

drift in a particular direction. For instance if a number of old Indians or old soldiers agree that at a particular point there was hot fighting, and that elsewhere the fighting was like Indians chasing buffaloes, I should assume that the consensus of conclusions had settled that matter for good and all. However, I am loath to place very much confidence in the unsupported statements of Red or white men who are survivors, because as old age comes on they get to romancing. The historical people in Washington tell me that they wrote letters to every old soldier who had been at the Little Big Horn and they found that of those who would answer questions as the result of interrogatories nothing of value could be gotten from them. I think the best results are obtained from diaries written at the time, or letters, or statements in newspapers at or near the time of the battle or engagement which is being considered.

I bought your book at once. Your description of the panic is a classic. It is a masterpiece. I have a good opinion of Sitting Bull as I have told you. It is inconceivable that he could be a coward and have the wide influence that he certainly had over the Indians. As I stated above, I am very much afraid of old peoples' tales at the present time about matters that occurred fifty or more years ago.

You have a fine subject for your new book and it is almost virgin ground.

Very truly yours,

*Charles F. Smith*