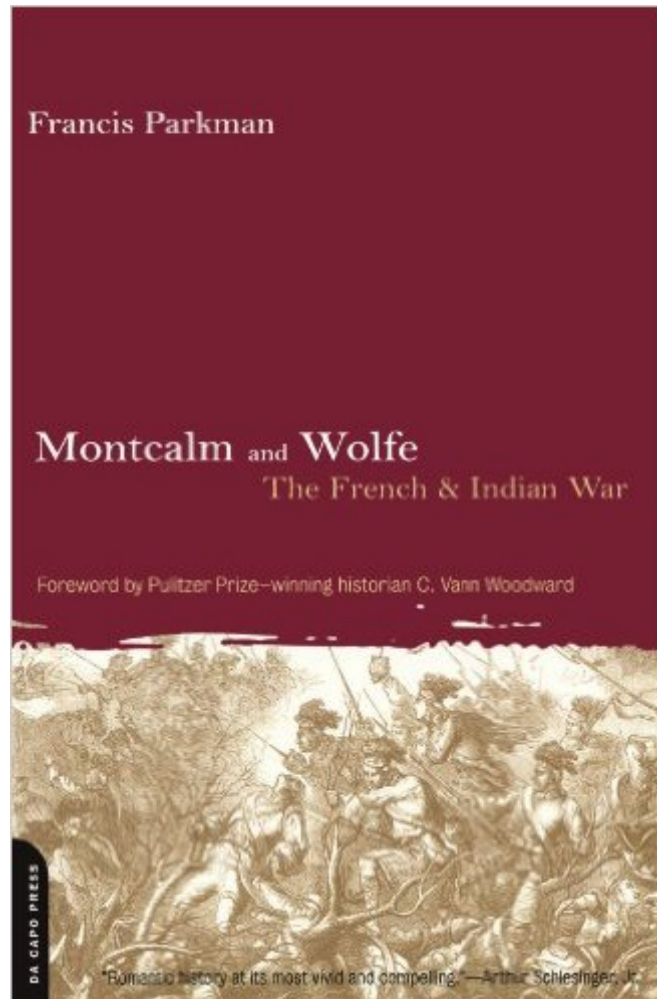


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Montcalm And Wolfe: The French And Indian War



Synopsis

Montcalme and Wolfe frames the war years through the lives of its two brilliant opposing generals. Weaving together the campaigns on both sides of the Atlantic. Parkman travels from opulent royal courts to muddy colonial fields, from Fort Necessity to the Plains of Abraham. He couples impeccable history with rich insightful narration, revealing the war as a deeply personal conflict between Louis de Montcalm and James Wolfe, the two ambitious leaders who ultimately died heroes' deaths on the frontlines. Accompanied by over forty detailed maps and illustrations; some selected specially for this edition; Parkman's timeless work shows how the enormous transfer of land from France to England at the war's end sowed the first seeds of colonialism; seeds that, in the due course, led America to its revolution, and eventually, its independence.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Francis Parkman (1823-1893) was the first great American historian and today the most prestigious award in the field bears his name. "Montcalm and Wolfe" represents volumes six and seven of his celebrated study on the Anglo-French conflict in North America. This book is more than an excellent history of a seminal but largely forgotten conflict; it is nothing less than a work of literary art and very much a piece of American history itself. Even if you have little interest in the Seven Years' War or the colonial-era in general, Parkman's writing alone is reason enough to put "Montcalm and Wolfe" on your reading list. Here is one notable, but by no means unusual, example of Parkman's narrative

abilities, which describes the journey of colonial troops through the marshes around Lake Oneida in upstate New York in 1755:"Thither the bateaux were dragged on sledges and launched on the dark and tortuous stream, which, fed by a decoction of forest leaves that oozed from the marshy shores, crept in shadow through depths of foliage, with only a belt of illumined sky gleaming between the jagged tree-tops. Tall and lean with straining towards the light, their rough, gaunt stems trickling with perpetual damps, stood on either hand the silent hosts of the forest. The skeletons of their dead, barkless, blanched and shattered, strewed the mudbanks and shallows; others lay submerged, like bones of drowned mammoths, thrusting lank, white limbs above the sullen water; and great trees, entire as yet, were flung by age or storms athwart the current - a bristling barricade of matted boughs.

Francis Parkman was a master storyteller. The French and Indian War is often seen simply as a precursor to the American Revolution. Simply put, Parkman illuminates this conflict between England, France, Prussia, Russia, etc. and more specifically between England and France for control of North America as the pivotal conflict of the 18th century. It truly was the first global conflict, the consequences of which are masterfully explained. Parkman deftly describes the political maneuvering of the English and French in order to win Native American allies. With respect to Native Americans, Parkman is not often kind. They are often described as 'savages' or 'barbarians' in reference to atrocities committed during the course of the war. Parkman often does not give as much attention to atrocities committed by the European powers, especially the English. However, Parkman did not have the lens of modern political correctness through which to view such behavior. It was a different time and Parkman should not be condemned for the prejudices of his time. The descriptions of the natural beauty of the wilderness in which this conflict raged are timeless. One almost feels as if they are on the scene when Howe's army set off down Lake George to attack Montcalm at Ticonderoga. The mental picture one gets from Parkman's descriptions is absolutely vivid! Battle descriptions are just as exciting with detailed descriptions of troop movements and fighting techniques of the Europeans, Native Americans, and New England and Canadian militias. The book is well annotated and meticulously documents all sources used during its preparation. The appendices contain many curious stories of individual soldiers and politicians. In all, this was a great read.

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