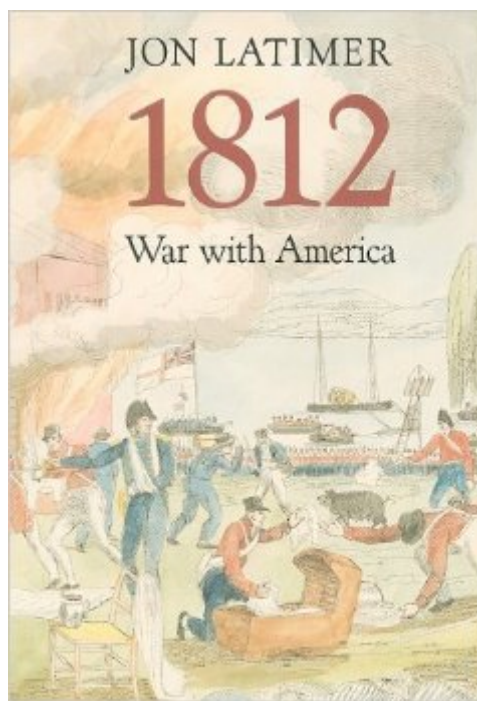


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1812: War With America



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

The War of 1812 is rarely referenced outside of predominantly American historiography. Often presented by Americans as a second war of independence that resulted in the burning of the White House, Jon Latimer in *1812: War with America*, challenges this simplistic representation with a lively description of a much more complex and nuanced conflict. Latimer, citing extensive source material, argues that the War of 1812 was not a second war for independence created by "simple arrogance" on the part of the British rather a policy of economic warfare against France of which Britain was locked in a twenty plus year conflict for survival of which the conflict with the Americans was a mere distraction (pg 4). Most importantly though Latimer argues that the War of 1812 was "fundamentally a failed war of conquest" by the United States which desired to take control of Canada resulting in Canada becoming a separate nation free of British and American control. For most citizens of the United States the War of 1812 is usually tied to the bombardment of Fort McHenry which inspired Francis Scott Key's "The Star Spangled Banner" or perhaps Andrew Jackson's victory at New Orleans. Rarely though do we hear of the United States desire to annex Canada which Latimer convincingly argues was one of the main reasons behind many in the pro war camp of US government (pg 30-31). While the US was stymied in its attempts at annexing Canada, and was unable to resolve the issues of neutrality and impressments, for which the moral argument for war was based the British came out of the war having obtained many of their goals.

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