

STATEMENT OF SPOTTED BEAR - HUNKPAPA SIOUX

I was born near Tongue River, Montana Territory, 88 winters ago (1868). According to Sioux Indian chronology (winter count of the Hunkpapa and Black-feet Sioux) the winter when the whole country was covered with ice and an Indian woman froze her legs. I belong to the Teton Division of the Sioux Tribe. Sitting Bull was the Head Chief. I was 8 years old when Long Hair (Custer) was killed. I saw the fight on Greasy-grass river (Little Bighorn river). I was camped with the Hunkpapa Sioux at the upper end of the great Indian encampment. The sun was quite high in the sky when Long Hair's soldiers came up the valley of Greasy-grass and started to shoot at us. None of us knew that it was Long Hair until after the battle we were told by a half-breed named "Big Trousers" (John Brugier) that it was Custer who was wiped out. The warriors quickly got their war horses and with bows and arrows and war-clubs took after the soldiers (Reno's troops) in the bottom and chased them east across the Greasy-grass river to a high-bluff. In the retreat many soldiers were un-horsed and killed with war-clubs. The troopers must have regretted afterwards for it was Sitting Bull's camp that they attacked. When the firing began all the boys of my age got their ponies and rode away from the range of fire. It was very exciting - everybody was on the move - old men, women, children and dogs. There were two groups of Long Knives (Cavalry), one at the upper end and one at the lower end. I saw both fights, the upper and lower end. One group of Long Knives were all killed. We heard afterwards that this was Long Hair's men. Two years before Long Hair was killed (1874) I heard from Indians who were there say that a large group of men with wagons, horses and mules, came up the valley of the Rosebud river looking for maza-ska-ze (gold). Two Kettle band of Sioux Indians under their chief, High-back-bone or Hump and the Minne-con-oju band under their Chief, Red End Of Horn were camped there. It was the warriors from these two bands who fought the gold-hunters. I do not recall where I was at that time, but I heard that it was quite a fight. High-back-bone or Hump was my father's brother. He was in the Wounded Knee massacre of December 29, 1890, on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation, South Dakota. High-back-bone or Hump was wounded several times; he died at Popular (Fort Peck) Montana, not too many winters ago. I, too, was in that terrible onslaught, where men, women and children were mowed down indiscriminately. I was wounded four times; many Chiefs and brave men were slain unnecessarily; so much for that.

After Long Hair was killed I went to Canada with Sitting Bull and his warriors and their families. I came back across the Canadian Line about 1884 and lived here on the Standing Rock Indian reservation ever since. In 1890 I saw the Ghost Dance on Grand River, South Dakota. I recall the slaying of Sitting Bull, December 15, 1890. Sitting Bull was a great man. All the big men of the race who were leaders of the people in those days have gone to that land of Waziya, land of paradise. Spotted-Bear has spoken!

Judge's impression of informant

Genuinely honest & intelligent. Height - 5' 8" straight - dignified. Hair parted in middle & braided tightly - black hair - not unusual among Sioux. 4 wounds, 2 on arm & 2 on right thigh. Sundance scars on chest above nipples. Voice and mien calm. Excellent type of oldtime Plains Indian.

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Statement secured by Judge Frank B. Zahn, Fort Yates, North Dakota, in October, 1956. This copy made from Judge Zahn's original typed copy by James S. Hutchins, October 26, 1956.