



# **CROSSED SABERS: General George Armstrong Custer and the Shenandoah Valley Campaign**

*Adolfo Ovies*

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Sheridan's Shenandoah Valley campaign was a period marked not only by professional achievement and advancement for Custer, but also by a rapidly emerging personal maturity as the steady influence of his marriage to Elizabeth Bacon exerted itself. Using excerpts from their extensive correspondence, *Crossed Sabers* develops the theme of Custer's maturation and his gradual acceptance of Libbie's religious beliefs. *Crossed Sabers* examines Custer's soldierly qualities throughout, traces his involvement in the evolution of cavalry tactics, and scrutinizes his methods of discipline, his concept of leadership and its exercise. The narrative deals with the events surrounding the feud between Custer and the Rebel partisan, John Mosby. The Valley campaign was conducted under Grant's rules of total war, and Custer's involvement in this ugly side of the campaign demands close scrutiny. This work captures Custer as he begins to crest the wave of glory, and it strives to do so with a broader examination of the man inside the uniform than has been achieved in previous writings. *Crossed Sabers* relies heavily on the Official Records, but the narrative is fleshed out through the accounts of dozens of participants to bring Custer's part in the campaign into focus.

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