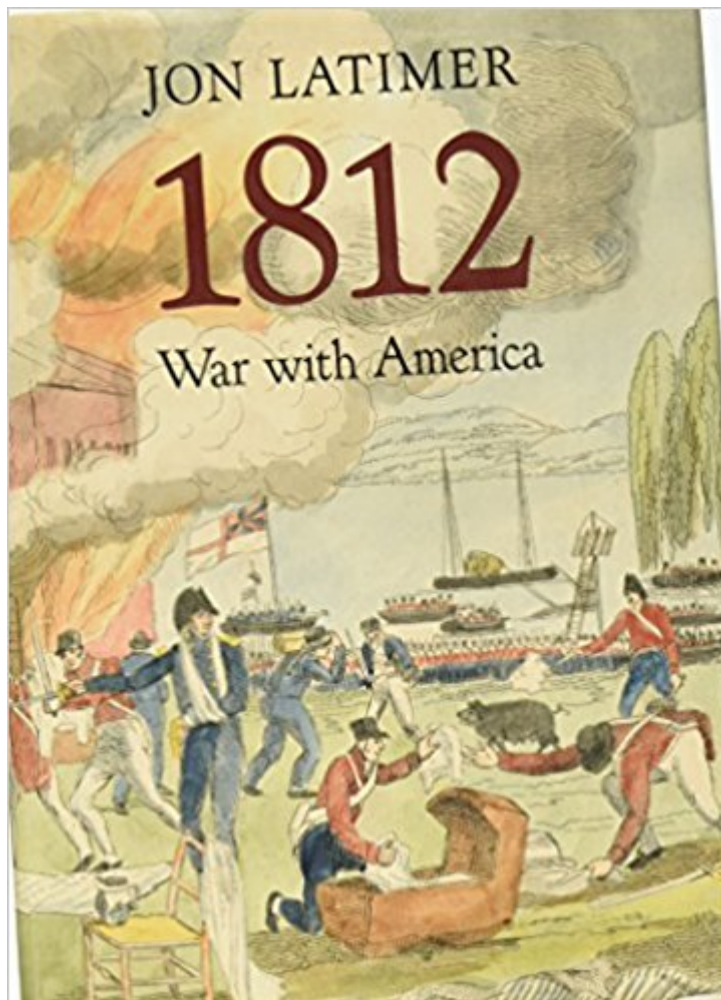


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1812: War With America



Synopsis

Listen to a short interview with Jon Latimer Host: Chris Gondek | Producer: Heron & Crane In the first complete history of the War of 1812 written from a British perspective, Jon Latimer offers an authoritative and compelling account that places the conflict in its strategic context within the Napoleonic wars. The British viewed the War of 1812 as an ill-fated attempt by the young American republic to annex Canada. For British Canada, populated by many loyalists who had fled the American Revolution, this was a war for survival. The Americans aimed both to assert their nationhood on the global stage and to expand their territory northward and westward. Americans would later find in this war many iconic moments in their national story--the bombardment of Fort McHenry (the inspiration for Francis Scott Key's "Star Spangled Banner"); the Battle of Lake Erie; the burning of Washington; the death of Tecumseh; Andrew Jackson's victory at New Orleans--but their war of conquest was ultimately a failure. Even the issues of neutrality and impressment that had triggered the war were not resolved in the peace treaty. For Britain, the war was subsumed under a long conflict to stop Napoleon and to preserve the empire. The one lasting result of the war was in Canada, where the British victory eliminated the threat of American conquest, and set Canadians on the road toward confederation. Latimer describes events not merely through the eyes of generals, admirals, and politicians but through those of the soldiers, sailors, and ordinary people who were directly affected. Drawing on personal letters, diaries, and memoirs, he crafts an intimate narrative that marches the reader into the heat of battle.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

An exhaustive reassessment of a war neither side really won. (Kirkus Reviews 2007-07-15)The history of the war has been written mainly by Americans. Jon Latimer has now provided a full account, mainly from the British standpoint and often using British sources hitherto disregarded by American historians. It is a very credible effort and a substantial volume...The fact is the war of 1812, which Latimer describes so well, taught both Britain and America that war between them was futile and shameful. --Paul Johnson (Literary Review 2007-10-01)In this welcome British perspective to the canon of research on the War of 1812, Latimer convincingly debunks the popular myth that this was a second war of independence and a total victory for the United States...The financial deficiencies, administrative mishaps, and military mistakes on both sides are examined in thorough detail, making for a balanced and enlightening account. --Douglas King (Library Journal 2007-09-01)Of all the books I've consumed on the War of 1812, Jon Latimer's 1812: War with America has got to be the best...It is the most comprehensive narrative of the war you're likely to find. --Hans Werner (Toronto Star 2007-11-11)[Latimer] is particularly good at establishing the complicated connections between the negotiations that ended the war in America and the wider European peace settlement. --Stephen Conway (Times Literary Supplement 2008-03-07)Latimer promises and delivers a comprehensive investigation of the War of 1812 from a British perspective. What Latimer has provided is a densely detailed and balanced study. He examines the issues from the perspectives of all participants: Americans, Britons, Canadians, and Indians. His approach is broad, weaving political, diplomatic, financial, social, military, and naval activities into a coherent whole. His work is buttressed by the skillful use of the best scholarship and is further supported by extensive personal accounts of the participants which contribute to an already engaging style. --Richard V. Barbuto (Journal of Military History 2008-04-01)This insightful and comprehensive study of the War of 1812 is particularly valuable because it presents that conflict from the perspective of America's enemy. Latimer's British point of view—in which he sees the war as a subset of the war with Napoleon, rather than as the separate conflict we often view it as—may not be wholly appreciated by U.S. readers. But this impressively researched and well-written account is a fascinating revelation that serves as an excellent mirror in which to study ourselves. --Thomas J. Cutler (Proceedings 2008-05-01)This is a history of the War of 1812 written from the British perspective, using the personal letters, diaries, and memoirs of the generals, admirals, politicians, plus the ordinary soldiers, seamen, and civilians caught up in the conflict. It is a comprehensive and fast-paced narrative that brings the conflict vividly to life, from its causes that emanated from the Napoleonic War in Europe, to the conclusion of peace in 1814...1812: War with America is a comprehensible and very readable account of the conflict. By examining the story from

the British perspective, the author places the war within its global context as perceived by Great Britain at the time. As such, it is a very valuable addition to any library on this subject. --Paul Chamberlain (First Empire)any books have been written about the War of 1812 in the last few years, but none quite like Jon Latimer's 1812: War with America. The author of histories of British arms in the Burma and North African campaigns in World War II, Latimer has written the first book on the the War of 1812 from the British perspective since nearly two centuries ago. The result is a thorough and elegantly written account that squarely places the conflict in the context of the Napoleonic Wars...1812: War with America covers all aspects of the conflict, including diplomacy, finances, atrocities perpetrated by and against the Indians, the naval campaigns at sea and on the Great Lakes, and the land campaigns in the Old Northwest, the South, and Canada...With wit and pathos, [Latimer] has drawn wonderful capsule sketches of the participants, and his staggering research as led to illuminating first-hand accounts of marches and battles from leading generals to lowly sergeants...1812: War with America is a detailed study of a still-obscure war from the British perspective, insightful, written with panache, and backed by massive research. --Frederick C. Leiner (United States Naval Institute)

Jon Latimer lectured at the University of Wales, Swansea and served in the Territorial Army. He is the author of 1812: War with America and Alamein (both from Harvard).

This well researched and written book, describing the War of 1812 from the English point of view is an excellent counterbalance to the many books written from the American standpoint. Each chapter is relatively short, centered on one topic and includes both sea and land actions, supported by the political thinking behind them. Given the current 2012 interest in trade sanctions it is interesting to read of them being used in the past and the various measures by the sectors most affected, producers, shippers, and traders to bypass the governments attempts to limit curtail the effects of these transactions on their businesses. The maps are very helpful in visualising the various areas most closely involved. From the point of view of a genealogist, the many names that appear in the text provide ideas for further research into the part your family played in this war.

Although I was somewhat familiar with political issues of that time, this is the first book I have read about the war itself. Besides giving an international overview of the war from the British perspective, Latimer provides many fine and personal details of battles and skirmishes of American involvement - far more than I was anticipating. Judging from the extent of detail, I'd say that this is pretty well

researched. Before receiving this book, the 600+ pages sounded like a long read. However, 143 pages are devoted to notes and 57 pages to bibliography.

If what you know about the War of 1812 amounts to a bunch of pretty embarrassing American losses in Canada (and pretty much elsewhere), a few wins at sea, and oh, yes, the burning of Washington, D.C....well, you have it in one. No, I don't count the "Battle of New Orleans" as a win (the song or the battle). But there's so much more to the story, so much nuance. 1812: War with America lays it all out. Take the New England Federalists who traded with the British throughout the war (and the wartime American crops that went to feed Wellington's troops). They were paid in specie, a rare commodity at the time, and those New England riches went on to fund the American Industrial Revolution. It may not be obvious from the title, but this is a rare history of the War of 1812 (the American War, to the British at the time), written from a British point of view. It's the most thorough history of the war I've ever read, and I've read a few. The book is really only 408 pages (not 656). The rest are notes, AMAZING notes, and bibliography. The notes alone make this book worth the investment. I spent as much time perusing them and discovering sources that I want to read as I did reading the actual text. There are places where I bristled. I think I'm open-minded and skeptical, but some national heroes/myths die hard. Every time I felt I was getting little annoyed or wondering about British bias (a complaint I'd seen in other reviews), I stopped and realized that my bias was what was causing the cognitive dissonance. It was painful to realize how far astray I'd been led. (However, I'm still pissed off about the sack of Washington. The Library of Congress! Bastards!) Definitely a must-read if you love American history, especially during these bicentennial years. Truly masterful. (It's also the only history that I've read and thought, "Damn, I wish I'd written this.")

A good history of the 1812 War. Particularly as it shows the rampant imperialistic expansionism that was prevalent in the US during the 1800's.

Jon Latimer approached this book on the War of 1812 with a goal to set this war in a broader context and to introduce a substantial amount of English archival material about the conflict. The work is well written, authoritative, and thoroughly documented. The work provides a fascinating context for understanding the United State's aspirations towards Canada and its' virulent anglophobia that persisted until the advent of World War II. My only problem with this book was that it was sometimes hard to distinguish between the affiliations of the officers and units engaged in the

conflict (make a "cheat sheet"). A good read for anyone who wishes to have a deeper understanding about this complex and confused skirmish with our English kin.

This book is well researched and it would not surprise me if others who have read more about the War of 1812 thought this book to be the most comprehensive. That being said, I found the presentation to be on the dry side. Sometimes history books are written in a manner so as to inspire me to read as much additional information I can about the subject matter. Perhaps, because this book is so thorough, I did not feel that inspiration here. At the end of the day, I was just a little bored with the War of 1812.

Full of information. Clearly, well researched. I am enjoying it and am going to finish it. But, this book is missing oomph of some kind. It does not have a holistic feel to it. Does not seem to be tied together well from a strategic standpoint.

The story as viewed from the British perspective. Very detailed and an easy read. Great book!!!

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