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Review of *March of the Columns: A Chronicle of the 1876 Indian War, June 27-September 16, 1876* By James Willert

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two days after the defeat of Custer's Seventh Cavalry and culminates with the end of the summer campaign. Sandwiched between are the numerous anecdotes, tragedies, and travels of Generals George Crook and Alfred Terry, Colonels Nelson Miles and Wesley Merritt, and their troops.

As volume four of a six book series, this extensively researched and well written account will increase the reader's knowledge and appreciation of a small segment of the wars between the Army and the Indians. Volumes one and two in the Custer Trails Series, *Benteen's Scout to the Left* and *Custer's 7th Cavalry Comes to Dakota*, both by Roger Darling, were followed by W. Kent King's *Massacre*. Volume five, *Custer and the Cheyenne*, by Lewis Kraft, covers the years 1867-68. The final work, James Willert's *Little Big Horn Diary*, originally published by the author in 1976, has been supplemented and updated to include new information. With the release of *March of the Columns*, Willert has finally followed up on his effort to tell the story of the 1876 campaign.

Tracing the movements of the various units desperately trying to locate and defeat the victors in the Custer battle, Willert carefully integrates the action on the Plains, on the rivers, and in Washington. He also includes narratives by Indians associated with the battle at Little Big Horn, though these are too brief; other works capture this dimension in greater detail. For the historian or general reader who wants a comprehensive study of Army life on the frontier, however, this book provides significant detail and firsthand accounts capturing the harsh realities of daily life. Extensive quotes by the participants help the reader appreciate the hardships, confusion, and tragedy accompanying military duty. Inadequate communication systems, non-existent transportation networks, and sometimes brutal living conditions were just a few of the problems soldiers encountered. Infrequent fishing and hunting expeditions, spectacular sunsets, and other benefits of this life also come alive through the author's detailed account.

March of the Columns: A Chronicle of the 1876 Indian War, June 27-September 16, 1876. By James Willert. El Segundo, California: Upton and Sons Publishers, 1994. Maps, photographs, illustrations, notes, bibliographical essay, index. xii + 643 pp. \$85.00.

Unbearable heat, driving thunderstorms, endless marching, and poor rations were daily fare for the soldier on the Plains. Weeks of tedious riding culminated in brief moments of sheer terror when the adversary was finally confronted. *March of the Columns* provides the day by day exploits, movements, and disappointments of US soldiers in pursuit of Cheyenne and Sioux warriors along the Yellowstone, Tongue, and Powder Rivers. The tale begins

Including the action on the rivers by the steamboats *Durfee*, *Far West*, *Carroll*, and *Josephine* explains how important the waterways were, but also shows how limiting they could be to an Army marching or riding far upstream or great distances from any water system. Sparse but important guidance from the nation's capital highlights the problems commanders had determining their duties and detailing their responsibilities in dealing with Indian peoples on and off the reservations.

Although printed from camera ready copy, this book is wonderfully illustrated and includes numerous maps, photographs, and drawings that add to its appeal. Anyone interested in the aftermath of the Custer defeat or the lifestyle of the 1870s Army soldier will enjoy this book. For the serious student, *March of the Columns* provides a wealth of source material in an inviting format.

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