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Review of *The Lance and the Shield: The Life and Times of Sitting Bull* By Robert M. Utley

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The Lance and the Shield: The Life and Times of Sitting Bull. By Robert M. Utley. New York: Henry Holt, 1993. Preface, prologue, maps, black and white photographs, epilogue, sources, notes, index. xvii + 413 pp. \$25.00.

In the past decade biography as a field within American history has made a strong comeback, and Robert M. Utley's study of the Hunkpapa Lakota (Sioux) leader Sitting Bull is an excellent contribution to the field. Writing the life story of an Indian leader who died more than one hundred years ago is difficult at best. For example, even the birth date of the subject is open to question. Nevertheless, the author has written a thorough, balanced, and informed book. In it Sitting Bull emerges as a rational person living within his culture, having recognizable goals, and experiencing both success and failure. Utley's narrative rests solidly on what is known or can be reconstructed about nineteenth-century Hunkpapa society.

After examining Lakota culture, beliefs, and practices, the author traces Sitting Bull's life from his emergence as a warrior at age fourteen to his 1890 death at the hands of reservation police. Utley presents his subject as the model Sioux, a man who exemplified the Lakota virtues of personal bravery, fortitude, generosity, and wisdom. He does this while tracing the Lakota leader's ascent to various positions of responsibility and prestige among his people. These included acceptance as a war chief and a respected religious leader, as well as membership in several religious and leadership groups.

Utley places Sitting Bull's actions into three distinct periods. Between 1864 and 1869 he acted as an aggressive military leader, launching repeated attacks against people who entered Sioux territory. Then, from 1869 to 1881 he sought defensive measures to protect traditional customs. Finally, between 1881 and his 1890 death, he served as spokesman for the unhappy reservation-bound Indians. Using this framework the author examines the chief's role in peace and war, in inter and intra-tribal

matters, in leading some Lakota into Canada, and in events leading to his death.

Often finding dependable or complete sources is difficult for those writing Native American history. Fortunately, the materials gathered by Walter S. Campbell (Stanley Vestal) during the 1920s and 1930s when interviewing Sioux who knew Sitting Bull are available. The author has used these as well as a wide variety of other materials effectively. As a result the narrative shows his impressive command of the sources. He presents the evidence even-handedly, offering both praise and blame without apology. While one can always quarrel with specific interpretations, the author's extensive evidence and calm logic are persuasive. As a subject, Sitting Bull presents major challenges. Utley has met and overcome them in this first-rate study.

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