

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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A World on Fire: Britain's Crucial Role in the American Civil War.

Foreman, Amanda (Author)

Jun 2011. 1008 p. Random, hardcover, \$35.00. (9780375504945). 973.7.

Inspecting British influence on the Civil War, Foreman delves into the wartime activities of dozens of British officials and subjects, ranging from the foreign secretary and the ambassador to America to volunteers in both Union and Confederate armies. Her illustrative matter, almost entirely reproduced from pro-Southern British publications, underscores the support the Confederacy found in England. That sympathy's potential conversion into official recognition—the North's nightmare—impels Foreman's detailed accounts of diplomatic relations between Washington and London. The character of Foreman's narrative emerges not in dry description of a *démarche* but much more vividly from sharp realization of the personalities and emotions of American and British diplomats reacting to events provoked by Confederate armaments purchases and campaigns for British and French recognition of independence. Those who picked up a rifle instead of a pen also come to life in Foreman's prose and maps showing where on Civil War battlefields these British soldiers and illustrators found themselves. Formidable researcher and lucid writer, Foreman dispels the obscurity of a critical aspect of the Civil War.

— *Gilbert Taylor*