

Reno; if this led to the Little Big Horn, it should not be followed, but Custer should keep still further to the south, before turning toward <sup>53</sup> that/river, in order to intercept the Indians should they attempt to slip between him and the mountains, and also in order, by a longer march, to give time for Colonel Gibbon's column to come up.

This plan was founded upon the belief that, at some point on the Little Big Horn, a body of hostiles would be found, though it was impossible to arrange movements in perfect concert, as might be done were there a known fixed objective point. It was believed impracticable to unite both Gibbon's and Custer's forces, because more than half of those of Gibbon were infantry, who could not keep up with the rapid movement of cavalry; whilst taking away the mounted troops from Gibbon, to unite with those of Custer, would leave Gibbon's infantry too weak a force to act independently.

Under directions, then, to carry out his part of the foregoing plan, to also examine the upper part of Tullock's Fork and endeavor to send a scout through with the information thus obtained to Gibbon's column, which was to examine the lower part of that fork, Custer started up the Rosebud on June 22, and Gibbon's command, personally accompanied by General Terry, moved the same day for the mouth of the Big Horn. A supply steamer was to push up the Big Horn as far as the forks, if found navigable for that distance, and Custer, at the expiration of the time for which his troops were rationed, was to report to General Terry there, unless in the mean time other orders should be received.

In accordance with this plan, all of Gibbon's column reached and crossed Tullock's Creek on the afternoon of June 24.

On the afternoon of June 22, Custer's column marched up the Rosebud twelve miles and there encamped. The next day, June 23, he continued up the Rosebud thirty-three miles, passing a heavy lodge-pole