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Walter R. Borneman, *The French and Indian War: Deciding the Fate of North America*. New York: Harper-Collins, 2007. Pp. xxiii, 360. ISBN 978-0-06-076184-4.

Review by Matt J. Schumann, Eastern Michigan University (mschuman@emich.edu)

For the casual reader interested in a lively introduction to the French and Indian War, this is an excellent book. It surpasses most general histories by its consideration of the long European and global background to the conflict, its handling of theaters well outside North America—such as the Philippines! (271-2), and its attention to details that other, even prominent scholars, sometimes overlook. This said, it may be recommended as a general introduction only; readers in whom it inspires a stronger interest in the war would be well-advised to consult the spate of more detailed scholarly accounts in the newly-vibrant historiography on the subject.¹

A pervasive feature of his book is Borneman's dedication of small sections to more obscure aspects of the war, some of which, while intriguing in themselves, are only tangential to his larger narratives. These include Céloron de Blainville's mission south of the Great Lakes in 1749 (14-7) and Admiral Edward Boscawen's adventures in the North Atlantic six years later (44-6). His commentary on Wolfe's legacy—on Pitt's speech to Parliament and the rhymes in British Canada (224)—is no less engaging, and his surprising attention to the naval battle near Port Mahon (63-6) is admirable for moving beyond the American backwoods to the European theater. Far from distracting, these small digressions add breadth and substance to an already vivid narrative.

More generally, Borneman is to be commended for offering a fairly detailed background for many of the major actors on the British side, not least Benjamin Franklin and William Pitt (30-1, 70-1). His use of foreshadowing is also judicious, not least in his short discussion of three of Braddock's adjutants at the Monongahela—George Washington, Thomas Gage, and Horatio Gates (58-9)—and the end of Jeffrey Amherst's career in 1763 (294-5). The final chapter as well (296-308) brings the coming Revolution into focus, though it was far from certain in 1763. Thus he makes good on the last comments in his introduction:

Land claims west of the Appalachians and taxes imposed without representation quickly rankled colonists no longer bound to the British crown by the fear of French encirclement. Revolution was premature, but the die had been cast. The

¹ Among a great many others, see Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (NY: Knopf, 2000) and *The War That Made America: A Short History of the French and Indian War* (NY: Viking, 2005); Matthew C. Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years' War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765* (Pittsburgh: U Pittsburgh Pr, 2003); Michael N. McConnell, *Army and Empire: British Soldiers on the American Frontier, 1758-1775* (Lincoln: U Nebraska Pr, 2005); Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), *White Devil: A True Story of War, Savagery, and Vengeance in Colonial America* (London: Weidenfeld, 2004), and *Paths of Glory: The Life and Death of General James Wolfe* (London/NY: Hambleton, 2006).

triumphs of one war had sown the seeds of discontent that would lead to another. Great Britain had indeed won a continent, but in doing so, it had also lit the fuse of revolution (xxiii).

Thus, throughout his book, Borneman provides context for and foreshadowing of the American War of Independence, so crucial to scholarship on the Seven Years' War in general and to its niche in the American imagination and in the American academic market.

Alongside this anticipation of the Revolution, however, Borneman also keeps his readers squarely in the "present" of the 1750s and early 1760s, with gripping, meticulous accounts of some of the most important campaigns. His opening, on Braddock's 1755 expedition (46-58), is typical of the whole work and worthy of emulation for its fascinating and detailed narrative. In the same vein is the story of John Forbes' 1758 expedition to Fort Duquesne (152-68). Borneman's consistent inclusion of operations outside the American theater, for example in the Caribbean (169-86), sets him apart from most scholars of the French and Indian War.

A relatively short notes section at the end completes the catalogue of the book's merits. Borneman has drawn on everything from the latest standard works on the war (see note 1 above) to textbooks and a variety of printed primary documents. He thus taps a vital and growing academic historiography on the war and hints at the ever-expanding accessibility of printed primary sources. Without an exaggerated effort to impress readers by parading his research, he enriches a brisk narrative with occasional footnotes to assist readers seeking deeper explorations.

In this last regard, however, especially for those seeking a more academic type of history, Borneman's book shows its limitations. One of its notable qualities is a bias in favor of Anglo-America and the Elder Pitt. This certainly follows the previous historiography, yet a fuller appreciation of French motives would have added greater richness to the narrative.² Borneman might also have noted the great inconvenience of French traders forced to reach the Mississippi by way of Lake Michigan, for example, as well as the danger that British traders, having blocked routes to New Orleans by way of the Allegheny, the Great Miami, and ultimately the Ohio River, might establish one more trading post on the Mississippi itself and so prevent communication altogether between Louisiana and Canada. Conversely, Thomas Pelham-Holles, First Duke of Newcastle, stands condemned as foolish and nearsighted, sometimes repeatedly in a short space of text (42-4), though recent (and not-so-recent) scholarship shows him to have been generally competent and well liked by colleagues.³ Finally, the Britain-versus-France paradigm outlined in the introduction fails to take note of the complexities in European international relations—complexities that found Britain and France allied in the War of the Quadruple Alliance (1718-22) and generally on good terms overall so long as Robert Walpole and Cardinal Fleury held their respective posts (i.e., up to 1742-43).

It is also worth noting that, while Borneman has a solid command of *what* happened, he is less at home in his discussions of *why*. Thus, he posits a certain inevitability about Anglo-

² See, e.g., Guy Frégault, *Canada: The War of the Conquest*, trans. Margaret M. Cameron (Toronto: Oxford U Pr, 1969), and Jonathan Dull, *The French Navy and the Seven Years' War* (Lincoln: U Nebraska Pr, 2005).

³ See Reed Browning, *The Duke of Newcastle* (New Haven: Yale U Pr, 1975), and J.C.D. Clark, *Dynamics of Change: The Crisis of the 1750s and English Party Systems* (Cambridge: CUP, 1982).

French rivalry and the War of Independence, noting for example British hesitation over French breaches of trust in the Caribbean (170), but omitting Britain's bad faith toward Spain over the trade in logwood from present-day Belize. Conversely, there is no mention of the British non-reaction (even among other colonies!) to the destruction of Pickawillany in 1752, or of a treaty signed between the two East India Companies in 1755. Likewise, George III receives due criticism for his "sophomoric prattle" toward Lady Sarah Lennox, but not for his handling of what was, at the start of his reign, one of the most effective ministries in British history (264); and John Burgoyne receives almost as much attention for his activities yet to come at Saratoga as for his leadership in Portugal (265). No reasons are given, however, for either appointment.

In sum, this book ranks among the most appealing available introductions to the Seven Years' War, and particularly its American theater. It is well written, sufficiently detailed, and well researched throughout. Another attraction is Borneman's success in evoking the romance of the Anglo-French rivalry and the excitement of the coming Revolution. These last are excellent selling points for the book, but they do a disservice to scholarship more narrowly focused on the war itself, some of which appears in the notes and bibliography. Indeed, Borneman's underuse of such sources is a telling indicator of how far short he falls of a nuanced academic history. Thus, while readers seeking a good beginning study of the war are encouraged to start with this book, those desiring more penetrating and comprehensive analysis will need to look much, much further into the current relevant literature.