

Sitting Bull Lohr

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April 20, 1944

Lenox R. Lohr, President
MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY
Jackson Park
Chicago 37, Illinois

Dear Mr. Lohr:

I was pleased to get your letter of April 14 and to learn that you have come into possession of a pistol said to be used in the slaying of Sitting Bull. Thanks for your kind praise of my book.

You ask what evidence is available as to the type of weapon used in killing Sitting Bull, that is, what guns were carried by Bullhead and Red Tomahawk. I suppose the records of the Indian Bureau at Washington would show what type of arms was issued to the Indian police at Standing Rock.

In my book, New Sources of Indian History, published by the University of Oklahoma Press in 1934 on page 16, I quote the official report as to ammunition left in the hands of the Indian police after the fight at the beginning of which Sitting Bull was killed. From that report it appears that most of the police, and perhaps all of them, had both guns and revolvers.

I believe that Red Tomahawk certainly shot Sitting Bull with a pistol. I am under the impression that Bullhead shot him with a rifle. However, I think your best course would be to write to Mr. Frank Zahn at Fort Yates, North Dakota. He is well acquainted with the history of the Sioux, and as interpreter there is in a position to contact the old timers, some of whom still survive and remember the fight. If you would offer a reasonable fee for the service, I have no doubt he could get particular details as to what general type of weapons were used, and perhaps what became of the particular weapons used in killing Sitting Bull.

As you may know, most of the arms taken from Sitting Bull's followers at that time were smashed over wagonwheels. Mr. A. B. Welch of Mandan, North Dakota, told me that he had a number of weapons used by Indians in the fight. I did not inspect his collection.

While working at Standing Rock, one of the interpreters there presented me with a Colts revolver which he said had been found trampled under in the mud on the scene of the fight and handed down in his family. The cylinder was gone, and all that remained was the iron frame. I do