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Frances H. Kennedy, ed., *The American Revolution: A Historical Guidebook*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2014. Pp. xx, 390. ISBN 978-0-19-932422-4.

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Interest in battlefields increases every year, but Revolutionary War-era military sites of historical interest grow scarcer, as development along the eastern seaboard overtakes them. In *The American Revolution*, editor Frances Kennedy¹ offers “an overview of the Revolution by focusing on 147 historic places that are critical to our understanding of it, set in a roughly chronological narrative.... [T]hanks to wise preservation efforts by Americans over the centuries, we can learn about our history in the places where [the nation] was first made and defended” (xvii). Standing on historic battlefields provides the opportunity to better understand America’s past; this guide to such important sites will be a welcome addition to the library of any serious student of the Revolutionary War.

Kennedy’s volume leads readers through the events that caused Great Britain’s North American colonies to rebel, beginning with the Proclamation Line established by the Treaty of Paris in 1763, limiting westward expansion into Indian lands. An introductory section, “The Coming of the American Revolution,” quotes leading historians at some length to explain the impact of the Stamp Act and the Townshend Acts and outline the growing cultural schism between London and the colonies. Kennedy dates the start of armed conflict to the 1768 arrival of British troops in Boston and, very conventionally, portrays Americans as defending community and individual rights: “Parliament was focusing upon taxing and controlling” (17) and British aggressors seeking to usurp the rights of Englishmen drove the colonists to rebel.

The following 287 pages comprise a detailed chronological tour of Revolutionary War-era battlefields and historic sites, beginning with the Boston Common and ending with New York City’s Fraunces Tavern. This novel and compelling approach allows Kennedy to discuss the Siege of Saratoga before jumping to Delaware’s Hale-Byrnes House on the next page. Sites are clustered by discrete campaigns that took place over a specific time period; for instance, the seventeen sites relevant to General Cornwallis’s 1780–81 southern campaign are treated in roughly forty pages. This arrangement sometimes entails rather abrupt geographical shifts, but has the advantage of showing how the war unfolded throughout all thirteen colonies, as well as such regions as Florida and Arkansas (both under Spanish control), the Ohio Country, and even the area of present-day Indiana. While many books focus on major engagements near the Atlantic coast, with occasional excursions inland to battles like Guilford Courthouse (near Greensboro, North Carolina), Kennedy scrupulously includes less well known and geographically isolated sites.

The information provided for particular sites is somewhat sparse. While the sponsoring organization for every site (e.g., the pertinent National Parks Service [NPS] unit) is indicated with its address, there are no links to websites to aid visitors in locating or learning more about the sites, an odd omission in our digital age. Each entry begins with a general description of the events that occurred at the relevant location and then quotes a substantial excerpt from the work of a leading historian. This passage on the battle at Great Bridge, Virginia, is typical: “In early December Colonel William Woodford’s command of 900 patriots arrived to oppose Dunmore’s 600-man force. Woodford led the 2nd Virginia Regiment, the Culpeper Minutemen Battalion, and Virginia and North Carolina militia. Michael Kranish describes the Great Bridge battle in *Flight from Monticello: Thomas Jefferson at War*: “Woodford arrived on December 1, 1775, pitching camp in front of a small church at the southern end of the marshy area...” (71–72).

1. Head of the Conservation Fund’s Historic Lands Program, Kennedy has produced similar volumes on other subjects: *The Civil War Battlefield Guide*, 2nd ed. (NY: Houghton Mifflin, 1998) and *American Indian Places: A Historical Guidebook* (NY: Houghton Mifflin, 2008).

Taken together, the citations of so many prominent historians constitute a superb guide to further reading on the Revolutionary War. (One is left, however, wondering about Kennedy's own thoughts on the sites and her view of the various phases and turning points of the Revolutionary War.) The excerpts are very astutely chosen and concern more than military history: women, Indians, slaves, landless poor whites, loyalists, and urban workingmen all make their appearances. Also discussed are political theory and diplomacy.

One of two concluding sections furnishes snippets from the Treaty of Paris and the Constitution. The other, entitled "The Achievements of the American Revolution," offers twenty-three one- or two-page quotations of historians on the subject, with an introductory sentence or two. For example: "In *Setting the World Ablaze*, John Ferling notes the crucial role of leadership in the success of the Revolution..." (316). Two appendices print the Declaration of Independence and a report to Congress on historic preservation. These are followed by a useful timeline, a good bibliography, and a thorough index.

The book includes several interesting images of historical documents or artifacts. Six regional maps with numbered sites are helpful but not particularly well drawn. Too often, the publisher has been content to reproduce maps from older works² that do not represent the current state of print technology.

In her impressive work of compilation, Kennedy has used the NPS's 2007 "Report to Congress on the Preservation of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Sites in the United States." This document identifies 463 battlefields and "associated historic properties." Kennedy does not reveal her selection criteria for the present volume beyond stating that some battles are described but not included in her list because their sites "have been lost to development" (xviii). She refers in this regard to the Battle of Long Island, fought in what is now Brooklyn, but fails to mention the museum devoted to the battle, housed in a replica structure—The Old Stone House—built with materials used in the fighting. The Powder Magazine in Charleston, South Carolina, built in 1713, should have merited inclusion (211). A good number of house museums make the cut, but not Fort Pitt or Fort Niagara, important staging points for Indian diplomacy and loyalist raids.

Readers of Frances Kennedy's richly informative and clearly organized guide to Revolutionary War battlefields and historic sites will benefit from its attention to broader historical contexts and its judicious introduction to the work of many major historians. The book compares well with the previous standard guide, Theodore P. Savas and J. David Dameron's *A Guide to Battles of the American Revolution*,³ which gives too little space to non-military sites.

2. E.g., Robert Middlekauff's classic *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763–1789* (NY: Oxford U Pr, 1982).

3. NY: Savas Beatie, 2006.