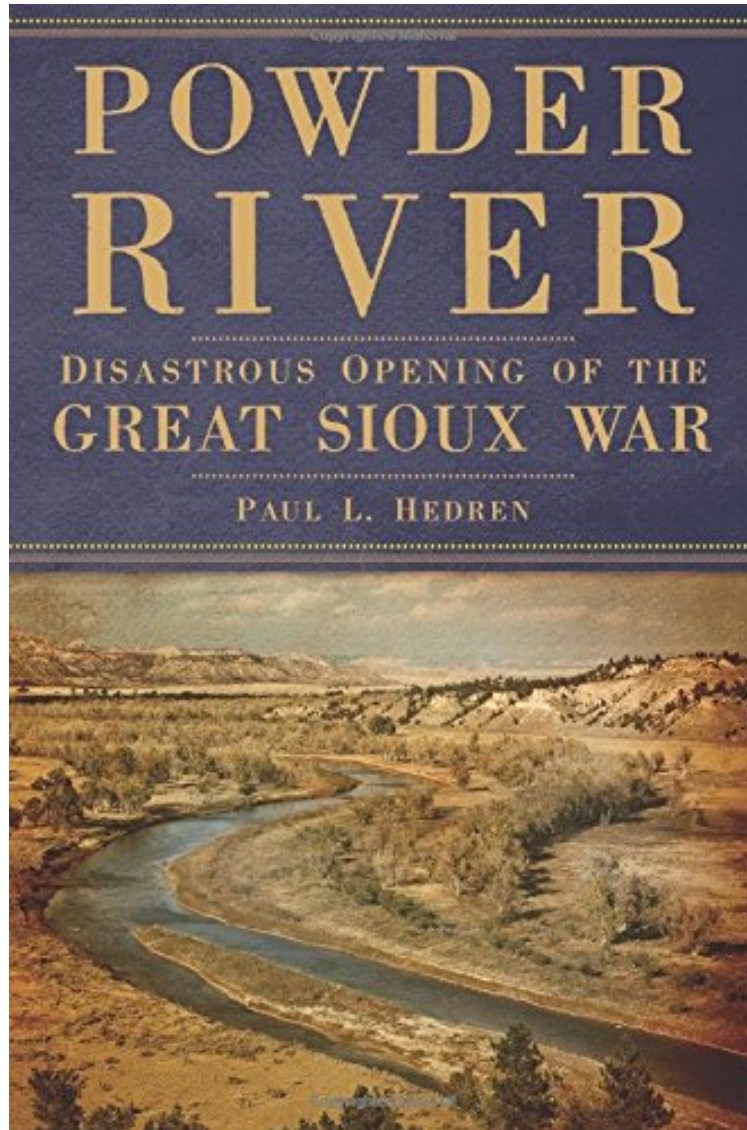


[Free] Powder River: Disastrous Opening of the Great Sioux War

## Powder River: Disastrous Opening of the Great Sioux War

*Paul L. Hedren*

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**Paul L. Hedren : Powder River: Disastrous Opening of the Great Sioux War** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Powder River: Disastrous Opening of the Great Sioux War:

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the United States Government's ultimatum came and went without the surrender of the major "hostile" bands as they were called, (prominently, the Sioux and Northern Cheyenne,) the U.S. Army was sent in to strike a telling blow that would force these tribes to move onto the various reservations and submit to the ways of the whites. In March of 1876, General George Crook and several companies of cavalry and infantry were ordered to teach these resisters a lesson. Trudging through the merciless winter of Wyoming and Montana, Crook's troops suffered from the effects of exposure, poor subsistence (for men and horses), and small skirmishes with warriors of the same tribes they were in search of, including the loss of their entire herd of cattle (only a few days after leaving their expedition's station). Eventually, Crook's scouts would locate the trail of two Cheyenne hunters. Upon the news of this discovery, Crook split his troop into two columns, leaving one under himself and the other led by an aging Col. Joseph Reynolds who would lead his men into the Powder River Country and locate a Cheyenne village (thought to be a mostly Sioux village under the leadership of the famed Oglala leader Crazy Horse). In a series of blunders that followed, Reynolds and several of his company officers turned what may have been a serious victory for the U.S. Army into a shocking stalemate, that included few casualties on the Cheyennes side, several dead and even a wounded soldier being left behind, and the loss of warm hides and buffalo meat that would have kept the men in a better state of condition against the elements and hunger of being disconnected from their pack-train. The Cheyenne, sensing the tide was turning in this engagement, seized their moment and retook their decimated village and eventually recaptured their stolen pony herd in a last show of defiance over Crook's men. Paul Hedren has once again proven why his name is synonymous with the great writers of the Plains Indian Wars. In "Powder River", Paul not only traces the movements of the troops marching towards their destination in striking detail, but also correlates the Cheyenne of that camp and their reasons for being there as well as their leadership. The story of the Battle of Powder River is an almost forgotten piece of western heritage now brought to life in this thrilling account by Mr. Hedren.

The Great Sioux War of 1876–77 began at daybreak on March 17, 1876, when Colonel Joseph J. Reynolds and six cavalry companies struck a village of Northern Cheyennes—Sioux allies—thereby propelling the Northern Plains tribes into war. The ensuing last stand of the Sioux against Anglo-American settlement of their homeland spanned some eighteen months, playing out across more than twenty battle and skirmish sites and costing hundreds of lives on both sides and many millions of dollars. And it all began at Powder River. *Powder River: Disastrous Opening of the Great Sioux War* recounts the wintertime Big Horn Expedition and its singular great battle, along with the stories of the Northern Cheyennes and their elusive leader Old Bear. Historian Paul Hedren tracks both sides of the conflict through a rich array of primary source material, including the transcripts of Reynolds's court-martial and Indian recollections. The disarray and incompetence of the war's beginnings—officers who failed to take proper positions, disregard of orders to save provisions, failure to cooperate, and abandonment of the dead and a wounded soldier—in many ways anticipated the catastrophe that later occurred at the Little Big Horn. Forty photographs, many previously unpublished, and five new maps detail the action from start to ignominious conclusion. Hedren's comprehensive account takes Powder River out of the shadow of the Little Big Horn and reveals how much this critical battle tells us about the army's policy and performance in the West, and about the debacle soon to follow.

“Paul Hedren's study of the Crook-Connor campaign affords compelling new assessments about the Great Sioux War of 1876–1877. Teeming with fresh data and analysis, *Powder River* embodies the most significant contribution on this topic to appear in decades.”—Jerome A. Greene, author of *American Carnage: Wounded Knee, 1890*