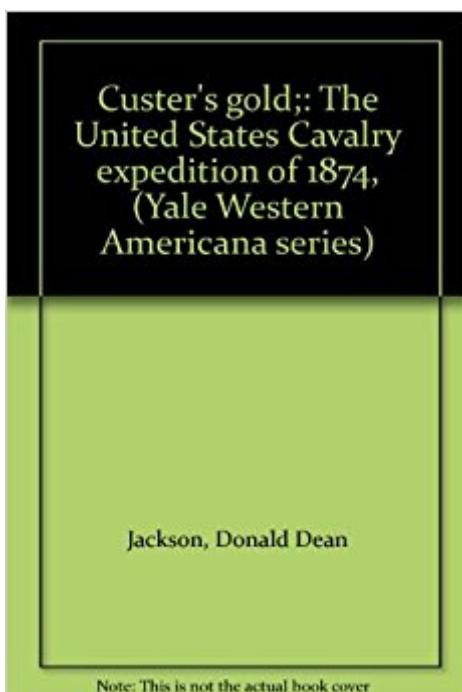


The book was found

Custer's Gold;: The United States Cavalry Expedition Of 1874, (Yale Western Americana Series)



Synopsis

The white settlers had little interest in the semiarid land assigned to the Sioux under the Treaty of 1868 and, for a time, the Indians enjoyed their domain in relative peace. However, when rumors spread that the Black Hills of the Dakota Territory were rich in gold, miners and newspapers wanted to organize prospecting parties. At first the government discouraged attempts to trespass upon the Sioux land, but under the pressure of public opinion, the Army in 1874 sent the Seventh Cavalry Regiment, commanded by General George A. Custer, to explore the Hills. With reports that gold had indeed been found by Custer, all hope of preserving the Sioux treaty vanished. Miners flocked to the area despite attempts by the government to keep them out; by 1876, the Black Hills had been officially removed from Sioux control. The story of the expedition and its effect on relations with the Sioux is told from government documents, including much new material from the National Archives, and from newspaper correspondents' reports and previously unpublished journals. William Illingworth's original photographs of the expedition, reproduced here, were almost as influential as reports of the expedition in luring prospectors to the Black Hills. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"A superb example of the way military history and western history, in fact all history, ought to be written." --John Bakeless (John Bakeless) --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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A provision in the 1868 Ft. Laramie Treaty assigned all the lands west of the Missouri River in present-day South Dakota, including the Black Hills, to the Sioux. But rumors began to emerge that the Black Hills were rich in gold, and in 1874 the government authorized a "reconnaissance" to check out the rumors. George Armstrong Custer, headquartered at Ft. Abraham Lincoln near Bismarck, ND, was put in charge, and from July 2 through August 30 he led an expedition to the Black Hills that indeed proved the rumors to be true. In this short book Donald Jackson tells the story of the expedition. Perhaps once THE book on the expedition, now it's best utilized as a supplementary text next to Gafe & Horsted's amazingly superb EXPLORING WITH CUSTER: THE 1874 BLACK HILLS EXPEDITION, which is a detailed, eye-popping, near mile-by-mile account of the expedition. Jackson expands somewhat on the scientific corps that accompanied the expedition as well as the prelude and postscript to the trip, but generally relates in words what Gafe & Halsted reveal in maps and photographs. One interesting sidenote is the baseball game played by the troops on July 31 in what is today downtown Custer, the first baseball game played in South Dakota. The results of the expedition ushered in a gold rush and another disaster for the Indians whose lands were once again invaded. Jackson is a well-known and excellent western historian and this book tells the story of Custer and the 1874 expedition succinctly and well. Recommended.

This book first appeared in the early 1970s which, in hindsight, was at the dawn of an era that witnessed the publication of a flood of new books on Custer that has continued over the years, most noteworthy being those from Utley, Louise Barnette, Michno on the battle, etc. For anyone wanting the full details of the Black Hills Expedition, CUSTER'S GOLD was easily trounced in 2002 with the publication of EXPLORING WITH CUSTER with its wealth of then-and-now photographs, abundant quotes from primary sources, and a fine narrative to pull it all together. That book suffers though from a lack of an index! That said, for someone looking for a shorter and less costly recounting of the historic 1874 expedition, this well-written book answers the call. Especially noteworthy is the chapter entitled "The Misery of Private Ewert" that draws from his diary to illustrate the hellish conditions endured by enlisted men as they marched across the prairie towards the beckoning Black Hills. The author lets his anti-Custer bias show on occasion but that is in small measure compared to some writers. Unlike the recent EXPLORING, there is an index. Recommended.

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