



Our Bones Are Scattered: The Cawnpore Massacres and The Indian Mutiny Of 1857

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Rich in character and vivid detail, this first full-scale history of one of the central dramas of imperialism echoes in the mind like a great nineteenth-century novel. Our Bones Are Scattered recounts the bloodiest acts of one of the bloodiest rebellions in history - the siege and massacre of the European garrison at Cawnpore, India, and the terrible retribution that followed. Set in the doomed world of the British East India Company's domain, this riveting saga of folly, bravery, faith, and rage extends to the furthest reaches of human cruelty and strength. Among the extraordinary characters: Nana Sahib, the Mahratta prince whose extravagant hospitality won him the trust and friendship of the very Europeans who would be slaughtered in his name; the maimed and aging warhorse, Major General Sir Hugh Wheeler, who disastrously staked the lives of his Eurasian wife and children on his dream of commanding the Company's army; the brilliant Azimullah Khan, whose struggle from famine waif to Nana Sahib's emissary to London cultivated a genocidal loathing of the British; Jonah Shepherd, the pious Eurasian clerk who escaped the Entrenchment and survived as a prisoner of the rebels; the Mahratta brigadier Tatya Tope, whose resourceful courage as a guerrilla nearly compensated for his complicity in the Cawnpore massacres; Lieutenant Mowbray Thomson, who escaped the siege of one entrenchment only to withstand the siege of another; four American missionary families whose harrowing exodus down the Ganges would end in their destruction; Brigadier General James Neill, whose martial audacity was subsumed by an atrocious appetite for vengeance; and the beautiful Amy Horne, who was spared her life only to become a trooper's concubine. With a historian's authority and a novelist's empathy, Andrew Ward draws on unpublished letters and documents, years of research, and repeated trips to India and Great Britain to bring this monumental epic to life.

Our Bones Are Scattered: The Cawnpore Massacres and The Indian Mutiny Of 1857 Details

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Author : Andrew Ward

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From Reader Review Our Bones Are Scattered: The Cawnpore Massacres and The Indian Mutiny Of 1857 for online ebook

happy says

I have always found military history fascinating. Unfortunately my knowledge of the Great Mutiny has been lacking. I found this an excellent look at the beginnings and causes of the Great Mutiny of 1857. Mr. Ward makes good use of primary sources, first person accounts and has a nice turn of phrase. In this volume he specifically looks at Cawnpore and the resulting massacres of the garrison and the motivations it gave to the Imperial troops. “Remember Cawnpore” became their battle cry, much like “Remember the Alamo” was used by the Texans in their War of Independence from Mexico the 1830s.

Mr. Ward not only looks at the causes of the Mutiny, he explores the unpreparedness of the British in general and at Cawnpore specifically and the reasons behind that lack of preparation. He also provides good biographical sketches of the main participants on both sides. In telling the story he is remarkably even handed. To modern sensibilities, no one comes out looking good. The killings by both side was horrific. His description of the slaughter of the women and children, more than 160 people, held by the Nana Sahib in July of '57 is especially hard reading.

In exploring the various causes of the Mutiny, Mr. Ward discusses the role religion played. Not only was there a problem with the ammunition the Native Regiments were issued, but there was a fear of forced conversion to Christianity that native rebel leaders used to great effect. A major not-religious reason seems to be that the East India Company had recently annexed several Indian Monarchies, putting them under Company control causing discontent esp in the ruling classes

For those that don't know, the Sepoy regiments had recently been issued a new type of rifle. The ammunition for those rifles was coated in either beef or pork fat, which was an anathema to the Hindu and Moslem soldiers respectively. The author makes a good case that, while ammunition issue was important, it was more of a tipping point. He makes a good case that the other issues were festering and much more important.

As the mutinies began Cawnpore became a supposed safe refuge from the Mutiny and refugees flocked there. In telling the story of the siege and following massacres – there were two. The first occurred immediately after the surrender where most of the adult males were killed in an ambush as they were supposedly evacuating to British controlled areas. The surviving women and children were taken prisoner and held until the British relief forces were closing in, about 3 weeks later. The author does an excellent job of telling the stories of both the defenders and the attackers of the station of Cawnpore. He also follows people who didn't actually make it to Cawnpore, but were caught up in the Mutiny. The author also tells what happened to many of the survivors, both Indian and British, which I found interesting.

The author provides excellent footnotes and some of the best stories are contained in those notes

The only problem I had with this book is its lack of a glossary. The author uses Indian terms extensively and it can get confusing. That brings this down from a 5 star read to 4.25 for me.

Dipanjan says

First of all i frankly admit that the perusal of this book throughout three weeks resembles more or less a psychological torture on my peaceful mind. Indeed, as per author's own words from the preface of this book, the bones of countless hapless Indians, Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Eurasians, Hindoos, Muslims or Christians are scattered throughout each and every page of this unique book on the great Indian mutiny of 1857. Since our childhood we have been taught in the history classes of our school to hail the Mutiny of 1857 as the first war of Indian independence, while on the other part of the globe in Great Britain or rather in Europe it has been touted as Sepoy mutiny. We Indians, while reading the history of 1857 mutiny had attached ourselves emotionally with such stalwart rebel figures like Nana Sahib, Tatya Topi or The Queen of Jhansi Laxmibai. On the other hand the British generals like Henry Havelock, John Nicolsen or James Neill had become hate figures to us for their utmost cruelty to put down the rebellion.

But for the first time in life after going through this book i could not control my tears to learn about the massacre of the poor European women and children at the hands of the mutineers in Bibighar as well as in other sites where the mutiny had spread its black shadows. Infact a few questions are hammering upon my mind. First had not the mutineers massacred the British women and children, would the Britishers also have spared the women and children of the mutineers from the retribution in form of rape and murder ? Second had Nana Sahib been able to defeat the British army and driven them out of Cawnpur forever, would the mutineers have shown mercy on the British women and children imprisoned in Bibighar and had allowed them a safe passage to Calcutta?

I am afraid to say that i am doubtful about both of these probabilities. Massacre-revenge-counter-revenge the vicious cycle rolls on and on over the surface of the so-called farce named civilization. There is seemingly no end of it. Dresden bombing in response to London Blitz, Hiroshima-Nagasaki to avenge Pearl Harbour, Second world war and Holocaust to avenge the humiliation of Versailles treaty, the bloody conflict between Israel-Palestine or more recently invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan to avenge the destruction of twin towers. Do the 'children Of God' have no chance of escape from the vicious play of revenge and counter-revenge ? Perhaps the human beings are the only living being to descend into the nadir of such hateful barbarity as described from the title page to colophon of this book. While reading this book it seemed to me as if both the British rulers and the Indian mutineers had locked horn with each other in sheer madness to prove whose method of killing is more ingenious and barbaric. Really the human beings possess such superhuman capacity to hate each other !!!!

At the end i personally thank Mr. Andrew Ward for writing such a tremendous book on this cataclysmic event of the British-Indian empire and for unlike most Western historians presenting the history of the Indian mutiny from an unbiased standpoint. Really very few books shook me so much as this book did.

Andrew Otis says

An incredible undertaking, sometimes bogs down and is perhaps too much.

Mahesh Andar says

Desperately want to get hold of a copy of this book. Not available with Flipkart.com

Alex Baker says

A devastating, merciless account of a seminal event in the British and Indian imagination. The author delivers on his promise to provide an exhaustive and unflinching version of events, allowing the tragedy to unfold in deliberate detail. That makes for an an impressive achievement, but maybe not a good recommendation for someone looking for a general book on Indian history or an introduction to the mutiny. This book goes DEEP.

Tom Williams says

This is probably the definitive book on the massacre at Cawnpore. It is truly excellent. The only reason for not giving it five stars is that it is long and detailed and probably too much for anyone not already interested in the subject. For anyone interested in what happened at Cawnpore, it's essential reading. When I was researching my novel, 'Cawnpore', it was invaluable.

Mike says

I love history, especially military history. I can't help but wonder what I would have done when faced with the same situations as historical figures. Of course, I am glad I live now and don't have to actually find out. That is especially true in the case of the 1857 Indian Mutiny, Sepoy Rebellion or 1st War of Indian Independence, depending on where you sit. I only knew vaguely of the Mutiny, usually as an aside as I read about Afghan history, just a footnote to that story. Here in *Our Bones Are Scattered: The Cawnpore Massacres and The Indian Mutiny Of 1857*, I remedied the lack of knowledge with a **5 Star** intense focus on one key British settlement, Cawnpore. It is a truly horrific story and I only recommend it for those with a strong constitution. The various massacres and slaughter are tough to read about. Ward does not present gratuitous violence but he doesn't shy away from telling what happened, both sides come away bloody and guilty.

The history of the British takeover of India is only briefly covered. The action is focused on the reasons for the revolt, what happened and who the main players were. Most of the story revolves around the three week long siege at Cawnpore, how it ended and the resulting actions to put down the Mutiny and rescue/or fail to rescue the besieged locales. Written by an American who grew up in India, he attempts to tell an even-handed account and mostly achieves that. Copiously footnoted, you have to read the footnotes in the back as you progress. Great information and background there.

This is a story of religious, cultural, caste, racial and class conflict. Mix all these up and you get some of the worst excesses of violence. There are also instances of bravery and humanity. Highly recommended!

Martin Empson says

This is an absolutely wonderful piece of historical writing. It has often been said that victors write history. This is absolutely true of the Indian Mutiny. For years the narrative focused on the appalling violence and betrayal of the rebels, without putting it into context, while the British response was downplayed or ignored. Andrew Ward's detailed, scrupulously researched and extremely well written history rectifies this. I encourage you to read it.

Full review on the blog: <http://resolutereader.blogspot.co.uk/...>

Jeff says

Solid if depressing read of one portion of the Sepoy Rebellion, with excesses on both sides.

Sue Duse says

The history of the Indian Mutiny has always fascinated me. It is a classic example of colonial arrogance in the face of racial and religious prejudice. This book is the best modern account of the incidents leading up to the dreadful Cawnpore massacre, and subsequent punishment of the subjected peoples of the Indian subcontinent. Stupidity and horror that set the stage for the end of the Raj, and the British Empire.

Jestyn says

Grim, but illuminating insight into the mess that was the Indian Mutiny. Neither side comes out particularly well - the casual slaughter on both sides was horrific.

Gordon Frye says

A well researched and well written book about the Indian Mutiny of 1857, specifically on the siege of Cawnpore. Written by a local fellow from Bainbridge Island, of all things. LOTS of footnotes!
