



Drawing Battle Lines: The Map Testimony of Custer's Last Fight

By Michael N. Donahue

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Michael N. Donahue

Drawing Battle Lines: The Map Testimony of Custer's Last Fight, AVAILABLE NOW, is a unique description of Custer's final fight because it serves as a comprehensive pictorial view of the battle based on drawings and maps made by participants and researchers. Many of these maps have never been published, studied, or even viewed by the general public.

The widespread dispersal of these original maps has made effective, comparative research virtually impossible without an extraordinary large library. It is also clear that most maps of the battle have received only cursory study by scholars and researchers. DRAWING BATTLE LINES provides a primary resource for all those interested in discussing the visual testimony of the Battle of the Little Bighorn found in these maps.

Unfortunately, maps of the battle have historically played a subordinate role to the written or oral interviews. Many who fought in the Custer fight, as well as interviewers of the participants, realized the universal art of drawing could clarify information otherwise cluttered by language, interpretation and cultural differences. This book combines both the visual and the historical, and here, a picture is worth a thousand words.

Michael Donahue has organized these drawings chronologically in each section: Soldier, Warrior, Civilian and Miscellaneous. Included is each map maker's portrait (when available) and a brief biography, understanding that these were people with individual stories and perspectives. The author has carefully analyzed each map providing a summary of its critical values and flaws, using only the original maps and sketches created by eyewitnesses or second generation researchers who interviewed battle participants.

While this book might seem a cartographer's delight, it is intended to create a historically accurate and visual study guide. It is much more than just a book of maps. These literal battle lines in map form were drawn by those who had direct and indirect knowledge of this tragic episode in our nation's history.

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Editorial Review

Review

A splendid example of the fruits of combining research in indoor and outdoor archives. For eighteen summers at the battlefield, Donahue gathered and pondered a variety of formerly unknown maps and took them to the field, sometimes by horseback, to apply their clues to the terrain itself. In this impressively designed volume, he combines reproductions of the maps with his own well-informed analysis of each. The result is a milestone in the historiography of the Little Bighorn. --Robert Utley

About the Author

Michael N. Donahue is Chairman of the Temple College Art Department, a position he has held since 1979. A native of Texas, he holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in History and Art from Stephen F. Austin State University as well as Masters and Masters of Fine Art degrees in Art. His painting Souvenirs of the Little Bighorn was the first artwork to represent the battlefield in the nationally competitive Arts for the Parks exhibition. In 1993, he was recognized as a Piper Professor, one of the top ten professors from all Texas colleges and universities. Donahue's interest in the Battle of the Little Bighorn began during high school, and he has had numerous articles and artworks published on the battle. He serves on the editorial board of Greasy Grass, a publication that deals exclusively with this subject. He has worked as a seasonal historical interpreter and park ranger at Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument for eighteen summers. Michael Donahue currently lives in Belton, Texas.

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