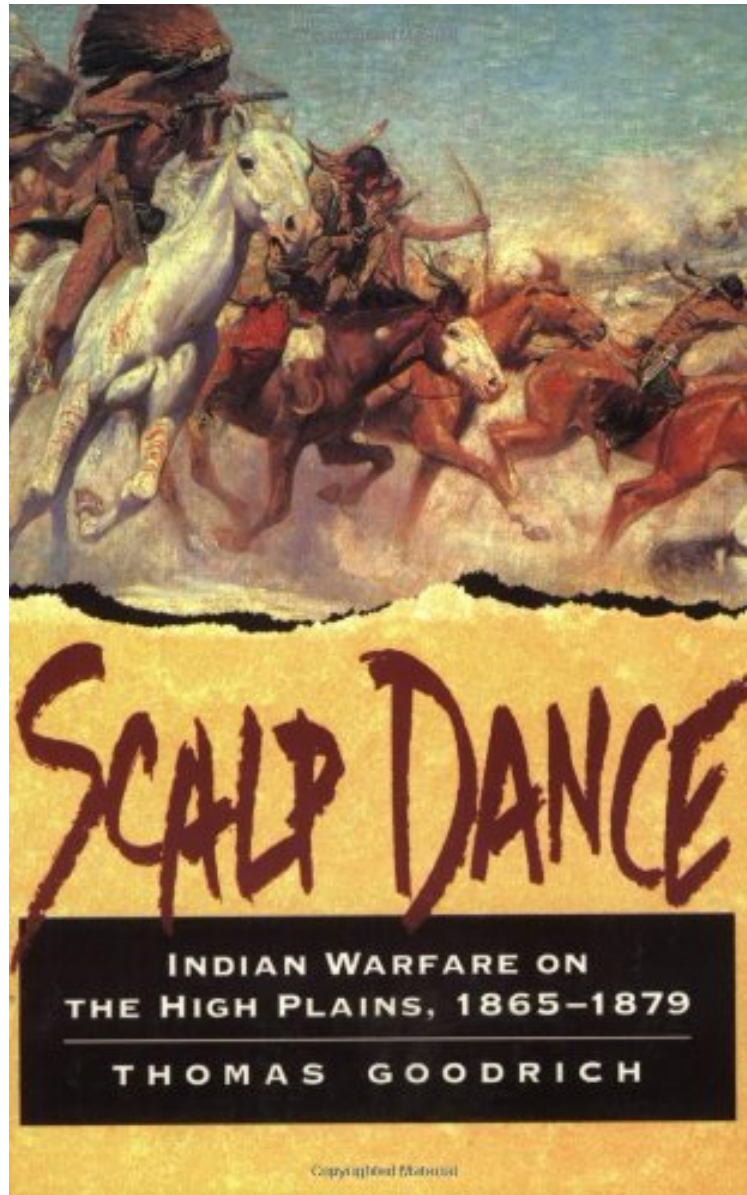


[Download] Scalp Dance: Indian Warfare on the High Plains, 1865-1879

Scalp Dance: Indian Warfare on the High Plains, 1865-1879

Von *Thomas Goodrich*
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Von Thomas Goodrich : Scalp Dance: Indian Warfare on the High Plains, 1865-1879 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Scalp Dance: Indian Warfare on the High Plains, 1865-1879:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen2 von 4 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich.

Propagandistic collage, not history

Von Sven Oliver Roth

Once I had finished reading this book I wondered how to categorize it. Is it a history book? Many reviewers seem to believe that. But history books give a narrative distilled from sources and then refined by careful analysis according to the historical method. This book doesn't do that. I would rather call it a collage. It reminds me very much of the European political agit-prop-art of the 1920s and 1930s that is made of photo-collages. It is shrill, extremely in-your-face, follows a very clear agenda and isn't hampered by shades of gray. The message of this political collage is that the Plains Indians - for all the period admiration of their exotic "gaudiness" - were essentially inhuman creatures (and therefore themselves less than human) who got what they deserved in the ethnic cleansing wars of the 1860s and 1870s. If you want to find out what the author of this 1996 book has to say nowadays, you'll find his interviews on white supremacist internet talk radio websites and his articles on websites where his articles are lined with advertisements for poetry books on Adolf Hitler. That's not a coincidence. Looking at his book publishing record, you immediately realize how he categorizes groups of people on the good guy/bad guy scale. At the very bottom of the moral food chain are the supposed villains of this book, the Plains Indians, who dared to resist their ethnic cleansing (Goodrich calls it the only just war he knows). Above them, naturally, reside the white Invaders (more or less artfully presented as victims of Indian aggression here). Between those, however, there is a clear hierarchy of better or worse: Abolitionists are bad, Slave-proponents are good. Logically, the Confederate South is the morally superior victim of the evil North (The Day Dixie died). Looking across the pond, Nazi Germany becomes the morally superior genocide victim of the evil Allies (Hellstorm). In the background of everything, of course, lurks the eternal Jew who hates the white race and wants to destroy it from within by instilling racial self-hate among whites. Welcome to the world of Thomas Goodrich. Goodrich wants to assemble as many like-minded white supremacists as possible for the coming "Endkampf" between the races. This book is part of the recruitment effort. The Leitmotiv of this book is one of racist partisanship: If you're a white American, be proud and unapologetic about the Indian Wars. Your ancestors deserve admiration and sympathy, the Indians only gleeful scorn. The method chosen by Goodrich is even simpler: Why reinvent the wheel when all the racist, exterminatory rape and mutilation porn has already been written in abundance by others in the 19th century. Remember, this is not a history book but rather a political propaganda collage. It's all one big cut and paste job. The book consists of at least 80% block quotes (carefully selected for propagandistic effect, of course) and a bit of political prose that directs the reader from one copy/paste segment to the next. Looking through the short bibliography, the Indian Wars buff will quickly notice that the standard literature on the Plains Indians is missing. One looks in vain for indispensable classics like Grinnell's "The Fighting Cheyennes", Hyde's "Life of George Bent" or Powell's "People of the Sacred Mountain". Goodrich makes sure that the Indians will exclusively be viewed through the hateful and ignorant eyes of their white enemies. Apart from some frontier newspaper snippets (a treasure trove of - often facts free- hysterical anti-Indian atrocity porn), the literature used is exclusively secondary sources. Goodrich doesn't even consult Army reports such as the ones collected in the "Annals of the Southern Rebellion", he just copy-pastes from other authors. So, when he, for instances, quotes the -often comically- anti-Indian Colonel Richard Irving Dodge, he doesn't say from which of his books the quote actually is. That's quite annoying if you want to check quotes. Knowing Dodge's books doesn't help as the author doesn't tell you from which one the quotes at hand have been lifted as he didn't consult the original but went the easy way of quoting from secondary sources. Worse, very often he doesn't even bother to state which person he is quoting. You just get another the-Injuns-are-evil snippet and a footnote that directs you to some 1960s secondary literature. So, who actually said this? We never know. Having said all this, I can't deny that large parts of the book are entertaining. After all, no matter how biased an author is, if he fills 80% of the book with direct quotes, you get a lot of "you are there" stuff for your money. However, much of these aren't just often very biased against Indians, they also often contain far less "live coverage" than it may feel like for the less informed reader. Take for example the abundant excerpts from Custer's autobiographic "My Life on the Plains". As with any PR-savvy public figure, Custer's writing about his own exploits was of course heavily redacted to make him appear in the best possible light - dashing, brave and chaste- and his enemies in the worst possible light - treacherous, cowardly and always looking for the next rape victim. Award-winning historians like William Chalfant have painstakingly retraced how Custer's versions of certain events further and further "evolved" over time (the paper trail includes private letters and official reports) until they reached the form as presented in his autobiography. Goodrich, of course, isn't interested in such work and always takes authors like Custer at face-value. Here is but one example of how that works: When Custer tells his readers an entertaining cloak-and-dagger-style episode of how he supposedly was the first to search some teepees of a large Cheyenne village deserted by its panic-stricken inhabitants, he has himself discover a little girl left behind in a dark lodge. Army reports, however, show conclusively that Custer wasn't the one who inspected these teepees first. He invents this for effect - and Goodrich swallows it all hook, line and sinker. Predictably, Goodrich also copy/pastes Custer's story that the eight years old little Girl was part-white and that she told the troopers that "the Indians had done her bad". However, the army records (especially the final report of the surgeon who inspected her), corroborated by Indian accounts, reveal that the Girl was full-blood Cheyenne, mentally retarded, had gotten lost in the chaos and was still untouched when the last Indian left the village. Soon after, the first troopers started rummaging through the village, looting it (that's not featured by Goodrich) - and must have treated the girl as just another enemy

trophy for the taking, gang-raping her. She died a few days later from her severe wounds. In Goodrich's book, it's of course the Cheyennes who, covering and accompanying the evacuation of their panic-stricken families, have nothing better to do than rape a little girl from their own village during the evacuation. Yeah, sure... That's how objective Thom Goodrich is. Staying on topic, the systematic sex abuse by the 7th cavalry of female Cheyenne hostages after the annihilation of Black Kettle's village at the Washita (it lasted from late November '68 until the early summer of '69) isn't even hinted at with a single word. Goodrich loves to relate rape and sex slave stories, but this one, of course, doesn't fit his agenda. Generally, Indian women are either denigrated as looking like Gorillas in this book or they are presented as cute Indian princesses who only fancy white cavalry officers (it all stays clean and platonic though, and the Indian princess dutifully dies before she can racially contaminate any white officer). Talking about Indian women dutifully dying: The grand Opening of the book, Goodrich's coverage of the Sand Creek massacre, is a real keeper: He is, to my knowledge, the only modern author who would portray the bulky genocidal bully John M. Chivington as a "handsome" avenging angel, overlooking the judgment of God over the "Red Devils". His pulp-fiction-story like retelling of the Sand Creek Massacre is indeed hard to stomach, both for its awkward literary style and its glaring distortion of historical facts:- Goodrich describes how lucky Chivington felt that his prayers had been answered and the village of Sand Creek was where he had hoped it would be. In reality the Indians had been camping in this location on Chivington's orders. The chiefs had reported the location to nearby Fort Lyon. Just two days prior the local fort commander had sent traders to the village to make the villagers feel safe.- Goodrich: "This morning, down there along the banks of Sand Creek, John Chivington was going to right a great wrong". One wonders what that would be. The search-and-destroy policy against unsuspecting Cheyenne villages he had instigated the previous spring? The callous murder of peace chief Lean Bear in May? Goodrich gives the reader a hint on the following page: "After nearly three years of fear and frustration the opportunity to smite their foe had finally arrived". One wonders what on earth the man is talking about. Remember, it was the whites who had, in flagrant violation of the 1851 Fort Laramie treaty, overrun Cheyenne and Arapahoe lands, destroying their favorite camping sites, water and timber resources, killing and driving away the game. As a consequence, many of the Cheyennes and Arapahos had been starving. Their warriors had been kept in check by the chiefs, anxious not to trigger a war of annihilation with the invaders. The uneasy peace had been kept until the begin of the search-and-destroy campaign of the Colorado volunteers. So, seriously, what is it now he wants to blame the Indians for? The civil war in the East? The Confederate threat from Texas? As deluded as it seems, that's exactly what the author is doing next.- Mixing the civil war with the latter date settler-Indian war, he omits how the Colorado volunteers started the war and conveniently jumps to the reluctant retaliations by the Indians, answering deadly and destructive raids against no less than five villages with mere horse theft actions. Actually he doesn't even do that. Instead he fast-forwards to the point in the ensuing tit-for-tat where the Indians drew first blood among settlers after several weeks, obviously to make them look more like aggressors. He then inserts a ghastly quote that describes the finding of the four-person Hungate family on June 11th 1864 outside Denver, the first settler family to die 8 weeks after the first army attacks on Cheyenne villagers. Goodrich neither explains this quote as pertaining to the Hungate killings nor does he explain that these happened in retaliation to the killing of an Arapahoe warrior by Nathan Hungate. His anonymized presentation serves to give the reader the impression that such things were happening every day - which they were not.- Goodrich: "Later that autumn, a band of Southern Cheyennes and Arapahoe under Black Kettle, aware of looming winter and weary of war, ceased their raiding and sued for peace"(p.3). That's totally manipulative again. Black Kettle had already sought out the commander of Fort Larned in July for peace talks and sent peace envoys to various Forts again in September. The only way to lure trigger-happy troop commanders into peace talks was to inform them about white prisoners and suggest a prisoner exchange. That was what finally worked for Black Kettle.- Next sentence by Goodrich: "Although territorial authorities refused to treat with the Indians until the remaining hostiles surrendered, Black Kettle's band was given a voucher of safety from a young Federal officer and allowed to camp in peace" (p.3). In reality there was a conference at Camp Weld outside Denver. And the "young Federal officer" was not so young, it was Chivington himself. Next: "The people of Colorado were outraged. [...] Punishment, not peace, should be the raiders' reward, most whites felt, and none was more violent on the matter or more determined to punish than Reverend John Chivington. Thus, above Sand Creek thus bright winter morning in 1864" What Goodrich omits is that Chivington himself had told the chiefs that they should lay down their arms and submit to military authority at Fort Lyon. The Indians at Sand Creek had done exactly that. Now he was sneaking up at dawn to massacre them. Goodrich chooses to completely obfuscate the murderous treachery by Chivington that Sand Creek was. Astonishingly, Goodrich then races through the actual carnage of Sand Creek in under one page. Why the sudden squeamishness and the haste? Isn't this the type of material this book is all about? This one morning at Sand Creek produced more quotable material on- families being ripped apart by artillery shells,- groups of women begging for their lives on their knees, then getting their brains blown out,- countless more variations on the child-or-woman-begs-for-mery-and-gets-callously-murdered-nevertheless theme,- target practice on fleeing toddlers,- troopers taking turns in deflowering still living, dying or very dead women,- murders of men, women and children taken captive etc., etc., etc. than years of White-Indian War. Why skip what the book is all about as it is allegedly about the brutality of the Indian Wars? Because the victims have the wrong skin color, that's why. To top it all, one third of that one page is

devoted to a story of a bale of white scalps having been found in the village (see? We only did bad things to bad people). Informed people know how this story developed. Sure, Sand Creek was all about scalps, hundreds of them. Only one scalp in this story was white. It was taken by a warrior when he killed a trooper who had strayed too far from the rest while hunting survivors. His fresh scalp was found later in the day by other troopers and created much alarm among the troopers who were themselves so busy with scalping dead and not yet dead villagers. Soon the story evolved, the scalp became half a dozen scalps, then a full dozen and finally a bale of scalps (which is nowhere to be found as it never existed). When a legend has matured to this level it's just ripe for Thomas Goodrich. There you go...With such propagandistic distortions disfiguring the entire narrative of the book, one is almost thankful that 80% of the book is not in the author's own words. The book ends just as preposterous as it starts. Adding insult to injury to the Cheyenne people, Goodrich copy-pastes some white folks musings about how unduly quickly the whites had forgiven the survivors of the 1878 Northern Cheyenne Exodus their fight for their freedom. This is a book written by a white racist for white racists. If you are white, scared of other races and feel like mentally preparing for the coming race war - this book has been written for you. However, if you are better than that, do yourself a favor and buy yourself a real history book.

3 von 3 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. The Indian wars from the participants view
Von Ein Kunde Tells the story of the indian fighting the decade after the Civil War. Much from letters and diaries. Gives some insights in the fighting but no analyzis, no tactics nor a good discussing summary. But you get the feeling of being at the "frontier".
1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. compelling reading
Von Ein Kunde Scalp Dance takes you on a factual ride through the plains. The eyewitness reports and letters make you feel you are really there and gives you insight into the brave Indians, settlers and soldiers who fought there. I'm glad I was only reading it.

Kurzbeschreibung Some of the most savage war in world history was waged on the American Plains from 1865 to 1879. As settlers moved west following the Civil War, they found powerful Indian tribes barring the way. When the U.S. Army intervened, a bloody and prolonged conflict ensued. Drawing heavily from diaries, letters, and memoirs from American Plains settlers, historian Thomas Goodrich weaves a spellbinding tale of life and death on the prairie, told in the timeless words of the participants themselves. Scalp Dance is a powerful, unforgettable epic that shatters modern myths. Within its pages, the reader will find a truthful account of Indian warfare as it occurred.

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