

Separating Fact From Legend on Sitting Bull

SITTING BULL, CHAMPION
OF THE SIOUX, by Stanley Ves-
tal (350 pages; University of
Oklahoma Press, Norman; \$5).

THE importance of this con-
tribution to Western his-
tory long has been recognized
and the book has for many
years been out of print.

In the 25 years since its
first publication much new
material has been made avail-
able and is included in this,
the definitive edition on the
great leader of the Sioux.
Students of Indian history
who are seeking information,
especially on the struggle of
the Sioux nation to maintain
its integrity and existence,
should find it a valuable
guide.

Parallel with and part of
that struggle was Sitting
Bull's own unrelenting efforts
to retain leadership of his
tribe. He is described as "a
many-sided man, a soldier,
diplomat, organizer, patriot,
statesman and prophet."

Stanley Vestal is the pen
name for Walter S. Campbell,
a prolific writer on Western
themes. Research professor of
English at the University of
Oklahoma, he has for 18 years
conducted courses there in
professional writing. He was
graduated from the Oxford



Sitting Bull.

university as the first Rhodes
scholar from Oklahoma. Some
of his better known books in
the field of Western history
are "Warpath and Council
Fire," "Jim Bridger," and
"Dodge City."

None can quarrel with the
author's scholarship or com-
petency in presenting his ma-
terial, but there will be those
to differ at many points of his
work; as to the underlying
causes of the fight at Killdeer
mountain; as to the events at
the Little Big Horn, where
Custer made his last stand;
as to his courage, and as to his
leadership.

All these differences stem
from acceptance of traditions
and legends about Sitting Bull
which the author declares to
be without foundation in fact.
One of these tales, that Sitting
Bull himself killed Custer, is
denied unequivocally; the
slayer was White Bull, a
nephew of the chief.

John Edward Hicks.