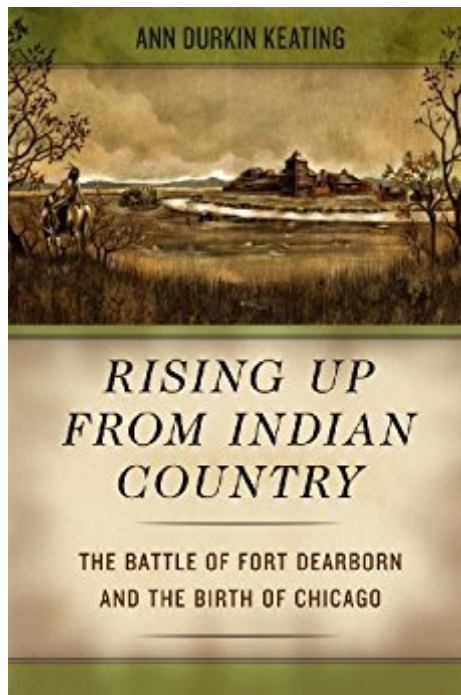


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Rising Up From Indian Country: The Battle Of Fort Dearborn And The Birth Of Chicago



Synopsis

In August 1812, under threat from the Potawatomi, Captain Nathan Heald began the evacuation of ninety-four people from the isolated outpost of Fort Dearborn to Fort Wayne, hundreds of miles away. The group included several dozen soldiers, as well as nine women and eighteen children. After traveling only a mile and a half, they were attacked by five hundred Potawatomi warriors. In under an hour, fifty-two members of Heald's party were killed, and the rest were taken prisoner; the Potawatomi then burned Fort Dearborn before returning to their villages. These events are now seen as a foundational moment in Chicago's storied past. *Rising up from Indian Country*, noted historian Ann Durkin Keating richly recounts the Battle of Fort Dearborn while situating it within the context of several wider histories that span the nearly four decades between the 1795 Treaty of Greenville, in which Native Americans gave up a square mile at the mouth of the Chicago River, and the 1833 Treaty of Chicago, in which the American government and the Potawatomi exchanged five million acres of land west of the Mississippi River for a tract of the same size in northeast Illinois and southeast Wisconsin. In the first book devoted entirely to this crucial period, Keating tells a story not only of military conquest but of the lives of people on all sides of the conflict. She highlights such figures as Jean Baptiste Point de Sable and John Kinzie and demonstrates that early Chicago was a place of cross-cultural reliance among the French, the Americans, and the Native Americans. Published to commemorate the bicentennial of the Battle of Fort Dearborn, this gripping account of the birth of Chicago will become required reading for anyone seeking to understand the city and its complex origins.

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Customer Reviews

This book takes us back to when Chicago was the frontier, and does an excellent job of doing this. Chicago was started in 1804 when the US Government authorized the building of a fort south of the Chicago River and near Lake Michigan. (There is a statue on the northwest corner of Michigan and Wacker just south of the Michigan Avenue bridge where the fort was built.) This book takes us from the building of the fort until the 1830s with a focus on the War of 1812, and the Fort Dearborn Massacre. The book does that through the main characters of that period, 1804 - 1812, John Kinzie, Forsyth, Captain Heald, Black Partridge (a Potawatomi Indian chief) and others. It also describes the main events of the War of 1812 in the Old Northwest (currently Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin) with an emphasis on the Fort Dearborn Massacre. The author argues at one point that this was really not a massacre since the formal definition states that it has to be an "indiscriminate" killing but the Indians were not being indiscriminate in killing women and children (a weak argument if you ask me). I guess then based upon that definition then the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864 would not have been a massacre. However, she does not mention any examples US forces killing of Indian women and children and state this, so I will have to disagree with her on this one. (She does mention Wounded Knee and says from an Indian that non-Indians consider it a battle but maybe that is called a battle by some but I call it the Wounded Knee massacre so I disagree with one also.) Also, the killing of women and children in war is indiscriminate whether an Indian believes it or not because I believe it.

I have read hundreds of books, articles, and manuscripts concerning the history of Chicago, Northeastern Illinois, Northwest Indiana, and Southwestern Michigan. When purchasing this book, I did not think there would be much content that would be new to me, but I was incorrect in that assumption. Keating effortlessly weaves detailed Fort Dearborn history with the broader early pre-settlement history of Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan so that the reader better understands the context of the Indian uprising that occurred August 15, 1812. Keating details the relationships forged between American citizens, British loyalists, American and British military personnel, and the

several tribes residing in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio. Also, she follows the Kinzie/Forsyth family in particular detail, which provides a rather good framework for presentation of the historical facts/events. Unlike many historians that seem to enjoy poetic, long-winded descriptions of people, places, and events, Keating's writing is not obtuse. It is clear, concise, and appropriately footnoted. The only detraction in the writing is the repetition of facts throughout the book; the book could have probably been shortened by 10 to 15 percent with a thorough editing and removal of repetitive material. For example, there are instances where detailed facts are repeated on the same page. I found that quite annoying, as my memory is not that short. Overall, the book is excellent and very worthy of reading. But then there is the Epilogue. My dictionary defined *epilogue* as "a section or speech at the end of a book or play that serves as a comment on or a conclusion to what has happened." I wholeheartedly disagree with Keating's comments.

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