



Custer Survivor: The End of the Myth, the Beginning of the Legend

By John Koster



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Custer Survivor was the basis for History Channel's television documentary *Custer's Last Stand* about the one man in the Seventh Cavalry who escaped the annihilation at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. It is the story of Sgt. Frank Finkel of "C" Company, who, stunned by the impact of a rifle barrel smashing his forehead, was carried off by his panic stricken horse. Drawn from Sioux observations, Dept. of Army documents and forensic evidence, this is the story of the one soldier who escaped death at Little Big Horn and the fascinating life story of the man who turned myth into legend.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

For decades, Custer's "Last Stand" at Little Big Horn has captured the American imagination. Remembered by some as the tragic result of imperialist policies and by others as a noble sacrifice for American expansion, the one thing everyone learns in school is that Custer's battle against Lakota and Cheyenne forces left no Americans alive. In this chronicle of meticulous research, handwriting analysis and document investigation, journalist Koster turns that myth on its ear: though a number of people claim to have fought at (and survived) Little Big Horn, Koster identifies the one reluctant claimant who actually did--Sergeant Frank Finkel of Company C. A carefully deconstructed historical mystery sure to thrill American history enthusiasts, Koster's narrative and methods are entirely transparent, presenting all the information and leaving readers to draw their own conclusions. Though Finkel's story isn't particularly dramatic, Koster's pursuit of the truth behind a great American myth makes for a compelling tale in itself.

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Review

Library Journal Nov.1, 2009

Over the years there have been a number of claims of survivors of Custer's battalion at the Little Bighorn in 1876, but none has held up under close scrutiny--until now. Journalist Koster (*The Road to Wounded Knee*) carefully reconstructs the life of Frank Finkel, second sergeant of C Company. He marshals all of the available documentary, historical, archaeological, and forensic evidence, to show that the Frank Finckel born in Ohio in 1854 was the George August Finckle who enlisted in the Seventh Cavalry in 1872, the Frank Finkel who died in Dayton, WA, in 1930, and the "long sword" whom Rain-in-the-Face reported being told escaped the battle on a runaway horse and whom he saw in Chicago in 1893. Koster also tells how Finkel's desire to enhance his status and his second wife's efforts to erase all traces of his first wife, supposedly part Cherokee, misled researchers for decades but also kept Finkel's story alive. VERDICT This well-written and carefully reasoned argument is essential reading for scholars and students of the West and will be of great interest to anyone with even a passing interest in Custer and the Little Bighorn. Highly recommended.--
Stephen H. Peters, Northern Michigan Univ. Lib., Marquette

--Library Journal

Midwest Book Review, December 12, 2009

5.0 out of 5 stars A thought-provoking addition to American history shelves,

Custer Survivor: The End of a Myth, the Beginning of a Legend dares to challenge the long-standing historical assumption that the 210 troopers under Custer's command were exterminated to the last man. Drawing up extensive research and forensic evidence, Custer Survivor reveals the untold tale of one trooper who escaped, the Second Sergeant of C Company. Following his ordeal after his escape and the successful life he pursued thereafter, Custer Survivor is a thought-provoking addition to American history shelves with a focus on intense historical scrutiny and re-examination.

Over the years there have been a p> --Midwest Book Review

About the Author

John Koster is known for his thorough knowledge of Native American history which has been translated into German, Czech, Russian and Japanese. His first book, *The Road to Wounded Knee* (Bantam, 1974) won the Sigma Delta Chi Award for Distinguished Public Service for his personal coverage and analytical research into the American Indian Movement.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Paula Jackson:

The book untitled Custer Survivor: The End of the Myth, the Beginning of the Legend is the book that recommended to you to see. You can see the quality of the publication content that will be shown to anyone. The language that writer use to explained their ideas are easily to understand. The article writer was did a lot of study when write the book, so the information that they share to your account is absolutely accurate. You also could get the e-book of Custer Survivor: The End of the Myth, the Beginning of the Legend from the publisher to make you more enjoy free time.

Curtis Wilson:

Playing with family in a park, coming to see the sea world or hanging out with good friends is thing that usually you may have done when you have spare time, subsequently why you don't try point that really opposite from that. One particular activity that make you not feeling tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition of information. Even you love Custer Survivor: The End of the Myth, the Beginning of the Legend, you could enjoy both. It is fine combination right, you still would like to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh seriously its mind hangout people. What? Still don't buy it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

Rose Rafferty:

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Wanda Riddle:

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