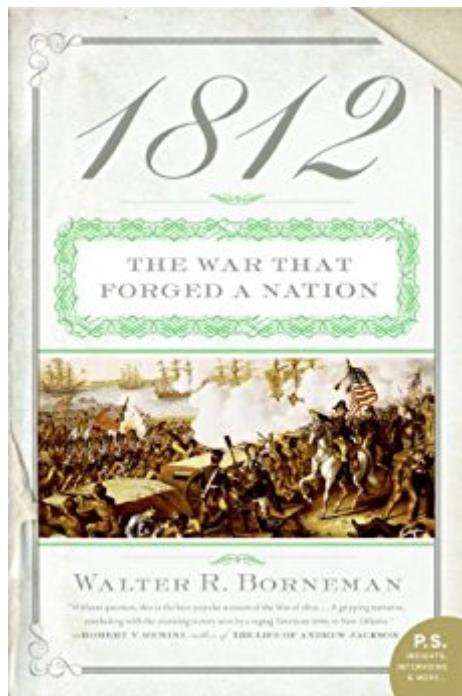


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1812: The War Of 1812



Synopsis

In June 1812 the still-infant United States had the audacity to declare war on the British Empire. Fought between creaking sailing ships and armies often led by bumbling generals, the ensuing conflict featured a tit-for-tat "You burned our capital, so we'll burn yours" and a legendary battle unknowingly fought after the signing of a peace treaty. During the course of the war, the young American navy proved its mettle as the USS Constitution, "Old Ironsides," sent two first-rate British frigates to the bottom, and a twenty-seven-year-old lieutenant named Oliver Hazard Perry hoisted a flag exhorting, "Don't Give Up the Ship," and chased the British from Lake Erie. By 1814, however, the United States was no longer fighting for free trade, sailors' rights, and as much of Canada as it could grab, but for its very existence as a nation. With Washington in flames, only a valiant defense at Fort McHenry saved Baltimore from a similar fate. Here are the stories of commanding generals such as America's Henry "Granny" Dearborn, double-dealing James Wilkinson, and feisty Andrew Jackson, as well as Great Britain's gallant Sir Isaac Brock, overly cautious Sir George Prevost, and Rear Admiral George Cockburn, the man who put the torch to Washington. Here too are those inadvertently caught up in the war, from heroine farm wife Laura Secord, whom some call Canada's Paul Revere, to country doctor William Beanes, whose capture set the stage for Francis Scott Key to write "The Star-Spangled Banner." 1812: The War That Forged a Nation presents a sweeping narrative that emphasizes the struggle's importance to America's coming-of-age as a nation. Though frequently overlooked between the American Revolution and the Civil War, the War of 1812 did indeed span half a continent -- from Mackinac Island to New Orleans, and Lake Champlain to Horseshoe Bend -- and it paved the way for the conquest of the other half. During the War of 1812, the United States cast aside its cloak of colonial adolescence and -- with both humiliating and glorious moments -- found the fire that was to forge a nation.

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Customer Reviews

This book was ok, but for me a little hard to follow.

This is a very readable account of the War of 1812 aimed at ordinary readers who want to learn more about it. Borneman is not really a historian, or at least not an academic historian; this is reflected in his bibliography which consists mostly of secondary sources. So, there is nothing new here that has not been told in other books. But I don't have any problem with that. I got just what I wanted from the book: a brief history (under 300 pages) of the war that was informative, accurate, well organized, and enjoyable to read. Some reviewers have criticized Borneman's writing style which is very familiar and conversational; I did not mind it. Borneman sensibly split his narrative into 3 parts: "Drumbeats", "Bugles", and "Finale". The first covers the events that lead to the war. The second covers the first part of the war in which America took the offensive, attempting several times to conquer parts of Canada. The third covers the last year of the war during which America was on the defensive against an England no longer restrained by the Napoleonic War in Europe. He does a good job covering both the land and naval engagements. While there are some maps, some extra or improved ones would have helped since some locations described in the text were not on any maps. My only real caveat (which other reviewers have shared) is that Borneman claims on his final page (and his subtitle) that the War of 1812 made the United States more united and changed the nature of the "United States" from a plural to a singular term. Given the fact (which he acknowledges) that we still had to fight the Civil War, this seems farfetched. While it might be true that Americans after the war chose to fondly remember their victories and forget their defeats, there was still a lot of division between the different regions of the country. It took a lot longer for the

"United States" to really be a singular entity.

I bought this book a while ago and it sat on my shelf. I lost interest in this topic but needed a book that was a quick read. Once I began, each page drew me in and it turned out to be a very good book - easily readable and can be read in a few days time. The author gives the reader a great overview of the causes leading up to the war, the main battle both on land and sea and the political ongoings during the war up to the treaty of Ghent. It was written in a quick pace, interesting style. So a matter-of-fact book turned out to be an excellent book in my opinion. This is a good pick for someone wanting to get the "summary" version and not get bogged down in dry, cumbersome details. I will say my knowledge increased greatly on this subject and was a pleasure to read.

Sometimes it was difficult to remember which side (country) the participants in the war(s) were connected to. May be because of my old mind trying to retain such information. Regarding the maritime issues, I experienced the same problems keeping the entities separate. All in all, I enjoyed my journey through this historical book.

A bit tongue-in-cheek but an enjoyable account of the War of 1812. Covering the major as well as the minor battles on both sea and land, it provides a brief but thorough account of the entire conflict including the events leading up to the war and the aftermath. Well worth reading for those interested in early American history.

Well written book for anyone interested in history. A few too many subjective descriptions on the part of the author and at times difficult to keep track of the myriad "players" but overall it held my interest.

I suspect that most Americans are like me: they know much more about the Revolutionary War and the Civil War than they know about the War of 1812. Borneman's book gave me a solid foundation of understanding. It is engaging and fun to read and, in my view, proves its main thesis that the War of 1812 played a major role in shaping and transforming the young nation into one with a genuine national consciousness.

The depiction of the war and what it meant to bring the states into a nation was incredible. The war itself was high drama but more importantly the establishment of our Navy, and Army were truly

fascinating. Would recommend this to any history buff. Great read and engaging. The Champlain battle and New Orleans were depicted clearly and the outcome for the British was telling.

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