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Archaeological Insights into the Custer Battle: An Assessment of the 1984 Field Season. By Douglas D. Scott and Richard A. Fox, Jr., with a contribution by Dick Harmon.

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elders, the ill, and the young are placed inside the dance, nearest the drum, so they can benefit from the drum's power (p. 54).

In his introduction, Whitehorse acknowledges that his book is not meant to be definitive. It is too small to allow for full discussions of even simple things like the pow-wow circuit and its ramifications. An expanded volume would permit development of models that are only hinted at in this text, such as the proposition that the horse and trade led to increased intertribal contact. Cross-cultural contact, in turn, changed social institutions, resulting in secular ceremonialism and intertribal alliances. These led to the pow-wow.

As an initial glimpse into the pow-wow, this book merits reading. But its brevity definitely leaves the reader wanting more. Let us hope that we can look to future, more fully developed works on this meritorious subject.

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Archaeological Insights into the Custer Battle: An Assessment of the 1984 Field Season. By Douglas D. Scott and Richard A. Fox, Jr., with a contribution by Dick Harmon. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987. 138 pages. \$18.95 Cloth. \$9.95 Paper.

In August 1983 fire ravaged the thick grass that for over a century had covered the battlefield where Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer and the Seventh United States Cavalry had fought and died in 1876. Because the bare surface of the battlefield afforded the opportunity to conduct an archeological study of the area, the superintendent of Custer Battlefield National Monument allowed Douglas Scott, a doctoral candidate in archeology, Richard Fox, an archeologist, and Dick Harmon, an expert on firearms used in Indian wars, to conduct the study. It was hoped that new findings would answer some still-puzzling questions concerning the battle.

The archeological work was conducted in two phases. The first phase resulted in this book, which describes the investigation done in 1984 at the site of the Custer portion of the Little Bighorn fight. The second phase, done in 1985, produced another book, *Archaeological Perspectives on the Battle of the Little Bighorn* (1989),

written by the same three authors and others. The second book contains further archeological work done at the Custer site, plus work at the Reno-Benteen defense locale. This review, however, deals only with *Archaeological Insights*.

The authors begin by presenting interesting information on the method and theory of archeology. They write that "artifact patterns are the physical evidence of the cultural process by which that society operated" (p. 6). For example, artifact patterns such as the relationship between bullets and cartridge cases reveal the progress of the battle, directions of fire, and movements and positions of individuals and units. The authors also studied the placement of battlefield markers where soldiers fell, to determine their accuracy. The authors do not claim that their work is definitive. They stress that their archeological approach to studying the battle complements historical studies on the subject. Indeed, both disciplines are necessary in such an investigation.

The chapter on artifact description and analysis is fascinating. The application of modern firearms identification techniques to lead bullets, cartridges, and cartridge cases revealed that a variety of weapons were used during the battle, especially by the Indians, who were well armed. The large number of misfired shell cases found on the battlefield indicated that Indian firearms were in need of cleaning and repair. The single most common bullet discovered was the .50/70. Only a few firearm parts were found. Other objects included commercial and homemade arrowheads and personal items such as coins, buttons, tobacco tags, and a ring. Skull fragments and bones of soldiers revealed types of injury and mutilation.

The 1984 archeological collection provides new information on the variety of weapons used, the firepower advantage of the Indians, the battlefield positions of the combatants, and the inaccuracies of some of the markers. Because of the limited amount of evidence, the authors do not subscribe to the theory that the soldiers committed mass suicide; they believe further research is required.

Archaeological Insights into the Custer Battle is well written and contains good maps and excellent illustrations of the artifacts. Students of the Battle of the Little Bighorn and of firearms identification analysis will find this book extremely informative.

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