



# At Custer's Side: Civil War Writing on James Harvey King

*Eric J. Wittenberg*

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During the Civil War, James Harvey Kidd fought along side the General George Armstrong Custer as a member of the 6th Michigan Cavalry, the Wolverines. A student at the University of Michigan at the outbreak of the war, Kidd enlisted in 1862 and was elected captain, commanding a company of Wolverines. Within two years he was promoted to colonel and took command of the regiment. In the fall of 1864, he succeeded Custer as commander of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade and eventually received a brevet to brigadier general of volunteers. After the war, Kidd served as brigadier general in the Michigan National Guard and, upon returning to his civilian career as a newspaperman, published two newspapers in his hometown of Ionia, Michigan. He also wrote a memoir of his service *Personal Reminiscences of a Cavalryman in Custer's Michigan Brigade*, a classic of Civil War literature. Eric J. Wittenberg presents many of this newspaperman's captivating writings in their original form in *At Custer's Side: The Civil War Writings of James Harvey Kidd*. Kidd wrote eloquently about his Civil War experiences, especially his service with Custer. His speech given at the dedication of the Custer monument in Monroe, Michigan, is particularly important, as it provides readers with one of the first revisionist views of the tragedy that befell Custer at Little Big Horn. Much like Wittenberg's first book of Kidd's writings, *One of Custer's Wolverines: The Civil War Letters of Brevet Brigadier General James H. Kidd, 6th Michigan Cavalry* (Kent State University Press, 2000), this latest collection offers insightful, articulate, and entertaining commentary on what it was like to serve in the Civil War and with "the boy general".

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