

October 11, 1939

Mr. R. B. Roberts
7402 Bay Parkway
Brooklyn, New York

Dear Mr. Roberts:

I was pleased to get your letter of October 9. I am afraid there is very little truth in the article which appeared in Cosmopolitan. Indians make excellent eye-witnesses, but the moment you take them out of their own backyards, they are thoroughly unreliable. Yellow Robe, now deceased, wrote me that he gave Long Lance the material. I judge that the editor doctored it up to conform to popular folk-lore. Probably it was written on assignment, if not ghost-written. Long Lance, it is said, was not an Indian at all, but a Negro. Perhaps he was both. I never met him.

It seems highly improbable that Custer was the last man killed in the battle. I have talked to all the living survivors who would talk, and never found one who had been able to identify Custer before he was killed. A number of Indians have expressed the wish that they had killed him. If anybody knew who had killed him, it would have been broadcast among the Indian tribesmen long ago. Too many who have written on Indian affairs were sensation mongers caring nothing for the truth. Some others, though in earnest, did not know how to obtain true stories from Indians. I suggest you read my book, New Sources of Indian History, published by the University Press here, on the methods of obtaining true history from Indians. Every Indian thinks of an event as an incident in his own biography, and tends to make himself the hero of every event in which he took part. A good many white men have failed to allow for this fact.

You might also be interested in my book, Warpath, published by the Houghton Mifflin Company, which gives the Indian version of the Sioux wars. I hope this will help.

Yours cordially,

W. S. CAMPBELL