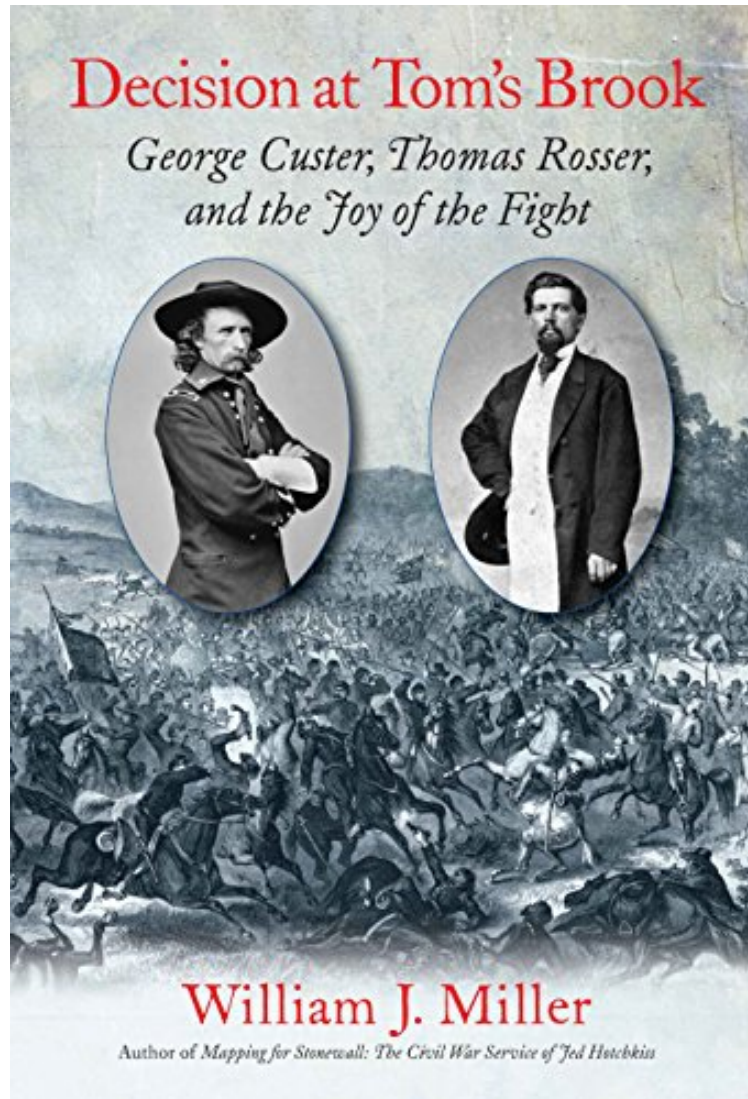


(Mobile library) Decision at Tom's Brook: George Custer, Thomas Rosser, and the Joy of the Fight

Decision at Tom's Brook: George Custer, Thomas Rosser, and the Joy of the Fight

William Miller

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William Miller : Decision at Tom's Brook: George Custer, Thomas Rosser, and the Joy of the Fight before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Decision at Tom's Brook: George Custer, Thomas Rosser, and the Joy of the Fight:

15 of 16 people found the following review helpful. A good rendering of this clashBy Steven PetersonAnother in the Beatie Savas library. . . . Here, we read of the Battle of Tom's Brook, a rather minor skirmish in the Shenandoah Valley Campaign, with Generals Early and Sheridan leading contending forces. After a series of defeats, Early was

trying to reestablish his forces' ability to face Sheridan. As a part of that, he wanted cavalry forces under General Thomas Rosser to keep track of Sheridan's cavalry and other forces. In terms of cavalry, Rosser's main opponent was General George Armstrong Custer and his division. Sheridan became impatient with the passivity of his cavalry in dealing with Rosser. He ordered the commander of his cavalry to dispose of Rosser's force. Federal cavalry were sent to take on Rosser. At Tom's Brook, Custer and Rosser (friends before the war) faced off. A term discussed in the book was "dash" versus "rash." In terms of the struggle to come, Custer was defined as possessing "dash" (elan) and Rosser with "rash" (taking chances that might not have been worth it). Rosser did not have enough troops to cover his defensive position. The inevitable happened and his cavalry was flushed and took to the roads in helter-skelter retreat. What followed was termed the "Woodstock races," as Rosser's troops fled. A good rendering of this clash. Also, as with others in this series, a description of the battlefield today is provided. A nice entry to this series. . . . 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. could not have better suited to fighting a battle that need not have ... By Mark Dye I wanted to fill in a gap about the Civil War in the Shenandoah Valley and Miller's book did so very well. Two ambitious, flawed egomaniacs, Rosser and Custer, could not have better suited to fighting a battle that need not have happened. The author ably shows how the events and personalities of the two cavalry generals and their commanding generals, Early and Sheridan lead to the ill advised battle at Tom's Brook. Well worth a read. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Robert G. Wolaver Item arrived on time and as described... Thank you!

The Battle of Tom's Brook, recalled one Confederate soldier, was "the greatest disaster that ever befell our cavalry during the whole war." The fight took place during the last autumn of the Civil War, when the Union General Phil Sheridan vowed to turn the crop-rich Shenandoah Valley into "a desert." Farms and homes were burned, livestock slaughtered, and Southern families suffered. The story of the Tom's Brook cavalry affair centers on two young men who had risen to prominence as soldiers: George A. Custer and Thomas L. Rosser. They had been friends since their teenage days at West Point, but the war sent them down separate paths—Custer to the Union army and Rosser to the Confederacy. Each was a born warrior who took obvious joy in the exhilaration of battle. Each possessed almost all of the traits of the ideal cavalryman—courage, intelligence, physical strength, inner fire. Only their judgment was questionable. Their separate paths converged in the Shenandoah Valley in the autumn of 1864, when Custer was ordered to destroy, and Rosser was ordered to stop him. For three days, Rosser's gray troopers pursued and attacked the Federals. On the fourth day, October 9, the tables turned in the open fields above Tom's Brook, where each ambitious friend sought his own advancement at the expense of the other. One capitalized upon every advantage fate threw before him, while the other, sure of his abilities in battle and eager to fight, tried to impose his will on unfavorable circumstances and tempted fate by inviting catastrophe. This long-overlooked cavalry action had a lasting effect on mounted operations and influenced the balance of the campaign in the Valley. Based upon extensive research in primary documents and gracefully written, award-winning author William J. Miller's *Decision at Tom's Brook* presents significant new material on Thomas Rosser and argues that his character was his destiny. Rosser's decisions that day changed his life and the lives of hundreds of other men. Miller's new study is Civil War history and high personal drama at its finest.

"...well written and well researched monograph on the cavalry battle at Tom's Brook...provides vivid character studies of the leaders on both sides, particularly Custer and Rosser, and his concluding chapter, documenting Rosser's postwar life and the former general's efforts to defend his war time record, is especially well done...a significant contribution to the scholarship on cavalry operations in the Eastern Theater and on the Confederacy's unsuccessful defense of the Valley during the War's final months." (Civil War News) From the Author Maybe the most enjoyable research project I've ever worked on, and certainly the best story. From the Back Cover *Decision at Tom's Brook* is more than an account of the cavalry engagement of October 9, 1864. It is the story of two friends--Tom Rosser and George Custer--who opposed each other on this day. William Miller has written an insightful and compelling study on the two warriors, who shared remarkably similar attributes and beliefs. The research is impeccable, and the writing is moving. This is an excellent book and a most welcome work. Jeff Wert, author of *A Glorious Army*. Miller is one of the finest historians at work, distinguished both for his thoughtfulness and his sprightly prose. In some important ways Tom's Brook was a landmark event in 1864 cavalry operations. Its story, with its many tentacles of recrimination and controversy, will never receive a more measured and able treatment than this. Robert E. L. Krick, author of *Staff Officers in Gray*. Bill Miller has written the definitive account of the Battle of Tom's Brook, delivering a flowing narrative deeply rooted in years of diligent research in all the right places. Miller's effort captures the romance of cavalrymen such as Custer and Rosser, while at the same time documenting the grim realities of the Civil War in the Shenandoah Valley in 1864 as he fittingly challenges many historical misconceptions in his detailed analysis of this little-known cavalry battle. Scott C. Patchan, author of *The Last Battle of Winchester: Phil Sheridan, Jubal Early, and the Shenandoah Valley Campaign*