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## Article Title: Faces of War: Five Soldiers of General Crook's Big Horn and Yellowstone Expedition, 1876

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Article Summary: A rare ferrotype shows five enlisted men who marched with Crook. Posing after the Starvation March, they wear a variety of uniform pieces and non-regulation civilian-style clothing in this portrait that commemorates their camaraderie during the Great Sioux War.

### Cataloging Information:

Names: Pvt Lewis C Boone, Pvt John R Jones, Pvt Richard L Davis, Pvt Frederick Sutcliffe, Pvt August Schneider, Crazy Horse, Stanley J Morrow, D S Mitchell

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Photographs / Images: enlisted men who served on Crook's 1876 Big Horn and Yellowstone Expedition: Lewis Boone, John Jones, Richard Davis, Frederick Sutcliffe, August Schneider; "Tale of the Tintype" (sidebar)

# Faces of War

## FIVE SOLDIERS OF GENERAL CROOK'S BIG HORN AND YELLOWSTONE EXPEDITION, 1876

By Jerome A. Greene

The remarkable photograph accompanying this article represents one of the few known portrait-style contemporary images of enlisted men who served on Brig. Gen. George Crook's Big Horn and Yellowstone Expedition, August–October, 1876. The expedition traced parts of Wyoming, Montana, and Dakota territories following the defeat by Lakota and Northern Cheyenne Indians of Lt. Col. George A. Custer's command at the Little Big Horn River on June 25–26 of that year.

The photograph is a ferrotype (commonly called a tintype). Thus it is an in-camera original, not a print made from a negative, and the image is reversed by the camera lens. Here, however, it has been reversed again for reproduction, and shows the group as posed. All members of the Fifth U.S. Cavalry, they are, standing, left to right, Pvt. Lewis C. Boone, Company C; Pvt. John R. Jones, Company G; Pvt. Richard L. Davis, Company C; seated, Pvt. Frederick Sutcliffe, Company C; and Pvt. August Schneider, Company C.

The campaign, which involved more than two thousand infantry and cavalry soldiers, started from Crook's headquarters at Goose Creek, Wyoming, where the general had withdrawn to await reinforcements following his strategic defeat by Indians at Rosebud Creek, Montana, a week before Custer's fall.

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His reinforcements included troops of the Fifth Cavalry, commanded by Col. Wesley Merritt, who previously, on July 17, had skirmished with Cheyennes at Warbonnet Creek, Nebraska.

Of these five men, only Private Jones was present with his Company G at the Warbonnet encounter. Company C, which included Private Davis (with Privates Boone, Schneider, and Sutcliffe absent on detached service until July 28), was following Merritt's column and did not participate in the action.<sup>1</sup>

Crook's army began its trek north to the Yellowstone, then—practically without rations—headed east into Dakota Territory on the leg soon known as the "Starvation March," during which the desperate troopers ate the flesh of their played-out horses. The Fifth Cavalry was there, and all of these men except Davis, who, becoming sick, had gone down the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers to Fort Abraham Lincoln, certainly partook of that abysmal feast. All but Davis were present, too, at Slim Buttes, where part of Crook's command routed a village of Sioux and Cheyennes in the first significant army victory of the Great Sioux War. At Slim Buttes, the soldiers formed part of Maj. John J. Upham's first battalion, which advanced up the slopes south of the Indian village to repel a late afternoon attack by Crazy Horse's warriors.

Thereafter, the hungry command, beset by unrelenting rainstorms and cold winds, made its way south to the Black Hills with the object of protecting citizens in the mining camps from Indian attack. There they found food and shelter before taking up a more leisurely pace through the hills for the balance of September

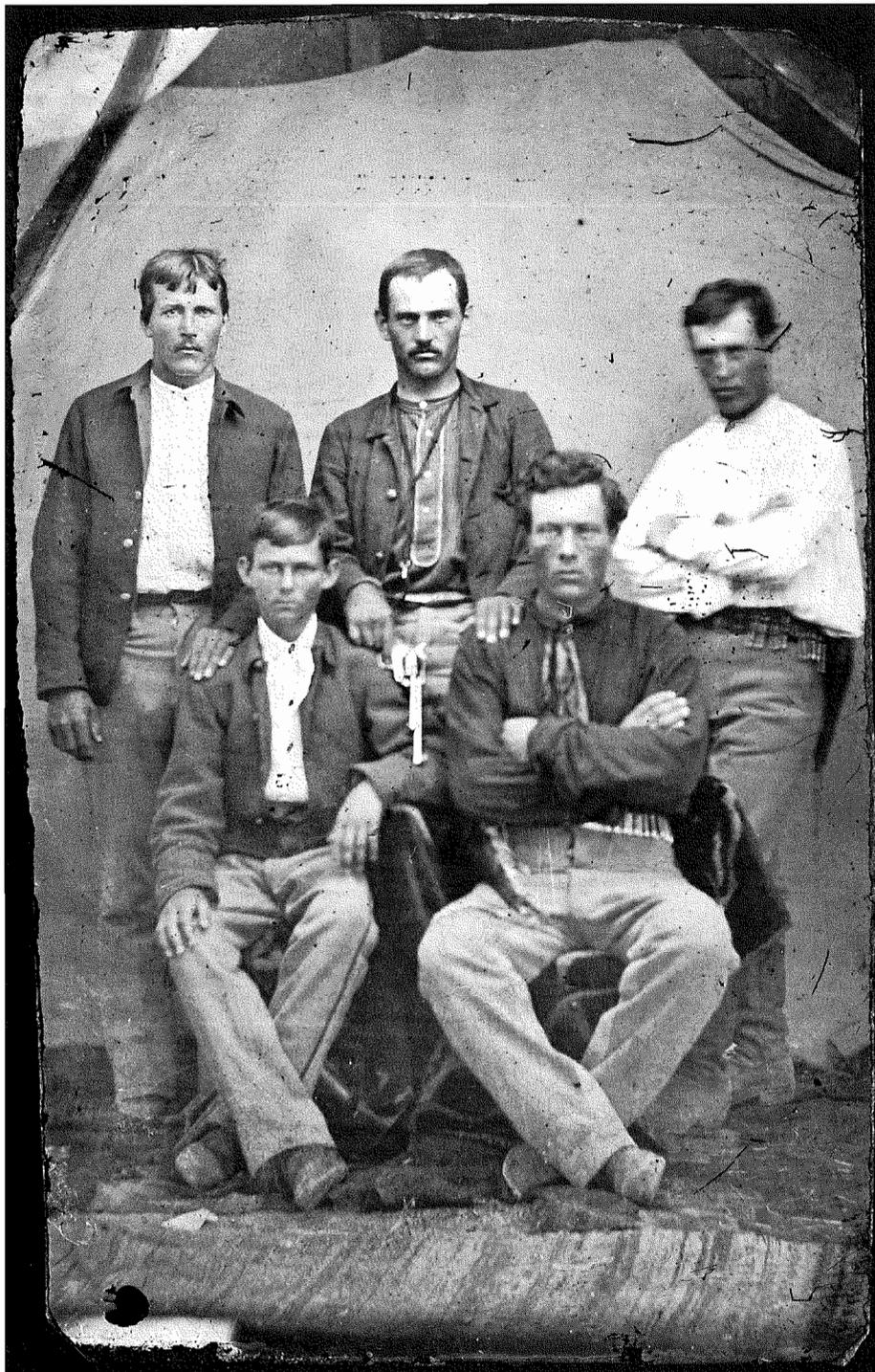
and much of October. Private Davis rejoined the command from Fort Lincoln in October.

On October 24, the soldiers gained Camp Robinson, Nebraska, where Crook formally declared his expedition at an end. The continued campaigning of Crook and Col. Nelson A. Miles, resulting in the surrender at the agencies in Nebraska and Dakota of many of the Lakotas and Cheyennes, eventually ended the Great Sioux War by the summer of 1877.<sup>2</sup>

The men who marched with Crook fairly typified the American soldier in 1876, and the five soldiers who posed for the tintype embody the composition of the enlisted element of the Big Horn and Yellowstone Expedition when it passed through the Black Hills.<sup>3</sup> The picture illustrates the field appearance of the soldiers following completion of the Starvation March. Clean shaven perhaps for the first time since leaving Montana, they are attired in a variety of uniform pieces reflective of the discordant nature of apparel normal for troops who had been on the trail for more than eight weeks. Most wear nonregulation civilian-style white or patterned shirts, likely their first clean clothing in some time. It probably was purchased in Crook City, Deadwood, or Custer City as the command passed south.

Private Schneider, seated at lower right, may be wearing a blue pullover campaign shirt issued experimentally in 1875; his neckerchief hides the placket and buttons. All appear to be wearing 1872-pattern trousers with vertical slash pockets, as can be barely discerned on Private Davis, standing at right. Private

## General Crook's Big Horn and Yellowstone Expedition, 1876



A group of enlisted men who served on Brig. Gen. George Crook's 1876 Big Horn and Yellowstone Expedition. Standing, (l. to r.) Pvt. Lewis Boone, Pvt. John Jones, and Pvt. Richard Davis; seated, Pvt. Frederick Sutcliffe (l.) and Pvt. August Schneider. A ferrotype ("tintype"), the photograph is an in-camera positive, the image reversed by the camera lens. Here it has been reversed again to show the group as posed. Courtesy Jerome Greene

Schneider's trousers show signs that they are the reinforced-seat cavalry pattern, while those of Private Sutcliffe, seated left, have colored welting, denoting his duty as trumpeter. Part of his trumpet is visible behind and to the left of his feet. All the men's boots are most assuredly 1872-pattern cavalry boots—Private Davis's clearly are. Jones, Boone, and Sutcliffe wear the Model-1874 fatigue blouse with five brass buttons, but they have removed the yellow cord designating cavalry from the collars and cuffs, a common practice that ultimately influenced the Quartermaster Department to do away with piping on these blouses.<sup>4</sup>

Some arms-related equipment is apparent. Davis and Schneider sport handmade leather "thimble"-type ammunition belts, with protruding cartridges. Davis wears a holster, possibly regulation, on his belt, but Schneider's is a fringed, non-regulation model. Private Jones, who wears a key on a thong about his neck, is displaying his army-issue Model-1873 Colt revolver, the hand weapon of the cavalry.

The men pose before what appears to be a white canvas tarpaulin tacked to a wall. Schneider and Sutcliffe are seated on folding camp chairs turned so that the backs can be used as armrests, and they are draped with material, perhaps issue rubber blankets, that served as the groundcloths on which campaigning troops slept.<sup>5</sup> The lower part of the tintype shows what might be loose grass and other debris on the ground, suggesting that the picture was taken outdoors. What appears to be a rumpled rug at the bottom of the image is more likely an aberration in the emulsion.

Who were these men? Fortunately, some evidence of their lives and army careers has survived in War Department enlistment registers and regimental returns and in Veterans Administration claims records.

Lewis Boone was born in Grundy County, Missouri, on October 18, 1852, making him twenty-four years old in 1876. The son of Nathan R. and Arilla Boone, he had a brother and two sisters.

In 1860 the family resided in Buttsville, Missouri, but after the Civil War they moved to near Greenwood, McHenry County. There, for some reason, the family was broken up. Boone lived with the family of Aristides Stevens, apparently working as a carpenter until 1871.

On November 6, he enlisted at Chicago and was assigned to Company C, Fifth Cavalry. He was described as standing 5 feet, 7½ inches tall, with hazel eyes, brown hair, and a florid complexion. War Department records show that Boone joined his unit at Camp McDowell, Arizona Territory, after traveling by way of San Francisco. He also served at Camp Apache, the Camp at San Carlos, and Camp Lowell, Arizona, before being assigned to Camp Supply, Indian Territory. He also saw duty in Kansas and Texas before the Great Sioux War.

At Slim Buttes, Boone and the other members of Company C fought under German-born Capt. Emil Adam and 2nd Lt. Edward Livingston Keyes. Discharged at Sidney Barracks, Nebraska, on November 6, 1876, he moved to Woodstock, Illinois, resuming his trade as a carpenter and working as a machinist at a typewriter factory. In 1879 he married Luella L. Wilcox, and by 1901 had a daughter and three sons.

As he aged Boone suffered from rheumatism, failing eyesight, a hernia, hemorrhoids, and heart trouble—afflictions he believed had been brought on by his Western service. During the 1920s, '30s, and '40s, Boone sought, but was denied, increased pension benefits for his various maladies. In July 1944, when he was nearly ninety-two years old, his monthly benefit for Indian wars service was increased from seventy-two to one hundred dollars. On February 19, 1945, Boone died of a stroke brought on by arteriosclerosis. He was buried in Woodstock's Oakland Cemetery.<sup>6</sup>

John Jones was twenty-one when he signed up at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on October 14, 1871, and was assigned to Company G. A farmer, Jones was 5 feet, 6¼ inches tall, with brown hair, brown eyes, and a dark complexion. He served

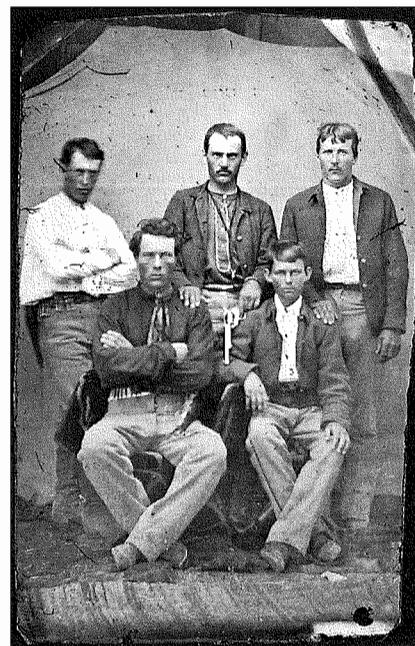
in Arizona, Kansas, and Indian Territory with the Fifth Cavalry, and when the regiment departed for the Great Sioux War Jones remained on detached service at Camp Supply, Indian Territory, rejoining the regiment at the end of June. He was separated on October 14, 1876, at "camp near Custer City, D.T.," a private of excellent character. Jones's discharge document carried a notation by Capt. Edward M. Hayes, Fifth Cavalry, that he had "participated in engagements with hostile Sioux Indians at Slim Buttes, D.T., Sept. 9 and 10, 1876."

In March 1885, Jones married Mary J. Thomas, a Welsh immigrant with whom he lived until his death on December 11, 1901, in Minneapolis at age fifty-one.<sup>7</sup>

Pvt. Richard L. Davis, standing at right (who evidently moved during the exposure producing a blurred image), was born in Lebanon, Virginia, in 1850, and was twenty-two years old when he enlisted at Lexington, Kentucky, on March 20, 1872. He gave his occupation as "laborer." Davis stood five feet, five inches tall, had blue eyes, light brown hair, and a fair complexion. He was discharged on March 20, 1877, at Fort McPherson, Nebraska, at the expiration of his term of service, a private of "very good" character. No details of Davis's post-army life and career are known.<sup>8</sup>

Comparatively little is known of August Schneider. He was born in Prussia, Germany, in 1849. The date of his immigration to the United States is unknown, but on September 23, 1872, like many foreign-born youths, he joined the army. He enlisted in New York City, declaring his civilian occupation as carpenter. Schneider was described as standing 5 feet, 5¾ inches tall, with blue eyes, brown hair, and a fair complexion. Assigned to Company C, Fifth Cavalry, he served in Arizona and the central Great Plains. Schneider was discharged at Fort McPherson, Nebraska, on June 9, 1877, a private soldier of "very good" character. He apparently never applied for an army pension, and the particulars of his post-army life are not known.<sup>9</sup>

Frederick W. Sutcliffe, a musician



### **Tale of the Tintype**

*Somewhat unusual circumstances led to the acquisition, identification, and preservation of this tintype, reproduced above with the image reversed by the camera lens as it is seen when viewed directly. It turned up years ago at a collectors' show in Denver, complete with its original fitted page, as torn from a period album, on which were penciled in old-style script the surnames of the soldiers. When it was shown to me, I copied down the names, a fortunate decision, for when I next saw the picture—it had resurfaced at an antique show in Tacoma—the page containing the identities had been removed. Several years later I acquired the tintype and was able to reassign the names and verify the men's participation in Crook's march. Technicians at the Nebraska State Historical Society later digitally scanned the image to enhance its detail and reversed it to show the men as they originally posed.*

*Jerome A. Greene*

## General Crook's Big Horn and Yellowstone Expedition, 1876

who was learning the position of trumpeter, served for twenty-six years with the Fifth Cavalry. He is possibly the most interesting of the five men pictured. Sutcliffe was born in 1860 in Springfield, Missouri, and enlisted at Camp Supply, Indian Territory, on February 5, 1876, when he was sixteen years and four months old. Army regulations exempted musicians with "natural talent" from the usual prescribed age limit of twenty-one for enlistment without parental consent, and, as a musician, the five-foot-one-inch Sutcliffe was exempt from minimum height requirement of five feet, three inches.<sup>10</sup> Army records depicted Sutcliffe as having light blue eyes, brown hair, and a fair complexion. He had no reported civilian occupation.

Young Sutcliffe served throughout Crook's march, and he took part with Company C in the engagement at Slim Buttes. Within a year of the expedition, in October 1877, he transferred to Company F of the same regiment, commanded by Capt. J. Scott Payne. In September 1879, the unit, then stationed at Fort D. A. Russell, Wyoming Territory, near Cheyenne, marched to accompany the ill-fated expedition under Maj. Thomas T. Thornburgh against Ute Indians in Colorado. Thornburgh was killed in the action at Milk River on September 29, and in the six-day siege that followed, Payne and Company F played a significant role. Eighteen of the unit's soldiers fell dead or wounded among the command's fifty-seven casualties; Trumpeter Sutcliffe received a gunshot wound in his right leg. On October 5, troops under Col. Wesley Merritt arrived to rescue the stricken force. In Payne's General Orders No. 1 of that date, Sutcliffe and other enlisted men were cited for "conspicuous gallantry" in the combat.

Discharged as a sergeant on February 4, 1881, at Fort Niobrara, Nebraska, Sutcliffe re-enlisted the next day. In total, Sutcliffe served through six enlistments—four of five years each, and two of three years each—and, incidentally, he grew to 5 feet, 8<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches. He subsequently transferred from Company F to the

non-commissioned staff, and in 1894 became chief trumpeter of the Fifth Cavalry.

In June 1880, at Fort Niobrara, Sutcliffe married Lillian W. Griffith, and they had five children. After the Spanish-American War he served occupation duty in Puerto Rico, then transferred to the Philippines, where he remained until his final discharge in 1902. In retirement, he and his wife and several children moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, where Sutcliffe died on December 30, 1916. When Lillian died in 1953, she was receiving a monthly pension of \$64.50 based on her husband's military service.<sup>11</sup>

The photographer who made this image probably was either Stanley J. Morrow or D. S. Mitchell. Both ranged through the Black Hills at that time garnering views of the gold rush at Deadwood and Custer City, and, although both produced collodion glass negatives for albumen paper prints, one or the other likely snapped the privately commissioned tintype at either place, creating several images on one plate that would have been cut apart for the men.

Morrow, who operated a studio in Yankton, was first to meet the south-bound army, arriving on September 14 at Whitewood Creek with residents of Deadwood bearing foodstuffs for the famished men. Over the next few weeks, Morrow photographed the troops fighting over horsemeat in re-enactments of their earlier trials, among other scenes. He followed the soldiers on their march through the hills over the ensuing weeks, eventually producing a series of thirty-one stereograph cards entitled "Views of General Crook's Expedition and the Black Hills."

Mitchell, from Cheyenne, passed through the hills in 1876, rendering some eighty-two stereo images of the gold rush, including a few related to Crook's expedition. A contemporary newspaper reference placed Mitchell in Cheyenne on October 7, having just returned from the hills, which suggests that Morrow remained and, based on the time and locality was likely the man

who captured the image. No other photographer is known to have been in the area at the time, although it is not beyond possibility that another was present.<sup>12</sup>

The precise circumstances for the gathering of the five soldiers for the group portrait is unknown. Lewis Boone's birthday was October 18. Davis, who had been sick at Fort Abraham Lincoln, had only recently returned to his company, most likely with the large contingent of recruits joining the command between October 12 and 21. All but Jones belonged to Company C, but he must have been a regular colleague—a buddy. Perhaps it is most plausible that they convened to honor Jones—standing in the middle holding his revolver—on the occasion of his discharge from the army on October 14. Whatever the occasion, the picture relates the solidity of friendship in the afterglow of a rigorous campaign—likely a defining moment in their young lives. Within months, all but Sutcliffe had been discharged and gone their separate ways, and their camaraderie during the Great Sioux War became but a memory. It is not known if their lives intersected ever again.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> See Jerome A. Greene, *Battles and Skirmishes of the Great Sioux War, 1876–1877* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), xv–xxvii, or Charles M. Robinson III, *A Good Year to Die: The Story of the Great Sioux War* (New York: Random House, 1995). For Warbonnet Creek see Paul L. Hedren, *First Scalp for Custer: The Skirmish at Warbonnet Creek, Nebraska, July 17, 1876, with a Short History of the Warbonnet Battlefield* (Glendale, Calif.: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1980).

<sup>2</sup> Regimental Returns of the Fifth Cavalry, July, August, September, October, 1876 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M744), National Archives (hereafter NA); "Supplementary Muster Roll of Captain Emil Adams' Company C of the Fifth Regiment of Cavalry, Army of the United States (Colonel Wesley Merritt), from the 31st day of August, 1876, when last mustered, to the 31st day of October, 1876," Records of the Office of the Adjutant General, Record Group 94, NA. The "Starvation March" and the Slim Buttes engagement are described in Jerome A. Greene, *Slim Buttes, 1876: An Episode of the Great Sioux War* (Norman: Uni-

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versity of Oklahoma Press, 1982). For Camp Robinson, see Thomas R. Buecker, *Fort Robinson and the American West, 1874–1899* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1999). Miles's operations are chronicled in Greene, *Yellowstone Command: Colonel Nelson A. Miles and the Great Sioux War, 1876–1877* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991).

<sup>3</sup> For the disparate elements composing the United States Army during the post-Civil War period in the American West, see Don Rickey, Jr., *Forty Miles a Day on Beans and Hay: The Enlisted Soldier Fighting the Indian Wars* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 17–32 and passim.

<sup>4</sup> See Douglas C. McChristian, *The U.S. Army in the West, 1870–1880: Uniforms, Weapons, and Equipment* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), and Lee A. Rutledge, *Campaign Clothing: Field Uniforms of the Indian War Army, 1872–1886* (Tustin, Calif.: North Cape Publications, 1997).

<sup>5</sup> McChristian, *Army in the West*, 120–22, 216–19.

<sup>6</sup> Pension file of Lewis C. Boone, IO-1564054 and IC-A6/15/28, NA; "Register of Enlistments"; Eben

Swift, "The Fifth Regiment of Cavalry," in Theophilus F. Rodenbaugh and William L. Haskin, comps. *The Army of the United States* (New York: Maynard, Merrill, and Company, 1896), 227–29.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*; Pension application file of Mary J. Jones (widow of John R. Jones), WA-11724 and WC-9025, NA.

<sup>8</sup> "Register of Enlistments in the U.S. Army, 1798–1914," (National Archives Microfilm Publication M233, Roll 38, 1871–77), RG 94, NA.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Sutcliffe was likely encouraged to enlist by his stepfather, Sgt. George K. Kitchen, who had served 1870–75 in Company H, Sixth Cavalry and received a Medal of Honor. He joined the Fifth Cavalry in 1875 at Camp Supply, presumably at that time marrying Sutcliffe's mother. Kitchen continued in the Fifth until his retirement as a first sergeant in 1885. Virgil D. White, comp., *Index to Pension Applications for Indian Wars Service Between 1817 and 1898* (Waynesboro, Tenn.: The National Historical Publishing Company, 1997), 464.

<sup>11</sup> Pension application file of Lillian W. Sutcliffe, WA-13127 and WC-8603, and Claim XC-965096, NA; "Register of Enlistments;" Mark E. Miller, *Hollow Victory: The White River Expedition of 1879 and the Battle of Milk Creek* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1997), 180, 201, 204. For particulars of the regulations governing Sutcliffe's enlistment at age sixteen, see *Revised United States Army Regulations of 1861* (Philadelphia: George W. Childs, 1864), 130–31, 519; *Regulations of the Army of the United States and General Orders in Force on the 17th of February, 1881* (Washington: GPO, 1881), 72–73.

<sup>12</sup> Paul L. Hedren, *With Crook in the Black Hills: Stanley J. Morrow's 1876 Photographic Legacy* (Boulder, Colo.: Pruett Publishing Company, 1985), 10–11, 29, and passim; Hedren, *Fort Laramie in 1876: Chronicle of a Frontier Post at War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 169–70, 181–82; *Cheyenne Daily Leader*, Oct. 7, 1876. Basics of the tintype and stereograph processes appear in William Welling, *Collector's Guide to Nineteenth-Century Photographs* (New York: Macmillan, 1976), 31, 37, 39.