

(2)

THE DENVER ART MUSEUM

CITY AND COUNTY BUILDING, CIVIC CENTER
AND CHAPPELL HOUSE, 1300 LOGAN STREET
DENVER, COLORADO

September 29, 1947

Please Reply to
Chappell House, 1300 Logan Street
Denver 3, Colorado

Professor Walter S. Campbell
Dept. of English
University of Oklahoma
Norman, Okla.

Dear Professor Campbell:

I have delayed answering your very informative letter about the four horns war bonnet because I wanted to send you a photograph of it. But there have been so many delays in getting a picture taken that I have decided to write you anyway, and send the photo later. The bonnet has been entirely reconditioned and mounted so that you will be able to get a good idea of it when you do get the picture.

I deeply appreciated the mass of information which you took the trouble to send me. There is no longer any doubt in my mind as to who the man called "Four Horns" actually was. It is of course excessively unlikely that I could have good evidence tying my bonnet to Sitting Bull's uncle.

Since writing you another specimen from the same collection as the bonnet has come in to us. It is one of the old scalp shirts of the type worn in the early days by a few great leaders. A fairly learned old Sioux who lives in Denver told me that only the greatest men had shirts of this type and that he would not dream of even putting it on just to see how it looked! The shirt is cut to the oldest pattern which Wissler gives. The front and back are made from the body and hind legs of two deer skins and the sleeves are made from the folded shoulders and front legs. Around the shoulder seams and down the sleeves are small bunches of human hair wrapped in porcupine quills dyed yellow with wolf moss. The sleeves are caught together near the wrists but the front and back are not attached. The upper half is irregularly smeared with a blue earth paint and the bottom half is similarly treated with yellow. On each side of the front and back and down the sleeves there is a long red zigzag. The triangular neck flap is vertically divided into red-brown and blue. From the bottom of the neck flaps there originally hung four scalps mounted on hoops but only one remains today.

The most interesting thing about the old shirt is the complete absence of any quilled or beaded bands on the shoulders and down the sleeves. If Wissler is correct in thinking that the shoulder bands were suggested by the epaulets on army uniforms, the absence of any such things on this shirt might suggest an early 19th century origin for it. My old Sioux friend here tells me that these shirts were passed from father to son and not buried with any given owner.

I plan to have a colored slide made of this shirt and will send you one if you wish.

Very truly yours,

F. H. Douglas

F. H. Douglas, Curator
Dept. of Native Art

FHD:IGG