

Our Centennial Indian War and the Life of General Custer (The Western Frontier Library Series)

Frances Fuller Victor

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Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer was widely known as a Civil War figure, author, and successful cavalry leader before his spectacular defeat at the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876 by Lakota and Northern Cheyenne Indians. His actions—and those of his troops—would have been of public interest even without their final, bloody outcome. A ready audience of readers was hungry for information about the engagement and about their fallen hero when Frances Fuller Victor's book appeared in spring 1877.

Published even before the Great Sioux War had ended, Our Centennial Indian War and the Life of General Custer was the first contemporary and comprehensive account of the successive army operations in 1876 and early 1877. It was a major accomplishment. Victor drew information from a wide range of sources—including personal letters, war correspondents' dispatches, and government documents—to explain the lengthy, disjointed struggle between the army and the Lakota-Cheyenne coalition. She also offered one of the earliest biographical assessments of Custer, its most noted military participant.

Compared to other period writings, Victor's narrative is smooth and dispassionate, devoid of conjecture and judgment. In addition, her account contains rare Indian perspectives on the Little Bighorn battle, including Lakota testimony that has not previously appeared elsewhere. Featuring an introduction by historian Jerome A. Greene, this edition of *Our Centennial Indian War* provides a remarkable window into contemporary thinking about an iconic event



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