

Crook and Crazy Horse

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CROOK AND CRAZY HORSE

INDECISIVE CLASHES AT POWDER RIVER AND ON THE ROSEBUD
WERE STRATEGIC PRELUDES TO ANNIHILATION ON CUSTER HILL

written and illustrated by CORNELIUS C. SMITH, JR.



ASK ANY SCHOOL BOY to name the most famous of all Indian fighters and he will tell you, "General Custer." George Armstrong Custer, despite 90 years of debate, is still as famous as he was colorful and flamboyant. That he was a prudent leader is something else, as is seen in his final disregard of General Alfred Terry's advice to join with General John Gibbon before advancing on Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull on that fateful June day in 1876. Rashness and an indomitable belief in himself urged Custer to try it alone; he and his command were annihilated.

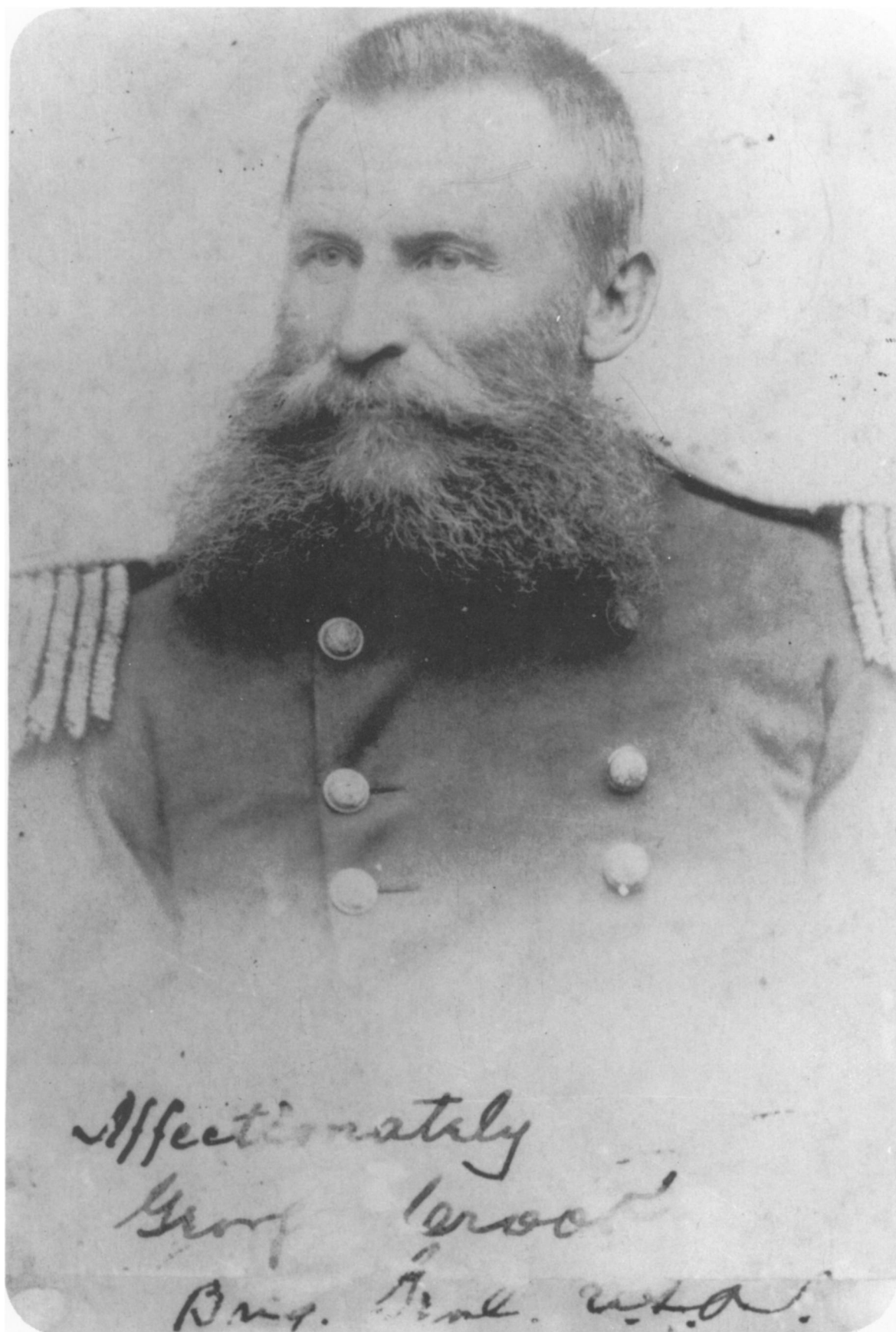
In recalling the episode—and in oversimplification—it is still generally difficult to tell where fact leaves off and fancy begins. Legend and fact have so long been interwoven around Custer's last battle that the event often assumes more the aspect of fiction than truth. It is strange, too, that we recall an entire era with a defeat—a most devastating and colossal defeat.

Custer lost 263 men on that grisly day on the Little Big Horn, yet the popular conception of plains warfare still employs George Armstrong Custer as the hero. Perhaps it was the factor of odds that attracts the public. If Custer's tactics were questionable, his bravery was magnificent. One thinks of Thermopylae, and the Alamo, and brave men fighting against insuperable odds.

There were many other men who fought the plains Indians, sometimes

poorly, sometimes brilliantly. We have done a pretty good job of forgetting most of them. The schoolboy—unless he is an exceptional one—will not recognize such names as Carrington, Miles, Crook, Terry, Gibbon, Fetterman, Powell, Baldwin, or Mackenzie. This is regrettable, because these frontier military leaders and others like them helped to write one of the most fascinating chapters of our national history.

A necessary background for understanding Custer's last stand are the little-known fights at Powder River and Rosebud Creek. Actually, they were the key battles. Had either turned out differently, there would have been no defeat at the Little Big Horn. What follows, then, is a brief review of these two vital but dimly-remembered earlier battles. In these engagements, the names General Crook and Chief Crazy Horse loom prominent above all others.



Affectionately
Geo. Crook
Brig. Gen. U.S.A.

GIVEN TO AUTHOR'S GRANDMOTHER BY GENERAL CROOK IN TUCSON, ARIZ., 1871

GENERAL CROOK had first seen Indian fighting in Oregon Territory prior to the Civil War. He built a brilliant career in the war, being responsible, among other things, for defeating Joe Wheeler's Cavalry in Tennessee. Crook achieved the rank of major general before the Civil War ended, and was commanding one of General Phil Sheridan's cavalry divisions in the spring of 1865. When Crook went to the Apache country in Arizona in 1871, he had distinct success against that wily band. He remained there until 1875 when he was ordered north to assist in putting down the Sioux and Cheyenne.

Crazy Horse has finally, in recent years, been singled out by many experts as the greatest military genius of the Sioux Nation. Strangely, no known picture of him exists. Troopers and frontiersmen who knew or had seen him, described him as handsome, aloof, proud, and always disdainful of whites. He first attracted attention as Red Cloud's lieutenant in the Fetterman fight, leading the decoy party which lured Fetterman's men up the fatal Lodge Trail Ridge in 1866. General Miles once described him as the "personification of savage ferocity." A true leader, he never asked of his warriors anything he would not do himself. Over the years, his tribesmen regarded him with genuine respect. It would be impossible to name a finer specimen of fighting Western Indian than Chief Crazy Horse of the Oglala Sioux.

Oddly enough, these two warriors met only at the Battle of the Rosebud. At Powder River, Crook had sent Col. J. J. Reynolds ahead to scout for Crazy Horse's camp, and it was Reynolds who had the skirmish with the Sioux. Still, since Crook was in command of the expedition, he bears the historical onus of its failure.

These two encounters—Powder River and the Rosebud—show how the groundwork for the Battle of the Little Big Horn was established, and point out the reasons for the total ferocity with which it was waged. That so few people know

much about these fights is attributable largely to the fact that they were submerged in the rash of notoriety and news concerning the dramatic and spectacular disaster of June 25, 1876—the Custer Battle.

To set the stage, let us go back to the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. This agreement ostensibly deeded the Sioux and Cheyenne Nations all the country between the North Platte (south) and Yellowstone Rivers (north), and from the Big Horn Mountains (west) to a line east of the Black Hills (east). The language of the treacherous agreement waxed poetic in parts. The land was promised to the Indians as a perpetual hunting ground for "as long as the grass grows and the water flows." While the government promised, its white citizens ignored the covenant. Almost from the beginning hunters, trappers, miners, homesteaders, and drifters filtered into the forbidden territory.

Outraged by the deception and worthlessness of the treaty, the Indians began to retaliate by sending raiding parties into adjacent lands not covered in the treaty. The big groups under Red Cloud and Spotted Tail, already settled on reservations, were sullen and disgruntled, although quiescent for the time being. The independents—Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse—still roamed the plains with their bands, and there were many Cheyenne who preferred buffalo meat to wormy pork and hoe cakes. As the months passed, conditions worsened; depredations occurred with more and more frequency.

By 1872, the surveys of the Northern Pacific Railroad, moving westward from Minnesota and Dakota Territory, had to be made under armed guard. Attacks on crews occurred at points all along the Yellowstone River. In several of these skirmishes, Custer took part. Once he attempted to cross the river in bull-boats to get at the Sioux on the opposite bank. The Sioux had the same game in mind, though, and swam their ponies across faster at a point downstream, to come up and hit him from the rear. In this

fight, Custer's horse was shot from under him, and his orderly was killed.

In 1874, John M. Bozeman organized a party of miners and invaded the treaty territory. Whenever the group came upon bands of Sioux roaming the hills, a sharp encounter occurred. Because of their organization and strength, the prospectors generally went pretty much where they pleased. In a sense, Bozeman's group was an expedition. He had ox teams and wagons to haul his supplies in, and the party was capable of withstanding heavy and repeated attacks. Sioux war parties followed his train for about a month, hovering in the distance, and swooping down on occasion for a hit and run blow at it. Whenever Bozeman's men caught a buck, he was tortured and mutilated just as the Sioux treated captured whites. No quarter was asked or given by either side in these bloody encounters.

The ultimate in Indian exasperation was reached with Custer's exploration of the Black Hills in 1874. His official reports—along with those of geologists and newspaper correspondents with him—electrified the East with gold fever. He described the territory as packed with gold “from the grass roots down.” As inviting as this was to the whites, it was anathema to the beleaguered Indians. Now they witnessed swarms of settlers overrunning their sacred hunting grounds. Actually, Custer's presence there was what it was advertised to be—a military reconnaissance. He had some 1,200 troops and 60 Indian scouts with him, and his orders were to preserve peace in the area. But the Indians saw only that more and more whites kept pouring into the land to cut up the hills, and they saw, too, that the soldiers busied themselves with pick and shovel. In spite of these charges, it is true that the troopers were able to apprehend a great number of civilian miners and turn them back empty-handed. In some cases, violence occurred, and whole outfits were destroyed by being overturned and burned. Some of the more persistent miners were turned over to civilian

SITTING
BULL



BARRY PHOTO

SPOTTED
TAIL



BARRY PHOTO

RED
CLOUD



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courts of justice for trial. Invariably the verdict was "not guilty"; not only did the men return to their diggings, but frequently took others back with them.

In June, 1875, a commission was established to secure mining rights from the Indians. It offered to lease the treaty lands for \$400,000 a year, or pay six million dollars for full and perpetual development rights. The Indians reneged, countering with an outright sale price of fifty million. No decision was reached. In its peevish report to Washington the commission stated: "We do not believe the (Indian's) temper or spirit can or will be changed until they are made to feel the power and magnanimity of the government." An offer of money, however small, always seems to make the donor feel charitable.

The Indians showed no inclination to sell *Pa Sapa*, sacred medicine ground of the Sioux. Of the seven thousand who attended the conference, most of them were openly hostile to the white agents. Had it not been for the intercession of Young-Man-Afraid-of-His-Horses, the commissioners might easily have been killed on the spot. Spotted Tail counseled a higher asking price. Spotted Bear suggested seventy million dollars. Red Cloud wanted not only money, but an assurance that the Great White Father would supply his people with meat for generations to come. Little Big Man wanted war. Crazy Horse remained grandly aloof from the whole sordid business of negotiation.

In spite of the army's efforts, some 11,000 miners had penetrated the area by the fall of 1875. Thus matters were coming to a head. By winter, Sioux from all the Missouri River agencies, and from the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail camps in Nebraska, started to make plans to join Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse. The time was coming when a major clash could no longer be avoided.

Army strategy called for the employment of three separate commands to move against the hostiles at a time when they were least able to fight back. Late winter would find the Sioux ponies thin

and weak, and the warriors concerned over diminishing foodstuffs for the tribes. Custer was to hit the assembled tribes from his quarters at Fort Abraham Lincoln. General George Crook was to close in from Fort Fetterman, and General John Gibbon from Fort Ellis. As it turned out, extreme cold weather halted the Custer and Gibbon expeditions, and only Crook got away on schedule.

Crook left Fort Fetterman on March 1, 1876, with Companies A, B, E, I and K of the Second Cavalry, and Companies A, D, E, F, and M of the Third Cavalry. Also, he had two companies of the Fourth Infantry with him, plus guides, teamsters and packers for a grand total of about 900 men. Chief of Scouts was the frontier phenomenon, Frank Grouard, heading up fifteen civilian scouts attached to the command. The column carried two news correspondents: Robert Strahorn of the *Denver News*, and Major T. H. Stanton, nominally the paymaster, but now assigned the extra duty of writing news dispatches for syndicated publication in several Eastern papers.

In general, the campaign was brief and disappointing. Crook, then commanding the Department of the Platte, had as his mission the discovery and seizure of the camps of Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, and Little Big Man, believed to be strung along the Powder, Rosebud, and Tongue Rivers.

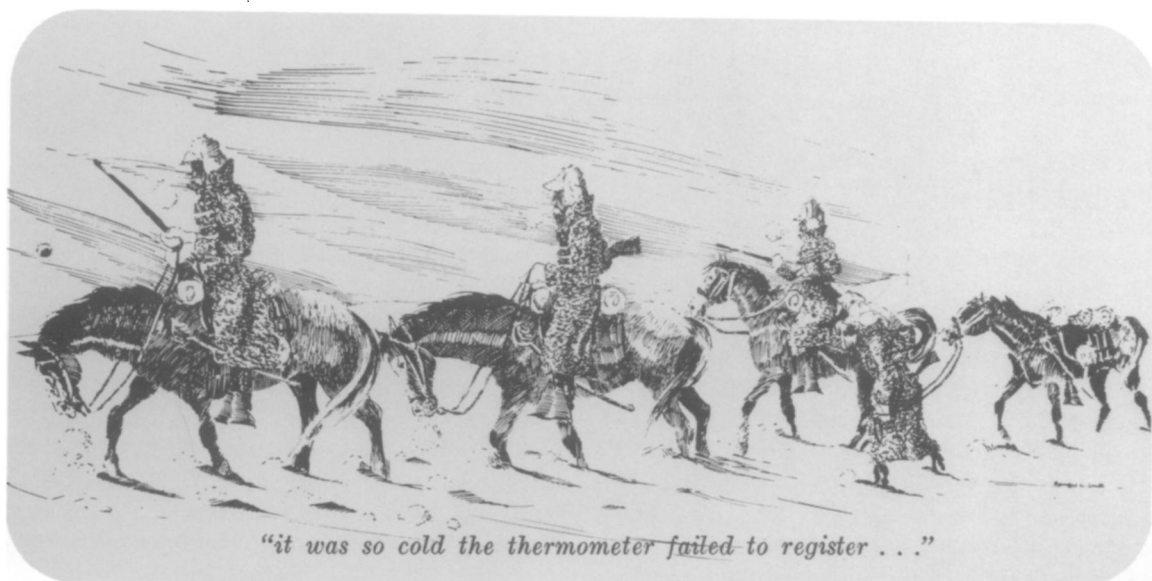
From the beginning the column had trouble. The same sub-zero weather that cancelled Custer's and Gibbon's participation almost proved Crook's undoing. On the first day out, the thermometer registered 26 degrees below zero. The column marched all that day and night to surprise a Sioux village. Taken by surprise, the defenders could only flee and watch from a distance the destruction of their tepees and capture of their ponies. Later, though, they were able to stampede the ponies and so retrieve them for future use. Two troopers killed in this fight were buried in a river. A hole was chopped in the ice,

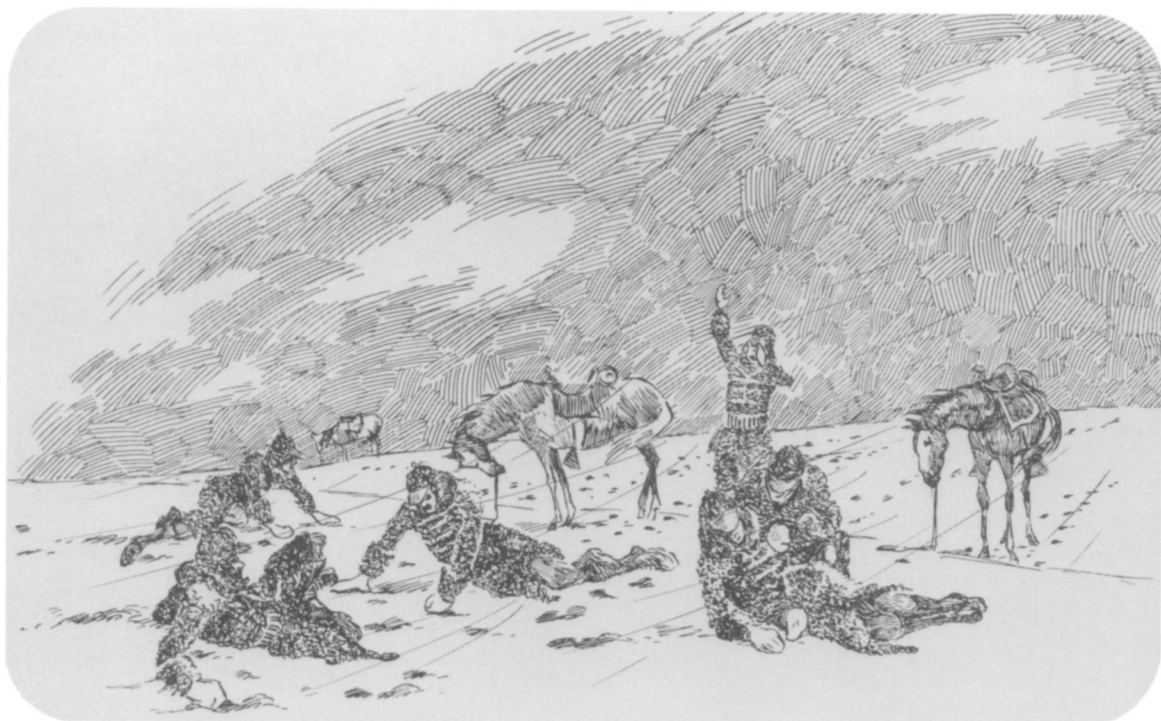
about two feet thick, and the bodies lowered into the opening.

Crook took the column along the old Bozeman Trail, arriving at the Crazy Woman Fork of the Powder River on the 7th. Here he detached his wagon train and sent it back to Fort Reno under infantry escort. From this point on, the men of the column had only the clothing they wore, plus one buffalo robe or two blankets per man. The men were put on half rations. Strength had to be conserved, and lightening the load was one means of accomplishing the goal. Moreover, the troopers had to be able to give the Sioux all their attention without worrying over the loss of supplies. A few years earlier, the idle boast had been that a few companies of veteran troopers "could ride through the whole Sioux Nation." In attempting to do just that—and expressly against the orders of his commanding officer—Captain William J. Fetterman had led his command into an ambush and lost it to a man. To add insult to injury, a Sioux warrior even put an arrow through the detachment's pet dog, which had followed it out from Fort Phil Kearny. That attitude had been replaced by one of respect for an able adversary. The Sioux and Cheyenne now had good firearms. Many of them had repeating rifles of the Winchester pattern. What is more, they knew how to use them.

From his position on the Powder River, Crook veered off in a northwesterly direction to pick up the Tongue River, and sighting it, proceeded downriver to the mouth of Red Clay Creek. Grouard, in his official report, says the camp was made a few miles farther on, near the mouth of Otter Creek. Here the column halted, and Crook sent parties out to scout the Rosebud Creek country north to the Yellowstone. No signs were found, and the searchers had all they could do to keep alive in the brutal cold of a stubborn, late plains winter. On one of these sorties, Grouard discovered some fresh pony tracks leading off toward the Powder River. Crook decided to follow them. They could be the tracks of a hunting party, or they might lead to Crazy Horse's village. The only way to find out was to follow them up and see.

On March 16, Crook divided his command. He sent Colonel J. J. Reynolds off in the direction of the pony tracks with Companies E, I, and K of the Second Cavalry, and E, F, and M of the Third. Reynolds' orders were to attack the village, if he should find it, and "shoot everything in sight." Crook kept four companies and the miscellaneous troops still accompanying the column. Reynolds was to rejoin Crook at an appointed rendezvous on Lodge Pole Creek the next evening. He started for the





"... had to shake the chill-dozing troopers awake ..."

Powder River late in the afternoon of March 16 for an all-night ride.

The weather grew worse. It was now so cold that the thermometer failed to register. Most of the men suffered from frostbite. Hardly a man escaped the dreaded bite of the fierce cold which descended upon the column. Feet, faces, toes, fingers all were numbed and bruised by the shocking attack. A halt was made about four in the morning for rest. When it came time to move again, officers and non-coms had to jerk and shake the chill-dozing troopers awake. Just a little longer in the relaxed positions of unconsciousness and the men might have been frozen stiff as they slept.

About daylight on the 17th, Grouard sighted a village on the west bank of the Powder River. It was Crazy Horse's camp, and in it were He Dog, one of Crazy Horse's Oglala Chiefs, and Two Moon, a Cheyenne Chieftain. It seemed to have about 100 lodges, and a population of some 600 men, women, and children. Reynolds had his orders, but they would not be easy to carry out. Snow lay in deep drifts all around, and the troop-

ers would make easy targets against the white background. Besides, the column would have to go down a steep incline to reach the camp. It was mirror-slick with a thick coating of ice, and each trooper would have his hands full to keep his mount from sprawling. The village lay almost a thousand feet below.

Reynolds decided to split his forces. One group would rush the sleeping village. Another group would drive off the pony herd, and a third detachment would stand by in picked positions to drop the warriors as they might flee the scene.

The first contact was made by Captain Theodore Eagan's Troop K, of the Second Cavalry. His part in the fight might have been more successful had it possessed the priceless element of surprise. As his party approached the edge of the village it surprised a young boy watering some ponies. For a moment the boy stood motionless. Suddenly he let out a piercing yell, and was instantly felled by a pistol ball. The damage was done. All over the village sleepers awoke and poured out of the lodges.

The troopers charged into the camp, hell-bent-for-leather, pouring a wild fu-

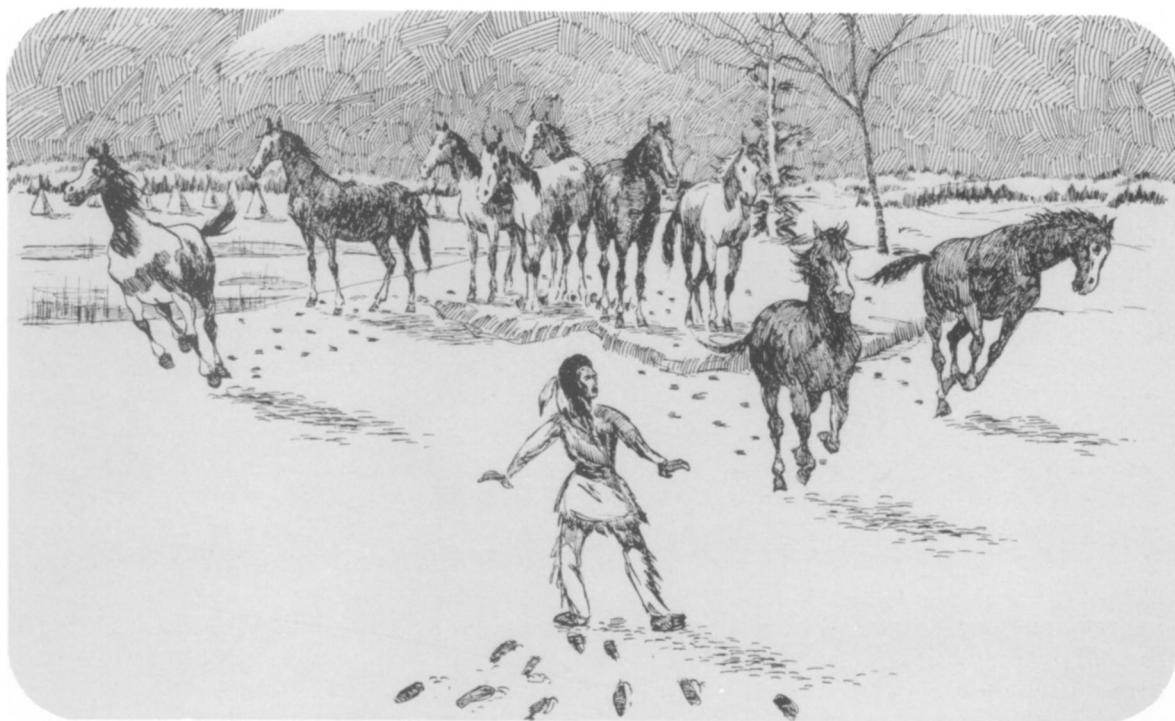
sillade of pistol shots into the emptying tents. The boy's warning shout had alerted the hostiles in time. Most of them—including some 400 women and children—escaped to the bluffs on the north side of the village. There the bucks deployed and poured withering fire into the ranks of the attackers.

The ponies were rounded up—about 1,000 of them—and for a while it looked as though the braves were in real trouble. But the troopers assigned to guard the herd, exhausted by the long march and the fire fight, were all but frozen as they took their places on the perimeter of the herd. Some of them probably dozed off, too, since early on the morning of the 18th, some warriors rushed the herd and managed to drive most of it off. A major defeat was changed into a tactical victory by this single action. Without their ponies, the hostiles were immobilized, and could have been chased down and slaughtered. With them, they were dangerous, and could ride off to fight another day. That day came thirteen weeks later, and not a trooper of Custer's detachment lived to tell about it.

Captain Mill's group began to fire the tents, but it was not long before that tactic was halted. Many of the tepees housed boxes of ammunition and powder kegs, and when fired blew sky high. The place was a veritable arsenal.

By mid-morning the troops were in possession of the village. In addition to the explosives, they found all sorts of valuable stores: tons of dried meat, barrels of coffee and flour, robes, blankets, saddles, and even fully packed travois ready for hitching. Reynolds decided to put the flammable stuff into a pile and burn it. This proved difficult. The meat and robes kindled and burned slowly. Now and then a powder keg half-hidden by a buffalo robe would ignite and blast off, unnerving everyone. All the time the Indians on the bluff were sniping at the working parties.

Reynolds hurried up the work, since he was determined to make his rendezvous with Crook at the mouth of Lodge Pole Creek. Some of his officers and men felt that he should have stayed in the village and sent word for Crook to join him there. But he did not. At about 2:30 in the afternoon of the 18th he with-



"... surprised a young boy watering his horses ..."

drew his forces and took off for the rendezvous. As soon as he had gone, the Indians filtered back into their smoking village to save what they could. There wasn't much left; yet by his intrepid action in recapturing his ponies, Crazy Horse, in effect, put Crook right back where he had started.

Reynolds might better have remained where he was. Crook was not there, but was camped instead about a dozen miles to the northeast of the appointed spot. The two bodies of men did get together later that day, and returned to Fort Fetterman several days later.

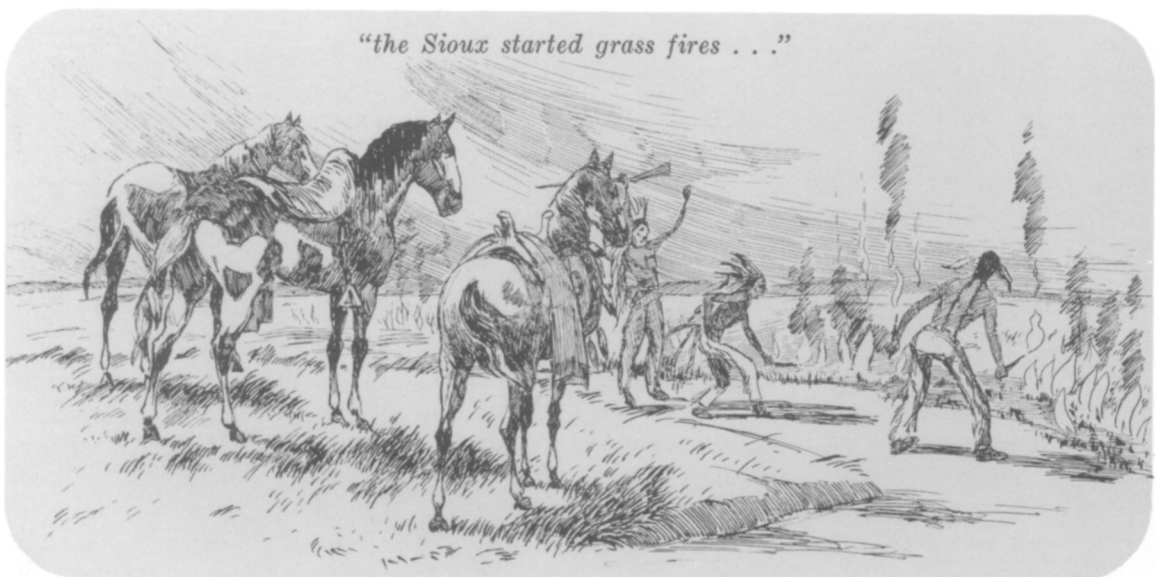
During the fight, four troopers were killed: Private Schneider of E Co., Second Cavalry, and three men of the Third Cavalry: Pvt. Peter Dowdy, E Co., Pvt. Michael McCannon, F Co., and Pvt. Lorenzo Ayers, M Co. In addition, one officer and five men were wounded.

Obviously, the engagement was not a success. In a report to the War Department on May 7, 1876, Crook maintained that the first part of the skirmish was accomplished satisfactorily. The village was taken, supplies confiscated, and the entire pony herd rounded up. After that, things seemed to get out of hand, and the situation deteriorated. He questioned the wisdom of burning the supplies. In the arctic cold of a plains winter, buffalo robes, blankets, and food-stuffs were basic to survival. Given the

opportunity of removing these items, the troopers could have used them profitably, in addition to denying the Indians their use. The most disastrous thing of all was the recapture of the pony herd. In army eyes, this was the cardinal sin.

Two officers were tried by court-martial after the fight. Captain Noyes, commanding I Troop of the Second Cavalry, for some reason ordered his men to unsaddle in the midst of hostilities. In this condition, the men could not have responded to a movement order had one been issued. Noyes was found guilty and sentenced to a reprimand in general orders. Colonel Reynolds was tried in Cheyenne in 1877 and found guilty of negligence in the conduct of operations. He was sentenced to suspension of rank and command for one year. Because of his long and excellent record, however, President Grant remitted the sentence. Instead, Reynolds was made a brevet major general and retired for disability in June, 1877.

Far from subduing Crazy Horse, the affair at Powder River acted to fire him up. Soon, wagon trains were attacked with greater frequency, and more settlements were plundered and burned. Because of the fierce cold, no military follow-up action to Powder River was planned right away. The army suffered real trouble in the matter of re-enlistments. Many men were reluctant to re-



enlist; some even deserted. In the thick of the Powder River engagement it had been necessary to abandon Private Ayers on the battlefield. Later, he had been found lying in a grotesque position in the snow, neatly scalped. The reluctant soldiers readily envisioned themselves in similar situations. In any case, enlistments dropped off alarmingly. The situation was acute. Every available trooper in the Department of the Platte had to be rounded up for the summer campaign against Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull.

Sensing what was in the wind, Sitting Bull called for a general council in April. It was held at Chalk Buttes on the Tongue River, and three of the chiefs in attendance were Crazy Horse, Two Moon and He Dog. They were smarting for revenge and had a score to settle with Reynolds and Crook. Indians from the reservations drifted in too—Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapahoes. As the huge camp moved to a better hunting ground, reinforcements were added. Black Elk, Big Road, Gall, Spotted Eagle, Touch the Clouds, Old Bear—all these and more brought their prancing warriors in to hunt and parley. The two camps made ready for war. As the Indians made war-medicine over the council fires, the soldiers, too, readied their equipment for battle.

On May 26, 1876, General Crook again took to the trail with 1,200 men. General Terry set out with about 1,000 troops, and General Gibbon with about 450. It was the largest force yet assembled to do battle against the Sioux and Cheyenne nations. Crazy Horse warned Crook that further penetration into Sioux territory would end in disaster for the army. But Crook was out for blood. This time there would be no slipshod handling of advantages gained. He headed straight for Crazy Horse and the other chiefs with everything he had.

Crook's column was harrassed almost daily by roving bands of Sioux. He established his supply camp on Prairie Dog Creek near its junction with the Tongue River. Even here he was har-



rassed, the Sioux starting innumerable grass fires and shooting or stampeding the horses daily. Crook stayed in this camp for several days waiting for some 200 Crow and Shoshone scouts who had been recruited to join his force. When the scouts arrived, the whole command moved on to a new base on Goose Creek, about twenty miles away.

As Crook advanced, the Indian camp moved from the Rosebud to the head of Ash Creek. Here the Sun Dance was held, so that a vision might be experienced to aid in the forthcoming struggle. Sitting Bull cut his arms with a sharp knife, gouging out chunks of flesh, and as he did so gazed at the sun for some sign of portent. Weak with dizziness and loss of blood, he fell. When he awoke, he told the assembled chiefs he had had a vision. Many soldiers were riding into his camp upside down. This augured well. An Indian victory was in the wind.

On June 16, Crook crossed the Tongue with his entire force. The column marched all that day and camped that night on the bank of Rosebud Creek. When it moved again at daybreak it was watched by scouts of Crazy Horse, who went hurrying back to their chief with news of the column. Crazy Horse was

not worried. He had joined forces with Sitting Bull and the other chiefs; between them they had an aggregation of almost 6,000 warriors.

At about eight o'clock on the morning of June 17 Crook's advance party ran into resistance, and the rattle of rifle fire ahead could be heard plainly. Soon the Crow and Shoshone scouts came galloping in with the news. "Heap Sioux come!" On the heels of the messengers came the enemy, hundreds of Sioux and Cheyenne, bonneted, painted, and yelling mightily. This first wave numbered about 1,800 hostiles. There were still some 4,200 waiting in reserve back of the hills. The scene became a screaming welter of confusion. The battle of the Rosebud had begun.

Major Royal rushed several troops to fight off an attack from the rear. Captain Mills forged ahead. This dividing of the force was just what Crazy Horse wanted. The hostiles fell back before both cavalry columns and the troopers plunged on. Mills sensed a trap and pulled up short. He sent a message to Crook, informing the general of his situation. Crook hesitated for a moment, weighing Mills' position against his own

over-all strategy. The scout Grouard, present at this fight as he had been at Powder River, was heard to remark: "General, I am no coward, nor yet am I a fool. I will take your command to where they can go into the village, but I will not stick my head in where I know I cannot get it out again." Crook sent a messenger off to Captain Noyes with orders to help extricate Mills. Noyes arrived none too soon. Both detachments had to fight fiercely to get back to safer ground. Tomahawks, clubs, rifle butts, and lances were used in this wild, hand-to-hand encounter. At the height of this free-for-all, Mills was ordered to attack the village. In following out his orders he entered a defile with the appropriate name of Dead Canyon. With Noyes somehow distracting the hostiles, Mills picked his way into the gorge gingerly. Just as he was about to reach the point of no return, Captain Nickerson came charging up at a full gallop. Nickerson came with a retreat order; once again the order came in the nick of time. Even as Nickerson and Mills conferred, large bands of hostiles had already begun to close in on their rear, to block all exit from the canyon. The fight to get out



"tomahawks, rifle butts, lances were used . . ."



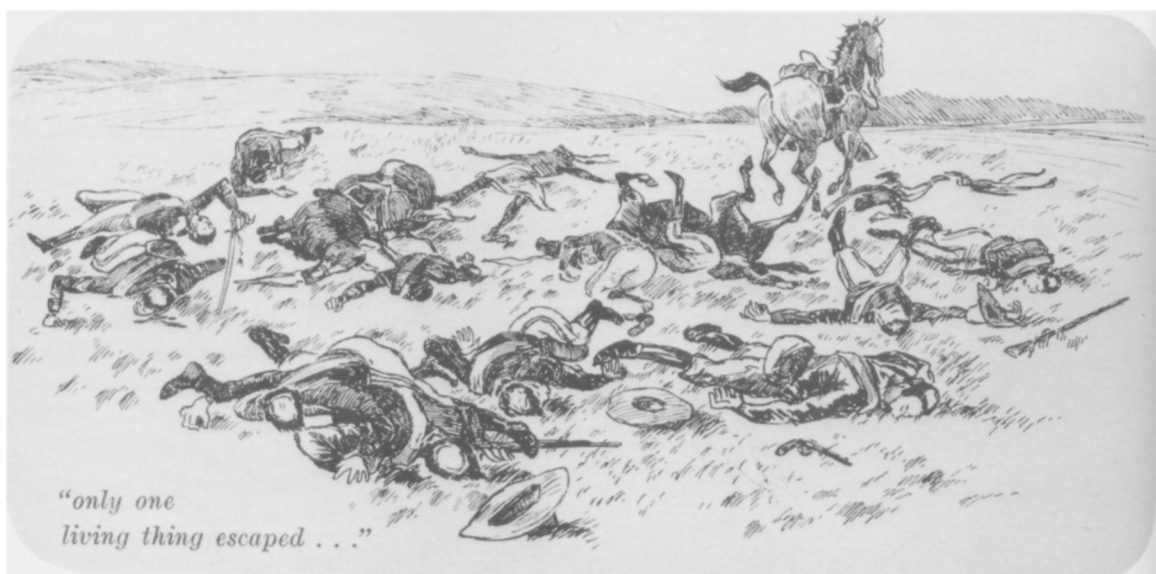
"Shoshones came into camp with a few dripping scalps . . ."

was desperate. Later, it was found that if the column had been permitted to penetrate just a few more yards, it would have been sealed off with a log-jam rolled into the gorge from high points on either side. Escape would have been impossible. As Mills extricated his force, Crazy Horse called off the chase for the day.

As it turned out, the battle ended then and there, although neither side knew it just then. The Indian casualty list for the Rosebud Battle is not known. As usual, most of the dead and wounded were dragged off by their comrades. The Shoshones came into camp that night with a few dripping scalps. Casualty figures for Crook's command are also at variance. Some writers place the number killed at nine, the wounded at 27; yet Captain John Bourke, a participant, said that nine were killed and 43 wounded.

Crook returned to his base at Goose Creek. In the circumstances, there was not much else he could do. Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull moved off to the Little Big Horn Valley. They had been tested and found strong. If the hated whites could do no better than they had at Powder River and the Rosebud, there was nothing to fear. They celebrated

CORNELIUS COLE SMITH, artist and able military historian, has appeared in these columns on two previous occasions, once in a featured article. In Winter, 1959, we published Dr. Smith's illustrated article on the 16th Century explorations of the Spanish in the Far West. He was himself the theme of an article in our Autumn issue, 1962, written by a friend and former classmate, Robert O. Hunter. This warm piece, illustrated with Smith's widely versatile art, pointed out many reasons why "Corney" is so deeply emersed in Western history, even after years of travel and varied experiences. Born at Fort Huachuca, Ariz. in 1913, Dr. Smith is the son of the late Colonel C. C. Smith of the Fifth Cavalry, who enlisted in the regular army from the old Montana National Guard in 1890 and won a Congressional Medal of Honor in the final engagement with the Sioux in the bitter winter which followed. A graduate of the University of Southern California, Cornelius II entered the Marine Corps in 1939. He served throughout World War II in the Pacific and was separated from the service in 1946 as a lieutenant colonel. He then traveled extensively, working in the Arabian oilfields and attending schools in Italy and Switzerland. He received his history doctorate in 1955 as the result of his European experiences and education. Dr. Smith for the past several years has been historian for the Fifteenth Air Force, traveling extensively as such from his home in Riverside, Calif. He is also an extremely busy artist, working in oils, watercolor, ceramics and clay. Dr. Smith appears in this article as both historian and illustrator, favorite roles for an uncommon Westerner.



with a scalp dance which lasted for several days.

While the loss of nine men from a total force of 1,400 could not be considered catastrophic, still the atmosphere in the Crook camp was sombre. There would be other days to fight, but a chance had been offered and missed. Somewhere, on some decisive field, another battle would be waged.

If Crook had been able to achieve a telling victory on the Rosebud, there would have been no Little Big Horn. But he could not. Perhaps the thought of taking on the whole hostile force of 6,000 was too much. Perhaps the events of the Powder River fight made him overly cautious. Twice the warriors of Crazy Horse had faced veteran troops; twice they had escaped to fight again.

Eight days later, on June 25, 1876, General George Armstrong Custer met the same Indians at a spot not forty miles away from the scene of the Rosebud fight. The whole world knows the story of that fateful encounter. Only one living thing escaped death at the hands of the Sioux: "Comanche," the thoroughbred mount of Captain Myles Keogh. Curly, the Crow scout attached to Custer's command, and who relayed the tragic news, was too far away to be caught in the debacle.

The battle at the Little Big Horn was the high-water mark of Sioux and Cheyenne resistance to the invasion of the whites. But as it was the high-water

mark, so was it the beginning of the end. A punitive policy of pursuit and revenge now was adopted by the federal government, chagrined and embarrassed over the astounding defeat. The weight and power of the U. S. Government proved too much for the Indians. It was inevitable that they should fall. Fourteen and a half years after the Custer Battle, all resistance would crumble and fall to pieces. The Sioux Nation would cease forever to be any kind of threat to the settlers in the area.

It is sad to relate that the government added ignominy to treachery before the era closed. On September 5, 1877, Crazy Horse was bayoneted to death by a soldier as he was being led off to prison. Since he had given himself up voluntarily, he could not comprehend the idea of imprisonment. As he struggled for freedom, he received the fatal thrust. A few years later, on December 15, 1890, Sitting Bull was shot by two agency policemen in the Dakota Badlands. He, too, was resisting an arrest he could not understand.

So ends the story of Crook and Crazy Horse, one an eminent officer of the United States Army, West Point trained, and—despite his reverses in these two campaigns—a fine and capable soldier. The other, Crazy Horse, was unschooled, illiterate, a savage. For all that, he was perhaps the greatest Indian field general of the plains, a fierce and wily tactician who defeated the best the U. S. Army could muster against him.