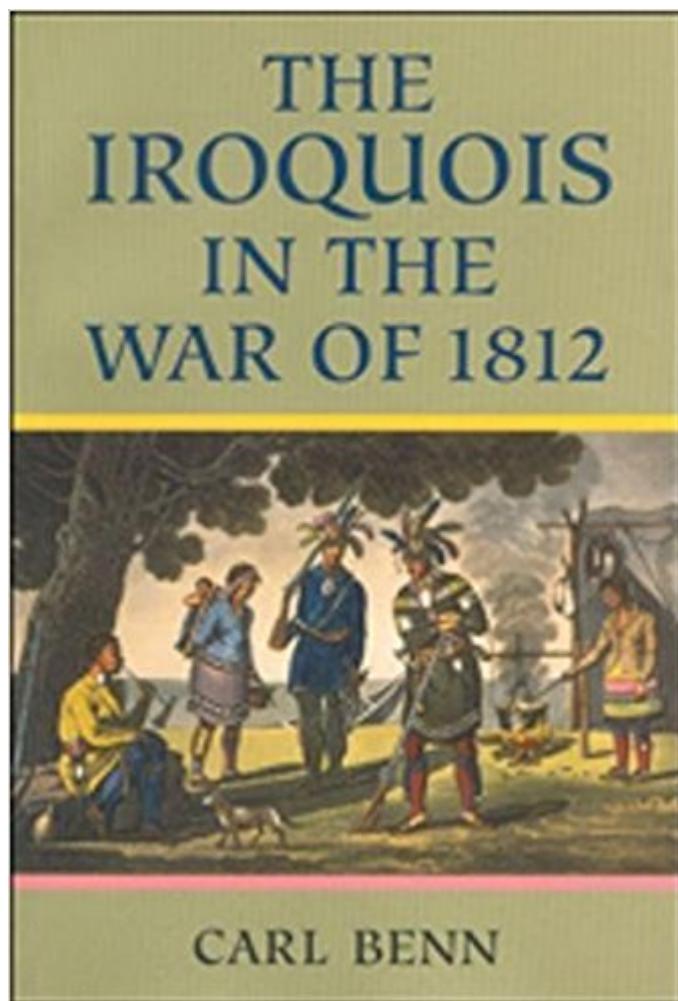


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Iroquois In The War Of 1812



Synopsis

Until now, the story of Iroquois participation in the War of 1812 has not received detailed examination, and there have consequently been major gaps in our understanding of the Iroquois, their relations with Euroamerican society, and the course of the war itself. The Iroquois in the War of 1812 proves that, in fact, the Six Nations' involvement was 'too significant to ignore.' Benn explores this involvement by focusing on Iroquois diplomatic, military, and cultural history during the conflict. He looks at the Iroquois' attempts to stay out of the war, their entry into hostilities, their modes of warfare, the roles they played in different campaigns, their relationships with their allies, and the effects that the war had on their society. He also details the military and diplomatic strength of the Iroquois during the conflict, despite the serious tensions that plagued their communities. This account reveals how the British benefited more than the Americans from the contributions of their Iroquois allies, and underscores how important the Six Nations were to the successful defence of Canada. It will appeal to general readers in both Canada and the United States and will have relevance for students and scholars of military, colonial, and Native history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

'Carl Benn has written a masterful study of the role that the Iroquois played in the war between the United States and Great Britain known as the War of 1812 ... Benn gives full consideration to social conditions within the Iroquois and to how they conducted war.' (Christopher T. George, Journal of the War of 1812 and the Era 1800 to 1840)

Carl Benn is Curator of Military History at Heritage Toronto and author of *Historic Fort York, 1793-1993*.

After 186 years, it's about time for a comprehensive look at the Indians' participation in the War of 1812, on both sides of the conflict. While Carl Benn's focus is on the Iroquois of the Six Nations (or Grand River Tract) of Upper Canada, and the battles and skirmishes in the Niagara region, he also refers to their brethren of western New York, the Seven Nations of the lower St. Lawrence region, Tecumseh's western conflict, and other nations such as the Delaware, Ojibwa and Mississauga. His explanation of the Iroquois way of war does much to dispel the myth of the "savage" and leads to a better understanding of their reasons for fighting, temporary desertion, looting and the now-repugnant practice of scalping. He allows the reader a glimpse into Iroquois society and the divisions within it, similar to those of Euroamericans, with pro-British, neutral, and pro-American factions. His account of the personal agendas and internal strife among the Indian Department, the civil authorities and the military illustrates that, unfortunately, the status quo has changed little over the centuries. This book is a scholarly treatise, with 609 footnotes, and although there is a factual tone to it, it is certainly not dry. Benn has made the best use of an extensive bibliography to create a well-balanced examination of the Iroquois alliances and conflicts, among themselves, and with their allies and enemies. His description of the Battle of Chippawa is downright exciting. Benn tends to skim over actions that do not involve the Iroquois. This is understandable, due to the subject matter, but quick reference can sometimes result in slightly distorted facts. As an example, Benn states that "Brock ordered the commandant at St. Joseph's Island in Lake Huron to capture the American post of Fort Mackinac at the head of Lake Michigan." In fact, Brock was under direct orders from his commander-in-chief, Sir George Prevost, to restrain from aggression; he therefore ordered the captain at St. Joseph Island to act according to his best judgement; by capturing Fort Michilimackinac, the captain acted on his own initiative. However, this is a small point. For the most part, this is an excellent book about a part of history that deserves to be better known and appreciated.

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