



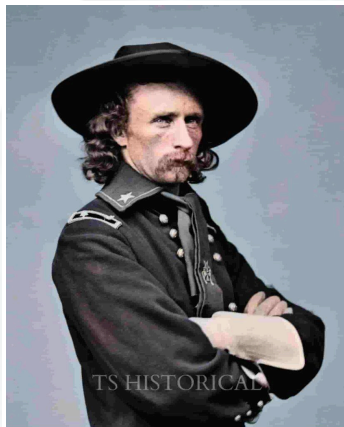
George Armstrong Custer | Quotes, Indian Wars & Death

George Armstrong Custer Summary

General George Armstrong Custer on June 25, 1876, sat atop his horse on a hill overlooking the banks of the Little Big Horn River in present-day Montana.

The Civil War hero, renowned for his bravery and good fortune, was plotting an ambush on the plains' most prominent Indian encampment ever assembled. Little did he know that this would be his Last Stand and the day when "Custer's Luck" would finally run out after a career full of daring risks and near misses.

George Armstrong Custer Facts



Rare Colour Image of George Armstrong Custer



Born:	5 December 1839, (Ohio, New Romley, U.S)
Death:	June 25, 1876 (Aged 36)
Cause of Death:	Two Bullet Wounds
Parents:	Emanuel Henry Custer > Maria Ward Kirkpatrick
Wife	Elizabeth Bacon Custer

Custer's Luck

George Custer was a man full of contradictions and controversy, remembered by some as a gallant hero and by others as a bloodthirsty villain. He was both a lover and a fighter, a brave but reckless warrior, and a glory-hungry but disobedient soldier. Who exactly was [General Custer](#), and why is he such a controversial figure?

George Armstrong Custer Early Life

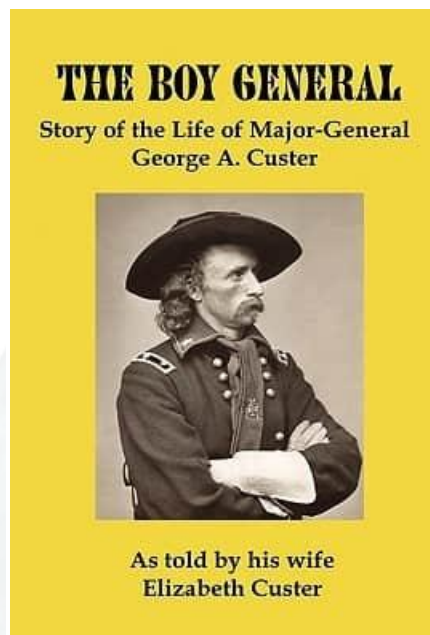
George Armstrong Custer was born in Ohio on 5 December 1839. The youngest of 5 children, young as called him "Auntie" because he couldn't pronounce his middle name, was sent to live with his older sister in Michigan at an early age. General Custer earned his teaching certificate in 1856, but they had bigger dreams for himself than teaching at grammar school.



He entered West Point Military Academy in 1857, where he was known for spending more time on pranks than his studies. He was routinely reprimanded and constantly received demerits, often earning himself extra weekend guard duties. If would foreshadow future issues in his career, he was once even court-martialed for failing to stop a fight between two cadets. With all these extracurricular activities, it's not surprising that he graduated last in his class in 1861.

General Custer graduated from West Point into a country in chaos – the Civil War had just broken out in April of 1861, and Custer saw his opportunity for glory. He joined the Union Cavalry, where he attracted the attention of his superiors for his bold leadership style, daring cavalry charges, and tactical brilliance. In June 1863, he became the youngest Brigadier General in the Union Army at 23.

The Boy General



A told by his wife Elizabeth Custer



As “Boy General” called him, George Armstrong Custer got his first taste of leadership in battle just a few days later during the infamous **Battle of Gettysburg**. On the third and final day of the bloody conflict, Confederate General J. E. B. Stuart’s cavalry divisions attempted to take the Union Army’s rear by surprise when Custer’s forces cut him off.

After a ferocious battle between thousands of horse riders, Custer’s men succeeded in driving off the Confederate cavalry, playing a decisive role in the Union’s victory in this critical battle. By the end of the Civil War, Custer’s daring and bravery had earned him a promotion to Major General in charge of a whole cavalry division. Highly unusual for an officer at the time, Custer was known for leading his men from the front rather than from the rear, and he was often the first to charge into battle. The nickname “Custer’s Luck” was created to describe General Custer’s fantastic good luck.

He avoided severe injuries during his career despite participating in multiple significant [battles](#) and having 11 horses shot out from beneath him. General Custer was involved in some of the most defining moments of the Civil War. His cavalry forces blocked Confederate General Robert E. Lee’s final retreat, and General Custer was the one to receive General Lee’s white flag, signifying his wish to surrender to Union General Ulysses S. Grant. Custer was also present for signing the terms of surrender between Generals Lee and Grant on April 9, 1865.

Custer was so central to the Union’s Civil War victory that General Philip Sheridan purchased the table used to sign the terms of surrender and gave it to Custer’s wife in gratitude for her husband’s service. Before the Civil War ended, Custer married Elizabeth “Libbie” Bacon in February 1864. Her father, a judge, was not supportive of the match, as he considered Custer to be “beneath” her. After initially rejecting him, he eventually won her over, and they began an intense courtship and a passionate letter-writing habit that would persist throughout their marriage.

General Custer’s Famous Quotes

Custer is famously quoted as saying, “I would be willing, yes glad, to see a battle every day during my life.” His life’s ambition was to gain fame and glory for his battlefield



exploits. Libbie was his devoted partner in this endeavor, happily playing the part of the faithful lady to his daring warrior.

Custer was also very luxurious; he paid close attention to his looks, especially his long, golden hair, which was perfumed with cinnamon oil. He always dressed in silk outfits with gold lace accents and big cowboy hats, which were the height of late 17th-century fashion.

Indian Wars



Battle of Little Big Horn Custer's Last Land (Rare Colour Image)



In 1866 Genral Custer was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, and he and Libbie headed to Kansas to help deal with the “[Indian Problem](#).” After the Civil War had ended, he needed more land to accommodate American settlers, and as they expanded westward, they inevitably clashed with the local Indian tribes. By the 1860s, most of the local Indians had been ruthlessly forced onto reservations or killed, but the Great Plains were the last Indianholdout, and the Plains Indians vowed to avoid a similar fate.

George Armstrong Custer participated in some raids and battles with the Sioux (pronounced “Soo”) and Cheyenne Indians over control of the western territories. General Custer faced two legendary Indian warriors, Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, for the first time in 1873 when his unit was protecting a Northern Pacific Railroad Survey at Yellowstone.

The government had been encouraging trains to stop so passengers could hunt the Buffalo for sport. The Indians relied on Buffalo for food, and the needless slaughter escalated tensions. Although he succeeded in driving them off this time, little did Custer know that he had just faced the warriors who would bring about his downfall years later. During this time, Custer once again demonstrated his disregard for authority when he left his regiment without permission to visit his wife, Libbie.

He was again court-martialed for this exploit and stripped of his rank and pay for a year. His punishment only lasted 10 months before General Sheridan reinstated him to lead a campaign against Cheyenne Indians. Custer was learning that fighting Indians was much different than fighting Confederate soldiers.

The Indians had the advantage of being much more familiar with the terrain, and since they were fighting to preserve their way of life, they were much more motivated to fight to the bitter end than Custer’s career soldiers. By 1876, the Plains Indian Wars had reached a stalemate. In 1868 South Dakota’s Black Hills had been set aside for the Great Sioux Reservation; however, once gold was discovered in the hills just a few years later, the government quickly reneged on their deal and took over the land.

General Custer was tasked with relocating the Indians to their new reservation, but things didn’t exactly go as planned. Rather than go quietly, most of the Indians traveled



to the banks of the **Little Big Horn River** in present-day Montana to join Custer's old adversaries Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse to fight for their freedom.

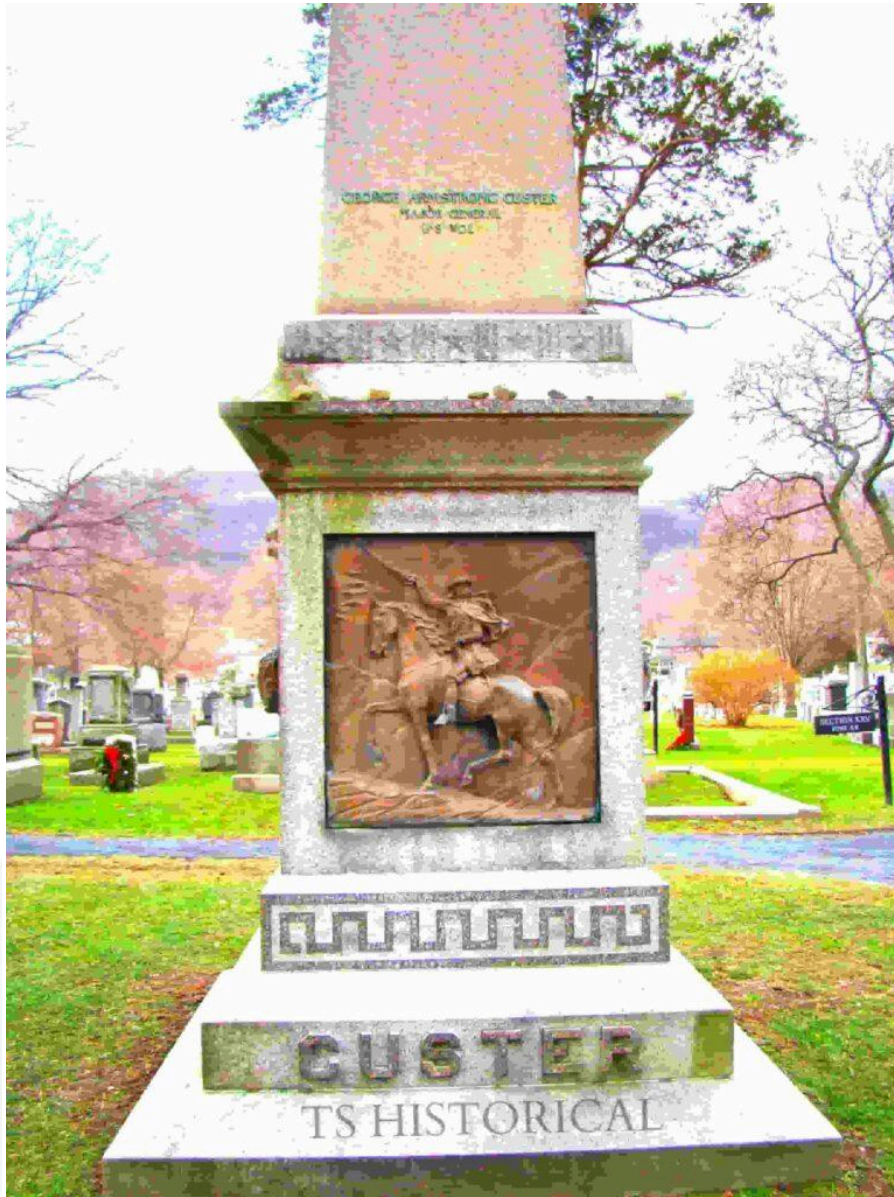
On June 25, 1876, George Armstrong Custer was one of the first to arrive at the meeting point near the encampment, where he and the other generals planned to gather before finding the Indians and forcing them to surrender to the reservations. While waiting for the other generals to arrive, he decided that General Custer and his men would move in and surround the Indians, then wait for reinforcements.

Once they had located the Indian's camp, however, Custer decided to launch a surprise attack rather than wait for reinforcements. No one is quite sure why he thought this would be a good idea, but based on what we know about him, we can assume that arrogance and glory-seeking played a significant role in his leading his men to certain death. The battle famously came to be called "**Custer's Last Stand**," but in reality, he never even had a chance against such a mighty force of Indian warriors.





Death of General Custer





General Custer Burial in West Point Cemetery, New York, United States

George Armstrong Custer divided his 600 men into four groups – one group was to stay with the supplies, two groups were to attack the Indians from the south, and Custer's group was to attack from the North. The south group was the first to attack, but they retreated almost immediately once it became apparent that they were outnumbered and outgunned. With more than 2,000 warriors, this was the largest gathering of Indians ever seen on the Great Plains.

The Indians also had superior repeating rifles, bows, and arrows, while the Cavalry had only single-shot rifles and .45 (pronounced "forty-five") caliber revolvers. Not knowing that their comrades had retreated, General Custer and his men launched their attack on the North.

Overwhelmed by the 'Indians' superior numbers and firepower, General Custer's command collapsed utterly, quickly becoming every man for himself. Within an hour, the Indians had massacred every one of General Custer's 210 men, except for one lucky soul who General Custer had sent to send a message to the southern forces asking for reinforcements. Sadly, he ignored his message.

George Armstrong Custer's subordinates, Benteen and Reno, hated him and hated each other and had just narrowly escaped a similar fate. Whether it was cowardice, malice, or even drunkenness, we don't know – all we know is that they did not come to Custer's aid when he sent the message to "come quick."

In keeping with his image as a daring leader, General Custer was found dead alongside 40 of his men, including his brother and nephew, with two bullet wounds – one near his heart and one in his head. To further add to the horrors of this massacre, the Indians ritualistically stripped and mutilated the bodies of the dead, possibly because they believed that the souls of disfigured bodies would be doomed to walk the earth forever.

Upon seeing the naked bodies of his dead compatriots, a junior military officer famously exclaimed: "Oh, how white they look! How white!" he once believed that Custer had been spared this indignity, but he later revealed that his body had also been mutilated, but the details hushed up to protect his wife, Libbie. According to legend, some



Cheyenne women pierced Custer's eardrums so that he could learn to listen better, and they even put a stick up his ahem manhood. Custer was hastily buried where he fell with the rest of his men, but he was later disinterred and reburied with a grand ceremony at West Point.

A memorial to him was erected in 1881 at the site of the battle. The Battle of **Little Big Horn** was the U.S.'s most significant defeat in the Plains Indian Wars. The Indians victory was short-lived, however. The American public demanded retribution for the death of General Custer, a decorated Civil War General and American folk hero.

The army intensified their efforts to hunt down Indians and either relocate them or wipe them out completely. Facing unprecedented violence against his people, Crazy Horse finally surrendered in 1877, bringing the Plains Indian Wars to a close. We have his devoted wife, Libbie, to thank for the enduring power of General Custer's controversial legacy. She lived another 57 years after his death and spent the rest of her life writing books and lectures about his heroism and gallantry.

She was helped in her efforts by William "Buffalo Bill" Cody, a one-time scout for General Custer who went on to create his famous traveling Wild West show, a highlight of which was a reenactment of Custer's last stand featuring real Native American warriors who had fought at Little Big Horn. Custer was even immortalized on the silver screen when future president Ronald Regan played him in the film *Sante Fe Trail*.

General Custer himself had written his autobiography shortly before his death, and "My Life on the Plains" went on to become a bestseller. After Libbie's death in 1933, the American public began to acknowledge that perhaps Custer wasn't the flawless hero he had been made to be. At the height of his fame during the Plains Indians Wars, the *New York Tribune* wrote: "Future writers of fiction will find in General Custer most of the qualities which go to make up a first-class hero." While his heroism may be up for debate in modern times, his legend certainly lives on even today. We suspect that the flamboyantly-monger wouldn't have wanted it any other way.



Peoples Also Ask?

Why is Custer so famous?

George Custer was a man full of contradictions and controversy, remembered by some as a gallant hero and by others as a bloodthirsty villain. He was both a lover and a fighter, a brave but reckless warrior, and a glory-hungry but disobedient soldier. Who exactly was General Custer, and why is he such a controversial figure?

Why did General Custer fail?

In 1866 General Custer was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, and he and Libbie headed to Kansas to help deal with the “Indian Problem.” After the Civil War had ended, he needed more land to accommodate American settlers, and as they expanded westward, they inevitably clashed with the local Indian tribes. By the 1860s, most of the local Indians had been ruthlessly forced onto reservations or killed, but the Great Plains were the last Indianholdout, and the Plains Indians vowed to avoid a similar fate.

Why did Custer lose the Battle of Little Bighorn?

Once they had located the Indian’s camp, however, Custer decided to launch a surprise attack rather than wait for reinforcements. No one is quite sure why he thought this would be a good idea, but based on what we know about him, we can assume that arrogance and glory-seeking played a significant role in his leading his men to certain death. The battle famously came to be called “**Custer’s Last Stand**,” but in reality, he never even had a chance against such a mighty force of Indian warriors.

Who was General Custer and what happened to him?

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