

State Historical Society

of North Dakota (State Historical Board)

North Dakota Heritage Center, Bismarck, N.D. 58505

Telephone 701-224-2666

January 9, 1985

Mrs. Mary Ellen Grogan
3428 Ashley Terrace, NW
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Mrs. Grogan:

Please forgive my tardiness in responding to your letter of December 13, 1984. To visitors museums seem to be timeless places providing an atmosphere appropriate to quiet contemplation of the past. Would that it were so! In reality, those of us who work on the inside know that one crisis after another will crop up, sometimes sequentially, sometimes simultaneously. With the last two crises under control I am now able to return to my December 17 list of things to be done.

I would like to thank you very much for your offers of assistance. Any information you could transmit about Mr. Farrell would be greatly appreciated. I also look forward with anticipation to reviewing copies of any of the historical documents that might turn up in your attic.

Again, both personally and on behalf of the State Historical Society of North Dakota, I thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Hollow
Curator of Collections

D R A F T

12/12

Dear Mr. Hollow:

Thank you for responding to my letter about Sitting Bull's grave. To answer ~~the~~ your question - my father was John Galen Carter and although I recall his mentioning Mr. Farrell I'm afraid I can't help you with any information on him.*

My father, John Carter, died in 1941 and he represented the tribes I mentioned during the late 20's and the 30's. His father, Thomas Henry Carter, first came to Washington as Territorial Delegate from Montana, and subsequently served in both the U. S. Senate and the House of Representatives. The studies which my father did for the Smithsonian included a lengthy study of the sign language with General Hugh Scott and a study of the Turtle Pipe Ceremony of the Arapahoe for which we spent some time at Wind River.

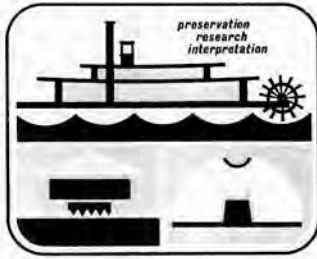
~~We also spent quite a bit of time at Fort Belknap, Rocky Boy, and of course, Browning.~~

#There is still a fair amount of material in my attic which I must do something about and I know it includes some bits and pieces about the Little Big Horn. Once the holidays are over I will try to get it together and send copies - quite possibly they are papers you may already have but on the outside chance that they might contribute to your collection you should have them.

* A friend of mine with connections at a local consulting firm which is researching old Indian claim cases is inquiring for any information that firm might have on Mr. Farrell. If we find anything helpful, I will pass it on.

With best wishes for the holidays, I am

Sincerely.



State Historical Society

of North Dakota (State Historical Board)

North Dakota Heritage Center, Bismarck, N.D. 58505

Telephone 701-224-2666

December 6, 1984

Ms. Mary Ellen Grogan
3428 Ashley Terrace, NW
Washington, DC 20008

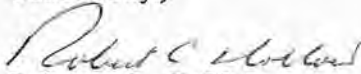
Dear Ms. Grogan:

Thank you for your letter of November 21, 1984. I appreciate the information about the \$500 slab of concrete poured by Major E. D. Mossman. The correspondence in our files certainly indicates that Major Mossman was no fan of Sitting Bull, and the Mossman monument is more or less what you would expect from him. I also share your sentiments about letting Sitting Bull rest in peace. My only interest in the matter was that purely by chance I discovered some information and made some connections that allowed me to construct an argument that the Mobridge party had removed the wrong remains. Under the circumstances I felt compelled to make the case available to the scholarly public. I did this in a paper delivered to the Eighth Annual Plains Indian Seminar at Cody. The press picked up the sensational part of the story and through dissemination by AP the story was published far and wide.

Another sentence in your letter has aroused my curiosity. You state: "my father, who was an attorney for the Blackfeet, Gros Ventre and Arapaho". Would, by any chance, your father have been A. C. J. Farrell? Mr. Farrell served as an attorney for these as well as other Plains tribes. We have a substantial ethnological collection contributed by him and I would very much appreciate corresponding with someone who could provide additional data about the collection and its donor.

Thank you for your letter. I appreciate the additional information.

Sincerely,


Robert C. Hollow
Curator of Collections

11/21/89

D R A F T

Mr. Robert Hollow
Curator of Collections
State Historical Society
Bismarck, North Dakota

Dear Mr. Hollow:

It was with great interest that I read the A.P. story, datelined November 10th regarding the grave of Sitting Bull at Standing Rock Reservation, and I am writing to add just a footnote to that story.

In 1936, when I was fifteen, I visited Major Mossman and his family at the agency at Standing Rock with my father who was an attorney for the Blackfeet, Gros Ventre and Arapahoe, and who had an abiding interest in American ethnology and did some studies for the Bureau of American Ethnology at the Smithsonian as an avocation. Major Mossman took us to see Sitting Bull's grave and it is my clear recollection that he told us that some group had sent him \$500 to "erect a suitable monument" at the gravesite, so, not being a big admirer of Sitting Bull he had bought \$500 worth of cement and had it poured in a solid block above the grave. As I recall it looked like a bunker - just a big oblong block of concrete - and ~~xxxxxxx~~ the impression conveyed by Major Mossman was that the point was that no one would ever be able to disinter the remains. The Major was definitely what would be termed "a character" and the visit there was one of the outstanding experiences of my life. Oddly enough we also visited at Mobridge during that same trip, as friends from the Smithsonian were working on a "dig" in the area on a bluff by the river.

I hope they leave Sitting Bull's remains alone - he deserves to rest in peace.

Historian Contends Raiders Didn't Get Sitting Bull Bones

BISMARCK, N.D., Nov. 10 (AP) — South Dakotans who set out to steal Sitting Bull's bones from North Dakota in 1953 got the wrong remains, a state historian says.

Robert Hollow, curator of collections for the state historical society of North Dakota here, said his research showed that the Sioux leader's remains were inside a coffin at Fort Yates on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in North Dakota and were missed by raiders from Mobridge, S.D.

"We kind of expected that kind of comment," said George Walters, of Detroit Lakes, Minn., who was a member of the raiding party. "I'm not surprised, because there are so many statements they've made which have later proved to be just speculation."

The Mobridge party says it dug up the Indian's bones and bedded them under 20 tons of concrete on a South Dakota bluff overlooking Mobridge and the Missouri River.

"We're very confident" that it was Sitting Bull's remains that were brought to South Dakota, Mr. Walters said.

Argument Is Made

Mr. Hollow said the South Dakota party had reported they had "dug up loose bones" that were not in a coffin. Moreover, he said, a coffin and bones were found at Fort Yates in 1962 that matched the descriptions of a reburial of Sitting Bull in 1932.

"The preponderance of evidence points in the direction that the Mobridge party took the wrong body," Mr. Hollow said.

Sitting Bull was killed Dec. 15, 1890, in north-central South Dakota and buried shortly afterward at Fort Yates.

In 1908, the military graves at Fort Yates were disinterred for reburial,

and Sitting Bull's coffin was removed as well, Mr. Hollow said. However, the Federal Government's Indian agent at the Standing Rock reservation ordered that the Sioux's bones be put back.

The bones were placed in a small box that was put inside a coffin and reburied, Mr. Hollow said.

Repairs Made in 1932

In 1932, Mr. Hollow said, the North Dakota Historical Society "paid to have the Sitting Bull gravesite fixed up because a tombstone over his grave was broken."

The work was performed by a long-time agency employee, Henry Stewart, under the direction of the Standing Rock superintendent, E. D. Mossman, Mr. Hollow said.

"Mossman and Stewart claim to have dug up the casket," he said. "They found a small box inside the big box. They found the skeleton to be complete with the possible exception of a femur, a thigh bone. They reburied the remains once more."

Mr. Hollow said that dike work in May 1962 accidentally exposed remains that matched the descriptions of Sitting Bull's bones.

"They excavated the grave and found a coffin measuring 6 feet, 4 inches by 2 feet by 1 foot, 3 inches," he said. "Inside this box they found a smaller box" with the bones, he said.

Volunteer Adviser Named

SANTA BARBARA, Calif., Nov. 10 (AP) — President Reagan said Thursday that he was appointing Patricia Jacobson, a Republican state committeewoman from Texas, to be a member of the National Voluntary Service advisory council. She is a member of the Haltom-Richland Chamber of Commerce and resides in Houston.