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Review of *Phil Sheridan and His Army* By Paul Andrew Hutton

Michael L. Tate
University of Nebraska at Omaha

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Phil Sheridan and His Army. By Paul Andrew Hutton. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. xvi+479 pp. \$29.95 cloth, \$14.95 paper.

Probably most Americans would recognize General Philip Sheridan as a celebrated Civil

War commander. Less well documented is Sheridan's subsequent two decades of frontier military service when he commanded the Division of the Missouri, encompassing the entire Plains and Rocky Mountain region. During the stormy years of westward expansion, he not only made policy which affected the outcome of the legendary Indian wars, but also presided over the mundane matters of military promotions, rotation of garrisons, supplying the far-flung military posts, and protecting federal lands throughout the West. He was the perfect embodiment of Gilded Age values which stressed pragmatism and elastic ethics as "he carried out the dictates of his government, ruthlessly quashing opponents, be they southern redeemers, northern workmen, or western Indians" (p. xiv). In these ways and more, he was a fitting symbol for his age.

Paul Hutton, former associate editor of the *Western Historical Quarterly* and currently assistant professor of history at the University of New Mexico, has crafted a weighty book to trace Sheridan's military career from his assignment as Reconstruction commander over the Fifth Military District of Texas and Louisiana through his 1884 promotion to commanding general of the army. Although the book logically focuses upon the "official Sheridan," we do see glimpses of his private side, his family life, and his character flaws. Most frequently, Sheridan's clashes with fellow officers developed out of his overly harsh stance against Indians and his tendency to punish the innocent along with the guilty. His unwarranted 1886 arrest of the loyal Apache scouts and subsequent confinement of them at Fort Marion, Florida, not only cost Sheridan his long-time friendship with General Crook, but also set him on a collision course with reform groups such as the Indian Rights Association.

On other occasions, Sheridan demonstrated a staunch loyalty to old friends, even when that loyalty temporarily tarnished his image. He stood behind President Grant and General Sherman during embarrassing investi-

gations of corruption in the Grant administration. Despite his personal pettiness, unforgiving nature, and self-serving actions, Sheridan maintained the public's confidence and proved himself an effective administrator. Furthermore, he sometimes appeared courageous by opposing the vested interests seeking to despoil the nascent National Park system. His 1883 trip to Yellowstone National Park with President Chester A. Arthur played a critical role in future park protection and expansion.

Drawing upon extensive manuscript collections, government documents, and other published materials, Hutton has provided us with the definitive treatment of Sheridan's western command. Going well beyond Carl Coke Rister's outdated and narrowly-focused *Border Command: General Phil Sheridan in the West* (1944), he has artfully synthesized the course of American Indian and military policies from the 1867-1868 winter campaign along the Washita through the 1874 Red River War and the 1876-1877 Little Big Horn and Yellowstone expeditions, to the conclusion of the 1885-1886 Apache War. Never content to merely rehash familiar materials about narrow battlefield tactics, the author has kept the broader, fully-integrated story before his readers' eyes. Few writers could have done as well.

MICHAEL L. TATE
Department of History
University of Nebraska at Omaha