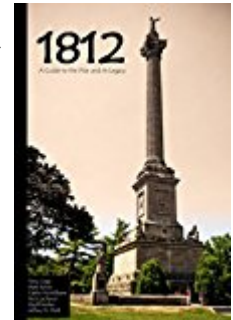**Terry Copp, Matt Symes, Caitlin McWilliams, Nick Lachance, Geoff Keelan, Jeffrey W. Mott.** *1812: A Guide to the War and Its Legacy.* Waterloo: Laurier Centre for Military, Strategic and Disarmament Studies Press of Wilfrid Laurier University, 2013. Illustrations. 264 pp. $34.95, paper, ISBN 978-1-926804-13-2.

Reviewed by Paul Springer

As often occurs, the anniversary of a conflict, in this case the War of 1812, produces a substantial volume of new works on the subject. The public's interest is piqued for a short while, and historians have a rare opportunity to convey information to citizens who might otherwise devote their leisure time to anything but reading and thinking about history. The Laurier Centre for Military, Strategic and Disarmament Studies has essentially produced a single-source staff ride book for much of the War of 1812. Anyone interested in visiting the sites of the conflict within a day's drive of the Canadian-U.S. border should begin planning their trip with this book at hand.

The first half of the book is an overview of the war, written by Terry Copp. It is straightforward and succinct, making it accessible to lay readers. While professional historians are unlikely to find many surprises in the prose, every page is beautifully complemented by full-color illustrations, enhancing the experience for the general public. The photos are well chosen, and the descriptions of the events are well written. The book avoids most of the controversial aspects of the war. For example, readers curious about the treatment of captured slaves should look elsewhere, as the subject is almost completely ignored. Naval events are largely confined to the Great Lakes, with the notable exception of the Chesapeake-Leopard Affair. Prisoners of war, whose treatment had a substantial influence on the conduct of the war, also remain outside the purview of this work. It is mostly concerned with the location, tactics, and outcomes of the battles along the Canadian frontier. While the narrative mentions the Chesapeake and Gulf campaigns, they are comparatively marginalized.

The second half of the book is essentially a tour guide to the remaining war sites and commemorations along the border area. While each section is well written, descriptive, and extremely helpful in locating some of the more obscure sites, it is also unfortunately incomplete. It is broken into a series of regional excursions, each of which might be completed in a matter of a day or two. However, it is limited to sites near the border, de-

spite the importance of other locations in the United States. In this regard, it demonstrates an understandable bias toward the Canadian elements of the war. However, the title, as well as the historical overview, make it clear that this work is not intended solely as an examination of Canadian affairs in the war. There are wonderful locations, such as the site of the Battle of Horseshoe Bend or Fort McHenry, that are conspicuous in their absence.

The work concludes with a short, fairly effective listing of accessible works on the war for readers desiring a deeper understanding of the conflict. Regrettably, it skips a few noteworthy works, perhaps due to their scholarly depth, but overall, it would be a good start for amateur historians. This work is a valuable addition to the shelf of anyone interested not just in the War of 1812, but also in the ways it is commemorated and remembered on both sides of the border. Although the decision to exclude other sites is understandable, it is also unfortunate, and somewhat undercuts the total value of this book.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at https://networks.h-net.org/h-war

Citation: Paul Springer. Review of Copp, Terry; Symes, Matt; McWilliams, Caitlin; Lachance, Nick; Keelan, Geoff; Mott, Jeffrey W. *1812: A Guide to the War and Its Legacy.* H-War, H-Net Reviews. July, 2014.

URL: https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=39461