

THE CUS

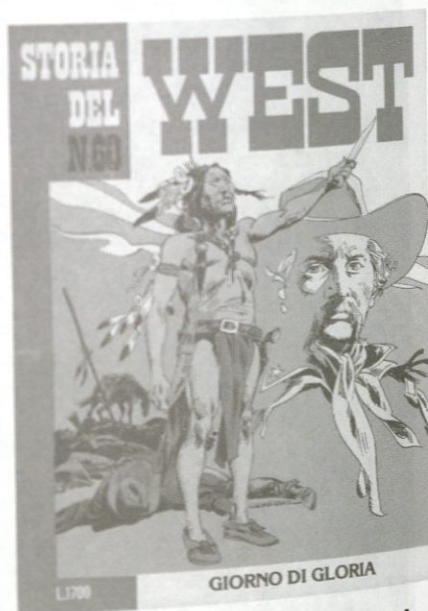
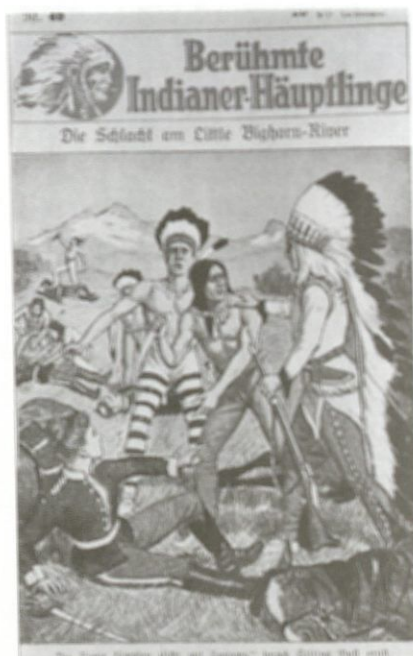


STER READER

EDITED BY PAUL ANDREW HUTTON

University of Oklahoma Press
Norman

LIBRARY MSU-BILLINGS



The international appeal of the Custer story is evident in a German dime novel (top left) and an Italian comic book (bottom right). In the German book, published around 1910, Sitting Bull rescues a young lady disguised as a soldier who had ridden with Custer (Courtesy Brian W. Dippie, from the collection of Edward T. LeBlanc). Custer made several appearances in the wonderful Italian comic book series *Storia Del West*, edited by Sergio Bonelli, published by Daim Press from 1967 to 1980, and reissued by Bonelli in the late 1980s. Gino D'Antonio's story, featuring his superb artwork, tells the tale of a Cheyenne warrior who stalks Custer to avenge the death of his wife at the Washita. They meet at the Little Big Horn and kill each other (Courtesy Sergio Bonelli).

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

The sheer bulk of written material on George Armstrong Custer is astonishing. A 1953 bibliography by Fred Dustin listed 641 items. A 1972 listing of bibliographical "high spots" by Tal Luther ran to 195 entries, whereas John Carroll's exhaustive periodical checklist ran to well over three thousand entries. This essay makes no attempt to be exhaustive in its coverage but instead should guide the interested reader through this morass of publication.

Essays reprinted in *The Custer Reader* are not discussed in this bibliographical essay because their value is made clear in the section introductions. Several detailed studies on sidelights of the Custer story have been mentioned in the notes to section introductions and are not repeated here. Many excellent essays on minor points of Custer's life or on the Battle of the Little Big Horn are also not discussed, for obvious space reasons. Much of the Custer literature, of course, makes no real contribution to our understanding of the man or his era and really deserves no space in any bibliography except one that wishes to be definitive.

The place to begin a more detailed exploration of Custer's storied life is with the biographies. It is rather surprising, considering the extent of the Custer bibliography, just how few good biographies have been written. The first is still worth looking at, for Frederick Whittaker's *A Complete Life of Gen. George A. Custer* (New York: Sheldon and Co., 1876) stood for over a quarter of a century as the only significant biography. It contains much useful information and, more important, was instrumental in transforming Custer into a major American hero. Later heroic biographies by Frederick Dellenbaugh in 1917 and Frazier Hunt in 1928 are not interesting as history or literature. Frederic F. Van de Water's *Glory-Hunter: A Life of General Custer* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1934) broke with the interpretation of over fifty years to dismantle the marble hero and present instead an understandable, if deeply flawed, human being. Few books have had so immediate and dramatic an impact on historical interpretation. Inspired by the works of Sigmund Freud as well as by the debunking biographers of the Lytton Strachey school, Van de Water penned a compelling portrait of a man consumed by ambition, driven by demons of his own making, and finally destroyed by his own hubris. Compellingly written, the book has stood the test of time as high literary biography and remains the most influential book ever written on Custer. In 1988 it was reprinted as a Bison Book by the University of Nebraska Press.

Van de Water had no challenge until Jay Monaghan's *Custer: The Life of General George Armstrong Custer* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1959), also

available as a Bison Book from the University of Nebraska Press. Monaghan is far more favorable toward Custer, but his research was hardly exhaustive, and his account of the Little Big Horn is sketchy and inadequate. His Civil War sections, however, are much stronger. But Monaghan fails to penetrate the Custer enigma, and the biography lacks the energy and force of Van de Water's or of later works by Connell and Utley.

D. A. Kinsley's *Favor the Bold*, 2 vols. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967-68) has some literary pretense but little else of interest or value to the reader. More interesting is Stephen E. Ambrose, *Crazy Horse and Custer: The Parallel Lives of Two American Warriors* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1975), but it ultimately provides nothing new despite the book's innovative organization and the author's distinguished credentials. Charles K. Hofling's *Custer and the Little Big Horn: A Psychobiographical Inquiry* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981) is certainly an interesting, even provocative, biography but will prove tough going for the nonspecialist reader. It is mostly speculative in content and is difficult to accept as true biography. Far more satisfying, although often equally as speculative, is Evan S. Connell's *Son of the Morning Star* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1984), the surprise best-seller that partially rehabilitated Custer's reputation. Although the author is occasionally careless with facts, he nevertheless gets to the heart of his subject better than any writer before him. Coming from a literary rather than an academic background, Connell is unshackled by convention and engages in wild digressions across time and space in freewheeling explorations of Custer and his singular, epic moment at the Little Big Horn. At the same time, Connell restores Custer to his proper place in history as a brave, experienced, but driven soldier full of compelling contradictions.

Far more traditional in terms of organization and approach, Robert M. Utley's *Cavalier in Buckskin: George Armstrong Custer and the Western Military Frontier* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988) is as definitive a portrait of Custer as we are likely to see for some time, firmly placing its subject within the broader context of national expansion. Although concentrating on Custer's western career, the biography nevertheless handles his Civil War actions admirably. Utley, the dean of frontier military historians, brought a lifetime of careful research to the project. The book has no documentation as a result of the series format that it is part of, but Utley's reputation gives enormous credibility to every word in this graceful, gripping biography. It is the Custer book to begin with.

George and Elizabeth Custer both left fine memoirs that are still available in reprint editions. They are often as informative by what they leave out as what they include: George Armstrong Custer, *My Life on the Plains; or, Personal Experiences with Indians*, ed. Edgar I. Stewart (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962); Elizabeth B. Custer, "Boots and Saddles"; or, *Life in Dakota with General Custer* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1885); Elizabeth B. Custer, *Tenting on the Plains; or, General Custer in Kansas and Texas*

(New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887); and Elizabeth B. Custer, *Following the Guidon* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1890). Extracts from the letters of the Custers, although heavily edited, are presented in Marguerite Merington, ed., *The Custer Story: The Life and Intimate Letters of General George A. Custer and His Wife Elizabeth* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1950), which is available as a Bison Book from the University of Nebraska Press. Additional correspondence and much useful information is contained in the encyclopedic and slavishly worshipful biography of Elizabeth by Lawrence A. Frost, *General Custer's Libbie* (Seattle: Superior Publishing Co., 1976).

Lawrence A. Frost, for years the curator of the Custer room of the Monroe County Museum in Custer's boyhood hometown, also compiled an entertaining but hagiographic pictorial biography: *The Custer Album: A Pictorial Biography of General George A. Custer* (Seattle: Superior Publishing Co., 1964). More dependable in terms of captioning and containing far superior photographic reproductions, but limited in content to only Custer, is D. Mark Katz, *Custer in Photographs* (Gettysburg: Yo-Mark Production Co., 1985). Also of interest to photo enthusiasts are Neil C. Mangum, *Register of the Custer Battlefield National Monument Photograph Collection* (Crow Agency, Mont.: Custer Battlefield Historical and Museum Association, 1984), and Neil Mangum, "Solving Custer Photo Puzzles: Some New Dates and Identifications," *Montana the Magazine of Western History* 31 (October 1981).

To focus on Custer's Civil War career, one should begin with Gregory J. W. Urwin, *Custer Victorious: The Civil War Battles of General George Armstrong Custer* (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1983), which was reprinted in 1990 as a Bison Book from the University of Nebraska Press. The best memoir by one of Custer's officers is J. H. Kidd, *Personal Recollections of a Cavalryman with Custer's Michigan Cavalry Brigade in the Civil War* (1908; reprint, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Black Letter Press, 1969), and Custer is also featured prominently in Henry Edwin Tremain, *Last Hours of Sheridan's Cavalry: A Reprint of War Memoranda* (New York: Bonnell, Silver and Bowers, 1904). General Sheridan's memoirs also deal at length with Custer both in the Civil War and on the plains, with the best edition being the 1902 enlarged one: Philip Henry Sheridan and Michael V. Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs of Philip Henry Sheridan General United States Army: New and Enlarged Edition with an Account of his Life from 1871 to his Death, in 1888*, 2 vols. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1902).

Custer's own aborted Civil War memoirs, though brief, are insightful and useful. They are available in E. Elden Davis, ed., "George A. Custer's War Memoirs," in Paul A. Hutton, ed., *Garry Owen 1976: Annual of the Little Big Horn Associates* (Seattle: Little Big Horn Associates, 1977), 14-97, and in John M. Carroll, ed., *Custer in the Civil War: His Unfinished Memoirs* (San Rafael, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1977). The latter also reprints Custer's Civil War reports.

For two specific campaigns, see David F. Riggs, *East of Gettysburg: Stuart*

vs. Custer (Bellevue, Nebr.: Old Army Press, 1970), and Jeffry D. Wert, *From Winchester to Cedar Creek: The Shenandoah Campaign of 1864* (Carlisle, Pa.: South Mountain Press, 1987). For the overall picture, consult Stephen Z. Starr, *The Union Cavalry in the Civil War: The War in the East from Gettysburg to Appomattox, 1863-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981).

Custer's Reconstruction duty in Texas is the focus of John M. Carroll, ed., *Custer in Texas: An Interrupted Narrative* (New York: Sol Lewis/Liveright, 1975). Also of interest are William L. Richter, "'A Better Time is in Store for us': An Analysis of the Reconstruction Attitudes of George Armstrong Custer," *Military History of Texas and the Southwest* 11 (1973), and Minnie Dubbs Millbrook, "The Boy General and How He Grew," *Montana the Magazine of Western History* 23 (Spring 1973).

For a superb synthesis of the postwar military frontier, see Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1973), which is also available in a Bison Book reprint from the University of Nebraska Press. Solid general histories of the war for the southern plains include several excellent essays by Lonnie J. White reprinted in Lonnie J. White, *Hostiles and Horse Soldiers: Indian Battles and Campaigns in the West* (Boulder, Colo.: Pruett Publishing Co., 1972); William H. Leckie, *The Military Conquest of the Southern Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963); and Wilbur Sturtevant Nye, *Plains Indian Raiders: The Final Phases of Warfare from the Arkansas to the Red River* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968). The Indian side of these campaigns is covered in George Bird Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes* (1915; reprint, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956); Donald J. Berthrong, *The Southern Cheyennes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963); and George E. Hyde, *Life of George Bent: Written from His Letters*, ed. Savoie Lottinville (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968).

For the formation and history of the Seventh Cavalry, see Melbourne C. Chandler, *Of Garry Owen in Glory: The History of the Seventh United States Cavalry Regiment* (Annandale, Va.: Turnpike Press, 1960), and Charles K. Mills, *Rosters from Seventh U.S. Cavalry Campaigns, 1866-1896* (Bryan, Tex.: J. M. Carroll and Co., 1983). Brief biographies of those who were at the Little Big Horn can be found in Kenneth Hammer, *Biographies of the Seventh Cavalry: June 25th, 1876* (Fort Collins, Colo.: Old Army Press, 1972). This is a particularly useful research tool. John M. Carroll built on and expanded Hammer's research in John M. Carroll, ed., *They Rode with Custer: A Biographical Directory of the Men That Rode with General George A. Custer* (Bryan, Tex.: J. M. Carroll Co., 1987).

The western career of Custer's mentor, with much on their relationship, is covered in Paul Andrew Hutton, *Phil Sheridan and His Army* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985). Profiles of Custer and many of his con-

temporaries are in Paul Andrew Hutton, ed., *Soldiers West: Biographies from the Military Frontier* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987). Several of Custer's officers have received biographical treatment. Myles Keogh is heroically depicted in Edward S. Luce, *Keogh, Comanche, and Custer* (1939; reprint, Ashland, Oreg.: Lewis Osborne, 1974), and in the more informative pamphlet by G. A. Hayes-McCoy, *Captain Myles Walter Keogh, United States Army, 1840-1876* (Dublin: National University of Ireland, 1965). Another foreign-born Seventh Cavalry officer's career is briefly detailed in Charles K. Mills, *Charles C. DeRudio* (Bryan, Tex.: J. M. Carroll Co., 1983). An apologetic account of Marcus Reno's life can be found in John Upton Terrell and George Walton, *Faint the Trumpet Sounds: The Life and Trial of Major Reno* (New York: David McKay Co., 1966). There is more material on the mercurial Frederick W. Benteen than on any other Seventh Cavalry officer except Custer. Charles K. Mills's *Harvest of Barren Regrets: The Army Career of Frederick William Benteen, 1834-1898* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1985) is overly detailed but quite useful. Far more compelling are Benteen's own caustic letters, available in two most revealing volumes: John M. Carroll, ed., *Camp Talk: The Very Private Letters of Frederick W. Benteen of the Seventh U.S. Cavalry to His Wife, 1871 to 1888* (Bryan, Tex.: J. M. Carroll Co., 1983), and John M. Carroll, ed., *The Benteen-Goldin Letters on Custer and His Last Battle* (New York: Liveright, 1974).

Enlisted men rarely rate biographies, but Custer's orderly John Burkman is the subject of a fine anecdotal one, based for the most part on his reminiscences. The 1989 Bison Book edition from the University of Nebraska Press is the most useful because of Brian W. Dippie's fine introduction to Glendolin Damon Wagner, *Old Neutriment* (Boston: R. Hill, 1934). Sergeant Charles Windolph finally rated a biography by managing to outlive all the other white survivors of the Little Big Horn. Neil Mangum provided a new introduction to the 1987 Bison Book reprint of Frazier Hunt and Robert Hunt, *I Fought with Custer* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953). Custer's scout on the southern plains, Moses E. Milner, is the subject of Joe E. Milner and Earle R. Forrest, *California Joe: Noted Scout and Indian Fighter* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1935), also available as a Bison Book with a new introduction by Joseph G. Rosa. The travail of a Seventh Cavalry wife is related in Katherine Gibson Fougere, *With Custer's Cavalry* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1940), reprinted as a Bison Book in 1986.

Custer's own account of his introduction to Indian warfare, presented with considerably more bile than in his later autobiography, is in Brian W. Dippie, ed., *Nomad: George A. Custer in Turf, Field, and Farm* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980). Dippie's detailed discursive notes are particularly valuable. Hancock's campaign, as well as the Washita campaign, is covered in the insightful and fascinating Barnitz diaries and letters, reprinted in 1987 as a Bison Book by the University of Nebraska Press. This record of life on the military

frontier can scarcely be matched elsewhere and is an invaluable resource. See Robert M. Utley, ed., *Life in Custer's Cavalry: Diaries and Letters of Albert and Jennie Barnitz, 1867-1868* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

Custer's September 1867 court-martial is detailed in Lawrence A. Frost, *The Court-Martial of General George Armstrong Custer* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), which includes the court proceedings. Two useful articles on the same subject are Robert A. Murray, "The Custer Court Martial," *Annals of Wyoming* 36 (October 1964), and Milton B. Halsey, Jr., "The Court-Martial of Brevet Major General George A. Custer," *Trail Guide* 13 (September 1968). This was Custer's second brush with military justice. For his earlier troubles, see Minnie Dubbs Millbrook, "Cadet Custer's Court-Martial," in Paul A. Hutton, ed., *Custer and His Times* (El Paso: Little Big Horn Associates, 1981).

The official documents of the Washita campaign have been published as John M. Carroll, ed., *General Custer and the Battle of the Washita: The Federal View* (Bryan, Tex.: Guidon Press, 1978), which makes a handy reference work. The best monograph, despite certain limitations, remains Stan Hoig, *The Battle of the Washita: The Sheridan-Custer Indian Campaign of 1867-69* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1976). A particularly fine memoir of the campaign by a volunteer trooper is David L. Spotts, *Campaigning with Custer and the Nineteenth Kansas Volunteer Cavalry on the Washita Campaign, 1868-69*, ed. E. A. Brininstool (Los Angeles: Wetzel Publishing Co., 1928), reprinted in 1988 as a University of Nebraska Press Bison Book. A view from the top is provided by the journalist De B. Randolph Keim, *Sheridan's Troopers on the Borders: A Winter Campaign on the Plains* (Philadelphia: Clayton, Remsen and Habbelfinger, 1870), reprinted in 1985 as a Bison Book with a new introduction by Paul Andrew Hutton.

Custer's Reconstruction duty in Kentucky has been largely ignored except for Theodore J. Crackel, "Custer's Kentucky: General George Armstrong Custer and Elizabethtown, Kentucky, 1871-1873," *Filson Club History Quarterly* 49 (April 1974): 144-55. Custer spent much of his time in Kentucky indulging his love of horse racing, and a history of the various horses owned by this cavalryman is provided by Lawrence A. Frost, *General Custer's Thoroughbreds: Racing, Riding, Hunting, and Fighting* (Bryan, Tex.: J. M. Carroll Co., 1986). The most famous horse connected with Custer did not belong to him but was the mount of Captain Myles Keogh. There is a large body of literature on the horse Comanche, but much of it is summarized in Elizabeth Atwood Lawrence, *His Very Silence Speaks: Comanche—The Horse Who Survived Custer's Last Stand* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989).

A highlight of Custer's Kentucky sojourn was his participation in General Sheridan's 1872 buffalo hunt for the Russian Grand Duke Alexis. A good brief account of the hunt is in John I. White, "Red Carpet for a Romanoff," *American West* 9 (January 1972). Two nice versions by participants are James Albert Hadley, "A Royal Buffalo Hunt," *Transactions of the Kansas State Historical*

Society 10 (1907-8), and *The Life of Hon. William F. Cody, Known As Buffalo Bill* (1879; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978). Full details of the Grand Duke's tour are in *The Grand Duke Alexis in the United States of America* (New York: Interland Publishing, 1972).

A good monograph of the important 1873 Yellowstone expedition is still needed. Much useful information, however, is contained in Lawrence A. Frost, *Custer's Seventh Cav and the Campaign of 1873* (El Segundo, Calif.: Upton and Sons, 1986). An interesting sidelight to the expedition concerns the killing of two civilians and a trooper by a party of Sioux supposedly led by Rain-in-the-Face. This incident and its consequences are detailed in John S. Gray, "Custer Throws a Boomerang," *Montana the Magazine of Western History* 11 (April 1961). Another controversy growing out of the expedition, concerning the value of Northern Pacific Railroad land on the northern plains, is covered in Edgar I. Stewart, ed., *Penny-an-Acre Empire in the West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968).

Unlike the Yellowstone expedition, the 1874 Black Hills expedition has produced a sizable body of good literature. A fine overview is provided in Donald Jackson, *Custer's Gold: The United States Cavalry Expedition of 1874* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), whereas excellent coverage of newspaper stories and participants' official reports is in Herbert Krause and Gary D. Olson, *Prelude to Glory: A Newspaper Accounting of Custer's 1874 Expedition to the Black Hills*. (Sioux Falls: Brevet Press, 1974). A modern photographic reconstruction of Custer's route, with fascinating insights into changes in the land since 1874, is Donald R. Progulskis and Frank J. Shideler, *Following Custer* (Brookings: Agricultural Experiment Station, South Dakota State University, 1974). Two diaries of the expedition are to be found in Lawrence A. Frost, ed., *With Custer in '74: James Calhoun's Diary of the Black Hills Expedition* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1979), and John M. Carroll and Lawrence A. Frost, eds., *Private Theodore Ewert's Diary of the Black Hills Expedition of 1874* (Piscataway, N.J.: CRI Books, 1976).

There is no single monograph that adequately covers the entire Great Sioux War of 1876-77. The causes of the war are grounded in twenty years of conflict between the Sioux and the expanding United States and, before that, in another hundred years of conflict between the expansive Sioux and other plains tribes. Excellent coverage of Sioux aggression is in Richard White, "The Winning of the West: The Expansion of the Western Sioux in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Journal of American History* 65 (September 1978). The immediate cause of conflict in 1876 is debated in essays by Mark H. Brown and Harry H. Anderson, reprinted along with several other important articles from *Montana the Magazine of Western History* in Paul L. Hedren, ed., *The Great Sioux War, 1876-77* (Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 1991).

A particularly fine memoir of the entire war is the *Chicago Times* reporter John F. Finerty's *War-Path and Bivouac; or, The Conquest of the Sioux* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961). Not as lively, but still useful, is

Colonel John Gibbon's *Gibbon on the Sioux Campaign of 1876* (Bellevue, Nebr.: Old Army Press, 1970), which reprints two 1877 Gibbon articles that appeared in the *American Catholic Quarterly Review*. The excellent journal of Lieutenant James H. Bradley of Gibbon's command, who discovered the bodies on Custer's battlefield, is reprinted in James H. Bradley, *The March of the Montana Column: A Prelude to the Custer Disaster*, ed. Edgar I. Stewart (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1961). Two other Montana Column memoirs are Edward J. McClernand, *On Time for Disaster: The Rescue of Custer's Command* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, Bison Book, 1989), and George A. Schneider, ed., *The Freeman Journal: The Infantry in the Sioux Campaign of 1876* (San Rafael, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1977). A good memoir by an enlisted man of the Second Cavalry is Thomas B. Marquis, *Custer, Cavalry, and Crows: The Story of William White As Told to Thomas Marquis* (Fort Collins, Colo.: Old Army Press, 1975).

For the activities of General George Crook's command, the best book remains the memoir by Captain Charles King, *Campaigning with Crook* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964). The sorry beginning of the campaign is ably covered in J. W. Vaughn, *The Reynolds Campaign on Powder River* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961). Crook's defeat at the Rosebud has been the subject of two solid studies: J. W. Vaughn, *With Crook at the Rosebud* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Co., 1956), and Neil C. Mangum, *Battle of the Rosebud: Prelude to the Little Bighorn* (El Segundo, Calif.: Upton and Sons, 1987). The three other major engagements fought by troops under Crook's overall command are covered in Paul L. Hedren, *First Scalp for Custer: The Skirmish at Warbonnet Creek, Nebraska, July 17, 1876* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, Bison Book, 1987); Jerome A. Greene, *Slim Buttes, 1876: An Episode of the Great Sioux War* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982); and John G. Bourke, *Mackenzie's Last Fight with the Cheyennes: A Winter Campaign in Wyoming and Montana* (Bellevue, Nebr.: Old Army Press, 1970). A fascinating pictorial account of Crook's campaign is Paul L. Hedren, *With Crook in the Black Hills: Stanley J. Morrow's 1876 Photographic Legacy* (Boulder, Colo.: Pruett Publishing Co., 1985); the same author chronicles the pivotal role of Fort Laramie in the campaign in *Fort Laramie in 1876: Chronicle of a Frontier Post at War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988).

Crook's unfinished autobiography is not particularly useful for the Great Sioux War, but it contains valuable background material: Martin F. Schmitt, ed., *General George Crook: His Autobiography* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946). Also surprisingly sketchy on the Great Sioux War, in which he played an important role, is the otherwise interesting memoir of Anson Mills, *My Story* (Washington, D.C.: Byron S. Adams, 1921). Far more useful is the classic memoir by Crook's aide, John G. Bourke, *On the Border with Crook* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891), as well as his biography by Joseph C. Porter, *Paper Medicine Man: John Gregory Bourke and His American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986). A truly marvelous

memoir by one of Crook's enlisted men, focusing on the Powder River expedition, is in Sherry L. Smith, *Sagebrush Soldier: Private William Earl Smith's View of the Sioux War of 1876* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989).

In a controversial chapter on the Custer battle, General Nelson A. Miles quotes General Terry as giving Custer wide latitude of action should he strike the Indian trail. Recent evidence has tended to support Miles's long-disputed account of their conversation. His memoirs are particularly valuable on Miles's 1877 campaign: *Personal Recollections and Observations of General Nelson A. Miles* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969). Miles was vindicated by impressive historical detective work presented in John S. Manion, *Last Statement to Custer* (Monroe, Mich.: Monroe County Library System, 1983). For more on Miles and his campaigns in the Great Sioux War, see Brian C. Pohanka, ed., *Nelson A. Miles: A Documentary Biography of His Military Career, 1861-1903* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark, 1985); Virginia W. Johnson, *The Unregimented General: A Biography of Nelson A. Miles* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1962); and M. M. Quaife, ed., *"Yellowstone Kelly": The Memoirs of Luther S. Kelly* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926).

The best single volume on the Battle of the Little Big Horn is undoubtedly John S. Gray's *Centennial Campaign: The Sioux War of 1876* (Fort Collins, Colo.: Old Army Press, 1976). As a history of the entire campaign, Gray's book does not succeed, for though his background chapters are strong, the book trails off quickly after Custer's defeat and does not provide adequate coverage of Nelson Miles's important operations. It is the study of Custer's defeat, however, that marks Gray's book as a remarkable accomplishment. Despite an aggravating system of documentation, Gray's impressive research, careful analysis, remarkable time studies, and deductive reasoning have resulted in a persuasive reconstruction of the battle, against which all other accounts must be measured. Gray greatly expanded on that earlier work in a book labeled as "brilliant, revolutionary, and all but unassailable" by Robert M. Utley; see *Custer's Last Campaign: Mitch Boyer and the Little Bighorn Reconstructed* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991). Gray's two books have replaced Edgar I. Stewart's *Custer's Luck* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955) as the standard accounts of the battle. Stewart's book, however, remains a nicely written, carefully balanced narrative well worth consulting. The same cannot be said for three earlier reconstructions of the battle that have not stood the test of time: W. A. Graham, *The Story of the Little Big Horn: Custer's Last Fight* (New York: Century Co., 1926); Fred Dustin, *The Custer Tragedy: Events Leading up to and following the Little Big Horn Campaign of 1876* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Edwards Brothers, 1939); and Charles Kuhlman, *Legend into History: The Custer Mystery* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Co., 1952). Dustin is so stridently anti-Custer that it fatally mars his careful analysis of the battle. Kuhlman, on the other hand, presents a defense of Custer's actions that is far too speculative. Of the three, Graham's work is the most useful, although his dismissal of Indian sources is a glaring problem. Nor is his attempt to vindi-

cate Major Reno convincing. The fact that Colonel Robert P. Hughes's 1896 essay "The Campaign against the Sioux in 1876" is reprinted adds to the usefulness of Graham's book, reprinted in 1988 as a Bison Book by the University of Nebraska Press.

A useful compilation of official government documents relating to the battle is John M. Carroll, ed., *General Custer and the Battle of the Little Big Horn: The Federal View* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Garry Owen Press, 1976). Military reports and rosters are in Loyd J. Overfield II, comp., *The Little Big Horn 1876: The Official Communications, Documents, and Reports* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1971). James Willert, *Little Big Horn Diary: Chronicle of the 1876 Indian War* (La Mirada, Calif.: James Willert, Publisher, 1977), provides a richly detailed examination of daily activity leading up to the battle.

One of the handful of key books on the battle is the delightful potpourri of original narratives, letters, reports, debates, and tall tales compiled by Colonel W. A. Graham, *The Custer Myth: A Source Book of Custeriana* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Co., 1953), reprinted in 1986 by the University of Nebraska Press. The book also contains Fred Dustin's comprehensive, if dated, bibliography. Of equal value are the collected interviews of Walter Camp with Custer battle survivors, both soldier and Indian, in Kenneth Hammer, ed., *Custer in '76: Walter Camp's Notes on the Custer Fight* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1976).

Much valuable testimony on the battle is contained in the massive *The Reno Court of Inquiry: The Chicago Times Account* (Fort Collins, Colo.: Old Army Press, 1972). A useful shorter version is W. A. Graham, *Abstract of the Official Record of Proceedings of the Reno Court of Inquiry* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Co., 1954).

There are a surprising number of diaries and memoirs. Several interesting reminiscences, as well as many reprinted articles by the author, are in E. A. Brininstool, *Troopers with Custer: Historic Incidents of the Battle of the Little Big Horn* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Co., 1952). A number of rather cryptic diaries are compiled in Michael J. Koury, *Diaries of the Little Big Horn* (Bellevue, Nebr.: Old Army Press, 1968). The unfinished memoir of Lieutenant Charles Varnum has been published as John M. Carroll, ed., *Custer's Chief of Scouts: The Reminiscences of Charles A. Varnum* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), first published in a limited edition by the Arthur H. Clark Co. in 1982. The diary of Dr. James DeWolf, who was killed in Reno's retreat, can be found in Edward S. Luce, ed., "The Diary and Letters of Dr. James M. DeWolf . . .," *North Dakota History* 25 (April-July 1958). Two accounts by enlisted men are Daniel O. Magnussen, *Peter Thompson's Narrative of the Little Bighorn Campaign, 1876* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1974), and Bruce R. Liddic, ed., *I Buried Custer: The Diary of Pvt. Thomas W. Coleman, Seventh U.S. Cavalry* (College Station, Tex.: Creative Publishing Co., 1979).

Richard A. Roberts was a friend of the Custers' and the brother-in-law of Captain George Yates. As a youngster, he accompanied the expedition as a herder, along with Custer's teenage nephew Harry Armstrong Reed. Unlike Reed, he survived and left an informative memoir published as *Custer's Last Battle: Reminiscences of General Custer* (Monroe, Mich.: Monroe County Library Systems, 1978). In his defense of Custer, Roberts contends that the cavalryman did not disobey General Alfred Terry's orders, an important question also analyzed by Charles Kuhlman, *Did Custer Disobey Orders at the Battle of the Little Big Horn?* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Co., 1957), and Francis B. Taunton, "Sufficient Reason?" *An Examination of Terry's Celebrated Order to Custer* (London: English Westerners' Society, 1977). General Terry's own campaign diary sheds little light on the question, although it does contain useful, if cryptic, information: *The Field Diary of General Alfred H. Terry: The Yellowstone Expedition—1876* (Bellevue, Nebr.: Old Army Press, 1970). A defense of General Terry's actions is in John W. Bailey, *Pacifying the Plains: General Alfred Terry and the Decline of the Sioux, 1866–1890* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979).

Battle narratives by Custer's Arikara scouts appear in O. G. Libby, ed., *The Arikara Narrative of the Campaign against the Hostile Dakotas, June, 1876* (Bismarck: North Dakota Historical Society, 1920), and accounts from Custer's Crow scouts, as well as narratives by warriors who fought Custer, are in Joseph K. Dixon, *The Vanishing Race* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1913). The story of the scout Goes Ahead appears in a biography of his wife: Frank B. Linderman, *Pretty-shield: Medicine Woman of the Crows* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1974). Its original publication in 1932 as *Red Mother* contained the first appearance of the story that Custer was the first to fall, shot from his horse while attempting to ford the river.

The accounts of many of the warriors who fought Custer are pulled together in the well-written and fast-paced narrative by David Humphreys Miller, *Custer's Fall: The Indian Side of the Story* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1957), reprinted in 1985 as a Bison Book by the University of Nebraska Press. Miller claimed to have based his narrative on personal interviews with the aged Indian participants, but his stories bear striking similarities to previously published Indian narratives. The best Indian-based account of Sioux resistance to white aggression remains Stanley Vestal's *Warpath: The True Story of the Fighting Sioux Told in a Biography of Chief White Bull* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1934), reprinted in 1984 as a Bison Book with a new foreword by Raymond J. DeMallie. Another version of White Bull's narrative is in James H. Howard, trans. and ed., *The Warrior Who Killed Custer: The Personal Narrative of Chief Joseph White Bull* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968). Another compelling Sioux narrative, as seen through the poetic eye of John G. Neihardt, is *Black Elk Speaks* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1932). Several Sioux accounts of the battle were used by James McLaughlin in *My*

Friend the Indian (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, Bison Book, 1989), and Indian testimony is also at the heart of Thomas B. Marquis, *Custer on the Little Bighorn* (Lodi, Calif.: Kain Publishing Co., 1969). The best Cheyenne memoir is that of Wooden Leg, presented in Thomas B. Marquis, *A Warrior Who Fought Custer* (Minneapolis: Midwest Co., 1931), reprinted as a Bison Book under the title *Wooden Leg* in 1962. Dr. Marquis' interviews with the Cheyennes led him to conclude that Custer's men committed mass suicides, an interpretation of the battle he presented in *Keep the Last Bullet for Yourself: The True Story of Custer's Last Stand* (New York: Two Continents Publishing/Reference Publications, 1976). The suicide story was disputed by the Cheyenne historian John Stands in Timber in his exceptionally fine chronicle of his people. The Custer fight and other battles on the northern plains are important features of John Stands in Timber and Margot Liberty, *Cheyenne Memories* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), reprinted in 1972 as a University of Nebraska Press Bison Book.

The leading Indian personalities have received biographical treatment, with the best work being Stanley Vestal's *Sitting Bull*, rev. ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957). A work of far greater literary than historical merit is Mari Sandoz, *Crazy Horse: The Strange Man of the Oglalas* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942). Although the great Oglala leader Red Cloud was not at the Little Big Horn, his biography is particularly valuable in providing background and perspective: James C. Olson, *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965).

Archaeological excavations at Custer Battlefield National Monument in 1984 and 1985 have tended to give additional credibility to Indian narratives of the battle. The refusal of earlier white historians to properly analyze or accept Indian testimony is particularly ridiculous in light of these findings, which often contradict the suppositions of soldiers who went over the field soon after the battle and which support Indian accounts. Although no major new discoveries were made by the excavations, they nevertheless provided an impressive amount of new physical evidence and solved several persistent battle puzzles, such as how well were the Indians armed (quite well, and many with repeating rifles); how important was extraction failure of the soldiers' Springfield carbines in explaining the defeat (not a significant factor); and how accurate was the placement of markers on the battlefield to indicate where soldiers fell (quite accurate, although there are too many markers). The final report of the archaeological team is required reading for the student of the battle: Douglas D. Scott, Richard A. Fox, Jr., Melissa A. Connor, and Dick Harmon, *Archaeological Perspectives on the Battle of the Little Bighorn* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989).

Support for the Indian narratives, also based on archaeological evidence, had been provided by a former Custer Battlefield National Monument ranger, Jerome A. Greene, in *Evidence and the Custer Enigma: A Reconstruction of Indian-Military History* (Kansas City: Kansas City Posse of the Westerners,

1973). A revised edition, making use of the later archaeological findings, was published by Outbooks of Golden, Colorado, in 1986. Greene was the first to inventory and map where various battlefield artifacts had been, although his evidence was mainly from Nye-Cartwright Ridge (parallel to Custer Ridge), which is outside the park boundary. Greene's evidence, however, tends to support the evidence from the 1984 and 1985 excavations, and combined, they provide vital clues to the nature of the battle. A similar combination of Indian testimony and physical evidence was employed by Richard G. Hardorff, with intriguing results, in *Markers, Artifacts, and Indian Testimony: Preliminary Findings on the Custer Battle* (Short Hills, N.J.: W. Donald Horn, Publisher, 1985).

The origins of the spectacular legend that grew out of the battle are presented in Robert M. Utley, *Custer and the Great Controversy: The Origin and Development of a Legend* (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1962), the first book to deal with what has come to be called the Custer myth. Utley, for the most part, focuses his study on journalistic controversies and historiographical debates, whereas Kent Ladd Steckmesser, in his pioneering study *The Western Hero in History and Legend* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), deals more with fiction and film in a section on Custer. Considerably more all-inclusive than either Utley or Steckmesser is Brian W. Dippie's *Custer's Last Stand: The Anatomy of an American Myth* (Missoula: University of Montana, 1976). Dippie's delightfully encyclopedic study surveys the entire range of writing and iconography making up the Custer myth—history, poetry, paintings, novels, and movies. For Dippie, the Custer of legend is a far more important figure to America than the real man. In a particularly intriguing and sophisticated study, the folklorist Bruce A. Rosenberg places the Custer myth within an international context, relating it to universal hero myths and heroic legends from other lands, in his *Custer and the Epic of Defeat* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1974). Another interpretation of the growth of the legend is in Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800–1890* (New York: Atheneum, 1985).

In this age of lists, it is perhaps appropriate to conclude this discussion of Custer literature with a top-ten list—the basic books for the Custeriana library. All such lists are highly subjective, but these books will give the interested reader a solid, well-rounded introduction to the vast Custer bibliography.

1. Robert M. Utley, *Cavalier in Buckskin*: the best biography and the book to begin with
2. George Armstrong Custer, *My Life on the Plains*: the story from Custer's own perspective
3. Elizabeth B. Custer, "Boots and Saddles": the poignant memoir of the Custers' last years together
4. Marguerite Merington, ed., *The Custer Story*: despite the heavy hand

of the sanitizing editor, these letters are a treasure trove of insights into both Custers

5. John S. Gray, *Custer's Last Campaign*: the most informative and enlightening book on the Battle of the Little Big Horn
6. Evan S. Connell, *Son of the Morning Star*: as provocative and daring as its protagonist, replete with remarkable insights into the personalities involved in the struggle at the Little Big Horn
7. W. A. Graham, *The Custer Myth*: a wild hodgepodge of often contradictory information and a remarkable sourcebook, the place to begin a more exhaustive personal investigation of the man and his last battle
8. Kenneth Hammer, *Custer in '76*: these interviews by Walter Camp are dramatic, telling, and significant; along with Graham's work, this is essential source material for the serious student
9. Brian W. Dippie, *Custer's Last Stand*: a wonderful exploration of Custer in popular culture, full of delightful surprises and significant insights
10. Paul Andrew Hutton, *The Custer Reader*: the book you have in your hands provides a definitive collection of personal narratives, reprinted scholarship, and the best of current research from top Custer scholars

If all of this is not enough, then jump into the vast Dustin bibliography in Graham's *Custer Myth*; Tal Luther's *Custer High Spots* (Fort Collins, Colo.: Old Army Press, 1972); John M. Carroll's massive *Custer in Periodicals: A Bibliographic Checklist* (Fort Collins, Colo.: Old Army Press, 1975), plus Carroll's numerous published corrections and additions to that list; and Vincent A. Heier's exhaustive Custer bibliographies published in the four annuals of the Little Big Horn Associates (*Garry Owen 1976* and *Custer and His Times*, volumes one through three). The bibliography on this intriguing American and his last battle is as fascinating and contradictory as the subject, and it shows no sign of slackening in terms of production. Custer, and his myth, will be with us so long as humans continue to be drawn to heroism, folly, mystery, and towering legendry.

SOURCES

Previously published selections were originally published in or are reprinted from the following sources:

"Custer: The Civil War Years," by J. W. Urwin. Reprinted from Paul Andrew Hutton, ed., *The Custer Reader* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 7-32, copyright © the University of Nebraska Press.

"From West Point to the Battlefield," by G. A. Custer. Originally published in *Galaxy Magazine* 21 (April 1876).

"Custer's 'Last Stand'—Trevilian Station, 1864," by Jay Monaghan. Reprinted from *Civil War History* 8 (September 1962): 245-58, courtesy of Kent State University Press.

"The Battle of Waynesboro," by Harlan Page Lloyd. Reprinted from W. H. Chamberlain, ed., *Sketches of War History, 1861-1865: Papers Prepared for the Ohio Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, 1890-1896* (Cincinnati: Clarke Company, 1896).

"Custer: The Indian Fighter," by Brian W. Dippie. Reprinted from Paul Andrew Hutton, ed., *The Custer Reader* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 103-115, copyright © the University of Nebraska Press.

"The West Breaks in General Custer," by Minnie Dubbs Millbrook. Reprinted from *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (Summer 1970): 113-48, courtesy of the Kansas State Historical Society.

"Some Reminiscences, Including the Washita Battle, November 27, 1868," by Edward S. Godfrey. Reprinted from *Cavalry Journal* 37, no. 153 (October 1928): 481-500.

"Expedition to the Yellowstone River in 1873: Letters of a Young Cavalry Officer," by Charles W. Larned, edited by George Frederick Howe. Reprinted from *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 39 (December 1952): 519-34, courtesy of the *Journal of American History* on behalf of the Organization of American Historians.

"Battling with the Sioux on the Yellowstone," by G. A. Custer. Reprinted from *Galaxy Magazine* 22 (July 1876): 91-102.

"The Little Big Horn," by Robert M. Utley. Reprinted from Paul Andrew Hutton, ed., *The Custer Reader* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 239-256, copyright © the University of Nebraska Press.

"Custer's Last Battle," by Edward S. Godfrey. Original version published in *Century Magazine* 43 (January 1892): 358-87. Revised version reprinted from John M. Carroll, ed., *The Two Battles of the Little Big Horn* (New York: Liveright, 1974), 39-125, courtesy of John M. Carroll.

"The Cavalry Campaign Outfit at the Little Big Horn," by James S. Hutchins. Reprinted from *Military Collector and Historian* 7, no. 4 (Winter 1956): 91-101, courtesy of the Company of Military Historians.

"The Battle of the Little Bighorn," by Chief Joseph White Bull, as told to Stanley Vestal. Reprinted from *Blue Book Magazine* 57 (September 1933): 52-58, courtesy of Malory C. Ausland and Dorothy Callaway.

"Custer's Last Battle," by Charles King. Originally published in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 81 (August 1890): 378-87.

"She Watched Custer's Last Battle," by Kate Bighead, as told to Thomas B. Marquis. Reprinted from Thomas B. Marquis, *Custer on the Little Bighorn* (Algonac, Mich.: Reference Publications, 1986), 35-48, courtesy of Reference Publications, Inc., 218 St. Clair River Drive, Box 344, Algonac, Michigan 48001.

"From Little Bighorn to Little Big Man: The Changing Image of a Western Hero in Popular Culture," by Paul Andrew Hutton. Reprinted from *Western Historical Quarterly* 7 (January 1976): 19-45, courtesy of the *Western Historical Quarterly*.

"The Pictorial Record of the Old West: Custer's Last Stand—John Mulvany, Cassilly Adams, and Otto Becker," by Robert Taft. Reprinted from *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (November 1946): 361-90, courtesy of the Kansas State Historical Society.

"Jack Crabb and the Sole Survivors of Custer's Last Stand," by Brian W. Dippie. Reprinted from *Western American Literature* 4 (Fall 1969): 189-202, courtesy of *Western American Literature*.

"Correct in Every Detail": General Custer in Hollywood," by Paul Andrew Hutton. Reprinted from *Montana the Magazine of Western History* 41 (Winter 1991): 28-57, courtesy Montana Historical Society.

"Custer: The Legend of the Martyred Hero in America," by Bruce A. Rosenberg. Reprinted from *Journal of Folklore Research* 9 (Fall 1972): 110-32, courtesy of the Folklore Institute, Indiana University.