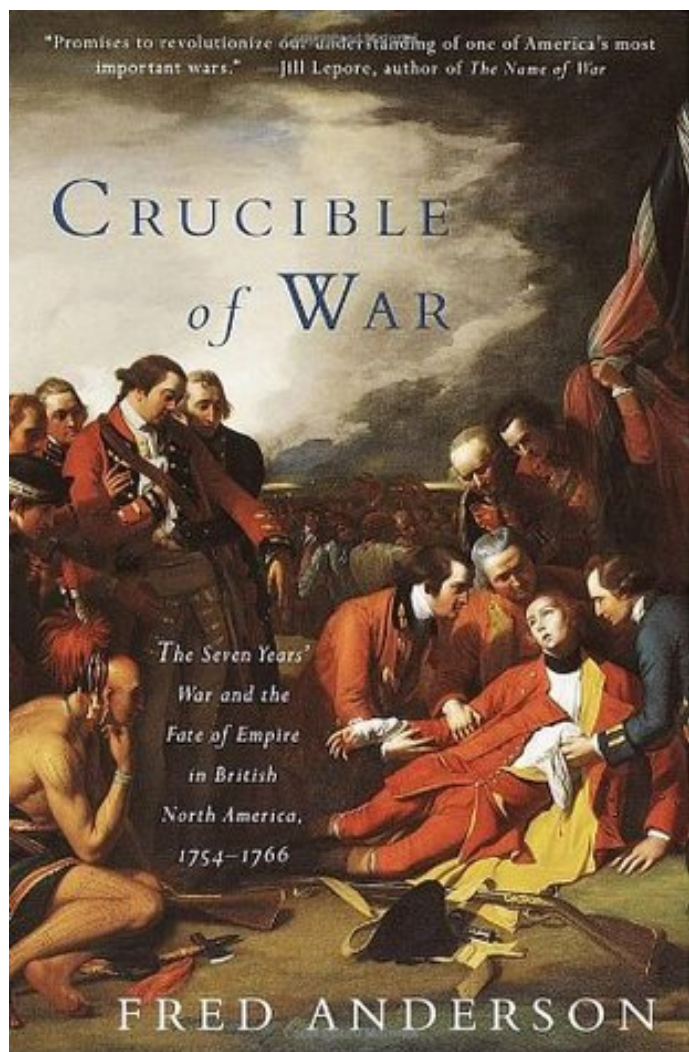

Fred Anderson

Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766



Title: Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766

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Description

In this vivid and compelling narrative, the Seven Years' War—long seen as a mere backdrop to the American Revolution—takes on a whole new significance. Relating the history of the war as it developed, Anderson shows how the complex array of forces brought into conflict helped both to create Britain's empire and to sow the seeds of its eventual dissolution.

Beginning with a skirmish in the Pennsylvania backcountry involving an inexperienced George Washington, the Iroquois chief Tanaghrisson, and the ill-fated French emissary Jumonville, Anderson reveals a chain of events that would lead to world conflagration. Weaving together the military, economic, and political motives of the participants with unforgettable portraits of Washington, William Pitt, Montcalm, and many others, Anderson brings a fresh perspective to one of America's most important wars, demonstrating how the forces unleashed there would irrevocably change the politics of empire in North America.

Insightful reviews

Jeremy Perron: As I explained in my last few posts, a short while ago, I decided to do a straight reading up on the history of my country. Not by a series of biographies or of any particular event; but a simple march through the ages exploring all the eras of the United States of America. The biggest challenge is to find books that try their best to explore from multiple perspectives in order to avoid just one narrow view, without at the same time surrendering a general narrative that is both readable and enjoyable. After finishing Jill Lepore's book on King Phillip's War, I decided to move on to Fred Anderson's book covering what we in America call the French and Indian War. The book looks at the major actors in the British and French Empires, and the Iroquois Confederacy and how this conflict changed them from top to bottom.

Like many wars, especially European Wars in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the conflict covered in this work is known by two names. Anglo-American colonials tended to name their wars after their kings and queens. The colonists had named the War of Austrian Succession, 'King George's War', and created a problem because King George II was still on the throne. They needed a new name for the conflict that Europe would call the Seven-Years' War. The name the Anglo-American colonists came up with was: 'the French and Indian War'.

Fred Anderson's reason for producing this book is that the place we historians assign the French and Indian War in the historical narrative, he argues, is as the simple prologue of the American Revolutionary War. With this book, Anderson brings the America's most forgotten and--arguably--most important war, to the forefront to be study on its own terms and not as the inevitable beginning of a different conflict. Prior to this war, the two great colonial powers in North America were the British and French Empires. These empires were populated by colonists who were strongly identified with their imperial connections and a powerful Native American Nation in the Iroquois Confederacy that was able to provide a buffer and power broker between the two powers. After this conflict the French would be vanquished and the British would be left with an empire that was most ungovernable and the Iroquois would be set on the beginning of their fall from power.

When I was in college, I, who had always been a history buff, felt I had strong understanding of World War II. Then in my Western Civilization II class with Parker Albee, we spent some time going over World War I. I remember thinking--as if a light had gone off in my head--'I understand why World War II happened better now.' Prior, all I had known of World War I had been some of its aftermath that helped lead to World War II, but nothing in real strong detail. I now view World War I and World War II almost as the different chapters in the same historic event. Having read this book I feel the same way about my understanding of the French and Indian War and the American Revolutionary War, as I did with my earlier reevaluations on World War I and World War II. I realize that this may sound the opposite of Anderson's intentions; however, I want to stress that reading this book you understand the French and Indian War as its own event but it still increases your understanding of the American Revolution.

One of the biggest things that stood out in my mind while reading this book was how some of the politics that led to the American Revolution against Britain during the late 1760s and 1770s were foreshadowed by the early events of the French and Indian War. The Earl of Loudoun, who was the commander in chief of the British armies in America, made several attempts to command the colonial governors and legislatures as if they were his colonels. His actions and the massive attempts to resist them by the colonial Anglo-Americans strongly resembled what was to come a decade later. Fortunately for the British cause in this war, William Pitt, who was a strong believer in the colonial subjects British rights, relived Loudoun of his command and set the colonial relations to rights.

"By mid-December 1757, Pitt knew that if the American assemblies were to be transformed from centers of resistance into sources of men and money, he would have to reverse entirely the course of colonial policy. Instead of treating the colonies like subordinate jurisdictions and requiring them to finance the war effort by forced contributions to a common fund, Pitt resolved to treat them like allies, offering subsidies to encourage their assemblies to aid in the conquest of New France. Rather than continuing to demand that civil authority, in the persons of colonial governors and legislatures, submit to military power in the person of His Majesty's commander in chief, Pitt resolved to withhold from Loudoun's successor direct authority over the provinces. In the future, as always in the past, the governors would receive their instructions directly from the secretary of state for the Southern Department. By this new grant (or more properly, restoration) of autonomy to the provinces, by offering inducements to cooperation rather than by seeking to compel union among them, Pitt hoped to create a patriotic enthusiasm that had not been much in evidence since 1756."p.214

In this book Anderson masterfully moves his readers from one military theater on the frontiers North America to another on continental Europe, he also cross-cuts from one political scene to another. While reading this book, the reader will go from the court of King George II to the assemblies of the American colonies, to military headquarters of Fredrick the Great, to the Massachusetts colonial militia. Yet it never becomes confusing making the reader feel out of place, Anderson's narrative flows smoothly from one event and theater to another without missing a beat.

I highly recommend this work to anyone it is really exceptional book. Fred Anderson takes a

highly difficult and at times confusing subject and lays it out rather neatly making it easy for his readers to understand this war that had so much impact on the modern world.

Matthew Linton: Fred Anderson's massive synthesis of the Seven Years' War and ensuing imperial crisis is an impressive achievement borne from nearly two decades of historical research. Ranging from the beginning of English colonial settlements in North America and ending with the Stamp Act crisis, Anderson successfully navigates an incredible time span weaving the intertwined stories of English imperial dominance with French and Spanish decline and American Indian politics.

Combining the British, French, American Indian, and American colonial perspectives into a single compelling narrative is "Crucible of War"'s greatest strength. Anderson is careful to allow each party its own voice, told through its most compelling characters: Lord Jeffery Amherst, George Washington, Teedyuschung, and William Pitt. For such a lengthy book (tipping the scales at nearly 750 pages excluding notes), "Crucible" maintains a compelling narrative throughout and gives the reader a holistic understanding of the transnational dimensions of the Seven Years' War and its aftermath.

Of course "Crucible"'s greatest strength is also its most glaring weakness. Anderson's argument about the creation and consolidation of the British Empire is frequently lost in the frequent descriptions of battles and British political debates that populate "Crucible"'s pages. A considerable amount of fat could have been trimmed from this book - perhaps at the expense of some of its narrative drama - to make it more argumentative and illustrate some of the transformations of certain groups (notably the American Indians and colonists) more clearly. Furthermore, as a synthesis "Crucible" contributes almost no new historical data regarding the Seven Years' War or the Imperial Crisis. Anderson primarily relies on previously published scholarly monographs and a published letters, instead of archival material. For such a lengthy book it would have been nice to see more archival evidence and/or novel documentary evidence.

Overall, a fascinating and well-written examination of an understudied period of early American history. A must read for history graduate students taking their exams in early American history as well as an enjoyable read for anyone interested in military history or American Indian history. An ambitious, epic book of the sort rarely seen in American historical scholarship nowadays and one that should inspire new interest in the Seven Years' War and the Imperial Crisis.

Theo Logos: `Crucible of War' is a tremendous achievement - a comprehensive, informative overview of The Seven Years War that is accessible while maintaining scholarly rigor. Prof. Anderson presents a sweeping, densely detailed, big picture view of the war in prose worthy of an exceptional novelist. In doing so, he very well may have created the best, modern, one volume history of the war available today.

Anderson writes that The Seven Years War was the most important war of the 18th century, not just a sort of prequel to the American Revolution as many here in the States tend to view it. "Unlike every prior 18th century European conflict," Anderson writes, "The Seven Years War ended in the decisive defeat of one belligerent and a dramatic rearrangement of the balance of power, in Europe and North America alike." The result crushed French power and dreams of

empire in North America, while giving Britain her first great empire. It also profoundly altered the destiny of the American Indians and colonist.

The Seven Years War was the first truly global war, fought not just in North America and Europe, but in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific. It started, however, in the backwoods of North America, and Anderson maintains that North America was both the most important theater and the greatest prize of that war. His focus, therefore, is concentrated on British North America. He not only emphasizes the role that the colonist played in the conflict (something that has often been overlooked), but counts the Indians as a full player in the game of empire - struggling to maintain their way of life, and not just a sort of savage auxiliary force for the Europeans.

Anderson does not end his history with the official end of the war. He goes on to write of Pontiac's Uprising, and the effects that Britain's victory had on the Indians. Likewise, he writes of the Stamp Act and the other acts passed by Parliament in an attempt to pay the huge debt the war had caused - actions that began to destroy their newly gained empire from its infancy. He never loses sight of the fact that the history of a war is far more than a detailing of battles.

While Anderson writes vividly of the battles of this war, 'Crucible of War' is not a book which concentrates on military campaigns, and if you have only a narrow interest in campaign histories, this is probably not the book for you. Nor does he effectively cover the French perspective of the war. What he does most effectively is give the big picture of the war and its meaning for Britain, her North American colonist, and the Indians. Both those who are coming to this material for the first time and those who already have a firm knowledge of the period can benefit from reading this superb book, and I give it my very highest of recommendations.

Steve: discuss a "one book" resource of knowledge! i bought this in the course of a trip to the NPS round citadel Ticonderoga because it healthy the environment. The ebook is factually good written, giving an exceptional review of not just the French and Indian conflict in North the USA however the occasions shaping it in England politically and the eu drivers. It additionally famous the commercial and cultural courting among the British/Colonials and the implications. It really clarifies the stipulations and emotional purposes for the yankee Revolution in a manner i have no longer obvious before. it really is extraordinary factually; the destructive facet is two fold, one it fairly will get into the main points of so much similar themes and therefore (2)can get lovely dry. Still, if i have been to suggest one publication at the French and Indian struggle or the pre-American Revolution, this might be it.

Jason: inston Churchill referred to as the Seven Year's warfare the 1st global war, and it may be argued that it used to be the first, in a string of 5 nice energy wars over one hundred ninety years, resulting in international battle II. yet for many scholars of the fashionable world, specially Americans, who should be unaware international war, a superb energy struggle was once sparked simply open air of present day Pittsburgh, PA. whether it is notion of, the Seven Year's battle is remembered as not anything greater than a prelude to the yank Revolution. Fred Anderson, of the college of Colorado, Crucible of struggle is an outstanding, complete army background of that conflict. one among his major intentions is to reorient smooth minds to the place they could see that it used to be the Seven Year's War, and never the yankee Revolution, that grew to become the good clash of the age.Until younger George Washington, a Virginia

defense force colonel on the time, sparked a growing to be clash among France and Britain in 1754, approximately the final a hundred years had visible one colonial clash after one other among France and Britain, to the purpose the place the wars combined jointly into simply generational border and buying and selling conflicts. In that sense, they the rage of approximately all ecu wars for centuries: small armies, combating faraway from home, rallied opposed to different principalities in short, bloody conflicts that did little yet switch a few borders and choose a couple of buying and selling or royal succession issues. Anderson consents with Churchill, in that the Seven Year's battle used to be a paradigm shift within the method the fashionable international fought war. huge swathes of territory have been exchanged, the clash unfold between different minor powers on a number of continents and in a feeling it used to be an ideological struggle. and prefer almost about each glossy conflict, the peace grew to become tougher to win than the warfare itself, simply because rules of order clashed with cultures now not wanting wholesale alterations in life. So whereas the Seven Year's conflict started in again state Pennsylvania, it unfold all alongside the British and French North American frontier, into the Caribbean, and later, within the moment 1/2 the war, between Prussia and different eu states in critical Europe, via India, and finally into the Philippines within the Pacific. earlier than it used to be over, a number of million were killed or wounded, France used to be economically exhausted and Britain was once approximately as broke, with a bigger empire to keep up and an economic climate incapable of working it. Anderson treats his topic up to epic as he does army history. His army writing is easily done, with right reliance on strategy, command and control, provide chains, and a spotlight to the consequences of terrain on troop movement. yet what makes this very readable is his realization to the human aspect of the conflict: the industrial interests, the cultural pulls on Indian tribes, French, English, etc., for that's what indicates what the inducement of the clash was. This is a complete book, intended to inform the tale of the battle from the incentive of numerous vantage points. So it's not essentially the yank colonial story, or the English or French or maybe Indian tribe story. Anderson writes so comprehensively that every part can have acquired their very own book. simply because he writes with one of these broad scope, he appears profitable in his try to express that historical past that we all know now, with the USA and the successor nice energy to Britain, used to be no longer inevitable; that nobody in 1754, least of all an bold guy like Washington, who was hoping to enhance within the British military, can have foreseen the occasions that resulted in the complete global being became upside down. There most likely isn't really nearly as good a one quantity telling of this war, that not just thoroughly tells the tale of the events, yet areas them it within the context as a global altering occasion that drove occasions for the subsequent a number of hundred years. this can be nearly as good a background of its style as i will recommend.

Mark: even though lengthy overshadowed within the conventional historic narrative by means of the yank Revolution, the Seven Years' War, as Fred Anderson argues, is an important occasion within the eighteenth-century North American history. Fought within the untamed wasteland which either France and Britain claimed, the fight introduced an finish to the French empire in North America. but paradoxically in doing so, it sowed the seeds for the eventual cave in of Britain's personal empire within the Americas through increasing it past a practicable dimension and developing pressures that finally led the 13 colonies to rebel. This struggle and its legacy is the topic of this very good book, one who bargains a fancy and inter-layered narrative of the origins, conduct, and effects of this often-ignored conflict. Anderson starts off via

interpreting the interplay among the British, the French, and the Iroquois within the Ohio Valley. Sandwiched among the 2 eu empire, the Iroquois Confederacy performed one off the opposite effectively for plenty of years. but land concessions to the British within the 1740s quickly prepared the ground for transforming into encroachment of the Ohio Valley via British colonists, prompting the French to say their very own claims to the region. while conflict erupted in 1754 (as as a result a conflict among a French strength and a celebration of Virginians and Indians, one conscientiously reconstructed and dramatically retold through Anderson), it increased steadily right into a basic clash among Britain and France, with battling occurring on approximately each continent. The conflict is the dominant concentration of Anderson's book, and he provides a readable and insightful narrative of the process the war. whereas his concentration is predominantly at the political and army struggles in North America, he additionally presents an description of the appropriate British politics and a precis of the conflict in Europe. quite amazing is his insurance of the local Americans, which he depicts now not as opportunistic savages yet as canny political operators who observed themselves as loose brokers focused on an online of relationships with one another in addition to with the colonial powers. although the e-book toilets down in his next exam of the postwar alterations to British victory, those chapters make for interesting studying via demonstrating simply how shut the hyperlink used to be among the issues posed through Britain's triumph and the protests that finally might bring about rebellion. By the tip of the book, it's challenging to disclaim the advantages of Anderson's argument. via his professional research and deft interweaving of individuals and events, he succeeds in restoring the Seven Years' struggle to the pivotal position it merits in American history. basically written and supplemented with quite a few pictures and maps, it's a masterful examine of the war, one not going to be handed in its breadth of assurance or caliber of its analysis. For somebody looking a historical past of the warfare and its legacy for American history, this is often the publication to read.

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