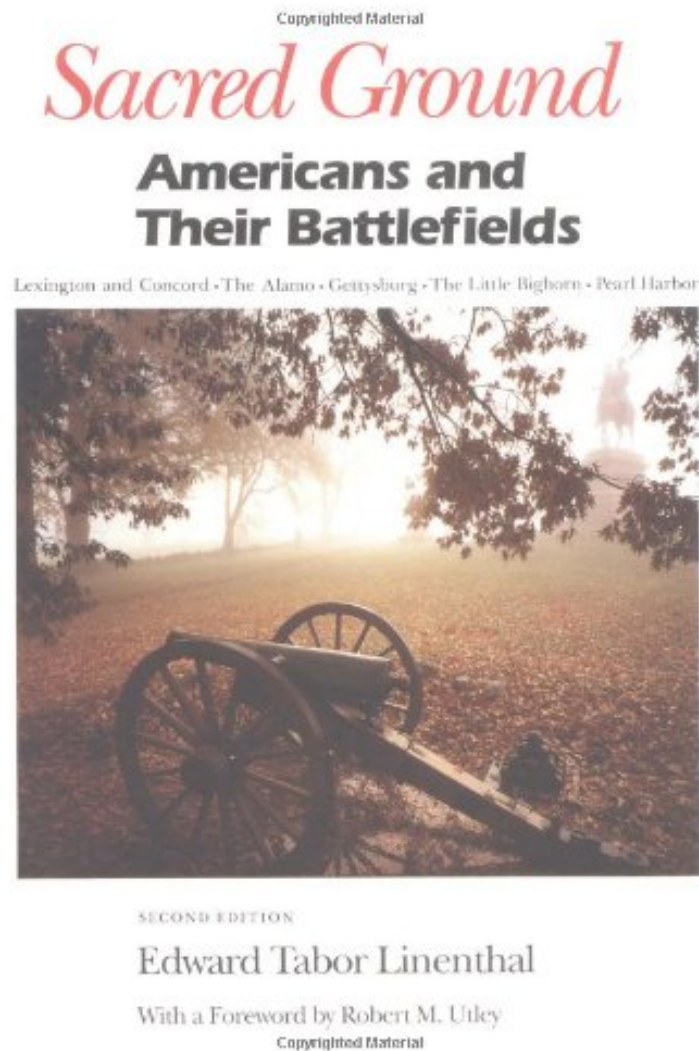


Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields

Edward Linenthal

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Edward Linenthal : Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A seminal account of the symbolic battles over battlefields By Arthur Digbee Linenthal looks at the battles for symbolic ownership of America's battlefields - - Lexington and Concord, the Alamo, Gettysburg, Little Bighorn, and Pearl Harbor. Each has great symbolic importance for American and each has a myth around it. More striking, four of the five are clearly "owned" by one side - - minutemen, white Texans, Custer buffs, and Americans. In contrast, Gettysburg celebrates the idea of reconciliation between Confederates and white Unionists, writing slavery, Reconstruction and Jim Crow out of the story. Each of these symbolic owners has faced

significant challenges from groups as different as Native Americans and the nuclear peace movement. This is a seminal book on the political struggles over these battlefields, and one of the few books to look at how the National Park Service interprets the national park units it manages. Linenthal often lets the NPS off the hook too easily, treating it as a political football between the warring camps. However, the NPS has been a partisan in these battles, most obviously at Little Bighorn. There, nearly a century of Custer worship under the Department of War and the NPS was only slowly dismantled, and the site still leans pro-Custer by any objective measure. The book includes a Foreword by Robert Utley, who as Assistant Director of the NPS, was involved in many of the decisions that Linenthal discusses. Utley has slowly come to realize two things about these battlefield sites - - despite his efforts to be neutral, the status quo privileges one side, and many citizens view these battlefields more as memorials that honor participants instead of being sites where the NPS educates visitors about history. Since it's been almost twenty years since the book was published, it is now out of date for Little Bighorn and perhaps some of the other sites. Even so, if you have enough interest in this topic to have reached this page, you will definitely want to read this book.

An authoritative study of the nature of the American patriotic spirit as observed in its most hallowed memorials (Kirkus Reviews), this book includes updates of each site, and offers the most thorough description and analysis of the 50th anniversary commemorations at Pearl Harbor. Photos.

"A blockbuster." -- Edwin C. Bearss, chief historian, National Park Service, and author of Vicksburg Campaign.