

Hotel Densmore,
Kansas City, Mo.,
February 8, 1933.

Mr. W. S. Campbell,
Department of English, University of Oklahoma,
Norman, Oklahoma.

My dear Mr. Campbell:-

I thank you very much for your long and informative letter of the 7th re Sitting Bull, et cetera.

Your expository passage regarding the great Sioux was especially welcome. I am primarily a portrait artist and what writing I do usually is hooked up in some way with my painting. While out in Dakota last year making portraits of some of the old Sioux survivors of the Custer battle I heard so much about Comanche that I decided to paint a picture of him as he might have appeared when found on the deserted battlefield terribly wounded on the 27th, the only thing left alive. To make the picture authentic it became necessary to do a lot of reading and research. In checking over what material I found to be available in old newspapers, books, and letters I found errata in almost everything. For instance, the chapter in Eleanor Ticknor's book (Houghton-Mifflin) on Comanche and the Custer fight (Book of Famous Horses) will not stand up to the facts....I have lettered and have talked with, men who knew Comanche and helped care for him both before and after the battle, including Generals Hugh L. Scott, Garlington and others. Last autumn I met the son of Trumpeter John Martin. Martin had told his son a good deal about Comanche. Among other things I have a poem by John Hay published in the ATLANTIC MONTHLY about Comanche some fifty odd years ago and have received permission to use it. I have also some interesting and hitherto unpublished photographs. In fact, the deeper I got into the history of the famous horse the more appropriate it seemed to me that a little book should be published about him, especially in view of the fact that the fine and wholesome association of men and horses has just about passed forever from the American scene. I believe the interest in Comanche, Traveler, and other famous horses will increase rather than diminish. Certainly there is now a pretty wide interest in Comanche. They tell me at the Dyche Museum that many inquiries from far and wide come in. The Assistant Curator told me that only the lack of available funds kept the University from writing and publishing a complete and authentic account of the horse for distribution. He expressed the wish that I, or someone else, would undertake the project. I, of course, make no pretense to being an authority on the Custer fight. But I doubt if anyone living now has at his command more authentic data concerning Comanche.

That portion of my letter regarding Gall and Sitting Bull may have seemed presumptuous. I did not mean it to be so. Your years of study and contacts cause me to pay your opinions the tribute of deference regarding Sitting Bull. My statements regarding the superiority of Gall as a field tactician were based upon impressions: many whites whom I thought well informed, and some Indians, have told me this. You are perfectly right about the reticence of the old Indians