

Hutchins re Sitting Bull

Booz man
PARTY
1874

DH

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September 18, 1956

Mr. James S. Hutchins
2445 East Broad Street
Columbus 9, Ohio

Dear Mr. Hutchins:

Thanks very much for your interesting letter and for all the information you have sent me. I don't know that I can help much or answer your questions. Since you know my book NEW SOURCES OF INDIAN HISTORY you may have noticed on page 159 Chief White Bull's account of the movements of Sitting Bull's camp 1870-76.

On page 162 under the Summer of 1874, you find the following: "On his return he found the camp moving north from the forks of Powder River. It proceeded to the southeast to the Big Bottom and remained there four days. Four tribes of Sioux were camped together; the Hunkpapa, Oglala, Minniconjou, and Sans Arc. The camp remained there until the Yellowstone was in flood and the roses in bloom. White Bull then left Sitting Bull's camp and was gone all winter."

The only fight that White Bull described to me on the Yellowstone in 1874 was that narrated in my biography of that chief entitled WARPATH in Chapter 17 entitled "Crowhorse." This was a fight with the Crow Indians. He told me nothing of fighting any white men that summer but, of course, they might have come and gone before he reached that camp.

If those four tribes were camped together it is unlikely that any large war party could have been composed entirely of Hunkpapa. Also it might be worth your while to check on the annual reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs of that period in order to learn what tribes were at Fort Peck Agency, if, as they supposed, the Indians who attacked the Bozeman outfit came from Fort Peck. I feel sure that if White Bull had been in such a camp when war parties were launched at the white man he would have taken part and mentioned it to me. I always stipulated that I wanted no heresay, but wanted only facts about my informant's exploits.

Chief One Bull, the younger nephew of Sitting Bull, was in Sitting Bull's camp almost constantly and he too never had anything to say about accounts with white men at that time.

Nor, I believe, do any of Sitting Bull's pictorial autobiographies record anything about this fighting. The Military Record of Engagements would hardly mention it since your men were not soldiers (of course, you might check).

From the small number of Indians killed even with artillery and "charging parties", I suspect you are quite right in distrusting the estimates of the number of Indians engaged and the number killed.