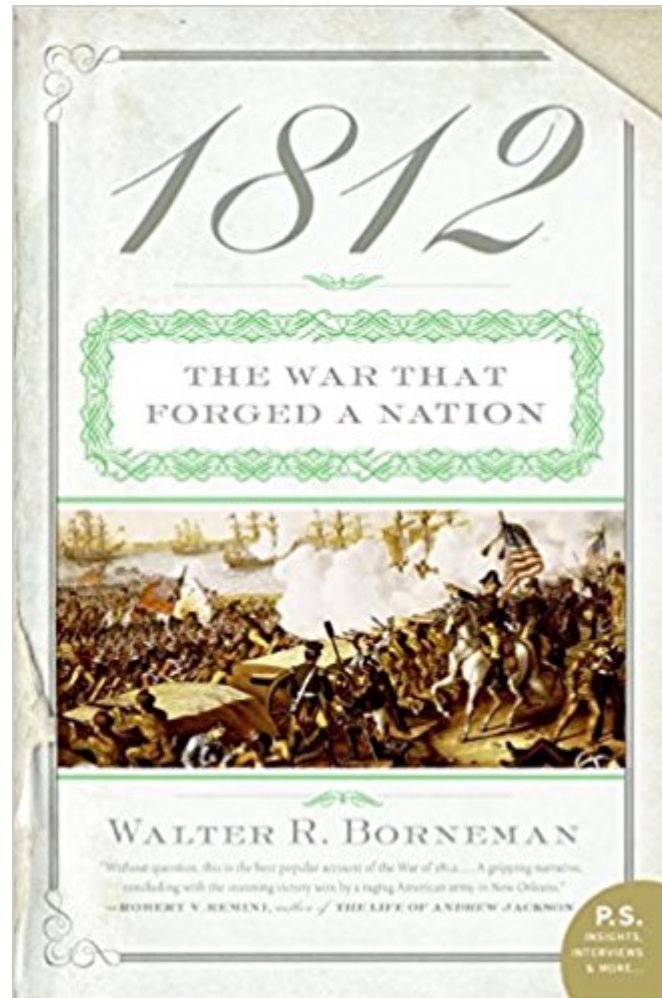




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1812: The War That Forged A Nation



Synopsis

Although frequently overlooked between the American Revolution and the Civil War, the War of 1812 tested a rising generation of American leaders; unified the United States with a renewed sense of national purpose; and set the stage for westward expansion from Mackinac Island to the Gulf of Mexico. USS Constitution, "Old Ironsides," proved the mettle of the fledgling American navy; Oliver Hazard Perry hoisted a flag boasting, "Don't Give Up the Ship"; and Andrew Jackson's ragged force stood behind its cotton bales at New Orleans and bested the pride of British regulars. Here are the stories of commanding generals such as America's double-dealing James Wilkinson, Great Britain's gallant Sir Isaac Brock, Canada's heroine farm wife Laura Secord, and country doctor William Beanes, whose capture set the stage for Francis Scott Key to write "The Star-Spangled Banner." During the War of 1812, the United States cast off its cloak of colonial adolescence and - with both humiliating and glorious moments - found the fire that was to forge a nation. This P.S. edition features an extra 16 pages of insights into the book, including author interviews, recommended reading, and more.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This thoroughly readable popular history of the War of 1812 may exaggerate in its claim that the war forged America's national identity; after all, there were enough regional identities left lying around after the conflict to cause a national civil war. But otherwise it's a fine narrative history that traces the major events of the war, from the preliminary plots by James Wilkinson and Aaron Burr that revealed the ambitions of Westerners for territorial expansion, through New

England's secessionist Hartford Convention to the Battle of New Orleans, which wrapped up the war in 1815. Borneman makes clear that the performance of the American army was mostly disgraceful, that the Canadians can pat themselves on the back for courage and endurance and that the decisive victory of the American navy was not the famous frigate duels but the Battle of Lake Champlain in 1814. Borneman (*Alaska: Saga of a Bold Land*) is also strong in vivid personal portraits (the gigantic Winfield Scott and the diminutive and sickly James Madison) and evenhanded as far as atrocities (too many, by all parties) are concerned. Even the annotation and bibliography of this sound introduction will propel those whose curiosity is piqued to read further in all directions. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From the ample literature about the War of 1812, which includes Theodore Roosevelt's minor classic *The Naval War of 1812* (1882), Borneman extracts people and events and integrates them into a popular narrative of the conflict's campaigns and battles. Ultimately, the war with Great Britain became a stalemate, lending the conflict the appearance of futility, but historians such as Andrew Jackson biographer Robert Remini regard the war as a second American war of independence. This is generally Borneman's stance as he relates the major American grievance against Britain--its seizures of American sailors and ships. However, Borneman also makes clear that the drive of aggressive "war hawks" to declare war was rooted in their desire to capture Canada and Florida. Toss in the horrifically remorseless Creek War, plus Shawnee warrior Tecumseh's exhortations for a last stand against white settlement, and the result is a geographically spacious and violent drama. A lively narrator and explainer of a war fought with muskets and sailing ships, Borneman will be welcomed by military-history readers. Gilbert Taylor Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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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