

Ho! for the Black Hills: Captain Jack Crawford Reports the Black Hills Gold Rush and Great Sioux War



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In 1875, a young man from Pennsylvania joined the Dodge Expedition into the Black Hills of Dakota Territory, from where he penned letters to the Omaha Daily Bee . Not content with accompanying Dodge, Captain Jack returned to the Black Hills in 1876 for a further six months. John Wallace Crawford, who became better known as Captain Jack, wrote a vibrant account of this fascinating time in the American West. His correspondence featured his adventures in the early Black Hills gold rush as he played the parts of reporter, plainsman, scout, and raconteur. Captain Jack met and worked with Buffalo Bill Cody and quickly seized the opportunity to scout for Brigadier General George Crook on his Indian campaign. Jack's correspondence from the Starvation March and the fight at Slim Buttes offers detailed and intimate accounts of these dramatic episodes of the Great Sioux War. Award-winning historian Paul L. Hedren has compiled these almost unknown letters, writing an introduction and essays that place the correspondence in the greater context of the Black Hills gold rush and the Great Sioux War. The result is a treasure trove of hitherto hidden primary documents as well as a ripping yarn in the traditions of the old West.

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