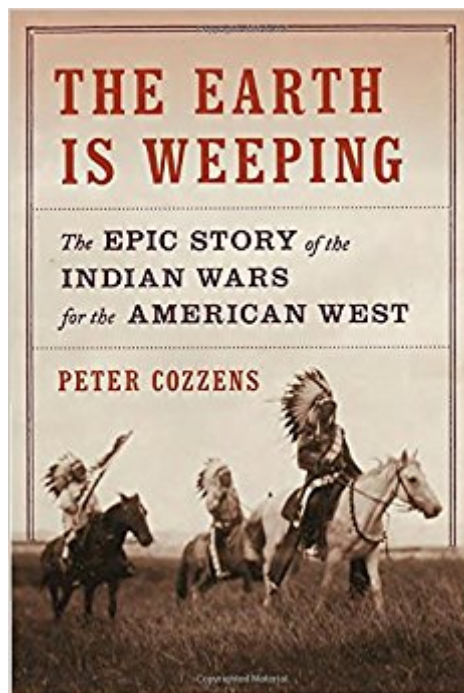




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The Earth Is Weeping: The Epic Story Of The Indian Wars For The American West



Synopsis

Winner of the Gilder Lehrman Prize for Military History**A Smithsonian Top History Book of 2016**Finalist for the Western Writers of America 2017 Spur Award in Best Western Historical NonfictionBringing together a pageant of fascinating characters including Custer, Sherman, Grant, and a host of other military and political figures, as well as great native leaders such as Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, Geronimo, and Red Cloud, *The Earth is Weeping* is lauded by Booklist as "a beautifully written work of understanding and compassion" and is the fullest account to date of how the West was won and lost. "[S]ets a new standard for Western Indian Wars history..." •Stuart Rosebrook, *True West Magazine*With the end of the Civil War, the nation recommenced its expansion onto traditional Indian tribal lands, setting off a wide-ranging conflict that would last more than three decades. In an exploration of the wars and negotiations that destroyed tribal ways of life even as they made possible the emergence of the modern United States, Peter Cozzens gives us both sides in comprehensive and singularly intimate detail. He illuminates the encroachment experienced by the tribes and the tribal conflicts over whether to fight or make peace, and explores the squalid lives of soldiers posted to the frontier and the ethical quandaries faced by generals who often sympathized with their native enemies.

Book Information

Hardcover: 576 pages

Publisher: Knopf; 1st edition (October 25, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0307958043

ISBN-13: 978-0307958044

Product Dimensions: 6.7 x 1.7 x 9.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 204 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #32,157 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #66 in Books > History > Americas > Native American #298 in Books > History > Military > United States #1183 in Books > History > Americas > United States

Customer Reviews

An Best Book of November 2016: Why write a book about the Indian Wars when we already have Dee Brown's seminal 1970 account *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*? It turns out there's a very good reason. While Dee Brown's book greatly informed our modern

view of the conflict between Native Americans and the United States government, it didn't get everything right. Put very simply, the Indians weren't all good and the white people weren't all bad. In fact, especially with the Native Americans, it was much more complicated than that. As an example, inter-tribe rivalries led to strategic decisions like siding with the U.S. government that made sense given the landscape of power. This is a story of survival, one that unfolds under the shadow of a predetermined tragedy. If you're at all interested in the Indian Wars, this scrupulous and even-handed account is essential reading.

--Chris Schluep, The Book Review

"A detailed recounting of random carnage, bodies burned, treaties broken and treachery let loose across the land | Cozzens admirably succeeds in framing the Indian Wars with acute historical accuracy | [D]emonstrates vast knowledge of American military history."

—Douglas Brinkley, The New York Times Book Review "[S]ets a new standard for Western Indian Wars history | [T]he most comprehensive, insightful synthesis of the conflict between the Western tribes and the United States government and citizens published by a popular New York press in decades | Like William Manchester's The Glory and the Dream | [Cozzens's] brilliant thesis and detailed narrative will sustain the reader | from the prologue to the conclusion... [S]uccinctly seeks a sharper understanding of the cause and effects of the American government's policies, citizen relations with the tribes, intertribal history and warfare, and the United States's massive immigration into the West during and after the Civil War." —Stuart Rosebrook, True West Magazine "A valuable contribution | [S]weeps across 25 years of U.S. Indian policy, gives clear accounts of battles and raids and introduces generals and chiefs, foot soldiers and warriors. While Cozzens doesn't say he wrote The Earth is Weeping to supplant [Bury My Heart at] Wounded Knee, he does express his hope that it will bring balance and better understanding of the Indian Wars of the American West. In that, he succeeds."

—John B. Saul, The Seattle Times "[S]corching vividness | [C]risp, muscular prose that offers clear pictures of men at war. A sweeping work of narrative history that synthesizes the work of countless historians, the book | recognizes fragments of nobility and humanity amid epic tragedy. Without implying any false equivalence, Cozzens emphasizes history's tangled complexity."

—Dan Cryer, The San Francisco Chronicle "A comprehensive look | A striking and thorough explanation | The structure of the book allows the interweaving of timelines and historical context in a way that makes the heavy subject matter extremely readable and also thought

provoking. "Cozzens takes to heart his own words of warning about the myths that pervade pop culture. This is a history book, but it is also a present-tense book, full of ironies about how we are not so different from 19th century Westerners." —Erin H. Turner, *Big Sky Journal* "[S]nappy prose, a strong narrative cadence, and admirable clarity. Cozzens is a gifted writer. It's one of the strengths of the book that Cozzens lets none of his cast of characters —Euro-Americans, Native Americans, political figures, military officers, and all the rest—off the hook for responsibility for what happened. Written briskly, it draws you in; its maps are unusually numerous and clear; its comprehensiveness, making it useful to anyone wishing to know the facts of the many, distinct Indian wars, is unlikely to be surpassed. For those wishing to learn the story of the Indian wars of the American West, this is the book to turn to."

—James M. Banner Jr., *The Weekly Standard* "An evenhanded and smoothly written volume that is no less ambitious in scope than *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*." —Andrew Graybill, *The American Scholar* "Cozzens does an exceptional job of examining the viewpoints of both sides, making heavy use of previously untapped primary sources. This is a timely and thorough book, presenting the story without hyperbole or histrionics of this controversial chapter in American history, providing an excellent one-volume history of America's actual longest and most tragic war." —Jerry Lenaburg, *New York Journal of Books* "I've been waiting for an up-to-date, objective, and well-researched book on the Indian Wars, and Peter Cozzens' *The Earth Is Weeping* is all that and more—an elegantly written narrative of one of the great sagas in American history, and better than *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*." —James Donovan, author of *A Terrible Glory* and *The Blood of Heroes* "[A] magnificent single-volume account of the post-Civil War conflicts that shaped our history and the mythology of the frontier. In examining the various Indian tribes and subgroupings within them, Cozzens does an admirable job of conveying their complexity and political divisions. This is a beautifully written work of understanding and compassion that will be a treasure for both general readers and specialists." —Jay Freeman, *Booklist* (STARRED review) "[A]dds a missing perspective on the lives of ordinary people on both sides. Grand plans descended into confusion and cross purposes, alliances and loyalties shifted momentarily, and soldiers and warriors and their families spent most of that quarter-century tired, hungry, discouraged, trying just to survive the next drought or winter. No wonder their earth wept." —William C. Davis, author of *Three Roads to the Alamo* and *An Honorable Defeat* "Peter Cozzens reminds us that tragedy, not melodrama, best characterizes the struggles for the American West. *The Earth Is Weeping* is the most lucid and reliable history of the Indian Wars in recent memory." —Victor Davis Hanson,

author of *Carnage and Culture* "A comprehensive assessment of the wars for control of the American West. Highly recommended for the intertwined history of Native Americans and the post-Civil War frontier U.S. Army." "Nathan Bender, *Library Journal* "Peter Cozzens, one of our finest working historians, has taken on a massive chunk of Native American history and delivered it with power, style, and insight. There is much wisdom here, and much good writing." "S.C. Gwynne, author of *Empire of the Summer Moon*, and *Rebel Yell*" [A] thorough history of the 1860-1890 Indian Wars. "The Week "The uninterrupted succession of armed conflicts between the U. S. army and Indians on the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains from the 1860s to 1890, with fatalities mounting into the thousands, were truly America's longest and most tragic war. In sobering detail, Peter Cozzens has chronicled this dark chapter in our history." "James M. McPherson, author of *The War That Forged a Nation* and *Battle Cry of Freedom*" A valuable panoramic view. Treachery on such an epic scale can bear many retellings, and this account stands out for its impressive detail and scope." "Priyanka Kumar, *The Washington Post*" [S]cores of fascinating characters. [V]ivid descriptions of ordinary people on both sides... [A] sweeping, sharp and stylish history of the Indian Wars of the second half of the 19th century. and their tragic consequences for the native people. Cozzens retells familiar stories...with panache." "Glenn C. Altschuler, *Star Tribune*" In this comprehensive, well-researched and beautifully written book, Peter Cozzens weaves together the many particular histories of the Indian Wars to present a multifaceted view of the era. "Foreign Service Journal "[V]eteran historian Cozzens brings verve and a mastery of the era as he chronicles the personalities, politics and bloody clashes... [D]oes full justice to the complexities of this history." "Matthew Price, *Newsday*

These were words spoken by General Philip Sheridan in 1869. Thankfully, not everyone in charge of fighting wars with our native Indian tribes shared that sentiment. This book by Peter Cozzens is perhaps the most concise and yet detailed historical narrative of the US government's plan to conquer the American West from the native Indians. Covering thirty years, from 1861 through 1891, Cozzens retells the events that helped shape myths and legends from both sides: the land-hungry whites and the land-holding natives. His mission is to show that much of what is printed in history textbooks about our Indian Wars is inaccurate and romanticized, and the many tribes within our growing boundaries were not always the "barbarians" or "savages" that they were depicted as being. Many tribes fought wars with other tribes. There were good and bad people on both sides. There were rivalries between native tribes over hunting grounds and natural resources before white

settlers came in to distract the warring parties. Cozzens starts out his 459-page book summarizing the situation between natives and whites after the Civil War. This is important for the direction of how Indian issues were dealt with, and how they ended up on reservations by the 1880s. President Lincoln, hailed as the Great Emancipator of the African slave, was far less tolerant toward the native Indian. The post Civil War US Army was downsized, many generals were now out of the service or had returned to their previous ranks (usually captains if they were officers) and money was now set aside for post-war Reconstruction. There was no longer a Confederate enemy and daily battles were no longer a part of a soldier's routine. Soldiers coming in after the war were paid at best \$10 a month and supplemented their income with gambling or trading. Uniforms weren't standardized and new recruits didn't spend much time on marksmanship until it was regulated by the War Department in the 1870s. It's important for the reader new to this genre of history to understand the enlisted man's daily life after the Civil War, stationed along the frontier guarding immigration routes, railroad routes, or mining claims. Alcoholism and sexually-transmitted diseases were rampant among officers and enlisted. A former Civil War officer considered duty on the western frontier as punishment while a young enlistee, who may have been a new recruit from Germany or Ireland, as a new adventure and a steady income. Cozzens's writing style is concise and lacking any flowery prose. He can state more in one paragraph than some writers say in an entire page. Each chapter is around 20 pages, and the narrative is chronological for the most part. He divides the 30 years into three parts with overlapping years among the three regions: 1861-1873 in the Great Plains, 1870s in the Northwest and the final battles with the Southwestern tribes until the last chief surrendered in 1891 and life as the Indians knew it was altered forever. He is cautious to depict both chief and general as unbiased as possible. While former Civil War heroes like Generals Sherman, Sheridan and Crook had a general contemptuous attitude about the Indians, there were many Indian Bureau agents who worked with the Indians and witnessed senseless carnage. This is how Cozzens wants the readers to see the Indian Wars: as a battle of trust and mistrust played by chiefs and generals who didn't always honor peace treaties, who lashed out in revenge, or who simply hated one another. Cozzens also stresses that a lot of the blame for some of the senseless massacres such as Sand Creek, Hancock's War, Camp Grant, etc on the profiteering contractors who often followed westward-moving troops to make a living. These contractors knew the life of a frontier soldier was remote and often boring, so they were there to sell them whiskey, clothes and items from the East Coast. They were often the ones making up stories to incite the old generals to conduct sweeping attacks across Indian villages, when the victims were then often women and children unable to escape. Some of these stories are quite heart-wrenching because Cozzens explains his

cause-and-effect between the generals and chiefs very well. The generals wanted obedient Indians away from immigrant routes or mining claims, but often did not differentiate between an Indian raid (for coveted items like horses and cattle or guns) to outright attacks of war. When the Union Army's weaponry improved in the 1870s with more reliable rifles, canons (which the Indians feared) and artillery, many tribes now were realizing that they were losing their homeland and living in peace with the white man was no longer possible. But here again Cozzen wants to stress that the US government did not have a policy of extermination in mind. The general consensus was simply to move the tribes out of White man's way and to hopefully Christianize them and teach them to be passive and productive farmers. Most tribes were not stationary farmers and were content with their own Creator and farming was not a lifestyle their traditions dictated. This difference of intent of course was complicated with the discovery of lucrative gold mines in Montana and Colorado, and the ever-expanding movement west of the American people in general. Some of the many stories in this book can bring one to tears at the wanton injustice, but there is blame on both sides. The largest tribes today in this country are the tribes that were willing to consent to the White man's plan, who did not wage constant war, and were willing to accept some western ways. Cozzen's research is impeccable. He traveled to some sites for a first-hand feel of what a massacre sight must have felt like (many are now on private land). He also sought the cooperation of other historians, notably James Donovan (author of "A Terrible Glory" and "The Blood of Heroes"). This volume is also replete with archival black-white photographs of Indian chiefs and generals, maps, immigration routes and summarized battle plans. For anyone interested in the history of US-Indian relations post Civil War, this is one book I highly recommend.

This is an "epic story" . It is beautifully written and balanced. The author focuses on the plains tribes during the 19th century. It is really a story of a series of tragedies that need not have happened. So many people on both sides making the same sorts of mistakes over and over again. The book also creates vivid pictures of many of the principle individuals involved in the struggle between two cultures.

What an amazing education I got from reading this book. I lived in Colorado for 20 years and thought I knew history of the Indian Wars. I did a number of paintings depicting the Indian Wars including one of Custer at the Little Big Horn. Many years ago I wrote a poem of the horrors of Chivington and the Sand Creek Massacre. But I had no idea of all that happened. What comes through in a steady thread is how the Indians kept getting screwed by the white man. Promises

made and then trashed because of the lure of gold or land or something. We didn't honor our promises and destroyed and subjugated a culture and religious spiritual beliefs. True, the Indians did their of damage to soldiers and settlers. Reading about some of what the Apaches did to their own women and to their enemies was pretty horrific - glad I wasn't around at the time. Anyway, the book was just fantastic and has me looking to go on do some more reading.

It is a sad statement that Americas growth was at the expense of its Indian tribes. We made many promises and treaties and broke the all As one the Indians said, the only promise the Americans kept was to take their land. The book is not to blame government alone but showed how government was unable to hold the movement of settlers to the west. Most of this at the expense of the Indians. I found a book to be an interesting read. The author took you from one tribe or situation to another with ease. It was a difficult book to put down.

Full disclosure, this is actually my husband's review. He checked this book out of the library and loved it so much he ordered his own copy. He says it is the fairest representation of the situation he has read. Neither the government nor the Indians are presented as noble or villains. Just a problem with no good solution.

1/3 of way through the book. Never knew many of the little things we did to destroy a culture and group of people. Many things to think and act on. I almost feel ashamed by what we did. Actually I do feel shame. May we all learn from this. One can only hope this can happen

Best historian, best history of this period, ever. A page turner, a great achievement, we are best served when history is written the way Peter Cozzens writes it, with compassion for all in a series of terrible conflicts, and truthfully.

An excellent historical portrayal of the blight of the Native Americans. After finishing this book I feel that I now have an understanding how each of the different tribes making up the Indian Nation were mistreated by the American political system and following an historical time table the author gives the reader an understanding of an important part of our history. A must read for anyone interested in American history.

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