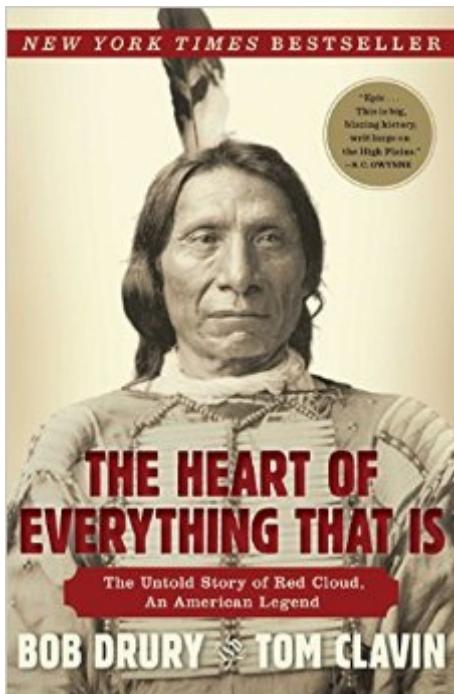


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The Heart Of Everything That Is: The Untold Story Of Red Cloud, An American Legend



Synopsis

An acclaimed New York Times bestseller, selected by Salon as a best book of the year, the astonishing untold story of the life and times of Sioux warrior Red Cloud: "a page-turner with remarkable immediacy" and the narrative sweep of a great Western • (The Boston Globe). Red Cloud was the only American Indian in history to defeat the United States Army in a war, forcing the government to sue for peace on his terms. At the peak of Red Cloud's powers the Sioux could claim control of one-fifth of the contiguous United States and the loyalty of thousands of fierce fighters. But the fog of history has left Red Cloud strangely obscured. Now, thanks to the rediscovery of a lost autobiography, and painstaking research by two award-winning authors, the story of the nineteenth century's most powerful and successful Indian warrior can finally be told. In *The Heart of Everything That Is*, Bob Drury and Tom Clavin restore Red Cloud to his rightful place in American history in a sweeping and dramatic narrative based on years of primary research. As they trace the events leading to Red Cloud's War, they provide intimate portraits of the many lives Red Cloud touched: "mountain men" such as Jim Bridger; US generals like William Tecumseh Sherman, who were charged with annihilating the Sioux; fearless explorers, such as the dashing John Bozeman; and the memorable warriors whom Red Cloud groomed, like the legendary Crazy Horse. And at the center of the story is Red Cloud, fighting for the very existence of the Indian way of life. "Unabashed, unbiased, and disturbingly honest, leaving no razor-sharp arrowhead unturned, no rifle trigger unpulled....a compelling and fiery narrative" • (USA TODAY), this is the definitive chronicle of the conflict between an expanding white civilization and the Plains Indians who stood in its way.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There are many untold stories in popular history, and usually "untold" means not that there is no fairly decent treatment of the respective topic, but that former studies are simply dismissed to pretend a deceptive exclusivity. Actually Red Cloud's story was told quite often, first by himself and later including preeminent scholars like George E. Hyde or James C. Olson. In fact this Oglala leader is a comparatively well researched historical figure, and while many of these former studies have their weaknesses (some are simply outdated), they look rather innovative in comparison with this most recent work, which uses a reactionary language which was - for good reasons - more or less absent for the last two or three decades of historical revisionism. The Heart of Everything That Is is a strange combination of stereotypes and assertions disguised as solid evidence. Starting with the introduction, there are so many historical errors, exaggerations and omissions hidden in casually written subordinate clauses, that even the most willing reader should start to wonder... The strategy of the authors is quite obvious - they portray this historical episode as an unique success story of an outstanding character. Behind this is the straightforward logic that the sheer quality of the topic is congruent with the quality of the book. Intentionally or not, this is no clean historical science, it is a kind of post-revisionist, largely pseudohistorical iconography. Taking a closer look at some of the more obvious distortions or misinterpretations, one can only conclude that the authors committed the worst sin of historical science: they couldn't resist the temptation to use rather apocryphal interpretations just to make their point.

I have previously read other books on what has become known as Red Cloud's War but this effort by Bob Drury and Tom Clavin is a masterpiece in old west history. I was puzzled by the title "The Heart of Everything That Is" but I learned that it refers to the Paha Sapa or Black Hills in western South Dakota. There were several variations of the Sioux tribes and the authors go into detail regarding the time preceding Red Cloud with Old Man Afraid of His Horses as the leader of the Oglala Sioux tribe. We also get a portrait of Jim Bridger, known as Old Gabe, and the authors wonder why more hasn't been written about this influential man in western history. Pretty Owl and Pine Leaf were loves of Red Cloud and the tragic death of Pine Leaf by her own hand is dealt with. The controversial building of forts along the hated Bozeman Trail through Wyoming and into Montana provides the reader with additional information regarding the building of Fort Phil Kearny which led to the infamous Fetterman Fight on December 21, 1866, in which William Judd Fetterman

lost his life along with eighty others. Who was to blame for this fiasco? Was it Fetterman himself or the ill-suited commander of the fort Henry Carrington? Of what role in the defeat, if any, did Tenedore Ten Eyck play? Did his delay in going to Fetterman's defense doom Fetterman and his men or would his support have just added to the victims? I learned that it was American Horse who killed Fetterman and John "Portugee" Phillips had two others who sent out word of the disaster at Fort Phil Kearny with Phillips being the only one who traveled all the way to Fort Laramie to bring word on the day after Christmas.

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