Vestal, and so I write under it, although known since early childhood by the name of my step-father, Campbell.

Faithfully yours,

W.S.CAMPBELL  
Formerly Captain, 335th F.A.A.E.F.