

INTRODUCTION

I certainly am glad this little informative pamphlet has been written and published. Not only is it valuable for young visitors to the battlefield, it is essential for beginning students as well. It also serves as a reminder to "old hands" to the story.

It must be a pleasure to perform a duty, as Jim did, and still get paid for it. It has been said few people work at jobs which are pleasurable. I don't know how true that is; I know I work at the only thing that gives me great pleasure. That something is the pursuit of historical truths. Getting it into the hands of those who need it most is difficult to do what with the seemingly over-kill of books on this singular subject. The major problem as I see it is that the wrong material seems more readily available and the more serious but equally interesting and informative material finds distribution a task.

Having to answer questions of the sort published here, time and again, would drive me bonkers. It takes a special breed to respond courteously day after day to the same questions and even to some questions which are almost certainly an insult to hear. I've heard such questions asked and have studied and marveled at the patient responses. I would be more apt to answer in kind but nonetheless honestly.

Jim's selection of questions and answers are indicative of his devotion to truth and its over-riding need to be told. That's what made him a good Seasonal Ranger and what makes him a good teacher. Dedication and devotion are the most valued attributes exhibited here and I'm sure in the classroom.

Since this was written, certain evidence has surfaced to support, or answer more fully, two of the questions addressed in the pamphlet. I would like to turn my attention to these two questions and answers.

The first one has to do with Terry's orders to Custer. Jim made no reference to the famed Mary Adams affidavit, possibly because Colonel Graham and others had dismissed it so readily. Everyone, that is, except General Miles and Jack Manion, the author of the recently published booklet titled LAST STATEMENT TO CUSTER. It had been claimed by some that Custer's black servant, Mary Adams, was in his tent that night after the session on the FAR WEST and after Custer had received his "letter of instructions" from Terry, when Terry himself appeared at Custer's tent and, after considerable discussion, departed after having advised Custer to "Use your own judgment and do what you think best if you strike the trail. And whatever you do, Custer, hold on to your wounded." This is a remarkable document in that it exonerates Custer from any charges of wrong-doing at the battle, particularly when interpreting the Terry "letters of instructions." The question arose as to its authenticity simply because some could not reconcile Mary Adams being there

and then later at Fort Abraham Lincoln where she was awakened and told to awaken Mrs. Custer so that she and the other ladies could be told the awful truth of the disaster at the Little Bighorn. Mr. Manion's faithful research produced ample evidence in the form of check stubs that there were two sisters, Mary and Maria Adams, in the employ of the Custers. A payment check for services was paid to Mary Adams, in the form of a documented receipt, while on the expedition. There is no doubt whatsoever Mary Adams was on the spot and overheard Terry literally reverse his written "letter of instructions and suggestions."

The other question I wish to address is on the number of Indians killed in the Little Bighorn fight. No real number will now ever surface; it is much too long after the fact. But the garbage of there being so few Indians killed--the usual misinformation that has prevailed for so long--is absolutely erroneous. Some say as few as 30 and perhaps as many as 100. Hogwash! Even the Custer Battlefield Handbook cites Chief Gall (later to become a highly respected Indian judge on the reservation) as having estimated "43 killed in all," and further: "Nearly as many died each day as were killed in the fight" on the way to the Wolf Mountains, a journey that took five days. One's mathematics (a pure science) cannot be denied. Sergeant Knipe identified at least 65 or 70 dead Indians left in the village in tepee burials. Private Coleman was cited as having found "150 dead Indians in a ravine." Red Horse stated categorically "the soldiers killed 136 and wounded 160 Sioux." These are but few of the bands of Indians reporting and only a few of the soldiers' reports. There are several bands of Indians not reporting at all. Chances are, a majority of these Indians wounded will have died, the lack of medical attention for them being what it was. By private calculation, there were more Indians killed than soldiers. I hope this will also set to rest another myth that is still being perpetuated.

I believe these little offerings by Jim Schneider will do much in the way of clearing the smoke which has surrounded this historical incident for so long.

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