

provoke hostilities, so attention was turned to Fort A. Lincoln, at the end of the Northern Pacific Railroad, as the next most suitable point of departure, though the distance was much greater than from Fort Hiram. General Terry was directed to organize a strong expedition and place it under the command of Lieut. Col. G. A. Custer, Seventh Cavalry, who was regarded as especially fitted for such an undertaking. The reconnaissance was eminently successful; the country of the Black Hills was found to contain plenty of fine timber, considerable good soil, and an abundance of water and grass. Gold was also discovered by the expedition, leading to a subsequent rush of miners and others who were with difficulty restrained from a general invasion of the Black Hills country. Upon the very satisfactory reports of this reconnaissance the recommendation for the establishment of a large military post in that section was earnestly renewed, but unfortunately for the subsequent history of Indian affairs, the construction of a post was not authorized until several years later, when disasters had occurred which might have been averted by that greater familiarity with the country which would have been required by the troops intended to be stationed there.