

December 18, 1956

Mr. W. E. Rosebush
411 East Washington Street
Appleton, Wisconsin

Dear Mr. Rosebush:

Your letter addressed to GUNS MAGAZINE has been handed to me for reply. First, as to the chart of comparative casualties, taken from my book New Sources of Indian History, pages 132 and 141, if you will consult that book I think you will find strong support for my figures. Those giving the white troops and civilians with them are taken from official reports. The figures given for Indian losses were supplied by eye-witnesses and participants, who in every case were asked not only for the number of Indians killed and wounded, but for their names and the names of living relatives with whom I could check. Also, I took pains to ascertain just where each man was wounded. Some of these figures had been committed to writing by Indians as early as 1880. My conferences with these eye-witnesses were held at times and places far apart and through different interpreters. The first qualification of a historian is skepticism. I trust I have my share of this virtue.

The only vagueness in these figures lies in the number of wounded and in the number of Indians engaged in the fights. As the Indian had no disciplined organizations of troops and no roll call, but fought as an individual who took part or looked on at will, it is impossible to determine to a man just how many were engaged in any but the smaller affairs. There is a similar uncertainty as to the exact number of Indians wounded. But there is no vagueness as to the number of dead. I consider the figures given for Indian dead in the table quite accurate as the figures given by officers for white soldiers killed. For these instances, I have given the number of Indians engaged in round numbers. ad

Now, as to your authority.

I do not believe that any historian acquainted with Indians takes seriously the work of Brady or Dodge. All this is second-hand, and none of these are squared with what has been learned since their book appeared. After all, my informants were in the fight. One has many opportunities to test the knowledge and honesty of an eye-witness in an interview. When we read, we listen in the dark.

The Indian had a very poor opinion of the white troops, and you will find these expressions of contempt recurring in statements of all Plains