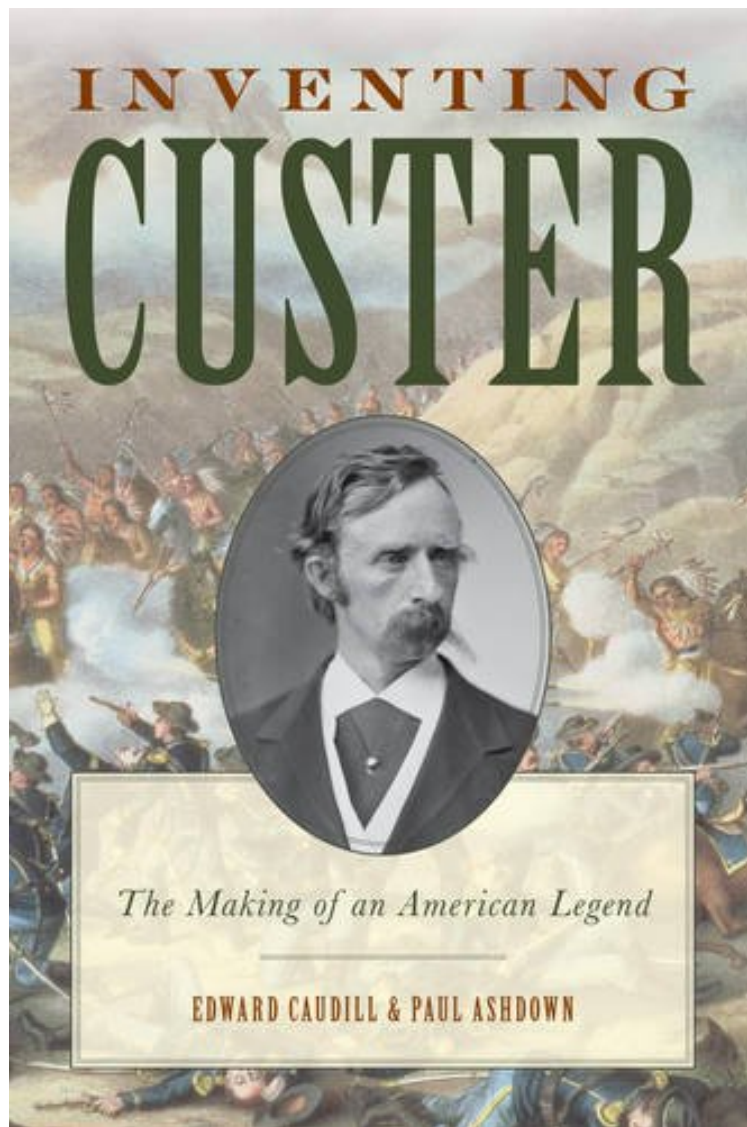


[Mobile ebook] *Inventing Custer: The Making of an American Legend* (The American Crisis Series: Books on the Civil War Era)

Inventing Custer: The Making of an American Legend (The American Crisis Series: Books on the Civil War Era)

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Edward Caudill, Paul Ashdown : Inventing Custer: The Making of an American Legend (The American Crisis Series: Books on the Civil War Era) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Inventing Custer: The Making of an American Legend* (The American Crisis Series: Books on the Civil War Era):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. DISPARITY BETWEEN TITLE AND TEXTBy Richard MasloskiSadly, the gulf between theory and execution in INVENTING CUSTER: THE MAKING OF AN AMERICAN LEGEND is immense. The title and subtitle sounded absolutely intriguing and enticing - but now, having read the book, I am left feeling empty. The main problem is that for the bulk of the book we are treated to a truly desiccated account of Custer's life with a special emphasis on his Civil War years. Instead of using this near 200 pages of biographical backstory to focus in on the purported *raison d'être* of the book - and that would be the "invention" of Custer - we are given a plethora of names and places and dates and commanders and brigades and roads and rivers and numbers of troop strengths and casualties and....it goes on and on, in a dry, deadly manner, without a laser focus on its titular subject, no, it reads more like a general and boringly told history of the Civil War instead. If the biographical material that makes up most of this work were only a tenth as good as T. J. Stiles' literate, incisive, evocative approach to Custer as evidenced in the quite epic CUSTER'S TRIALS, the slog through it all may have been worth something. But it isn't. The writing in INVENTING CUSTER is what George Armstrong Custer's life never was - and that is...boring.The rest is a strange smattering of stuff that seems to have been collated just to fill out the rest of the book. There is no discussion of substance of how the invention of Custer continued via paintings and poetry and film. There is a needlessly dense two-page synopsis and brief analysis of THE TWILIGHT ZONE's Custer episode but no analysis of any merit or even mention of many of the entries in Custer Cinema. No discussion of SON OF THE MORNING STAR, CUSTER OF THE WEST, LITTLE BIG MAN and only a blink-and-miss look at THEY DIED WITH THEIR BOOTS ON. These films are essential building blocks in "the making of an American legend" - but one wouldn't know it by reading this work. There are three and a half tortured tangential pages about Hemingway and Custer that actually go nowhere - yet the authors bizarrely bypass Walt Whitman's very germane to the "invention" angle laudatory poem about Custer's Last Stand which was inspired by an unmentioned painting that, due to its realism, Libbie Custer could not bear to see. Much is bypassed in this hodge-podge book. On page 299 is a nice photo of David Wright who portrays Custer in reenactments and educational films, but is the "living history" performer interviewed at all? His insights would have been interesting, I'm sure.In summation, the book wasn't cheap. And given its price, there just wasn't enough bang for the buck, not by a long shot.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Mostly a retelling of Custer's early life and military career, the last 100 pages are the main selling point ...By book lover3.5 starsWhen I started this book more than a week ago I thought it was going to turn out better than it did (not that it's bad). The stated topic of the book, based on the book's title, doesn't really pick up until the last 100 pages.The first half of the book is about Custer's Civil War career. If you are new to Custer, the opening chapters are generally a good overview of these years (I'm not that knowledgeable about the Civil War so can't comment on its accuracy but I like the way the authors broke it down into short manageable parts). The second half of the book deals with Custer's years on the plains and closes with a look at books about Custer and the LBH, movies and TV, and the battlefield itself (how it still holds our collective interest). I thought these chapters were the most interesting.On page 223, the authors attribute a quote to Captain Benteen that is incorrect (being that it was given directly to the reporter on July 6 in Philadelphia where Benteen clearly was not). In fact, the speaker is anonymous. Funny, but this detail is made clear in one of their sources which I don't think they read. Then on the same page they place correspondent Keim (who was with Custer in 1868) with Custer in 1876. Apparently he was at the mouth of the Rosebud with reporter Kellogg. There was also a date of June 2 that should have been June 21 (see page 225).Overall I think the book is worth reading. If it gets reprinted they can fix the above errors and any others that might develop.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An interesting take on the Custer story, which puts his "Last Stand" into the context of the political and social conditions of the time. A soldier of his rank didn't set policy, they were ordered to carry out difficult assignments with inadequate support and equipment. At least this author gave him some credit for his hard earned Civil War record.

Custer's Last Stand remains one of the most iconic events in American history and culture. Had Custer prevailed at the Little Bighorn, the victory would have been noteworthy at the moment, worthy of a few newspaper headlines. In defeat, however tactically inconsequential in the larger conflict, Custer became legend. In *Inventing Custer: The Making of an American Legend*, Edward Caudill and Paul Ashdown bridge the gap between the Custer who lived and the one we've immortalized and mythologized into legend. While too many books about Custer treat the Civil War period only as a prelude to the Little Bighorn, Caudill and Ashdown present him as a product of the Civil War, Reconstruction Era, and the Plains Indian Wars. They explain how Custer became mythic, shaped by the press and changing sentiments toward American Indians, and show the many ways the myth has evolved and will continue to evolve as the United States continues to change.

In the fourth book of a series exploring the myths and reality of famous Civil War leaders, University of Tennessee professors Caudill and Ashdown demonstrate how George Armstrong Custer's Civil War experience is critical to understanding his personality, and describe the multiple interpretations of Custer's life and his influence on American history, society, and culture. The first half of this well-researched book highlights differing interpretations of Custer's

significant Civil War experiences and successes. The second half of the book sketches his frontier experience and includes a short overview of the Battle of the Little Bighorn, with the bulk of the text devoted to a detailed survey of media interpretations of his exploits. For those familiar with Custers history, these are the most interesting sections of the book, as the authors analyze historical interpretations of Custer and his role in varied works of fiction and nonfiction. Finally, Caudill and Ashdown look at the influence of the Custer myth on popular perceptions of Native Americans and on other elements of popular culture. Well written and informative, this accessible volume is a valuable addition to serious Custer scholarship. (Publishers Weekly)

In this fourth book in a series that explores the lives of the US Civil Wars most mythical figures, Caudill and Ashdown note that George Armstrong Custer has become more myth than reality, a product not only of journalists and future historians, but also of Custer himself. Unfortunately, this myth has led historians to report Custers Civil War life as merely a prelude to the events at Little Bighorn. And, once formed, Custers myth continued to morph as historians attempted to reinterpret US-Native American relations. Caudill and Ashdown, however, attempt to analyze the whole Custer to better understand how his Civil War experience, coupled with the nations attitudes toward Natives and its coming to grips with a changing society within Reconstruction, created the immortal Custer at the Little Bighorn. Ultimately, the authors successfully peel back the layers of mythos surrounding Custer to reveal how the ordinary life becomes extraordinary. Thoroughly researched and well written, this work is a must-have for those interested in the historiography of Custer, the role of media in creating myths, and the evolution of memory and history studies. Summing Up: Highly recommended. All levels/libraries. (CHOICE)

[This] book is a welcome and useful new addition to the Custer library. . . . The sections on the development of the myths and legends is noteworthy. (Cannonball - York Blog)

More than 1,600 books have been written about Custer, most dealing with his final fight in southern Montana, and it would seem unlikely for new insights to be found in such an examined figure. Yet *Inventing Custer* makes a real contribution to the field, examining the life, times, and cultural impact of a man Caudill and Ashdown describe as 'a scorpion who could sting his victims and in the end wound up stinging himself.' . . . [T]he authors do an admirable job of showing how Custers legend began and how, often under his own direction, it grew to large size even before his untimely demise. . . . *Inventing Custer* presents plenty of evidence to show that, by making such a successful transition from life to legend, Custer became perfectly suited to reflect American ideals of the day whatever those ideals may be. (Chapter 16)

Edward Caudill and Paul Ashdowns study of Custers life and the creation of his legacy offers a significant contribution to Custer literature. Caudill and Ashdown, professors of journalism and electronic media at the University of Tennessee, have relied on extensive published primary and secondary sources to produce a volume that is part biography, part historiography, and part memory study. Throughout the book, the authors do a commendable job of recounting Custers life his birth in New Rumley, Ohio, time as a cadet at West Point, career during the Civil War, campaigns during the Indian Wars, and annihilation at Little Big Horn in 1876. . . . Beyond Caudills and Ashdowns insightful analysis of Custers Civil War service, historians of our American Iliad will find that the authors parse a great deal of historiography throughout their superb book illustrating the roles that historians have played in adding to Custers legend. . . . There is little to criticize in this well-balanced, prodigiously researched, and masterfully crafted study. This book is not only essential reading for Custer aficionados, but for anyone who seeks to understand how a historical legacy is created, manipulated, and changes with the evolving moods of an ever-changing nation. (The Civil War Monitor)

Inventing Custer is an excellent review of the principal architects and audiences of multiple Custers who have come to pass. (Journal of Southern History)

'Daring, dashing, and suddenly dead,' Custer's brief, violent soldier's life was the prototype for American celebrity, as Edward Caudill and Paul Ashdown explain in their fascinating summation and unwinding of Custer the man from undying legend. Read this rich book to understand why the Last Stand lives on and on. (Marc Wortman, author of *The Bonfire: The Siege and Burning of Atlanta and 1941: Fighting the Shadow War* (forthcoming))

As historians of myth correction, Edward Caudill and Paul Ashdown take on a historical figure that everyone thinks they know all about. Read this book to find out what Custer was really like. You will be amazed at what you learn. (John F. Marszalek, Giles Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Mississippi State University; executive director and managing editor, Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library)

The Civil War made George Armstrong Custer an American hero. The Battle of the Little Bighorn transformed him into a mythic figure, whose death is a part of the American saga. Caudill and Ashdown separate the reality from the myth in their beautifully written *Inventing Custer: The Making of an American Legend*. (David B. Sachsman, West Chair of Excellence, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga; director of the Symposium on the 19th Century Press, the Civil War, and Free Expression)

About the Author Edward Caudill and Paul Ashdown are professors of journalism and electronic media at the University of Tennessee. They are co-authors of *Shermans March in Myth and Memory* (2008) *The Myth of Nathan Bedford Forrest* (2005) and *The Mosby Myth: A Confederate Hero in Life and Legend* (2002).