

Little Big Horn and The Alamo

by Phillip W. Weiss

The Battle of the Little Big Horn was a disaster. The Native Americans scored an overwhelming victory against a large force of American soldiers led by General George Armstrong Custer. Custer made three inexplicable errors of judgment that led to his spectacular and shocking defeat and death. First, he attacked a much larger enemy force. Second, he split his forces, leaving much of his force behind. Third, he attacked on flat land where there was no place to take cover. The Native Americans surrounded Custer, cut off any chance for him to retreat, and proceeded to destroy FIVE COMPANIES of U.S. Cavalry soldiers. The Native Americans scored a major victory, but it did not stop them from losing the war. By next year, the Native Americans had returned to the reservation. But to this day, the United States commemorates the Battle of the Little Big Horn, which is one of those events that continue to resonate across time.

In 1836, Americans suffered another major defeat at the Battle of the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas. The fundamental cause of this battle was a political dispute between Mexico, which had outlawed slavery, and Americans who wanted to extend slavery into Texas, which was part of Mexico. The Mexican army surrounds a garrison of Americans who take refuge in the Alamo. The Americans repeatedly refuse demands to surrender, and the Mexican forces attack and overwhelm the Americans, killing all of them. The Americans became martyrs for

freedom while the Mexicans, commanded by General Santa Ana, are demonized. What is played down is that the Americans who fought for the independence of Texas wanted to extend slavery.

The battle of the Alamo was a disaster. For the Americans, help was not on the way, at least not immediately. They were under siege. With no hope that help would arrive, they fought a battle they could not win. So, they fought to their death and today are honored as heroes.