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strengthened or negated Mvskoke ceremonialism? How have gender roles, with regard to ceremonialism and medicine, changed since Swanton's work was first published in 1928?

These questions and others could be answered with a more thorough preface or epilogue to Swanton's rich but dated presentation of the complex worldviews of the Mvskoke Nation. *Mvto!*

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**The First Global War: Britain, France, and the Fate of North America, 1756–1775.** By William R. Nester. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2000. 320 pages. \$69.95 cloth.

Few people celebrate the Seven Years War: Americans remember it—if at all—as a prologue to the American Revolution, French-Canadians recall it as a tragic war of conquest, English-Canadians recollect it as an ambivalent victory, and Native people think of it as one in a series of colonial conflicts that cost them lives and land. Because it transcends national histories and defies simple explanation, the war demands a great deal of its historians, who must accommodate the multiple perspectives of the combatants while still conveying the broad scale of a global conflict. Some writers have risen to the challenge; synthetic treatments of the war are distinguished by the scope and ambition of their authors. Our understanding of the eighteenth-century struggle for North America is deeply colored by the inimitable literary styles and historical methods of Francis Parkman, Lawrence Henry Gipson, and Francis Jennings. It takes a certain hubris to tackle the subject these historical giants have made their own, but that is precisely what William Nester has done in his new survey of the conflict, *The First Global War*, which, along with its companion volume, *The Great Frontier War: Britain, France, and the Imperial Struggle for North America, 1607–1755*, provides an overview of colonial warfare in North America from the founding of Jamestown to the outbreak of the American Revolution.

Nester seeks to offer “a comprehensive, balanced analysis” (p. ix) of the conflict that avoids partisan bias and provides a factual baseline of the war's events. Although he repudiates Parkman's Victorian prejudices, he clearly is an admirer of the Boston Brahmin's ability to combine evocative descriptions with dispassionate analysis, a style that Nester imitates with mixed success. The book consists primarily of a yearly chronicle of military operations in North America, with special attention paid to developments in British policy and strategy. At the end of each chapter is a brief section reviewing major battles in Europe, Asia, and the Caribbean. Events are viewed with the synoptic eye of generals and prime ministers; broad discussions of strategy and tactics figure prominently, the gritty experience of footsoldiers in the field hardly at all. This elite perspective is likely a reflection of his sources. The endnotes include few references to manuscript materials and suggest a heavy reliance on government correspondence and officers' journals.

Given that Nester does not mine any new veins of information, it is not surprising that he arrives at a largely orthodox interpretation of the war. The French were undone by a combination of political corruption and military incompetence; colonial militiamen such as Rogers' Rangers increasingly adopted the French and Indian style of guerrilla warfare, with devastating effect. Naval superiority allowed the British to strangle France's colonies into submission. Nester is at his strongest in his thumbnail sketches of the war's major personalities: Lord Loudoun as a haughty exemplar of aristocratic arrogance, Intendant Bigot as a caricature of venality, Pitt as contradictory popular hero, James Wolfe as a frail and blundering commander, and the Marquis de Montcalm as an indecisive and foolhardy general. Nester does not pull his punches in these portraits, although his judgments rarely stray far from conventional wisdom.

If there is a characteristic that sets the book apart from other accounts of the Seven Years War, it is a peculiar obsession with numbers. Nearly every page is sprinkled with data on subjects ranging from the width of fort walls to the value of provisions. If one is at all curious as to how much salt pork (1,237 barrels) the French plundered from Fort William Henry (p. 63), how many men (519) were in General Wolfe's thirty-fifth regiment during the siege of Quebec (p. 164), or how many scalps (110) and prisoners (sixty) were taken from a fifty-four-wagon supply train by La Corne de St. Luc's regiment near Fort Edward on July 28, 1758 (p. 101), Nester's volume would be a good place to start. These figures are not grist to the mill of quantitative analysis but are apparently included for the sake of detail; unfortunately, the result is that some passages read more like scorecards than historical narrative.

The author is clearly torn between a desire to capture the drama of the battlefield and a determination to remain coolly objective. The result is that his account is neither a compelling narrative nor a persuasive interpretation. In his account of the Fort William Henry "massacre," he describes in grisly detail the atrocities committed against the British troops, quoting freely from two English observers of the event. Having conjured a vivid image of a cruel massacre, he then retreats from concluding as much, admitting that Ian Steele has refuted "the popular belief that a widespread massacre took place" (p. 62). The vivid description of Indian cruelties, in this context, is little more than a gratuitous anecdote.

Although Nester shows a little too much relish in describing Indian atrocities, his treatment of Native participation has some merit. He gives due recognition to the importance of Native auxiliaries in winning battles for the French and, to a lesser extent, the British. He also appreciates the importance of the woodlands diplomacy of William Johnson, George Croghan, and Indian tribes allied to the British. There are glimpses of factionalism among the Iroquois and Delaware, a clear synopsis of the diplomatic importance of gifts in the Great Lakes region, and a lengthy section devoted to the outbreak of Pontiac's War. Unfortunately, Nester tends to view Indian affairs from the perspective of European or colonial officials, rather than through the eyes of the Natives themselves. Indians, he suggests, "were at once the decisive element of any raid, and its greatest inhibition. The French and British alike fre-

quently questioned whether the Indians were not more trouble than they were worth" (p. 25). Although this belief held true from an imperial point of view, it fails to recognize why Native soldiers failed to conform to European standards of discipline. Nester could have profited from the burgeoning literature on the ethnohistory of warfare in North America; historians ranging from Daniel Richter to José Brendão have shown that Indians were inspired to fight not by the strategic aims of imperial commanders, but by a personal desire to avenge murdered relatives and win prestige within their communities.

More troubling is Nester's occasional use of pejorative language in describing battles involving Indians. In one passage, warriors "swarmed about" and "satiated their love for scalps by digging up corpses" (p. 60). On other occasions, they "burn, murder, and loot" (p. 26), and then "loot, murder, and burn" (p. 64). Meanwhile, George Croghan and William Johnson are said to have shared "a lusty eye for Indian maidens" (p. 16). Some readers might be discomforted by such language and the Victorian sensibility it reflects.

A more vigilant editor might have corrected such lapses. Indeed, the volume would have benefited from the more active use of the editor's pen, given the frequency of misspellings (*heros* instead of *heroes*, *Fontainbleau* instead of *Fontainebleau*, *Ian Steel* instead of *Ian Steele*) and factual errors (St. Pierre and Miquelon are said to be located in St. Lawrence Bay, even though the islands are located south of Newfoundland's Fortune Bay). Other sections are marred by a cut-and-paste style of writing that strings together paragraph-long quotations interspersed with one-sentence comments by the author. Still other passages suffer from tortured constructions: "the alliances that actually jelled differed sharply from those that seemed likely when 1756 dawned" (p. 2). A work on the Seven Years War naturally invites comparisons with such accomplished stylists as Parkman and Jennings, and Nester stacks up poorly against them.

Others might suggest a comparison with Fred Anderson, whose treatment of the same subject was also published this past year. Like Nester, Anderson strove to write a narrative account of the war that incorporates recent research without losing the interest of lay readers. Anderson not only tells a far more compelling story, but also gives a refreshingly new perspective on how the war reshuffled the political order of North America, paying due attention to the important place of Native groups within the French and British empires. It is disappointing that Nester, a political scientist moonlighting as a historian, could not do the same. Some might say that Anderson, the latest dynamo to take on the subject of the Seven Years War, has published the book Nester wished he had written.

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