

As you know, few of the Indian Wars guns are still in Indian hands - especially among the Sioux and Cheyenne, as they were disarmed several times. In spite of disarming though, I have a photo of Yellow Bird (?), taken just after Wounded Knee, with a Winchester repeater lying next to him. Reminds me, McLaughlin (My Friend the Indian) makes several mentions of Sioux armament.

In general, I will conclude by saying that perhaps, in my opinion, one half of the hostiles had respectable cartridge arms by the end of the Indian campaigns (Sioux and Cheyenne), many had the percussion revolvers already mentioned, several utilized older muzzle loading rifles, muskets and shotguns - for several reasons: gift of Indian bureau, most common legitimate trade gun, easiest to secure ammunition for. Many would have relied on bows.

I know this is rather a sketchy treatment, but since I have been ferreting out information on the subject, I have yet to come across a really good account of the matter, and am not yet sure in my own mind about several things.

Of course, you know about the arms trade in guns, ammunition and liquor between the Red River breeds and the hostiles - not too much, but sometimes during a time of trade truce. Also, had an Indian the cash or trade equivalent, he could procure arms at the agency trader's, a settlement, a gun runner (during periods when arms trade was forbidden), or another Indian. Captured army guns made up a certain percentage of hostile armament.

From my studies, I would say that generally the Indian was not a good long range marksman - but at times, as in the Reno-Benteen fight, an Indian marksman gave a good account of himself from a range of several hundred yards - Windolph's account makes a good mention of this (I Fought With Custer).

This reply is quite disjointed, and perhaps of little value to you. I can only say that since Supt Luce left, I am a one man gang - and can not do better under the conditions. I will look for you in Sheridan, August 3-5, if I get there, and if not, I hope you will take the 75 mile ride up here to see us. Hoping that Foster is more help than I am,

Cordially yours,

Don Rickey
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