



This major new book by Dianne Graves brings an entirely new perspective to the War of 1812. As Donald R. Hickey says in the foreword, “It is only in the last half century that women have broken out of their traditional roles, and that, not coincidentally, historians have started investigating their role in wars. Although we know a lot more than we once did about that role in some wars, the War of 1812 remains terra incognita. That is why Dianne Graves’s book is so interesting and important.”

512 pages, 6 x 9 inches, hardcover.  
 More than 100 illustrations and maps.  
 Notes, bibliography, index.  
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*In the Midst of Alarms* is a groundbreaking study of women – American, Canadian, British and aboriginal – who experienced the War of 1812. Dianne Graves distils her years of research in diaries, memoirs and correspondence into a colourful examination of the ordeals, tragedies and triumphs of women who endured a conflict wished for by neither of the belligerents.

She describes the woman’s world of early 19th-century North America: courtship and marriage, domestic life, childbirth and employment. Along the way she looks at fashion and clothing, cooking and gardening. She examines the lives of women whose men were in uniform – from the wives of senior officers to the camp followers – and she chronicles the experiences of women caught up in the war, from high society to low life.

We meet dozens of fascinating women, including Dolley Madison, the republic’s gracious First Lady, and her counterparts, Catherine Prevost and Lady Sherbrooke, the wives of the senior British commanders. There are famous belles – the daring Betsy Patterson Bonaparte of Baltimore and the vivacious Julia de Rottenburg of Montreal. We meet Eliza Romley, who, disguised as a man, joins the U.S. Navy and is captured in action, and Elizabeth Stewart, an American who proves an effective British intelligence agent, and 16-year-old Amelia Ryerse, who watches in horror as invaders burn her widowed mother’s farm. There are Tecumapease of the Shawnee people and Rachel Jackson, whose personal influence shaped major leaders. Finally, there are scores of other women, some nameless, who come to life again in this fascinating work of social history.

*In the Midst of Alarms* will appeal to all those interested in the lives and roles of women in early 19th-century North America, the War of 1812 and the meaning of true courage, which might best be defined as grace under pressure.



A native of Kent, England, DIANNE GRAVES studied languages before embarking on a career that has spanned international education, travel and public relations. She is the author of *Crown of Life: The World of John McCrae*, the biography of the man who wrote the famous poem “In Flanders Fields,” and *Redcoats and River Pirates: Sam and Ellen’s Adventure at the Windmill*, a novel for young readers set on the banks of the St. Lawrence in the 1830s. Dianne is married to Canadian military historian Donald E. Graves and resides in the scenic Mississippi River Valley of Upper Canada.

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