

These stones told me how Custer had formed his men, how he sent his horseholders off to the left, how his line advanced, how his front narrowed as men fell, and how the survivors, 58 in number, I believe, rallied and died around Custer. Two or three stones far beyond Custer, and a single stone still farther on, showed me how a few survivors tried to escape. I talked with my uncle about these things a great deal when I visited him and hunted with him later in the year.

Lieut. Lutz and I camped on the river three or four miles from the battlefield the night of June 24-25. It rained very hard during the night and we had to move our camp to higher ground. The next day I picked up a 50-caliber lead bullet in a gully, 18 inches below the natural surface of the ground. Its upper surface had been uncovered and polished by the rain the preceding night. It was manifestly a real relic of the battle. Like most everything of real value that I have ever possessed, it has been lost.

On the 26th of last January, at the meeting of the Order of Indian Wars, I heard General Charles King tell ~~many~~ things which I had heard my uncle relate thirty-two years ago. It seemed as if my uncle were speaking. I had the pleasure last month of seeing General King, as the oldest graduate present, review, with the Superintendent of the Military Academy, General William R. Smith, the cadet corps.

X Colonel Charles F. Bates, U. S. Army, Retired, 33 Park Avenue, Bronxville, New York, is engaged upon a life of General Custer. He has done a great deal of research in original records here in Washington and elsewhere along lines in which you are undoubtedly interested. He would be pleased to give you advice and information about the records. I shall drop him a line to-morrow, telling him that you may communicate with him.

This is merely a personal note to accompany an official letter which I signed yesterday in answer to your letter of July 21. Trusting that we may see you here in Washington in due season, and with best regards, I am,

Sincerely yours,

*S. C. Vestal.*