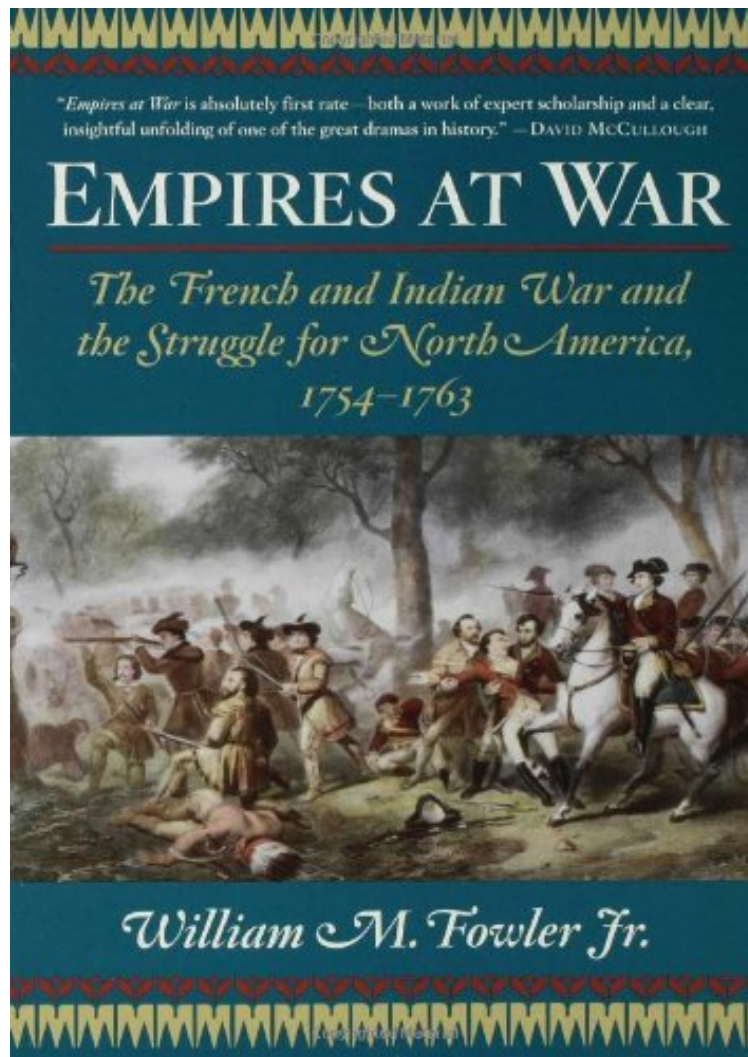


Empires at War: The French and Indian War and the Struggle for North America, 1754-1763

William M. Fowler Jr.

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William M. Fowler Jr. : Empires at War: The French and Indian War and the Struggle for North America, 1754-1763 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Empires at War: The French and Indian War and the Struggle for North America, 1754-1763:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Utterly FascinatingBy CustomerIn depth, well written, abs extremely absorbing. A fantastic introductory book on the French and Indian War.Most exciting was the addition of what happen to the true losers of the war, Native Americans.My only qualm would be the numerous spelling and grammatical errors from poor transition to this e-book version.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A

decent accounting of the war. By Stuart D. Hatfield This account of the French and Indian war is one of the more suckable ones out there. Delves in the details while at the same time giving you a bit of background. Although the authors style could be considered cold you have to remember that this is a book more concerned with the facts and actions than the stories. It is good for what it is. 6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Vital history By NA Miles As many have noted, the French and Indian War is ignored by historians far too often. In school, if history is still taught amongst all the modern PC nonsense, US history begins with the American Revolution; but any world (or US) history class should begin here. Though the F I War was surely overshadowed by the Revolutionary War just a few short years later, it was, no doubt, the first world war with its global impact undeniable and indelible. Fowler does a masterful job retelling the story in lurid fashion with no stone unturned and few dull moments. I do believe he covers the global impact of the war, contrarily to one prior reviewer. If anything, he might spend too much time on that side at the onset and in the seemingly endless chapters 11 12, since the book is about "the struggle for North America" after all. My only criticisms, and they're such small ones that I still gave the book the maximum stars, is that it could truly be 50-100 pages shorter. I know historians, of which I am one, can be wordy and drone on about an incident over 25-35 pages that could be relayed in 10-15, and Fowler does that a few times, especially at the end. The book could be just as informative and magnificent in 220 pages, frankly. I mused this a few times. There are also perhaps a few too many high level words, which I don't believe he uses to show off, but at the same time, makes this book above the level of any high school student, and here in 2009, probably too esoteric for most collegians. That's unfortunate yet true. But all in all, despite some PC/self-loathing whining about "the natives" in the closing pages, a wonderful and necessary read.

On May 28, 1754, a group of militia and Indians led by twenty-two-year-old major George Washington surprised a camp of sleeping French soldiers near present-day Pittsburgh. Washington could not have known it, but the brief and deadly exchange of fire that ensued lit the match that, in Horace Walpole's memorable phrase, would "set the world on fire." The resulting French and Indian War in North America became part of the global conflict known as the Seven Years War, fought across Europe, India, and the East and West Indies. Before it ended, nearly one million men had died. *Empires at War* captures the sweeping panorama of this first world war, especially in its descriptions of the strategy and intensity of the engagements in North America, many of them epic struggles between armies in the wilderness. William M. Fowler Jr. views the conflict both from British prime minister William Pitt's perspective-- as a vast chessboard, on which William Shirley's campaign in North America and the fortunes of Frederick the Great of Prussia were connected-- and from that of field commanders on the ground in America and Canada, who contended with disease, brutal weather, and scant supplies, frequently having to build the very roads they marched on. As in any conflict, individuals and events stand out: Sir William Johnson, a baronet and a major general of the British forces, who sometimes painted his face and dressed like a warrior when he fought beside his Indian allies; Edward Braddock's doomed march across Pennsylvania; the valiant French defense of Fort Ticonderoga; and the legendary battle for Quebec between armies led by the aristocratic French tactical genius, the marquis de Montcalm, and the gallant, if erratic, young Englishman James Wolfe-- both of whom died on the Plains of Abraham on September 13, 1759. For many, the French and Indian War has been merely the backdrop for James Fenimore Cooper's famous novel, *The Last of the Mohicans*. William M. Fowler Jr.'s engrossing narrative reveals it to have been a turning point of modern history, without which the American Revolution as we know it might well not have occurred.

.com Most histories of the Seven Years' War focus on either the European or the North American theatre of the war. William Fowler's *Empires at War* is original, and praiseworthy, because he troubles to set the North American conflict in the European context. Bravo! Written in lively and engaging prose, *Empires at War* tells the story of what Fowler calls the "first world war." By keeping one foot in the North American wilderness and the other in the courts of Europe, Fowler makes a strong claim for the critical importance of early Canadian history to the history of the world. Fowler is also to be praised for the prominent role he assigns to the First Nations of eastern North America, who fought according to their own agendas and not merely as French or British auxiliaries. A third strength of this work is to found in Fowler's willingness to shatter myths. For example, many American historians have chosen to ignore George Washington's shameful conduct at Jumonville Glen, or they have looked for excuses for it. Fowler, to his credit, lays the blame right where it belongs: "It remains an open question why Washington felt compelled to attack a sleeping camp without warning at a time when two nations were at peace." Fowler is particularly good at fleshing out all of his characters: General Jeffrey Amherst is ruthless and brutal; James Wolfe nervous and complaining; the Marquis de Montcalm pessimistic and defeatist. The Seven Years War led directly to the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the rise of Great Britain as a 19th-century superpower. It is vitally important that we learn more about these connections, and Fowler's *Empires at War* is a great place to start. --William Newbigging From Publishers Weekly In this solid narrative history of a once neglected conflict, historian Fowler, author of *The Baron of Beacon Hill: A Biography of John Adams*, glances occasionally at the European and Caribbean theaters of this "first world war," but concentrates on the North American operations that determined Britain's victory over France in the struggle for imperial supremacy. The outcome, he makes clear, was a foregone conclusion given the British colonies'

vast population and economic base in comparison with French Canada, British control of the seas, the high priority Prime Minister William Pitt assigned to the conquest of Canada and the indifference the people of Paris felt toward its "few acres of snow." But the French and their Indian allies fought well under competent commanders, administering bloody defeats to the redcoats and colonial militias until they were swamped by superior British numbers and logistics. Fowler's lucid account details the strategic, political and personal dynamics behind the campaigning and conveys the color and drama of this arduous struggle, in which the genteel etiquette of 18th-century warfare sometimes gave way to massacre and counter-massacre and the harsh wilderness terrain reduced combatants to starvation and cannibalism. The result is a judicious, well-paced and engaging introduction to a turning point in American and world history.

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From BooklistReaders daunted by the length of the definitive account of the French and Indian War, *Crucible of War*, by Fred Anderson (2000), which clocks in at 832 pages, will find Fowler's account a slimmer, more strictly narrative alternative. Like Anderson, Fowler quickly gets to the strange-but-true incident that touched off the war: George Washington's 1754 ambush of French soldiers in western Pennsylvania. That such a minor fracas on the frontier could ignite a world war is made plausible as Fowler sets within context the European diplomatic situation between France and Britain; in North America, the author sets the geographic constraints for the rivals' final showdown for control of the continent. Fowler efficiently relates the opening campaigns, such as the victory of the marquis de Montcalm at Ticonderoga in 1757, which brought William Pitt to power in England on a win-the-war platform. He succeeded in bringing Britain's numerical superiority to bear, although the contingencies of the crucial battle of the war at Quebec in 1759 are appropriately emphasized here. A well-modulated presentation for history buffs. Gilbert TaylorCopyright American Library Association. All rights reserved