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Ralph E. Eshelman, Burton K. Kummerow. *In Full Glory Reflected: Discovering the War of 1812 in the Chesapeake.* Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society Press, 2012. Illustrations. 256 pp. $24.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-9842135-4-2.

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Exploring the War of 1812: A Tribute to the Conflict in the Chesapeake

It is probably fair to consider the War of 1812 as the most significant American military conflict to fall victim to forgotten history. Its bicentennial commemoration, however, has inspired historians to look back and reexamine the events that defined the war's premise, importance, and consequences for America's future. *In Full Glory Reflected* is a noteworthy attempt to bring a spirited vitality to this academically neglected conflict, especially for those in the Chesapeake region, where a considerable amount of the war's action occurred. Recently, the National Parks Service opened a memorial trail to bring light to the story behind the writing of the national anthem, written in honor of the assault on Fort McHenry, an initiative to which the authors, Ralph E. Eshelman and Burton K. Kummerow, believe the book to be a "popular companion piece" (p. xi). With an introduction by the author of the most comprehensive study on the war, Donald R. Hickey, and a preface from the governor of Maryland, the authors hope to both establish the work's academic integrity and demonstrate the subject's significance to the region by generating local support. The book is separated into two parts: the first presents a chronological narrative of the war, with a focus on intimately regional events; the second demonstrates a brochure-like register that provides visitor information for those interested in exploring the region and historical significance of the landmark sites in the Chesapeake area.

The first seven chapters give an appropriately fundamental synopsis of the war. The narrative opens fittingly with an account of the historic Chesapeake-Leopard affair, an event that sparked outrage among Virginia's citizenry and initiated a potential international crisis for President Thomas Jefferson. This tale of the unwarranted attack on an American vessel sets the stage for increasingly strained relations between two nations still recovering from their previous quarrel. Because Jefferson and James Madison were ultimately opposed to war, both men faced intense international and domestic political struggles as a serious clash slowly became inevitable. Following a lesson on the events leading up to the conflict under both presidents' administrations, such as further impressments and economic coercion, the summary becomes focused on region-specific military engagements. Propelled by intimate glimpses of the individuals involved in the region's conflict, the narrative encompasses the history of the English raids along the Potomac and Patuxent rivers and the area's numerous land and naval engagements. British incursions on defenseless cities were not always brutal but fairly effective against American morale. Because American militiamen were not well organized or properly disciplined, British soldiers could move essentially unchallenged from town to town. As such, the book offers numerous stories of civilian heroes who bravely and honorably stood up to British forces amid the mounting hostility. Such legends as that of Catherine "Kitty" Knight, who, despite Georgetown and Fredericktown burning down around her, convinced Admiral George Cockburn to spare a number of homes due to the danger it might bring to the elderly residents, speaks to the underlying strength of the local citizenry despite the lack of any shielding military presence.

The authors do provide the general overview of the war's events that highlight more familiar names, like commodores Joshua Barney and John Rodgers and British counterparts Admiral Cockburn and General Robert Ross. But the purpose of the book is continuously

made evident by the frequent anecdotes of individuals and events that have never obtained recognition regardless the size of their contribution to the war: for example, the little-known story of Matilda O'Neil, the fifteen-year-old daughter of an American militiaman who met with Admiral Cockburn and personally negotiated her father's surrender as a prisoner of war; or the tale of how an agreement for the peaceful surrender of Alexandria to the British nearly unraveled due to the actions of a few angry Americans who recklessly tormented a British officer performing his duties in the town. Many of these stories spark a historical interest, while others are simply meant for entertainment. One memory of a rooster surviving a British shell to the leg at Fort McHenry and then receiving a pound cake for its bravery is somewhat extraneous but keeps the reading lighthearted. The authors' use of both British and American sources throughout the book is also commendable. While the stories are obviously meant to stimulate American pride in the heroes of the Chesapeake, they do so without demonizing the British. In fact, a considerable amount of the narrative is told from the perspective of British military personnel. Such a reliance on direct, firsthand accounts may have actually been sufficient to write the entire chapter on the battle for Baltimore as an oral history.

In Full Glory Reflected is complete with illustrations and photographs, giving the work a seemingly youthful style. Snapshots of the location where federal documents were stored during the British burning of Washington or an 1870 photograph of the twelve remaining survivors of the battle at Fort McHenry can help bring the war to life for any reader and, as the authors trust, will "amplify the visions of our imagination" (p. xi). By the second part of the book, the reader should be basically familiar with the subject and may feel a sense of curiosity. The final nine chapters offer a nearly limitless catalog of museums, historic districts, monuments, and reenactments for the serious adventurer. As experts on Maryland history and culture, Eshelman and Kummerow present a detailed list of significant landmarks throughout Maryland, providing both historical background and specific location information. Such attractions as the White House or the Capitol in Washington are familiar to the average tourist, but such landmarks as the Battle Monument in Baltimore, the first substantial memorial built in honor of the war, or the Hampton History Museum, where one can find existing artifacts from the conflict, might bring a fresh appreciation to this underappreciated portion of America's past.

To the authors, the American victory at Fort McHenry was a defining moment in the war and a "lasting point for a new country," an episode that lives on through the "Star-Spangled Banner" but that few people truly appreciate. In his introduction, Hickey recognizes that no area suffered more during the war than the Chesapeake, and many families, even to this day, remember British transgressions. As such, many of the region's war memories are not simply part of a modern history lesson, but an important component of the area's legacy. This book does not attempt to challenge existing facts relating to the war nor is it a pioneer of innovative theories. Its dignified task is to generate appreciation for this vital region's efforts during one of the most critical conflicts in American history, and it does so with a balanced perspective favoring neither side but using both to tell the story. With the bicentennial at hand, such an attempt is decidedly fitting and necessary. Not only is *In Full Glory Reflected* satisfactory for the resident, traveler, or scholar of the Chesapeake region, but the legitimacy of its sources also could facilitate its application as a reliable literary source for the dedicated scholar of the war, though that would hardly seem its foremost purpose.

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