

October 21, 1952

John C. Ewers
Associate Curator of Ethnology
Smithsonian Institution
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Ewers:

I was happy to hear from you and shall give such help as I can. I have no firm information as to the weapon Sitting Bull carried when he surrendered in 1881—certainly nothing that would invalidate Brotherton's claim. However, the weapons which Sitting Bull carried at Custer's Last Stand were given him by his nephew, Chief Joseph White Bull. These were described to me, both by White Bull and his brother, One Bull, separately at different times. They were in perfect agreement. You will find these described on page 165 of my Sitting Bull. White Bull obtained his own weapons and field glasses from Fort Bennett, and implied that he obtained those he gave to Sitting Bull at the same place. However, he obtained them from Indians and not from white men. You will find references to his visits to Fort Bennett in the index to my book Wapath. Also on page 148 and 149 in my Sitting Bull you will find some account of Indian armament on pages 148 and 149. White Bull at the Custer fight carried a 17 shot Winchester and two cartridge belts. His brother, One Bull, had only a muzzle-loader but discarded this when Reno attacked, thinking such a gun useless under those circumstances, and so preferring Indian weapons.

I went to some trouble to find out just how Sitting Bull and his immediate relatives were armed at the time of the Custer Stand. His uncle, Four Horns, carried a bow and arrow and I suspect not more than half the Indians had firearms, in spite of propaganda to the contrary.

I have always believed Brotherton to be a man of honor and his claim is probably authentic in my opinion. But Sitting Bull certainly carried a Winchester, Model 1873. I never found any statement of White Bull to be false.

Cordially yours,

W. S. CAMPBELL
(Stanley Vestal)