Battlespace 1865
Archaeology of the Landscapes, Strategies, and Tactics of the North Platte Campaign, Nebraska

By Douglas D. Scott, Peter Bleed and Amanda Renner

Key Features:
· Combines battlefield archaeology methods and results with historical data and personal accounts of a short but significant campaign of the American Civil War and onset of the Indian wars
· Examines the archaeological evidence for the theatres of specific engagements with LiDAR-informed terrain assessment and theoretical consideration of the strategic thinking of the combatants
· Applies a landscape approach to the archaeological study of war

For a period of about week in February 1865, as the Civil War was winding down and Plains Indian communities were reeling in the wake of the Sand Creek massacre, combat swept across the Nebraska panhandle, especially along the Platte River. The fighting that marked this event barely compares to the massive campaigns and terrible carnage that marked the conflict that was taking place in the eastern states but it was a significant event at the opening on the ensuing Indian Wars. Operating on terrain they knew well, Cheyenne warriors and other Native forces encountered the US Cavalry who operated within a modern network of long distance migration and pony express trails and military stations.

The North Platte Campaign offers a good basis for the application of landscape approaches to conflict archaeology if only because of its scale. This fighting is both easily approached and fascinatingly encompassed. Like many of the conflicts of interest to modern observers, the North Platte fights were between cultural different opponents. Archaeological consideration of battlefields such as Rush Creek and Mud Springs, bases, and landscapes associated with this fighting expose how the combat developed and how the opposing forces dealt with the challenges they encountered.

This study draws on techniques of battlefield archaeology, focusing on the concept of ‘battlespace’ and the recovery, distribution and analysis of artifacts and weaponry, as well as historical accounts of the participants, LiDAR-informed terrain assessment, and theoretical consideration of the strategic thinking of the combatants. It applies a landscape approach to the archaeological study of war and reveals an overlooked phase of the American Civil War and the opening of the Indian Wars.

About the Author:
Peter Bleed in Professor of Anthropology at the University of Nebraska.

Amanda Renner is an archeologist and GIS specialist with the National Park Service at the Midwest Archeological Center in Lincoln, Nebraska.
Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer
An American Hero

By Ronald D. Lankford

Ronald D. Lankford has written the definitive history of this iconic and much-loved Christmas character. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer was the creation of Robert May, a staff copywriter who wrote the original poem as a Montgomery Ward Christmas giveaway in 1939. More than 2.4 million copies were printed and given away that holiday season. Thus the legend began. Johnny Marks adapted the poem into what would become the Gene Autry hit "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," which instantly became and still remains one of the most popular Christmas songs of all time. The legend of Rudolph soared even higher with the Rankin/Bass stop-motion television special in 1964, which has gone on to inspire a cottage industry of toys and decorative items. In this festive and informed look at the most famous reindeer of all, Lankford discusses all of Rudolph's iterations, including comic books, sequels, advertising tie-ins, movies, and much more. Lankford has produced the first complete history of Rudolph that both celebrates and explains the undying popularity of Rudolph and his friends. The result is both a glowing tribute and a rigorously researched biography that will appeal to fans and lovers of classic American holiday culture.

About the Author:
From Darkness to Dynasty
The First 40 Years of the New England Patriots
By Jerry Thornton and Michael Holley

Love them or hate them, what New England has been able to do over the past 15 years is nothing short of remarkable. Now, not only boasting four Super Bowl Championships, the Patriots also have the best coach in the league, a smart and savvy front office, and a future Hall of Fame quarterback who is internationally recognized as the face of the NFL. And as the Patriots continue to dominate, on the field as well as in the media and the American pop culture landscape, the harder it is for anyone to remember them as anything other than a model franchise and the ultimate paradigm of success and accomplishment.

Anyone, that is, except for Jerry Thornton. It wasn’t always sunshine and roses for the Patriots; in fact, for the bulk of their existence, it was exactly the opposite. Though difficult to fathom now, the New England Patriots of old were not just bad—they were laughably bad. Not too long ago, the Pats were not only the laughingstock of the NFL, but of the entire sporting world.

From Darkness to Dynasty reveals the unlikely history of the New England Patriots as it has never been told before. From their humble beginnings as a team bought with rainy day money by a man who had no idea what he was doing to that fateful 2001 season that saw them win their first Super Bowl, Jerry Thornton shares the wild, humiliating, unbelievable, and wonderful stories that comprised the first 40 years of what would ultimately become the most dominant franchise in NFL history.

Witty, hilarious, and brutally honest, From Darkness to Dynasty returns to the thrilling, perilous days of yesteryear—a welcome corrective for those who hate the Patriots, and a useful reminder, for those who love them, that all glory is fleeting.

About the Author:
Jerry Thornton is a founder of Barstool Sports and a cohost of the daily Dale and Holley Show on WEEI, Boston’s leading sports radio station. In addition, Jerry is a standup comic who won the Boston Comedy Riot competition and has worked colleges and clubs all around New England. He has appeared on HBO’s Emmy Award-winning “Curse of the Bambino” and Comcast Sports New England and has written for ColdHardFootballFacts.com.