

Sitting Bull's Death 47 Years Ago

FELL FROM BULLETS OF INDIANS ARRESTING HIM

Wily Leader's Nephew, 87, Still Alive

By **RAYMOND S. GRIFFITHS**

Cherry Creek, S. D., Dec. 15.—It was during the early dawn of the crisp, frosty morning of December 15, just 47 years ago, that Sitting Bull, last great chief of the Hunkpapa Sioux Tribe, fell, riddled with bullets at the hands of his own people, Indian police, who were sent to arrest him.

The place, on Grand river near the present Indian village of Bullhead, today is a public park where an Indian caretaker will show the visitor about the grounds, pointing out spots where each brave fell in that fierce "struggle in the dark."

White Bull in Battles

The story of the arrest, skirmish, and quick death of the Sioux leader has been told and retold and the name of Sitting Bull is familiar in all parts of the nation.

Joseph White Bull, 87-year-old nephew of the wily medicine man, a veteran of the Custer massacre, skirmishes with the whites and numerous buffalo hunts, lives today at Cherry Creek on the Cheyenne river reservation. For feats of bravery, varied experiences and color, the life of White Bull doubtless eclipses that of his illustrious uncle.

Both Sitting Bull and White Bull are eulogized in separate books by Stanley Vestal, who gleaned much of his material for the two publications from the latter chief. White Bull took an active part in the battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876. Four years later he engaged in a buffalo hunt during the memorable winter of 1880 and barely escaped with his life after long exposure. In 1883 he joined the last great buffalo hunt of the west, a hunt that marked the range lord's prairie paradise.

Tells Own Exploits

About the life of his uncle, White Bull says little. Today his reminis-

cences, sometimes dimmed or exaggerated by passing years, cover his own exploits.

The death of Sitting Bull in 1890 ended the dominance of the old regime of chieftains on the reservations of western South Dakota and brought a breath of relief to government agents who had been kept busy by the strange actions of the Sioux at that time. His death occurred when the famous "ghost dance" was at its height and two weeks before the battle of Wounded Knee, last conflict between the whites and Indians.

One episode recalled today by the few living Indians who took part in the Grand river battle when Sitting Bull was killed was caused by a large grey circus horse that had been given to the medicine man by Buffalo Bill when the chief traveled with his wild west show. The handsome animal had been ordered saddled and brought to Sitting Bull's cabin at the time of his arrest so he could accompany the police to the agency.

Superstitious About Horse

Undisturbed by the shots and flying bullets, the horse merely eased back on its haunches and lifted one hoof as he had been taught. He believed he was back in the wild west show and it was all the part of another act.

The spectacle frightened the more superstitious of the Indian police, who feared the spirit of the then dead Sitting Bull had been reincarnated as a horse and had been sent to avenge the chief's death. Although the air was alive with bullets, the horse escaped unscathed.

In commenting on the life of Sitting Bull, his nephew, White Bull said, "He was a good chief and a brave man, but I too have been a brave man."