
Peabody Museum Curator Castle McLaughlin wins Western Heritage Award

(Cambridge, February 24, 2015) The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology is pleased to announce that Peabody Museum Curator, Castle McLaughlin's *A Lakota War Book from the Little Bighorn: The Pictographic "Autobiography of Half Moon* has been selected as this year's winner of the Western Heritage Award for **Outstanding Nonfiction Book**. Presented by the **National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum**, the Western Heritage Awards were established in 1961 "to honor and encourage the legacy of those whose works in literature, music, film, and television reflect the significant stories of the American West." ... Each honoree receives a Wrangler, an impressive bronze sculpture of a cowboy on horseback."

In being recognized for her superb research and writing, Castle joins such giants in writing the history of the West as Robert Utley (*Geronimo*, 2013, plus 2 earlier awards), Paul Hedren (*After Custer: Loss and Transformation in Sioux Country*, 2012), Richard White ("*It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own*": *A New History of the American West* 1992), Eliot West (*The Last Indian War*, 2010), Max Evans (*For the Love of a Horse*, 2008), Timothy Egan (*The Worst Hard Time*, 2007), Alvin M. Josephy Jr (*The American Heritage History of the Great West*, 1966), and (a personal favorite) Dan O'Brien (*Buffalo for the Broken Heart*, 2002).

The award will be presented at a gala dinner ceremony in Oklahoma City on April 18th. Read more about it: <http://nationalcowboymuseum.org/awards-halls-of-fame/western-heritage-awards/>

A Lakota War Book from the Little Bighorn: The Pictographic "Autobiography of Half Moon is a co-publication of [Houghton Library](#) and [Peabody Museum Press](#). It is the fourth volume in the Houghton Library Studies series, an innovative cultural analysis of the extraordinary composite document titled by its compiler "The Pictorial Autobiography of Half Moon, an Uncpapa Sioux Chief." At its core is a nineteenth-century ledger book of pictographic drawings by Lakota Sioux warriors found in 1876 in a funerary tipi on the Little Bighorn battlefield after Custer's defeat. Journalist Phocion Howard later added an illustrated introduction and had it bound into the beautiful manuscript that is reproduced in complete color facsimile here.

Howard attributed all seventy-seven Native drawings to a "chief" named Half Moon, but anthropologist Castle McLaughlin demonstrates that these dramatic scenes, mostly of war exploits, were drawn by at least six different warrior-artists. Their vivid first-person

depictions make up a rare Native American record of historic events that likely occurred between 1866 and 1868 during Red Cloud's War along the Bozeman Trail.

McLaughlin probes the complex life history of this unique artifact of cross-cultural engagement, uncovering its origins, ownership, and cultural and historic significance, and compares it with other early ledger books. Examining how allied Lakota and Cheyenne warriors valued these graphic records of warfare as both objects and images, she introduces the concept of "war books"—documents that were captured and altered by Native warrior-artists to appropriate the strategic power of Euroamerican literacy.

Castle McLaughlin is a Museum curator of North American Ethnography at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University. An exhibition based on the Lakota War book is currently on view: *Wiyohpiyata: Lakota Images of the Contested West*. Castle is also the author of *Arts of Diplomacy: Lewis and Clark's Indian Collection*. (Peabody Museum Press and University of Washington Press: 2003.)