

450 E. 700 South
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111
November 4, 1991

Minnesota Historical Society
690 Cedar St.
St. Paul, MN 55101

Dear Minnesota Historical Society,

I am writing an article about George A. Custer and his staghounds for THE CLAYMORE, the publication of the Scottish Deerhound Association of America.

In her autobiographical Boots and Saddles, Elizabeth Custer wrote of "the final fate of Cardigan," one of her husband's favorite staghounds;

When I left Fort Lincoln I asked someone to look out for his welfare and send him, as soon as possible, to a clergyman who had been my husband's friend. My request was complied with, and afterward, when the poor old dog died, his new master honored him by having his body set up by the taxidermist, and a place was given him in one of the public buildings in Minneapolis.

Does your collection house any materials which make reference to "the final fate of Cardigan?"

Any information that you are willing to share would be very much appreciated.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Stephen D. Youngkin

450 E. 700 South
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111
January 2, 1992

University of Minnesota Archives
10 Walter Library
117 Pleasant St. SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear University of Minnesota Archives,

Several months ago I addressed letters (see enclosed copy) to the Minnesota Historical Society and the Minneapolis Public Library and Information Center.

From the latter I received photocopies of six clippings from the Minneapolis Tribune (March, 1923) relative to the posthumous fate of Custer's "Cardigan." And the recommendation that I address an inquiry to University of Minnesota Archives.

Ms. Linda McShannock, Loan/Research Coordinator at the Minnesota Historical Society, spoke with the curator at the Bell Museum of Natural History, "but their records do not reveal what happened to the specimens collected by Custer during an expedition to the Black Hills, or his dog, which was part of the collection given to the museum."

Despite this apparent dead-end, I am interested in learning if the university archives houses any additional materials relating to "Cardigan." If so, would it be possible to obtain photocopies of same?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you.

Sincerely,


Stephen D. Youngkin

January 21, 1992

Stephen D. Youngkin
450 E. 700 South
Salt Lake City UT 84111

Dear Mr. Youngkin:

Your inquiry re Custer's dog, Cardigan, is one of a number I have received over the past few years. The dog did end up in Minneapolis as you will see from the attached newspaper articles. There are, of course, discrepancies and inaccuracies. The photo of Terry and Cardigan must have been taken before Terry's death in 1881. I assume that Cardigan preceded Terry in death. However, whether the dog in the photograph is alive or mounted is in question.

The mounted animal was probably discarded in 1916 when the University of Minnesota natural history collections were moved into a new building. The skull was still in the Bell Museum of Natural History collections until the 1960s because a friend of mine saw it there. At the time he thought it should be sent to the museum at the Little Big Horn Battleground. Unfortunately, he did not pursue the matter and a later Curator of Mammals may have disposed of it. The current curator, Dr. Elmer Birney, will check the few dog skulls in the collection when time allows. My friend remembers that the skull was marked in ink on the underside as belonging to Custer's dog.

The existence of the skull makes the subsequent rescue of the mounted dog from a rubbish heap questionable because a taxidermist in the late 1870s would probably have used it in mounting the head. The basic elements of the story, i.e. Mrs. Custer's gift of Cardigan to Reverend Terry who she may have met during a stay in Minnesota is true. The subsequent transfer of the mounted dog to the University appears to be accurate. The rest is rather apocryphal but great fun. Terry, who had tuberculosis, was an outdoorsman so it can be assumed that Cardigan's last master gave the dog an active and comfortable life.

If you could send me a copy of your story I would be most grateful. Inquiries regarding Cardigan seem to surface at least once a year from either Custer or Scottish deerhound fanciers.

Sincerely,

Penelope Krosch
Archivist and Head, University Archives