

FOREWORD

The years 2004–2013 mark the 250th anniversary of the French and Indian War. The opening shots of what Winston Churchill called the *first* world war were fired by American soldiers and their Indian allies, led by a young and inexperienced George Washington. Washington, en route to establish a fort at the strategic Forks of the Ohio, stumbled on a French advance party led by one Ensign Jumonville, who became the war's first casualty. This violent affair in a rocky glen not thirty miles from present-day Pittsburgh set in motion a three-way struggle—between French, Indian, and British forces—for dominance of the continent. It is altogether fitting that Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania should lead a national effort to commemorate this world-shaping event, one that determined not only the political map of North America but also the lives and languages of its peoples.

To focus public attention on this important anniversary, various regional institutions and government agencies are hosting a wide range of activities, from historic site restorations to films, battlefield reenactments, theater performances, and exhibitions. At the forefront of these efforts is the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, an organization formed in 1879 to preserve and interpret colonial history. Fifty years ago, on the occasion of the bicentennial of the French and Indian War, the Historical Society published *Drums in the Forest*. Written by Charles Morse Stotz and Alfred Procter James, the work quickly became a standard source on the war. At the same time, the Historical Society commissioned Stotz to begin a larger study on the war in Western Pennsylvania, with special emphasis on forts and the soldiers who were garrisoned there.

Stotz devoted the rest of his life to completing this groundbreaking work. It was not until 1985—the year of his death—that the Historical Society published *Outposts of the War for Empire: The French and English in Western Pennsylvania: Their Armies, Their Forts, Their People, 1749–1764*. Based on primary research in the United States, Canada, and Europe, the book provided a close-up look at the forts and fighters of Western Pennsylvania. Stotz brought to the project the eyes of a professional architect and the ear of a natural storyteller. His aerial perspectives bring vividly to life long-forgotten forts that played a central role in the struggle for North America, a remarkable achieve-

ment considering that most of these structures had been razed or, in some cases, buried and overrun by urban sprawl. With an architect's attention to detail, he scoured repositories, poring over 200-year-old manuscripts and drawings submitted by engineer officers and soldiers. The result was a masterpiece that quickly sold out. Today, it is sought after by collectors and commands an exorbitant price—if it can be found at all.

Before Stotz, American historians had long recognized the importance of the French and Indian War, but most saw it as mainly a struggle between French and British empires. Native peoples were largely considered an exotic backdrop to the central plot of European conquest and colonization. In the nineteenth century, Francis Parkman's two-volume opus *Montcalm and Wolfe* (1884) influenced a generation of scholars who admired the sweeping scope of his narrative. In the twentieth century, historian Lawrence Henry Gipson, in his massive fifteen-volume work *The British Empire before the American Revolution* (1936–1970), devoted much attention to this conflict, but again relegated American Indians to the dark forest as background players. Even the name of the war betrays an Anglo perspective. In the United States it is known as the French and Indian War—or, the war *we* fought against the French and Indians.

Then came Stotz. His principal purpose was to fill the gap in scholarship concerning frontier army fortifications. He wanted to show what they looked like, how they were situated and built, how they varied in design and purpose—all with an eye toward someday reconstructing them for the edification and enjoyment of the public. But during his research he discovered that the frontier fort was much more than a military installation—it was the center for farming, trading, and community.

Stotz also came to understand the larger context of the war and the clash of cultures that lay at the center of the conflict. “This was the last period in our history,” he wrote, “in which the Indians controlled the balance of power between the French and Canadians on the one hand and the British and the American on the other. It was a war in which Americans courted and begged the Indian to be their allies, friends, and defenders. It was the period, too, that produced the strongest and most nearly successful effort on the part of the Indians,

under Chief Pontiac in 1763, to recover their lands and drive the Anglo-Americans back over the mountains to the eastern seaboard.” Though Stotz understood the role of Indians in this three-sided struggle, he regretted that the native side of the story had been recorded by white men at parlays and councils and was necessarily culturally filtered. To his way of thinking, historians failed to use information about the native role to its full potential. As in period paintings, French and British soldiers stand colorfully uniformed at center stage while Indians lurk in the shadowy background.

Stotz encouraged new scholars to “get into the mind” of the American Indians and express native viewpoints. He would have been delighted to know that now, on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the French and Indian War, a new generation of historians has come to understand the importance of native peoples in the origins and outcomes of the conflict.

Daniel K. Richter, in *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (2001), reminds us that this continent was populated long before the arrival of Europeans. He looks at the coming of the white man from the viewpoint of the already inhabited forests and villages of native people and examines the same old records from a fresh perspective. James H. Merrell’s work *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (1999) examines the role of Métis and frontiersmen, who acted as intermediaries between the white and Indian worlds.

Perhaps the most remarkable achievement of these new scholars is Fred Anderson’s award-winning *Crucible of War: The Seven Years’ War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766* (2000). Anderson begins his story with Tanaghrisson, the Seneca Half King, who convinced the young Washington to fire on the French at Jumonville glen. Thus, Anderson places Indians front and center in the war that changed America—and the world.

R. Scott Stephenson’s *Clash of Empires* (2005) follows in Stotz’s footsteps with its attention to the material culture of the war. Stephenson has discovered maps and drawings in European and North American archives that not even Stotz knew existed. This material, along with war clubs, wampum belts, uniforms, cannons, muskets, and documents, including Washington’s Fort Necessity surrender “confession,” has been assembled and returned to Western Pennsylvania for the first time since the war. It will be included in the Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center exhibition *Clash of Empires: The British, French, and Indian War, 1754–1766* (2005–2007), curated by R. Scott Stephenson. The exhibit will also travel to the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

To honor this exhibit and the anniversary of the war, the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania is pleased to once again make available to historians, and to all those interested in Western Pennsylvania’s rich heritage, Charles Morse Stotz’s seminal work, *Outposts of the War for Empire*.

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