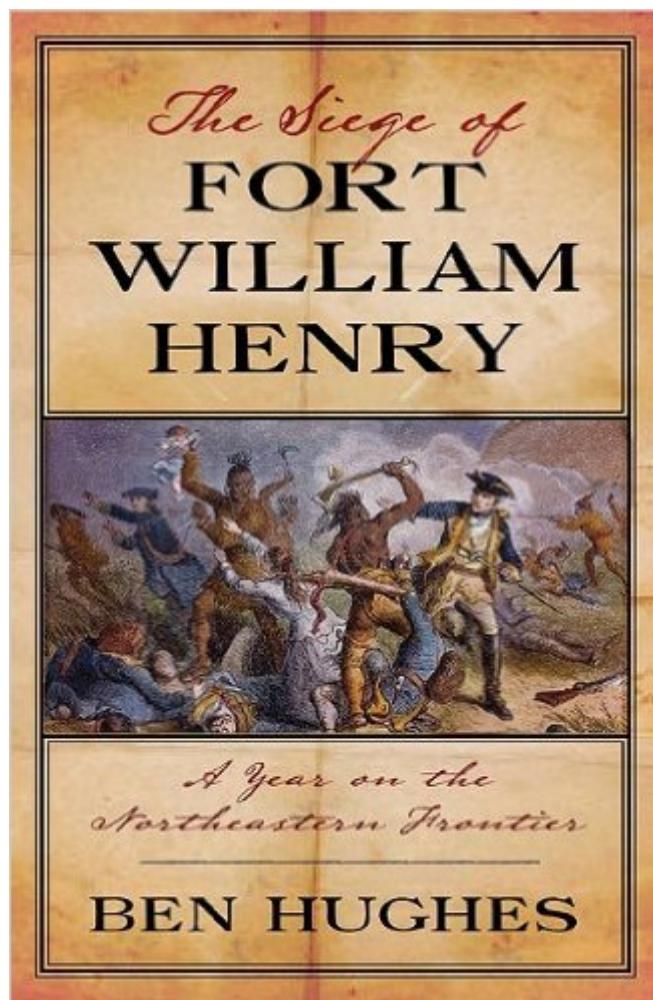


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The Siege Of Fort William Henry: A Year On The Northeastern Frontier



Synopsis

Immortalized in *The Last of the Mohicans*, the True Story of a Pivotal Battle in the British and French War for the North American Continent

The opening years of the French and Indian War were disastrous for the British. In 1755 General Braddock's troops were routed at the Battle of Monongahela and by the middle of 1756 Fort Oswego on Lake Ontario had fallen. Hindered by quarrelsome provincial councils, incompetent generals, and the redcoats' inability to adapt to wilderness warfare, Britain was losing the war. In 1757 the 35th Regiment of Foot stepped into the breach. A poorly trained assortment of conscripts, old soldiers, and convicted criminals led by Lieutenant Colonel George Monro, the regiment was destined to take center stage in the most controversial event of the war. Fort William Henry on the southern shore of New York's Lake George was a key fortification supporting British interests along the frontier with French America. Monro and his regiment occupied the fort in the spring of 1757 while Britain planned its attack on the key French fortress at Louisbourg, Nova Scotia. Learning that most of Britain's military resources were allocated to Louisbourg, the French launched a campaign along the weakened frontier. French Commander Louis-Joseph de Montcalm and his American Indian allies laid siege to Fort William Henry; Monro could not hold out and was forced to surrender. As part of the terms, the British regiment, colonial militia, and their camp followers would be allowed safe passage to nearby Fort Edward. The French watched in horror, however, as their Indian allies attacked the British column after it left the fort, an episode that sparked outrage and changed the tactics of the war. Seen through the eyes of participants such as Louis Antoine de Bougainville, a scholarly young aide-de-camp, Jabez Fitch, an amiable Connecticut sergeant, and Kisensik, a proud Nipissing chief whose father once met Louis XIV in the marbled halls of Versailles, *The Siege of Fort William Henry: A Year on the Northeastern Frontier* uses contemporary newspaper reports, official documents, private letters, and published memoirs to bring the narrative to life. From Indian councils on the banks of the Saint Lawrence River and bustling military camps in northern New York to the narrative's bloody denouement on the shores of Lake George, the reader is immersed in the colorful, yet brutal world of eighteenth-century northeastern America.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Let me tell you, there is nothing more deflating for someone who fancies himself a 'know-it-all' about a particular historical subject than to nonetheless keep reading and discover, well, a gap or two in the 'all.' And so it was with this excellent short work on one of my favorite subjects, the British surrender of Fort William Henry to the French in early August, 1757. As my other reviews will attest, I've read every account of the battle (usually presented in a larger historical context) I could find, from Parkman to Anderson, and from Steele to Bellico, along with various contemporary and later pamphlets and, of course, the seminal fictional version, 'The Last of the Mohicans.' Enforcing my certitude is the fact that I live about 1/3 of a mile due west of the fort's reconstruction (just to the south of the 'second battery'), and thus can literally walk to the prospect at the end of my street and envision the troop positions and events described in these narratives. So what's new and different about this author's version? First, Hughes does a splendid job of addressing the year and the siege while placing the events in the larger historical context of the F&IW. He also adds a very significant number of details about the principals and the composition and disposition of the respective fighting forces, many, I'm reluctant to say, new to me. All in all, throughout the work, and entirely due to his meticulous explanations, the reader is always comfortable in understanding who is doing what to whom, and why.

Hold onto your hat. There's lots of fighting and death on both sides. We often have thought of the native Americans as being barbarians, but the colonists yielded a mean and deadly tomahawk as well. This story takes place on the northeastern frontier. It involves the French and Indian siege of Fort William Henry. It is a true story and was the turning point for the British in their conflict with the French and Indians for the control of the North American Continent. In 1755, the British General Braddock and his troops were soundly defeated at the Battle Of The Monongahela. Later in 1756 the Fort Oswego located on Lake Ontario also fell to the French forces. The British had their backs

up against the wall. Quarreling among provincial councils, most incompetent leadership, and their inability to adapt to fighting successfully in the wilderness against the French and superior Indian forces, all led to British failures and losing of these strategic posts. Fort William Henry, located on the southern shore of New York's Lake George, was a key fortification in supporting British interests along the American frontier with French America. The French launched a campaign against Fort William Henry, and without giving much of the story away, the waters of Lake George and the wilderness path between Fort William Henry and Fort Edward was saturated in British men, women and childrens' blood. It was a massacre as portrayed in the novel *The Last of the Mohicans*. If your reading eye and stomach can churn through the blood and gore of this engagement, you will come away with a better understanding of what it was like to live and fight on the early frontier and how little importance was placed upon lives on either side of the conflict.

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