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Review of *Ho! For the Black Hills: Captain Jack Crawford Reports the Black Hills Gold Rush and Great Sioux War* Edited by Paul L. Hedren

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Ho! For the Black Hills: Captain Jack Crawford Reports the Black Hills Gold Rush and Great Sioux War. Edited by Paul L. Hedren. Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2012. xvii + 297 pp. Photographs, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth, \$18.95 paper.

With this edition of Captain Jack Crawford's letters, Paul Hedren has made another valuable contribution to the historical record of the Black Hills, the Great Sioux War, and frontier journalism. Hedren presents Crawford's letters from 1875 through 1876, introduced by an extended biographical sketch and a lucid description of the larger historical context. Crawford (1847–1917) emerges as a familiar frontier type—born in Ireland, raised in Pennsylvania, twice wounded during the Civil War, who then learned from Buffalo Bill Cody and others how to dress and act like the buckskinned scout, and most of all, how to tell stories about his rough-and-tumble frontier experiences.

The letters that form the core of this book come from Crawford's two years as a correspondent for the *Omaha Daily Bee*, when he witnessed the early mining boom in the Black Hills and then participated briefly as an army scout during the ensuing hostilities with the Sioux. As a cor-

respondent, he wrote glowing letters about the "land of gold," describing not only the mineral wealth but also the scenic beauty of "cathedral-like cliffs" and "natural amphitheaters surrounded by walls of granite." Crawford downplayed the casual personal violence in the mining towns, emphasizing instead that the miners were "good, law abiding citizens" anxious for duly constituted state and federal laws, an infusion of outside capital, and a regular post office.

In addition to this insider's view of Custer City and Deadwood, Crawford also recounts his life as a scout, personally requested by Buffalo Bill Cody, during General Crook's Starvation March and Captain Anson Mills's attack at Slim Buttes. These stories of personal adventure contribute some details to the army's campaign against the Lakotas in the early autumn of 1876, but are perhaps more valuable for what they reveal about the racial attitudes of miners toward the Indians who held legal title to the Black Hills. Crawford's frequent use of racial epithets (including reference to Lakotas killed at Slim Buttes as "good Indians"), his call for retribution against the "demons" who killed Custer, and his hostility toward Indian philanthropists make a good case that the Black Hills miners held far more animus toward the Indians than the U.S. Army could muster.

As with all raconteurs of the "Old West," one has to wonder about the veracity of the tales. Crawford was an engaging writer, a bad poet, and according to Lieutenant John Bourke, "a brave man, and a genial, good-natured liar, whose stories were welcomed at every fire-side." Despite his claim that he would spend the rest of his life in the Black Hills, Crawford visited the Hills rarely in later life, instead working for Buffalo Bill and then on his own as a writer and stage performer in Wild West shows. This ability to entertain saturates these letters. Hedren has performed a valuable service in bringing Crawford's lively, informative, and sometimes troubling stories to a wider audience.

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