

calls them a triumvirate, he shows they actually engaged in a shifting series of partnerships during their political careers.

Kaminski's approach is to discuss a series of specific topics about each man, presenting fifteen to twenty short essays in each of the three chapters. Convictions and personal character predominate. Reading tastes, religious opinions, and the balance between private and public life receive special attention. Kaminski is particularly interested in the decisions that led each man periodically to enter, and then retire from, the affairs of state. Central to the study is the meaning of republicanism in the Revolutionary era. Threats, threat perceptions, societal obligations, and the mobilization of public support often assume center stage. The author is more interested in providing springboards for discussion than in offering neatly structured answers. He has a clear preference for topics that have received comparatively little attention from historians. The discussions of the content of Washington's library and the management of Madison's plantation are good examples.

Kaminski indicates that he hopes teachers will make use of this volume, both to explore the early American Republic and to gain a better understanding of the use of primary source materials. He is careful to include documentary treatments that permit comparison and contrast among the three men. Their attitudes toward slavery, both upon their own plantations and in the larger society, are carefully structured for this purpose. So are the sections of each chapter that deal with the subject's use of the sources and opinions of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. Kaminski is also careful to offer a range of contemporary opinions about each man, inviting readers to judge and evaluate the quality and purpose of contemporary discourse.

The author's selectivity might post some classroom problems. He offers brief and effective summaries of some background issues but is silent on others. Washington's victory at Yorktown and Madison's Presidential years are examples of topics you will need to send students to the library or the Internet to develop. Perhaps most significant is the Virginia context. Readers will leave with a good idea of what plantation life was like but probably will be stretched to place the tiny plantation elite within the burgeoning democracy of the new republic. Resolving such challenges might prove exciting classroom exercises.

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Tim Lehman. *Bloodshed at Little Bighorn: Sitting Bull, Custer, and the Destinies of Nations.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2010. Pp. 240. Paper, \$19.95; ISBN 978-0-8018-9501-2.

Lehman's new book on the most famous battle in the American West is a useful and extremely readable narrative of Custer's defeat and a fine introduction to the long conflict between the expansionist United States and the native tribes of the Great Plains. *Bloodshed at Little Bighorn* is a concise, clearly written account that deftly traces the

history of the long series of clashes that led up to this battle. This engaging monograph is ideal for use in undergraduate classrooms, as the author provides gracefully crafted portraits of important characters and reviews important ideas, from American military strategy to the importance of the horse for Plains tribes. Non-specialists will find that Lehman's book is a fine summary of the final American conquest of the American West. While it includes no new interpretation and relies heavily on secondary sources, it provides a balanced, fast-paced history ideal for use in survey courses on the West, Native America, or the nineteenth-century United States. It is also a good source for material for anyone writing or revising lectures on the subject.

The story begins in 1854, when a young Lakota warrior butchered a cow straggling behind a Mormon wagon train on the Oregon Trail. Soldiers set out from Fort Laramie in Wyoming to capture the offender. Despite attempts at compromise, American troops opened fire without provocation. They were wiped out in retaliation. The incident sparked more than two decades of warfare—the Great Sioux War—which culminated in the Battle of the Little Big Horn in June 1876. As American settlers moved into Minnesota, Colorado, and eventually South Dakota, tensions rose. The Fort Laramie treaty of 1868 brought temporary peace, but conflicts over buffalo hunting, the westward expansion of the railroad, and an American lust for gold made conflict inevitable.

In the 1860s George Armstrong Custer made his reputation as the nation's premier Indian fighter. He led an expedition into the Black Hills in 1874 that proclaimed the region the "El Dorado of America." The Sioux refused orders to abandon the sacred Black Hills—also an important hunting area—by January 1876. In June, Custer recklessly went to his death. The American defeat led to a campaign of vengeance in 1876 and 1877 that involved thousands of soldiers in one of the largest military operations of the late nineteenth century. Sioux and Cheyenne survivors, hungry and freezing, were forced onto reservations within a year of Custer's defeat.

The final chapter reviews the mythology of the battle and the creation—and eventual rethinking—of the heroic legend of the Seventh Cavalry. Custer quickly became a national hero, but Sitting Bull also gained status as a worthy adversary. However, Custer's reputation evolved over time and he became a villain in the 1972 movie *Little Big Man*. The battlefield itself was also a contested place in American public memory, with Custer's name deleted in favor of Little Big Horn Battlefield National Monument and a more inclusive multicultural history. Lehman's brief work does justice to this complex story and its enduring legacy in American culture.