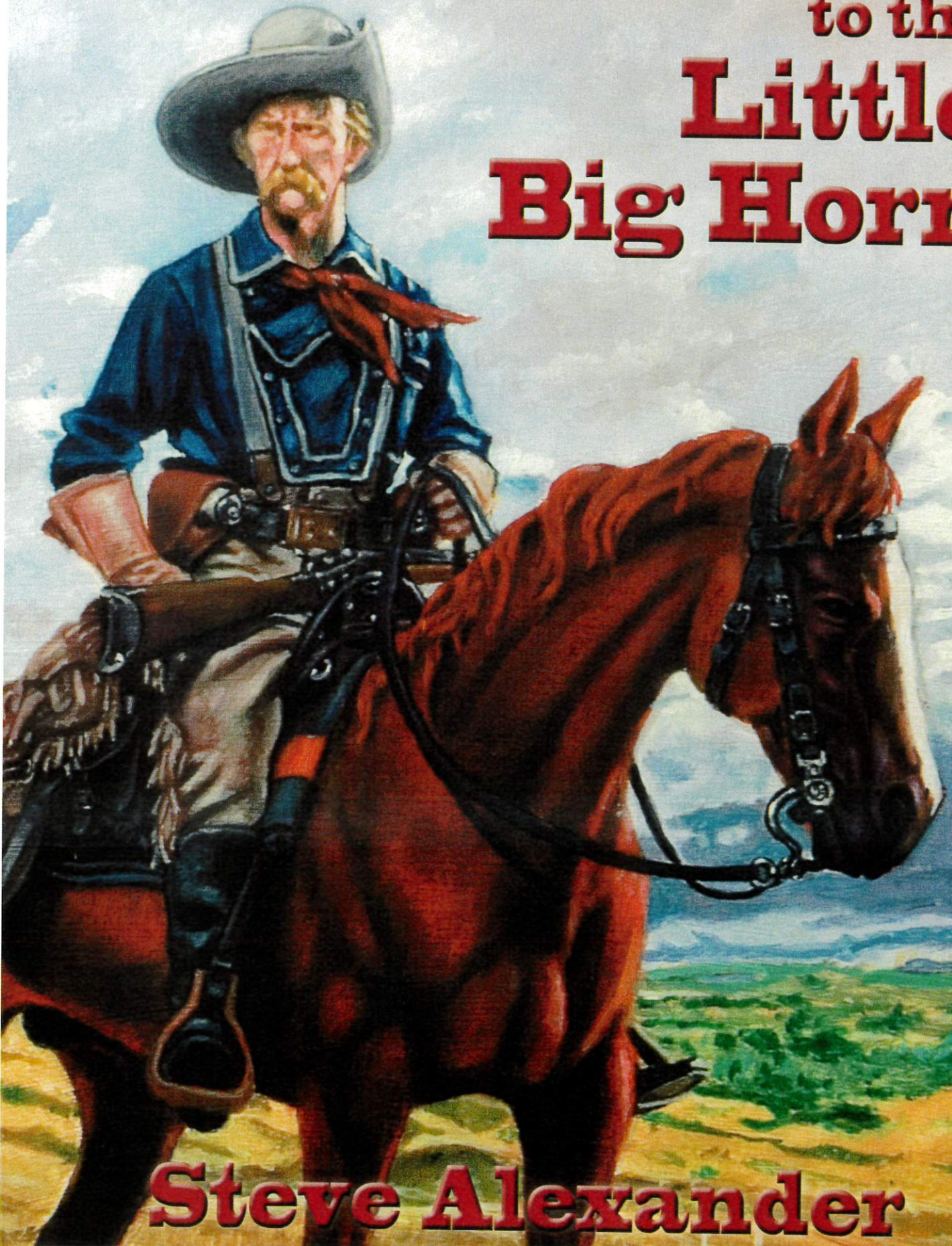


G. A. Hunter

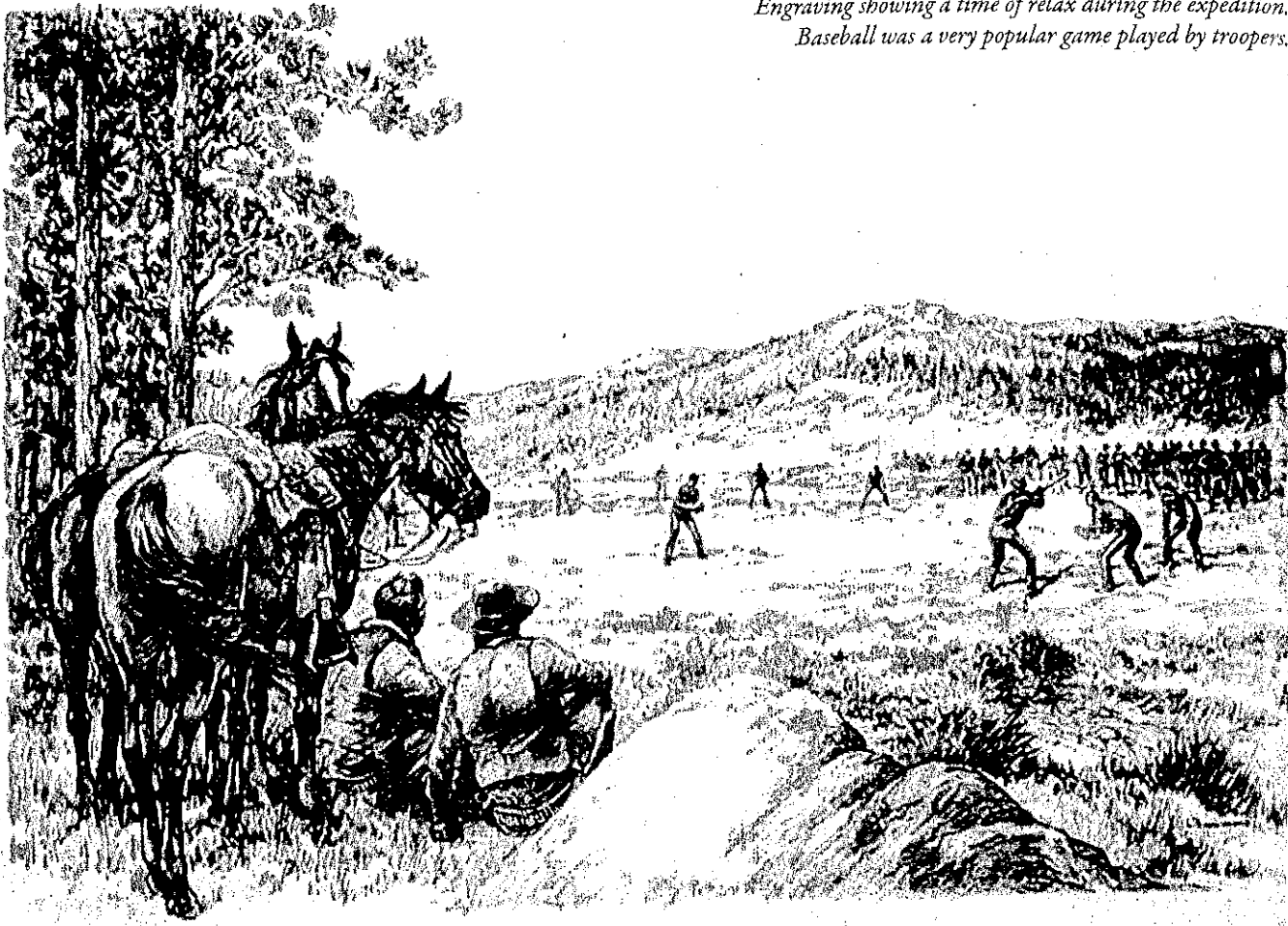
to the

**Little
Big Horn**

Steve Alexander



Engraving showing a time of relax during the expedition.
Baseball was a very popular game played by troopers.



*go-This was wrong-It was wrong to the Rees-It was wrong to the white warriors-It was wrong to the chief himself-The Ree warriors felt bad-They ... (now will return)... to Fort Lincoln without a single scalp-They had told their squaws that they would bring their belts full of scalps-Now they...(will)...be liars...(Bloody Knife hopes)...that the chief would never do this again."*¹¹⁵

On July 31st, the wagon train reached Harney Peak in an open area east of the present town of Custer, just as he had scaled the 6,000-foot Inyan Kara a week before, now Custer set off to conquer an even higher peak estimated at 7,244 feet the highest spot in the Hills. Armstrong and William Ludlow, the Scientific officer along with several other men climbed to the top of mountain.

Late in the afternoon, after a day of struggling across heavily forested slopes and gorges, the small party arrived at the base of Harney's Peak, not to be defeated the adventurous Custer continued to climb on. When he reached the summit the names of the six explorers were recorded on a small piece of notepaper "Gen. G. A. Custer, Gen. G. A. Forsyth, Col. Wm. Ludlow, W. H. Wood, A. D. Donaldson, N. H. Winchell, July 31, 1874," stuffed into an empty cartridge shell and pounded into a crevice of the granite barrier.¹¹⁵

While the climbing excursion was taking place the first of several baseball games was played for the

first time in the Hills while the prospectors triumphantly announced the discovery of gold on French Creek.

While the cat's away the mice would play Colonel Tilford along with Fred Benteen organized a champagne party hosting Fred Grant who along with the rest of the ensemble nursed hangovers the following morning. Unbeknownst to the General who had arrived from his climb in the late hours of the night, making plans for a late morning and saving face for the once robust partiers slowly crawled from their bivouacs.

Word of the discovery would be sent in official dispatches, along with the mailbag containing Custer's descriptive letter to Libbie "...gold has been found at several places, and it is the belief of those who are giving their attention to this subject that it will be found in paying quantities. I have on my table forty or fifty small particles of pure gold... most of it obtained today from one pail full of earth... We marched for five miles today in a southerly direction from Harney Peak and are now encamped on the South Fork of the Shyenne River about ninety miles from Laraine Reynolds leaves us here..."²²

Reversing the horse's shoes, Reynolds picked up mailbag stenciled "Black Hills Express, Charles Reynolds, manager. Connecting with all points east, west, north, south. Cheap rates, quick transit, safe passage. We are protected by the Seventh Cavalry."



Left: Appearing in an 1884-pattern brown canvas sack coat with matching trousers, this mounted man was probably a member of the First Volunteer Cavalry, the unit which gained fame as 'The Rough Riders'. Before receiving regular uniforms and shipping to Cuba, some of the Rough Riders pressed these duck fatigue outfits into service. (FSHM)

Lower left: Troop 'L' of the Ninth Cavalry fielded a baseball team at Fort Wingate, NM, evidently pressing their 1883-pattern shirts into service as their outer garments with the application of their team 'name'. Two of their officers appear in the 1895-pattern blouse; one is wearing an 1889-pattern campaign hat, the other an 1895-pattern forage cap. The two enlisted men on the far right in the front row are wearing the 1899-pattern khaki blouse with detachable yellow shoulder-straps, and featuring a 'rolling' collar. The man at the extreme right seems to be wearing white duck trousers, and the corporal to his left is wearing sky-blue kersey, an unusual combination of uniform components. (Photograph by Imperial Photo Gallery, Courtesy Museum of New Mexico)



Above: 'I' (nicknamed cavalry types of issued to until the fact that suited to country. wearing t first spec modified to the Sp these bra on the ou worn ben (USAMHI)

Right: In gradually top boots field as so Troop 'B', who has a for his Kr Letters ar indicate t be seen, a hat cord v adopted i