THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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CHICAGO 37, ILLINOIS, U.S.A.

1155 EAST FIFTY-EIGHTH STREET

September 16, 1946

Mr. James Willard Schultz,
University Club,
Los Angeles, California.

Dear Mr. Schultz:

I have just reread, during the past week-end--and I do not know how many times it makes now--your two remarkable books, My Life as an Indian and Friends of My Life as an Indian, and I wish this time to obey the impulse which I have often felt on previous readings, to write you of my deep appreciation of these wonderful volumes.

My first acquaintance with My Life as an Indian came a few years after its publication when I was a school boy in my early teens. As a result I formed a profound feeling of respect for the noble people among whom you lived and whom you counted as your own. I have never ceased from that time to love them and to hope for further acquaintance with them, possibly at first hand. However, fate has guided me in other directions, and it has never been possible for me to visit the lovely country on the Marias which you have painted so vividly and so beautifully.

I am an Egyptologist and have spent many years in Egypt--your books were with me while I was there--where also Sun had in ancient times his devoted people. Just now, indeed, I am making a special study of some Egyptian prayers to the sungod, and I noted yesterday with new interest some of the prayers offered by your people as related in the pages of your book.

But as I read again these two books--somehow your others have never come to my hand--I knew that this time I must write to you and tell of my feelings, how deeply I appreciate your life and admire you for your great service to your Pikuni, these people so noble and so happy in the long ago and so long suffering at the hands of our greedy and indifferent American compatriots. It has been once more a remarkable experience to live over with you those years in the eighties. Of course, I have felt again the shame of realizing that my race could have been responsible for the Baker massacre and the great starvation. But most of all, I have taken such pleasure in your warm account of Madame Berry (Joseph Kipp's mother), the Crow Woman, and especially that sweet and noble Natahki who was so dear to you and whom you have made dear to so many others.

words of appreciation--words which for more than thirty years I have left unexpressed, though they have often been in my heart. I deeply thank you for something which you have added to my life. It is a truly great achievement which you have made in representing so completely and so convincingly the soul and spirit of a noble race of men. Their own Apikuni has served them well by his mastery of the written word, and he has hewn for them a monument which will never die.

May you live to be old! As the ancient Egyptians would have said it: May you live a hundred and twenty years, in prosperity, in health, and in happiness of heart.

I hope that this letter will reach you in spite of the imperfect address to which I have mailed it.

Sincerely and gratefully yours,

Keith C. Seele