



The Frontiersmen: A Narrative

Allan W. Eckert

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Against the background of such names as George Rogers Clark, Daniel Boone, Arthur St. Clair, Anthony Wayne, Simon Girty, and William Henry Harrison, Eckert has recreated the life of one of America's most outstanding heroes, Simon Kenton. Kenton's role in opening the Northwest Territory to settlement more than rivaled that of his friend Daniel Boone. By his eighteenth birthday, Kenton had already won frontier renown as woodsman, fighter, and scout. His incredible physical strength and endurance, his great dignity and innate kindness made him the ideal prototype of the frontier hero. The Frontiersmen is equally the story of one of history's greatest leaders, whose misfortune was to be born to a doomed cause and a dying race. Tecumseh, the brilliant Shawnee chief, welded together by the sheer force of his intellect and charisma and incredible Indian confederacy that thrust of the white man's westward expansion. Like Kenton, Tecumseh was the paragon of his people's virtues.

The Frontiersmen: A Narrative Details

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From Reader Review The Frontiersmen: A Narrative for online ebook

Faith Justice says

The author calls this a novel about the settling of whites beyond the Allegheny Mountains, primarily in Kentucky and Ohio, but also a bit beyond to Indiana, Tennessee and Missouri. It reads like non-fiction--straightforward narrative with chapter notes. The author does impute emotions to the characters in a novelistic way. The dialog is supposedly taken from diaries and published accounts. I found the writing plain but the history fascinating, especially since I grew up in Ohio and was somewhat familiar with many of the characters. And there are a lot of characters. Allan W. Eckert deals with all the leading Native Americans, U.S. and British military leaders, frontiersmen, settlers, merchants and con-men that lived or visited Kentucky and the Northwest Territory. He covers the establishment of nearly every city and village (native or settler) in the area; every raid and murder (again on both sides) and military actions. It sometimes became a bit overwhelming, but his "touchstone" characters were the famous frontiersman Simon Kenton and legendary Shawnee chief Tecumseh. He filled in the background on their parents, siblings and lives from birth to death. Eckert began and ended the book with Kenton's story and regularly returned to him during the narrative.

In general, I enjoyed the book. The middle sagged a bit and, as I mentioned, the detail could get overwhelming. I would give it three stars for reading pleasure and the fourth for the great research. I will be reading the sequel. One chapter note struck me. According to Eckert, Andrew Jackson (our 7th president) was likely born at sea and ineligible for the Presidency. He presents some compelling firsthand accounts (one, a woman who claimed to have delivered him on the boat) and muddy dates (Simon Kenton mentioned meeting Jackson leading a gang of men in Kentucky when, according to the official biography, Jackson would have only been twelve years old.) Our first birther controversy! I recommend this book for those serious about early US expansion history. If you're looking for a romantic story or more traditional HF, this isn't the book for you.

L. McCoy says

Take that, short attention span! It might have taken over a year but I did it! It didn't take over a year because it was boring (I don't give boring books 4 stars) but because it's the first prose book I started reading for pleasure in years (though I have read some other, shorter ones since as I discovered that I actually like a lot of prose even if I thought I didn't for some reason), it has very small text and is long. Alright, let's go!

What's it about?

This book is a nonfiction story about a man named Simon Kenton and he was well... a frontiersman. He had many adventures with other frontiersmen including some that most people (Americans anyway) have learned about in history and of course he got in trouble with some Indians which is pretty much what happened to pretty much every white guy back then and a lot of crazy s*** happens!

Pros:

The story is very interesting, never too slow, I really like that.

Simon Kenton is interesting and it surprises me that he isn't more well known. I'm pretty interested in history and never heard of him until reading this book but he is one of the biggest bad-a**es of this time

period, at least as far people I've heard of from back then go and it is very surprising and disappointing that he isn't more well known.

This book is intense, exciting and has lots of action. Yeah, I know that it is maybe slightly f***ed up to say that it's exciting and has lots of action because that action does involve real life pain and death but on the other hand, I hate when nonfiction (or fiction) is boring so yeah, I'm still gonna go ahead and say that it may not be a good thing entirely but it's at least good for readers learning about this stuff.

I like when history books teach me about things worth giving a s*** about, this book definitely did that.

Since I didn't know much about this story even though it's nonfiction, it was still unpredictable.

This book is very well written. I like how the beginning of each part (not chapter, there are chapters but even they are divided into parts) includes the date of the events.

It is very clear that lots of research was done for this book, I really appreciate when authors do research on the history book they're writing, especially since it shows that they put effort into it and the reader can be (mostly) sure that it's historically accurate.

Cons:

There's these notes about certain stuff in the back of the book which at first I thought was great. It turns out it's not so great. It gets annoying having to flip to the notes when I'm trying to enjoy a story and a lot of the notes are things like "Present day (wherever)" which annoyed the s*** out of me. It's like I went through the trouble of going to the back of the book only so the author can tell me it's present day wherever which could may or may not be the case now considering how much geography and names of places change and this book was originally printed in the 1960's... so there's a very good chance that some of that has changed. I will point out that some of the notes were very interesting it's just: less geography please, really didn't need that. The text size in the edition I read was very small and often hurt my eyes, that's part of why it took so long to read this book. I eventually had to get a special magnifying screen made for reading in order to finish this book.

It's hard to keep track of the characters. Sure, it could be because I don't have a great attention span and because I read multiple books at a time for that reason however, I've talked to other people who have read it and they had the same problem so even though the characters and story are interesting it's a bit hard to keep track of, I think Eckert maybe should have included a character guide or something (though I think I mostly got it, just may not exactly be able to do a quiz on this book or anything like that).

Warning:

This book is extremely graphic! If you're familiar with a comic and/or anime series called Berserk, this is just as brutal as that only it's nonfiction and a detailed prose book so it ends up being even more f***ed up, I figured I should just throw that warning out there.

Overall:

Good book, I definitely recommend it for folks who can handle strong violence in books and are interested in history. I enjoyed this a lot, found it interesting and learned about things that I think more people should learn about. I had a few problems, sure but keep in mind, I tend to be a bit snooty when it comes to books (I hate admitting it but it's true) so I would still recommend this one.

4/5

Derek P. says

Another in the series of books from Allan W. Eckert about the formative period of the United States between

the French and Indian War and the War of 1812. Simon Kenton and Tecumseh are the central figures in a meticulously researched historical novel, a genre Eckert has mastered.

Ó Ruairc says

I've read the 'Frontiersmen' three or four times; it's a magnificent book. Be that as it may, I do find one shortcoming regarding Eckert's narrative. In the introduction, the author states that his book is fact, not fiction. Unfortunately, this is not entirely correct. Without a doubt, Eckert dramatizes a lot of the events that occurred during the time period in which 'The Frontiersmen' takes place. Too, he writes convincingly about a few incidents that have no basis for historical accuracy or certainty.

To Eckert's credit, however, he did make amends for some of his unsupported and erroneous 'facts' in 'The Frontiersmen' when he wrote his subsequent books 'A Sorrow in Our Heart,' and 'That Dark and Bloody River.'

Caroline says

This is the story of Simon Kenton and Tecumseh written in a very compelling and factual way with a wonderful narrative element. Anyone who lives in the Ohio Valley will be amazed by who came before us.

P.D. says

Everyone has that first book when they were a kid, that first book that initiated them to the world of literature. For me The Frontiersman was that book. It is a wonderful achievement of narrative history.

Juls says

Simon Kenton, what a hunk. All I can say is that Ohio is a sweet place to grow up and learn about history. This book is a fictional retelling of the history of wait, I forget, oh yeah, frontiersmen in Ohio. Written by a Buckeye, what's cool is that the events and places mentioned are still existing and visitable. Yes I know that's not a word. Pretty factual hardcore writing, but it's a goodie.

David Eppenstein says

One of my favorite areas of history is that of the founding of our country, its earliest roots, its struggle with British rule, our Revolution, and then the creation of our government and its struggle to succeed. During my reading of that history of the nation's early years mention is made of the people in the Western area of the new nation. By Western area what was meant was the land between the Mississippi River and the mountains of the East. From this area problems arose for the leaders of the original 13 Colonies. There was concern that Sectionalism would cause these Western residents to fall into the schemes of European nations or local

political intriguers like Aaron Burr or James Wilkinson. There was even a Whiskey Revolt in Western Pennsylvania that had to be put down by Washington himself. There was also concern that probably masked jealousy on the part of the Original Colonies that when these territories became states they would push the old guard aside and put the country in the hands of amateurs at best and barbarians at worst. But this is the total of what I have seen mentioned about these territories in the histories that I have read until now. This book, "The Frontiersman", has demonstrated to me that there is a void in my knowledge of U.S. History of which I was unaware. This book did a great deal to fill in some of this void and arouse a curiosity for further delving into this area of history.

"The Frontiersman" reads like fictional history but the author goes out of his way to assure the reader that it is a genuine history and that everything reported did in fact occur. Reading some of the reviews and comments about the book as well as the author's note there seems to be some minor controversies about details and whether or not the author used a bit of artistic license in some areas. However, nobody seems to challenge the facts of the various events written about. In his notes the author does mention the extensive amount or source material used for the book and that there is conflict within these sources so I am willing to overlook imaginative reporting of details as long as the fundamental history is accurate. If I had any skepticism about the accuracy of this book it would be because of the exploits of the main character, Simon Kenton. Daniel Boone is frequently mentioned in the book but the activities of Kenton are every bit as noteworthy and as extensive as anything Boone is noted for. If this history is in fact accurate then why isn't Kenton as well known as Boone? I doubt that Boone had a better PR person than Kenton and they were both close friends and would never have attempted to steal anyone's thunder. I guess this is one of those mysteries about the reporting of history that simply can't be explained but it does appear that the memory of Simon Kenton has been severely shortchanged. Now what history does this book exactly cover?

The book's history spans the years beginning shortly after the French and Indian War up to the mid 1830's. The thread of this history follows the lives of primarily two people and to a lesser extent a third person. These three people are the Indian chief Tecumseh, and a frontiersman named Simon Kenton also known as Simon Butler. The third person is an adolescent named Marmaduke "Duke" Van Swearingen who voluntarily allows himself to be kidnapped and adopted into the Shawnee Indian tribe in order to spare his younger brother. Duke becomes a very successful Shawnee tribesman and rises to become a respected chief and contemporary of Tecumseh. In later years Duke, now known as Blue Jacket, is reunited with his now adult younger brother in a manner only a fiendish fate could have created. The exploits of these young men is followed through the settling of the Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana area and vividly depicts what life was like in these wilderness areas in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. I greatly appreciated reading for the first time of what was happening in the West while our Revolution was being fought in the East and how alone and forgotten these settlers were because all military resources were focused on fighting the British. Indians supplied with guns and ammunition by the British made their lives a nightmare and their defense was entirely up to them.

Reading about the great events and personages of history is enjoyable but reading a history like this is far better. This book is about the ordinary people just trying to survive and build a life for themselves and their families. The difficulties they had to endure defy meaningful description but the author does an exceptional job. Every review of this book seems to make a point of warning the reader of the gruesome violence contained in these pages. Indeed the warnings are worth taking but the violence is typical of what you would encounter in reading any history of the conflicts whites had with our native Americans. What you might not expect is that the behavior of the whites toward the Indians is every bit as ugly and barbaric and neither side is able to claim victimhood in this history. The violence begat more violence until there was little difference between the parties of these disputes. The sad part is that the violence continued for another century and spanned the continent. Aside from the violence, however, the author fully reports the formation of small

villages and hamlets that were to grow to the towns and cities we are familiar with today. An enjoyable feature of the book is the notes section of the book where the author has taken pains to locate the present location of the sites of the historic events depicted in the book. I cannot believe that every resident of Kentucky and Ohio, especially those living along the Ohio River, do not possess and are completely familiar with this book as it is their foundation history in all its muddy, bloody, and challenging detail. The only criticism I could have of this book is its length. At just under 600 pages of text the book is a daunting read but it is worth the effort. Enjoy.

Mitzi says

AMAZING. The research that went into this book is mind boggling, but when you add to it that this is just one in a series of SIX it is almost too much to fathom! I agree with the other reviews that say it is a tragedy that Simon Kenton isn't more well known, I developed a hardcore history crush on him as I read this book. :) A must read for anyone who is interested in the settling of Kentucky and Ohio!

Rich Hoffman says

One of the best books about the beginning of America ever written. Its a wonderful book that should be read by every single student in the 8th grade. And if any adult has reached an age beyond 18 and not read this book they need to stop whatever they are doing, and read this book.

Peggy says

Alan Eckerts book The Frontiersmen is a story about the taming of West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Kentucky and Illinois. This story focuses mostly on Simon Kenton who was a brave woodsman, fighter and scout. At a very young age he was forced to leave his family and forge a life of his own. He fought alongside Daniel Boone, George Rogers Clark, William Harrison and many more of our early settlers. Also featured is the great warrior chief of the Shawnees, Tecumseh , who was able to assemble all of the Indian tribes and almost defeated the whites who came to make America their home.

This is a sad story and yet a brave one. When you read what the settlers went through to claim the land and also what the Indians went through to protect their heritage it makes you appreciate the beginnings of our Ohio. It is a gruesome story as these were gruesome times. The story begins very slowly but as I got to the middle of the book I couldn't put it down. The author has researched this time period so extensively and writes so beautifully that he puts you right there. It took a long time to read as it is over 600 pages but it was an important era of our history. I learned so much from this book I can't wait to read another of his books as he wrote several of that time period.

Jim says

What a great book. I think this should be required reading for youth. Not just about interesting history, but human nature and Christianity. Ok, sure some controversy about BlueJacket and his genetics, and books statements, but I see as a small blemish. A lot to be learned in this book about the faults of humanity and

incredible history.

Chris Hamilton says

A lovingly crafted tale that surrounds the history and lives of frontiersman Simon Kenton and the Shawnee Chief Tecumseh. What I was blown away by were the painstaking details Allan Eckert put into this book making sure nothing that was not documented contradicted with the history. I did not really know anything about either person and came away with a great respect for both. This book humbled me in my trivial trials compared to the days of the frontier. I listened to the audio version of the book through Audible. The narrator did a great job with the Indian words, names and accents as well as the other cultures which can be distracting or embarrassing if not done well.

Jim Cooper says

This is Allan Eckert's first book in his series "The Winning of America." It's the story of how Indian territory in the frontiers of the 1700s became the areas we now know as Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana. It's told through the eyes of its two main characters - Simon Kenton (who I somehow knew nothing about before this book) on the side of the frontiersmen, and Tecumseh on the side of the Native Americans.

I've read a lot of late 18th/early 19th century history, but this was my first time seeing that history (American Revolution, War of 1812, etc) through the eyes of Kentuckians/the frontier. Kenton and Tecumseh were the perfect people to tell this story through, as they were around for all of it. The way their lives continually intertwine is cool.

Ultimately what pushed this to 5 stars for me was finally learning about my local history. The founding of the town I live in - Danville, KY - is here, along with the beginnings of Louisville, Harrodsburg, Cincinnati, Lexington, Cleveland, Dayton, etc. In one battle alone there are the names of seven men who would go on to have Kentucky counties named after them - names I've heard my whole life but couldn't have told you a thing about them. I should really have known some of this stuff already!

I also somehow grew up never hearing about William Henry Harrison. There's a lot more interesting about him than his one-month presidency. And Simon Girty! What a great villain. This would make a great movie.

A couple of notes:

- I mostly read this on Kindle, because there are so many really good footnotes and Kindle makes it easy to flip back and forth between the notes and the text. On the other hand, the Kindle version has a bunch of errors in it and it doesn't have some of the maps and illustrations that the paperback version has.
- This book is really good, but fair warning - it is also really gory. Like really really gory. Frontier life was brutal.
- I read this with Google maps open. Some other reviewers have complained that there is too much geography in the book (especially in the footnotes), but it was one of my favorite parts! I loved tracking down these events to see where they happened/what the places look like today.

Bob Mayer says

All of Eckert's books are classics. When the frontier was in the eastern United States. His books give us history, up close and personal.

Nate says

My first Eckert, and probably my second or third experience with this strange and hard-to-define "narrative" style. From my understanding, it exists in that esoteric space between fiction and non; it reads as a novel, but hews too closely to an academic vibe with use of primary sources, etc. to be lumped in with an ordinary historical novel or whatever you wanna call it. I like it! You can get the immersive, intense experience of a well-researched novel without the usual (necessary) factual sketchiness and outright invention. Eckert's prose is workmanlike but still pretty in a utilitarian way and he obviously has a deep love and knowledge of the Ohio area, which is crucial as people are constantly running around it doing all kinds of stuff and the details really bring it to life in your head.

The overarching plot is indeed about the settlement (read: conquest) of the Northwest Territory and thusly it has a sizable cast of people from all walks of life. However, it's particularly focused on two men: Simon Kenton and Tecumseh. Kenton is certainly an interesting figure...the consummate frontiersman; clever, resourceful, well-bearded, an excellent marksman and traveler and unquestionably brave and compassionate. That said, Tecumseh was unquestionably the more interesting of the two for me. After the Shawnees had been forced further and further west by the military victories and weak-ass duplicitous treaties of the whites, he was the best chance for a turning of the tides not only for the Shawnee but for many of the other native nations of the continent. He proves himself again and again to not only be a clever, brave and formidable statesman and warrior but to be compassionate, constantly speaking out against the brutal torture his fellow natives would put captured Europeans through...I have a clear and obvious bias for the native peoples here and fervently wanted Tecumseh to violently throw off the greedy yoke of the encroaching whites.

It's impossible to avoid discussing the horrible, horrible violence in this book. There are countless scenes of murder, torture and mutilation perpetrated by both sides and they are portrayed very vividly. I consider myself fairly desensitized to this kind of thing, as most people who enjoy history probably do. That said, there were several scenes in this book that just made my blood run cold as fucking ice, particularly the nauseating Gnadenhutten massacre. I imagine that for people living in this area today reading this book would be something like reading a news clipping about a particularly long and gruesome series of murders that happened a long time ago in your house. I really have to give humanity credit for the inventive and thoroughly disgusting ways we've managed to kill each other during our wonderful time on Earth.

All in all a very bittersweet experience. It's a grand story but it's also disturbing to read this stuff as a citizen of the country that is coldly hacking through and shitting on so much humanity in these pages. Maybe bittersweet isn't the world...the sweet side is sweet and the bitter side is more the flavor of a rotted corpse. Still, it's all very valuable reading to anyone interested in any of the numerous subjects it covers, even if you only have a passing interest like I did when I started it. As usual I have to give nerd credit to the multiple well-made maps and illustrations sprinkled artfully throughout the book. I'm certainly going to continue on with the series, but not until the trauma fades.

Adambmour says

This is a revisit to my childhood. I had to read this in middle school over the summer. At the time I hated it because of its sheer size (600+ pages). But, upon reading it as an adult, I thoroughly enjoyed it. The *Frontiersmen* chronicles the life of Simon Kenton (a Kentucky frontiersman) and Tecumseh (the leader of the Shawnee) and the events surrounding the white expansion into what is now known as Ohio and Kentucky. Unlike many historical books, Eckert uses various resources, journals, newspaper articles, etc to create a narrative of the life of the two main characters. The narrative writing style of historical events made this book incredibly informative while being easy/interesting to read.

Also, my new kitten is named after a random person identified in the book named Pemberton. So, props to that.

Matt says

You can't mention *The Frontiersman*, or any of Allan W. Eckert's Winning of America Series, without noting its unique species: history-in-the-form-of-a-novel. It is not, repeat not, historical fiction. Instead, as Eckert takes pains to point out in his forward, every event described in the book actually occurred in the manner described. Every word used in dialogue comes from primary sources: journals, newspapers, diaries, etc.

What makes this book novelistic is that Eckert has taken the unorthodox approach of using some of this primary material to construct dialogue, rather than simply relate it. I guess Eckert never read Shelby Foote, because it's quite possible to write "narrative" history without resorting to inexact dialogue.

In fact, the dialogue in this book is the worst thing about it. Once, while driving to my brother's graduation, my girlfriend was reading the book aloud to me. Then she came to this passage, involving a confrontation between "the Frontiersman" himself, Simon Kenton, and Jacob Greathouse, a racist old Indian-killer.

Simon tells Greathouse: "The next time I point a gun at you, I'll kill you. And the next time you touch me, I'll kill you." To which Greathouse responds: "Eh, what do you think of this cub? Two times he comes very close to my blades and then he lays on the ground in his own blood and tells me he will kill me. I think I like this cub, eh?"

Then my girlfriend started laughing and wouldn't stop. Calling this dialogue tin-eared, even if it has primary sourcing, is generous.

Eckert's decision is unfortunate, because this is a very good book, and I trust the research that Eckert has done. However, because of the constructed dialogue, I'd never cite this book in a scholarly paper or book (if, for some reason, I ever wrote a scholarly paper or book).

Of course, there are mistakes, and I've noticed a lot of reviewers attributing the mistakes to the book's form. I hate to break it to them, but the historical inaccuracies have nothing to do with imagined dialogue and everything to do with the fact that no one knows for certain everything that occurred on the American frontier in the 18th and 19th centuries (I can't even get a straight answer as to who stole my Diet Pepsi out of the work fridge).

Interestingly, a lot of the criticism of this book comes from relatives of its characters. Simon Girty's descendant's, for instance, just can't get over the fact that Simon Girty was creepy, even if he wasn't the bloodthirsty traitor he's been made out to be.

With that said, *The Frontiersman* is the compelling, adventurous story of famed scout, hunter, explorer and soldier, Simon Kenton. Kenton was a contemporary of Daniel Boone, and actually did most of the things that Daniel Boone was supposed to have done.

Kenton was born in Virginia in 1755. When he was 16, he got into a tussle with a romantic rival. Kenton feared that he killed the man, so he took off running and eventually made his way to the unsettled wildernesses of Kentucky and Ohio.

In this way, then, the true-life story of Simon Kenton can be likened to a bildungsroman, or to a Joseph Campbell-esque hero's journey. In Eckert's telling, Kenton is the archetypal early-American: he is physically large, and possessed of great strength; he is taciturn; he is westward looking; he has no formal education; he is always moving on to the next place, blazing trails and marking out land for a farm he will never stand still long enough to plant. He goes into the wilderness, kills animals and Indians, and thus makes the wilderness safe for civilization. However, when he attempts to return to civilization's fold, it turns its back on him, and he can never be as comfortable as he was when things were wild.

At least, that's how this story is told. Its events, its dates, its characters, are all fact-based. However, the tale is told like a blood-and-thunder dime store novel. The dialogue is stilted; the prose is purple; the violence is grand guignol. And as soon as I figured this out, this particular way of telling this particular story, I started to love it. There are moments of laugh-out-loud stupidity, followed by moments of over-the-top violence that would make Tarantino jealous. For instance, there is the aforementioned Jacob Greathouse. Greathouse killed the pregnant sister of the Shawnee Chief Logan. The Shawnee catch up to Greathouse...

The ugly image of Chief Logan's pregnant sister, who had been shot, hung by her wrists and her belly slit open, had not been forgotten. Greathouse and his wife had been tethered each to a different sapling with a loop running from neck to tree. Their bellies had been opened just above the pubic hairs and a loose end of the entrails tied to the sapling. They had then either been dragged or prodded around so that their intestines had been pulled out of their bodies to wind around the trees as they walked. Mrs. Greathouse had apparently died before getting much more than half unwound, but Greathouse himself had stumbled along until not only his intestines but even his stomach had been pulled out and wound into that obscene mass on the tree. They had been scalped and burning coals stuffed into their bodies before the Indians departed.

Yay history! I think my social studies teacher skipped the part about stomachs being pulled from body cavities, and I certainly didn't see it on the AP History exam.

Eckert always takes a perverse delight in describing tortures, and I take a pulpish delight in reading them. It should be noted, however, that such tortures were of great fascination on the frontier, and are duly sourced; that is, they are not made up. I say this because I don't want to give the impression that Eckert portrays the Indians as unduly savage or brutal people.

To the contrary, Eckert is one of the great chroniclers of the Eastern woodland tribes, especially the

Shawnee, and especially Tecumseh. He is compassionate, clear-eyed, and immensely interested in the ways of life of the Shawnee, the Iroquois, and the Five Nations (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca). He takes you into their villages, introduces you to their inhabitants, and explains to you their customs, their politics (upon which our political system was partly based), and their noble fight to keep their lands.

I've read about half of Eckert's Winning of America Series, and this one is the best. The reason is that it stays focused on one main character - Simon Kenton - and uses him as a narrative throughline connecting all the many events explored (including the famous battle of Blue Licks).

This is a must-read if you're interested in early American-Indian relations. The later stages of American conquest - the defeat of the Sioux, Cheyenne, Comanche, et al - which took place in the American West is a sad, mournful, tragic story of defeat and slaughter. The earlier stages, which Eckert recounts, have more Shakespearian dimensions. While the ultimate result was the same (that being genocide), there are fascinating aspects of political intrigue on a geo-political scale. In the east, the woodland tribes were very savvy in the ways they played the French off the British off the Americans. They could never win the war, but they often won the battles. As a white American, you can't take any real pride in these events. In a way, it's even hard to write about it without solemnity; I feel like I should be seeking expiation instead. But by comparison, the eastern Indian wars don't leave the same rotten, we-just-broke-the-100th-treaty taste in my mouth. To the contrary, it's much more a contest of empires, with technology and numbers the ultimate deciding factor.

Mike (the Paladin) says

I read this book long ago and really enjoyed it. It may be harder to track down now...but if you like historical fiction it's a good read. Really.

I plan to "re-read" this if I can make room on my list. I read it back in the '70s and liked it a lot. Hope I can work in a reread.

.....update 5/7/14.....

I read this first in 1970 and always remembered it as a good read. It is, it's so good I've decided to up my rating to 5 stars.

This book is history but written with all the excitement and interest of a novel. While Mr. Eckert may put words in the mouths of the characters as he imagines conversation the events in the book are historically accurate. You'll come away from this book feeling as if you knew the people involved.

The picture here is also one of reality. The atrocities committed by both sides in the border/frontier war between settlers and "Indians" (and I use the word advisedly as it's the word the natives even used for themselves at the time when speaking with "Americans", "English" and "French"). There's no way not to come away with a better understanding of what happened to the Native Americans and what they lost.

Of course another thing we came away understanding is that to the settlers there was not the idea of robbing the natives they were just in a war. Like all people in all wars you end up fighting for the one next to you not

some idea. Hatred blossomed between so many of the participants while others grew in respect for each other.

This is an exceptionally good book and a good history. If approached with an open mind I think a lot of insight can be had.

I recommend this and for that matter Allan W. Eckert's other work.

Lisa says

One of the best written historical novels about the settling of the American "West" at the time of the Revolutionary War. Western Ohio that is.

I rated The Frontiersmen a five star because it changed my view of American history. Eckert is a master at transporting the reader back to a historical moment, creating a good story around the facts, and making the reader care. This book left me in awe of our ancestors' ability to survive. This was a ruthless time and both Whites and Native Americans did unthinkable deeds. Heroes in the movies we pay to see today, really did exist.

I read this book right after I read The Founding Brothers. (about what was happening in the Eastern colonies at that time) The two books married up very well.

My favorite book.
