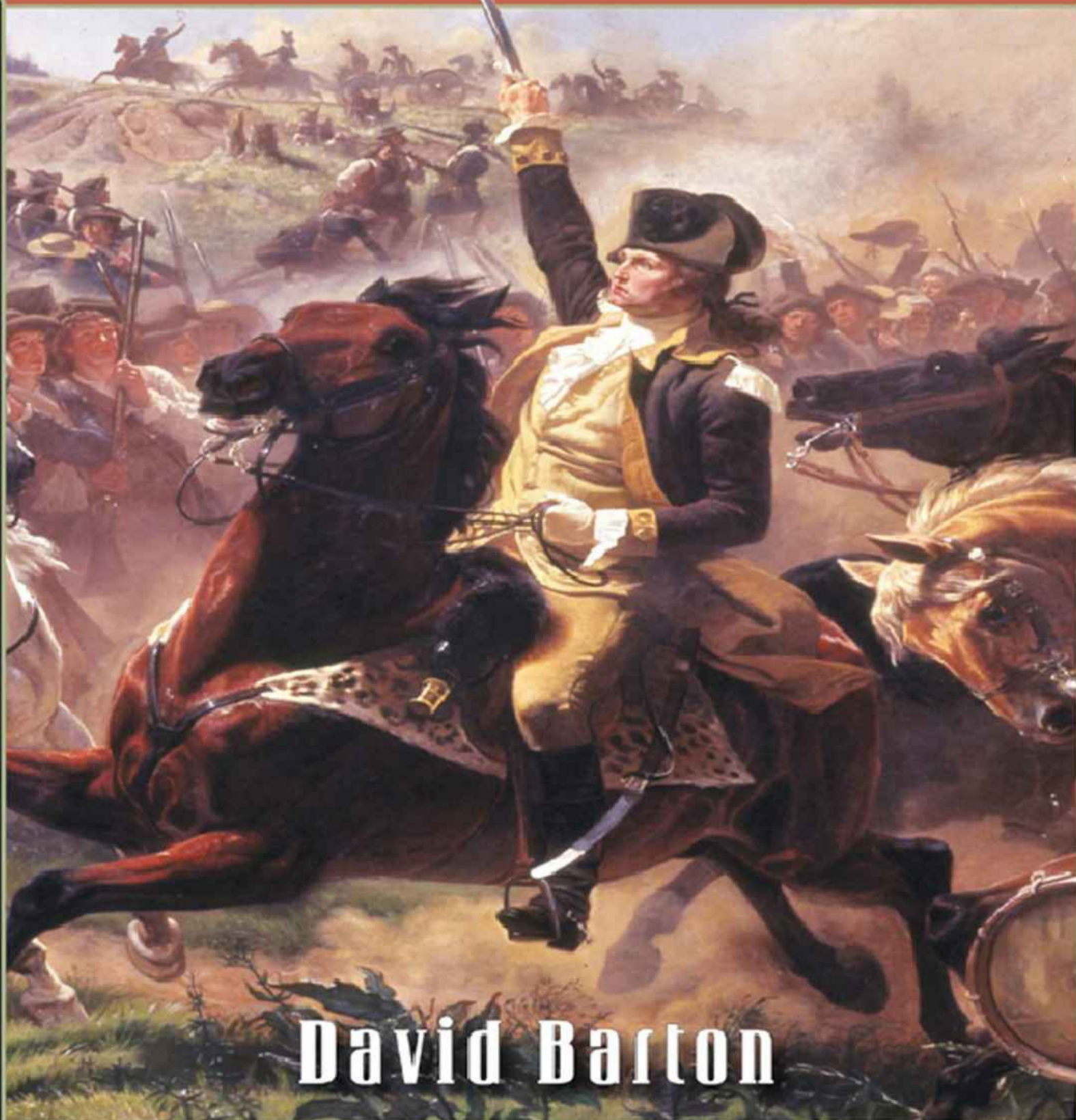


# *The* Bulletproof George Washington



David Barton

*The*  
**BULLETPROOF  
GEORGE  
WASHINGTON**

**DAVID BARTON**



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**Cover portrait:**

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**Cover design:**

Jeremiah Pent  
Lincoln-Jackson  
838 Walden Dr.  
Franklin, TN 37064

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Barton, David.  
The Bulletproof George Washington / David Barton. — 3rd ed.  
80 p; 21 cm  
Includes timeline of events, sources of illustrations and endnotes.

**ISBN-10: 1-932225-00-5**

**ISBN-13: 978-1-932225-00-6**

973.2/6 LOC 91-107126

1. Washington, George, President U.S. 1732-1799. 2. Monongahela, Battle of the, 1755. I. Title.

Printed in the United States of America

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## Foreword

George Washington is well known for the accomplishments of his adult life: Commander-in-Chief during the American Revolution, president of the Convention that produced the federal Constitution, and first President of the United States, overseeing the creation of the federal Bill of Rights and the successful implementation of America's constitutional government. No historical name is more recognized than that of George Washington, and today his name is venerated not only in America but also across the world as an international icon of liberty and constitutional government.

A wise maxim insightfully notes, "As the sapling is bent, so goes the tree"; and so it was with George Washington – it was his younger years that formed his character and shaped his destiny, but few Americans today know much about his youth or the circumstances and experiences that prepared him literally to change the world. It is for this reason that learning about what happened to and around the young George Washington during the 1755 battle of the Monongahela against the French and Indians is so essential to knowing who he was.

At that time, Washington was only a 23-year-old colonel; and as his life desperately hung in the balance for over two hours, the events of that dramatic battle helped confirm God's special call on this young man. In fact, fifteen years after that battle, a chieftain of the Indians whom Washington had fought on that day told him:

I am a chief and ruler over my tribes. My influence extends to the waters of the great lakes and to the far blue mountains. I have traveled a long and weary path that I might see the young warrior of the great battle. It was on the day when the white man's blood mixed with the streams of our forest that I first beheld this chief [Washington]. . . . I called to my young men and said. . . . Quick, let your aim be certain, and he dies. Our rifles were leveled – rifles which, but for you, knew not how to miss. 'Twas all in vain; a power mightier far than we shielded you. . . . I am come to pay homage to the man who is the particular favorite of Heaven, and who can never die in battle.

Most today have never heard this fascinating story (or the specific details that caused the chieftain to utter these words), but this account was well known to previous generations. Numerous sources – including Washington's own writings, the records of other participants in that battle (both friends and foes), and the research of prominent early historians – provide intimate details of this momentous event. These historical sources (some of which were first published two-and-a-half centuries ago) have been woven together in this narrative to provide an accurate and exciting account of that battle.

Through the story of *The Bulletproof George Washington*, you will gain a greater appreciation for the "Father of Our Country" and a profound respect for the manner in which God sovereignly selected and prepared him for the important task of helping birth and establish this great nation. The words spoken long ago by God to His beloved servant David seem to be descriptive of the manner in which God used George Washington:

I took you . . . to be a ruler over my people. . . . I have been with you wherever you have gone. . . . Now I will make your name like the names of the greatest men of the earth. 1 CHRONICLES 17:7-

May this account of a young George Washington once again become widely celebrated across America!

David Barton  
January 2009



# Chapter 1

## The French & Indian War

In the seventy-five years from 1688 to 1763, England and France regularly fought each other in numerous wars, and in 1754 their fourth war erupted – a war that spilled over into the American colonies. England and France both had settlements in America, so when the war reached America, the American colonists joined with the British against the French and her Indian allies. Known as the French & Indian War in America (and the Seven Years War in Europe), this was the final struggle between France and England for colonial supremacy in America; it also heralded a new epoch in American history, for it marked the first time that the various colonies acted together in unison.



THE REV. GEORGE WHITEFIELD

The individual colonies had long been kept apart by their own prejudices and jealousies, and those barriers had first begun coming down during the American religious revival known as the Great Awakening (1730-1770). As a result largely of evangelist George Whitefield – particularly the influence of his famous “Father Abraham” sermon that he preached across the country in the 1750s – the colonies came to realize that they had much in common and began to view each other as friends and allies rather than enemies and competitors. And so it was that when danger from the French and the Indians arose, the separate colonies were willing to join together against that threat. It was during the French & Indian War that the often fiercely independent history of each colony for the first time gave way to the more general history of the emerging nation as a whole.

For over a century before the armed hostilities began in America in 1754, both England and France had wanted control of the country. After all, it was a land extending thousands of miles, covered by vast forests with abundant supplies of timber and able to meet the growing demands of both the Old World and the New – it was a country containing boundless stores of mineral wealth, with a climate varied enough to support diverse types of agricultural production and the potential for numerous different industries. It was not surprising that European nations were eager to obtain as large a share of these benefits as possible.

The English settlements in America had developed primarily along the Atlantic seacoast in colonies stretching from Maine in the north to Florida in the south, but they had also begun to push westward, gradually opening settlements toward the interior, for English territorial claims extended far beyond the areas they actually occupied. British kings claimed that the early voyage of Sebastian Cabot had given them a lawful right to America from the Atlantic seacoast all the way to the Pacific Ocean.

The French, having also been early explorers of North America, felt that they, too, had a claim to a

generous share of the New World. Unlike the British, France had primarily colonized the interior of the continent, especially in the north with settlements such as Montreal and Detroit, and but also along the rivers to the south with settlements such as St. Louis and New Orleans – settlements all located more than five hundred miles inland from the English settlements along the Atlantic.

Had the French limited their claims to only their northern settlements along the St. Lawrence River and its tributaries (near what is now the Canadian border), there probably would have been little danger of conflict; and even if they had limited their claims just to their southern settlements at St. Louis and New Orleans, there might have been no war. But like the British, the French also claimed nearly all of North America for themselves.

The French Governor of Canada ordered that a chain of forts be built on lands claimed by the English, so the French began erecting forts from the Great Lakes to the Illinois River, to the Mississippi River, and finally to the Gulf of Mexico. The French purpose was to draw a French line across the American continent from north to south, thus keeping English settlements confined to the eastern seaboard. If the French could hold the English east of the Allegheny Mountains (which stretched from New York in the north to Virginia in the south), they could possess the rest of the continent for themselves.



TRADING WITH THE INDIANS

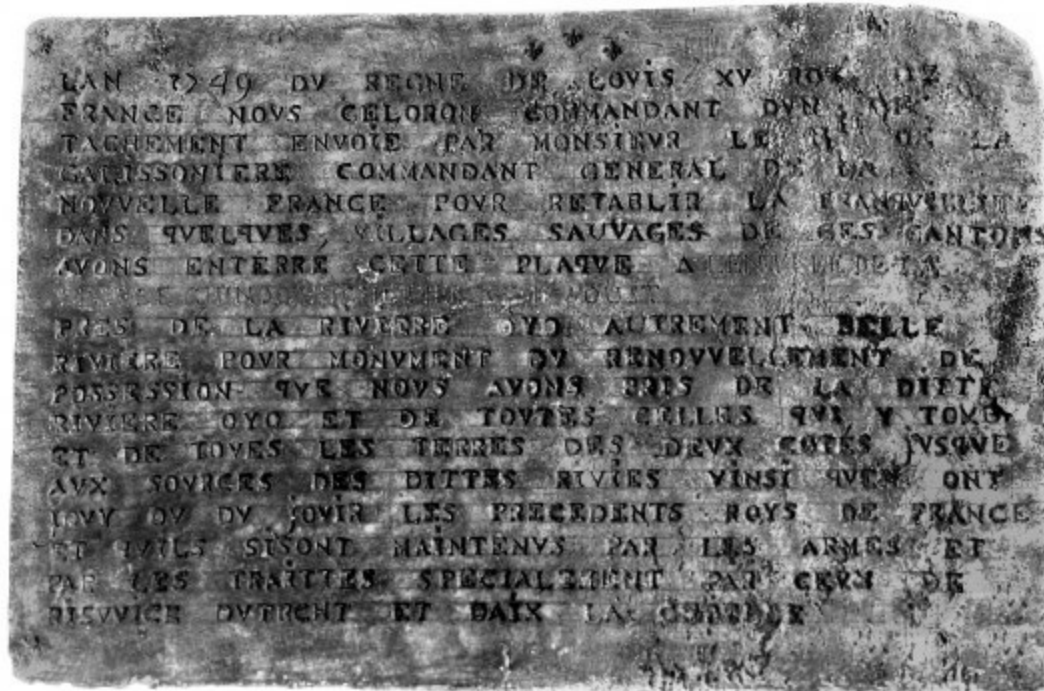
But the English had already moved well west of the Alleghenies. The fur traders of Virginia and Pennsylvania had established a chain of English trading posts stretching inland from the Atlantic coast to deep in the Ohio Valley and had developed friendly relations with Indian villages throughout the expansive Ohio Valley. (At that time, the Ohio Valley included portions of what is now Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Maryland.) The Indians had become accustomed to bringing their furs to these English settlements to exchange for English goods, but French traders from Canada began visiting the same locations in order to weaken the Indians' relationship with the British.

Because much of the Ohio Valley being visited by the French traders was within the holdings of the massive Virginia Colony, the French fur traders were regarded as intruders not to be tolerated. To counter French encroachment, several prominent Virginians – including Robert Dinwiddie (the Governor of Virginia), Lawrence and Augustus Washington (George's elder stepbrothers from his father's first marriage), and Thomas Lee (president of the Virginia Council) – established the Ohio Company to promote additional permanent settlements in the Ohio Valley region of the Virginia Colony.

The French, however, were very ambitious; and before the Ohio Company could dispatch its settlers to the Ohio Valley, the Governor of Canada dispatched three hundred men to claim the identical area. They nailed signs on trees and embedded plates bearing French inscriptions at numerous locations along both banks of the Ohio, warning all settlers that the country belonged to



France. The French then began building posts along the Allegheny River in northwestern Pennsylvania and even wrote Governor Hamilton of Pennsylvania, warning him to encroach no further into the territory they had just claimed for the king of France – territory that was actually part of the Pennsylvania colony.



ONE OF THE LEAD PLATES BURIED BY THE FRENCH ON THE BANKS OF THE OHIO RIVER

Since the French viewed the established English trading posts as obstructions to French expansion and as symbols of English jurisdiction that must be destroyed (or at least seized and converted to French use), they began attacking and pillaging English trading posts, making prisoners of English traders. The English responded by raiding French Acadian settlements in the English territory of Newfoundland and deporting their farmers and fishermen to the French settlement of New Orleans far to the south. (These French settlers transplanted to New Orleans eventually became known as Cajuns.) Tensions increased, and an all-out war loomed on the horizon.

## Chapter 2

### George Washington and the Great Meadows

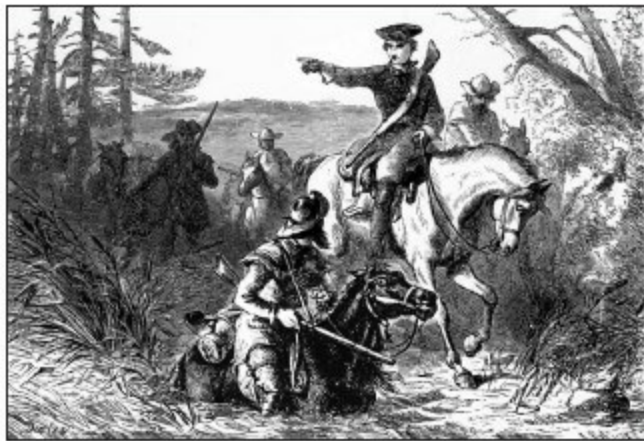
Before going to war against the French, Virginia's Governor Dinwiddie decided to file a final diplomatic objection with the French. A formal document was therefore drawn up, setting forth the nature and extent of the English (and especially the Virginia) claim to the Ohio Valley, sternly warning the French against further intrusion into that region.

It was necessary that this official remonstrance be carried to General St. Pierre, the commander of French forces stationed at Fort Erie in northwestern Pennsylvania. This would be the most important diplomatic mission yet undertaken in America and also its most dangerous, for the message must be carried across hundreds of miles of rugged, treacherous wilderness from Virginia to the far away Canadian border.

A young surveyor named George Washington was selected to make the perilous trek, so the governor summoned him from his home on the Potomac River and commissioned him as his official English ambassador. On October 31st, 1753, the twenty-one year old Washington departed Williamsburg, Virginia, to traverse more than five hundred miles through the pathless, wintry wilderness to Presque Isle on the shore of Lake Erie in far northern Pennsylvania. Washington, accompanied by an interpreter and a guide, plunged into the recesses of the wild, leaving behind every vestige of civilization. His tiny party endured snow and storms, crossed rugged mountain passes, and traveled through dense forests and into flooded valleys where they were forced to navigate swollen raging rivers on frail, dangerous rafts.



WASHINGTON THE SURVEYOR



WASHINGTON LEADING THE TRIP TO OHIO



CROSSING THE  
TREACHEROUS WILDERNESS

After finally reaching southwestern Pennsylvania, they followed the Youghiogeny River to the Monongahela, which they then followed to the Allegheny. That junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers was called “The Fork,” and at the time that Washington and his party passed, it was uninhabited. Yet, as a surveyor and explorer, Washington was impressed with the location and subsequently reported it as an excellent place for a future fort or settlement. (“The Fork” later became the site of French Fort Duquesne – pronounced Dew-Cain, and then of English Fort Pitt, from which sprang the present city of Pittsburgh.)

Passing “The Fork,” Washington continued along the river twenty miles to deliver friendly greetings from Governor Dinwiddie to Chief Tanacharison (also called Chief Half-King), the leader of the Southern Hurons living in the Ohio Valley; his friendship was being sought by both the French and the English. The chief received him with kindness; and after Washington attended a friendly council with the Indians, Chief Half-King and three of his warriors accompanied Washington the remaining hundred miles north to the French encampment.



WASHINGTON IN THE FRENCH FORT

On December 12th, six weeks after setting out on his wintry expedition, Washington finally arrived at French Fort le Boeuf and met General St. Pierre. Washington was received with great politeness, but the French general – citing military instructions given him by the governor of New France – refused to engage in any discussion on the rights of England. (New France covered most of eastern America, stretching from Minnesota eastward to Maine, then southward along the Atlantic Coast to Florida, then westward along the Gulf Coast to Louisiana, and then finally northward along the Mississippi River back up to Minnesota – the same region claimed and already occupied by the English.) General St. Pierre told Washington that his orders required him to eject every Englishman

from the Ohio Valley and he meant to carry out those orders to the letter – that France claimed the area and she intended to make good her claim by force of arms if necessary.

After refusing even to consider the document sent by Governor Dinwiddie, the French commander then ordered Washington to remain while he prepared his own reply to the Virginia Governor. Meanwhile, the French lobbied Chief Half-King to join them, even offering him prizes of weapons and liquor; but Half-King refused, remaining instead with his friend Washington.



A FLEET OF CANOES

Washington was finally sent away from the fort carrying the French reply, but not before he had memorized details of the immense preparations being made by the French. A fleet of fifty birch-bark canoes, a hundred and seventy pine boats, and a large body of French soldiers and traders were all ready to descend the river to the site of “The Fork.” (The French, too, had also noted the importance of that location and were determined to fortify it just as soon as the ice in the river should break.)

Washington and his guide, Christopher Gist, determined to take the shortest and quickest route back to Virginia to deliver the French message; the other members of his party decided to linger for a while hunt and trap. Washington and Gist, returning on foot through the woods in the dead of winter, were ambushed by a party of Indians. Eluding the initial attack, they traveled through the night and all the next day in hopes of losing their foes. Upon reaching a large river, they were dismayed to discover that it had not yet completely frozen, thus preventing them from walking across. Ice floes drifted in some parts of the freezing river; in other places ice did cover the river, but it was too thin to walk on. They therefore built a raft on which to cross – a project that consumed an entire day.

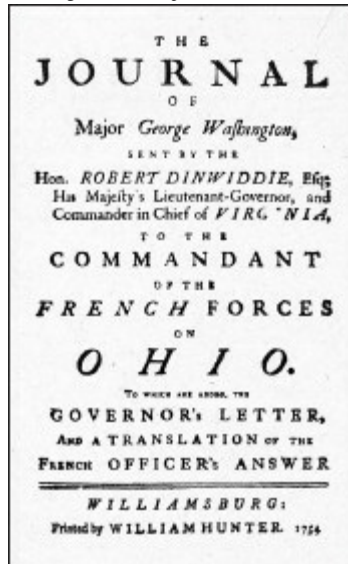


ATTEMPTING TO CROSS  
THE FROZEN RIVER

Shortly after sunset, they finally launched out into the rapidly moving icy waters, but the raft was quickly dashed into an ice jam, threatening to sink the small craft. Attempting to stabilize it, Washington thrust his push pole into the river but the raging water seized the pole, knocked Washington off balance, and pulled him overboard into the icy current. Grasping one of the raft logs, Washington was able to save himself, but despite their best efforts, they were unable to navigate the



raft toward either shore. The two finally managed to guide it to a small island in the river where they endured a cold, wet, miserable night. In fact, Gist's fingers and toes froze in the extreme weather. By the next morning, the river was iced enough for the two to walk across to the other side and continue their journey.



WASHINGTON'S JOURNAL

Washington arrived back at Williamsburg on January 16th, only eleven weeks after his departure. During the harrowing trek, Washington kept a daily journal and after his return, the *Maryland Gazette* published that record. The account was circulated throughout the colonies and even in England, resulting in widespread public praise for the young Washington. His countrymen were profoundly impressed not only with the boldness, judiciousness, and persistence with which he had met and overcome dangers but also with his ability to execute his hazardous assignment successfully.

Despite Washington's gallant efforts, official negotiations had failed; possession of the disputed territory would now be determined through war. Preparations were thus begun on the American side, with Washington being made Lieutenant Colonel and entrusted with command of Virginia's forces. On the French side, their fleet of boats and settlers had arrived at "The Fork," where they felled trees, built barracks, and laid the foundations for their new military citadel, Fort Duquesne, in the Pennsylvania Colony.



BUILDING FORT NECESSITY

To prevent the French from holding this strategic position, on May 1st, 1754, Colonel Washington and a small force was sent out from Virginia to recapture the site. After three weeks of marching, on May 24th they reached a location in southern Pennsylvania called the Great Meadows, pleasantly situated midway between two tree-covered knolls and still some sixty miles from Fort Duquesne. Washington learned from the scouts of Half-King that a company of French soldiers had been seen along the Youghiogheny River only a few miles away and was on the march toward him. He immediately erected a small stockade in the open meadow to which he gave the appropriate name,



Fort Necessity. Then, later discovering that the approaching French company was only a scouting party, Washington determined to strike the first blow.



WASHINGTON ATTACKS JUMONVILLE

Two of his Indian scouts located the French hiding in a rocky ravine. The Americans cautiously advanced, intending to surprise and capture the French, but the French were on the alert and seeing the approaching Americans, flew to arms. The engagement was brief but decisive: the French leader, Jumonville, and ten of his party were killed, twenty-one made prisoners.



DEATH OF JUMONVILLE (ON LEFT)

Washington returned to Great Meadows and Fort Necessity to await reinforcements for the attack on Fort Duquesne. While waiting, he began to cut a road across the rough country in the direction of the French fort. Over the next month, he extended the new road twenty miles, but during that time only one small company of volunteers from South Carolina arrived at the camp to reinforce his undersized army.

Washington's entire force numbered around three hundred, and while he had been awaiting reinforcements, the French and her allies had been collecting in much larger numbers, strengthening

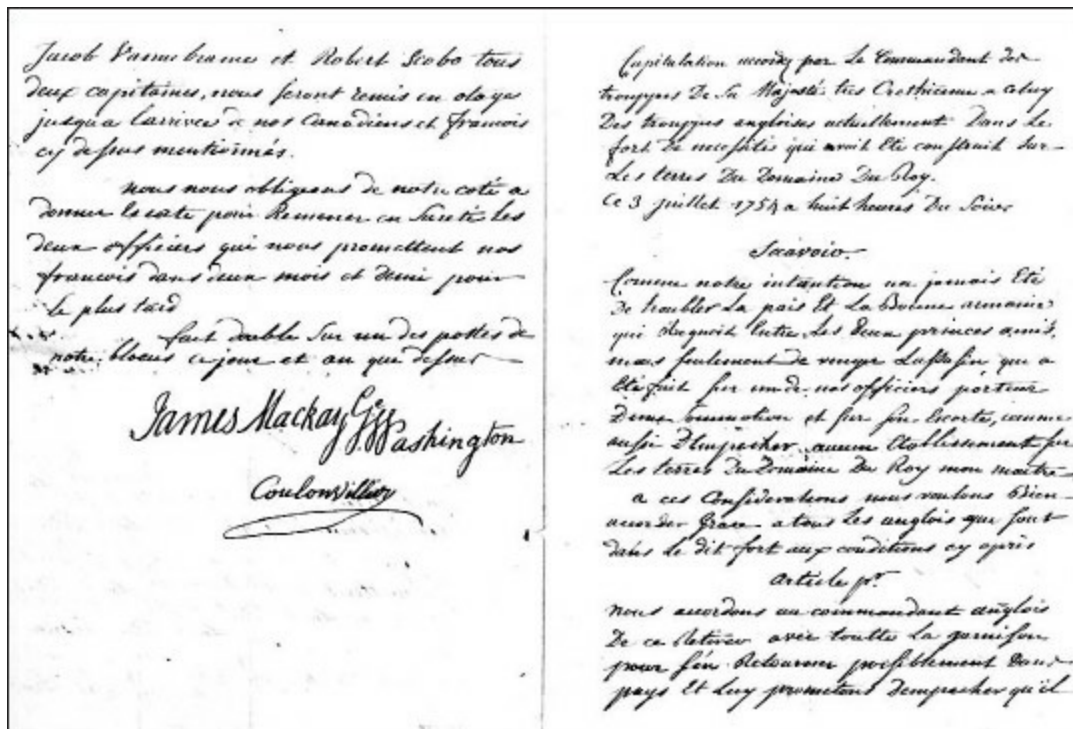
their position at Fort Duquesne. Washington decided he could wait no longer, so he set out to dislodge the enemy. After advancing only thirteen miles, his scouts reported that French General De Villiers was approaching with a massive army of French and Indians. Realizing the military impossibility of his situation, Washington fell back to Fort Necessity to save his soldiers.



SHOOTING UPON SOLDIERS  
FROM THE TREETOPS

His forces had scarcely secured the little fort when De Villiers and his 1,100 men arrived and surrounded them. The French stationed themselves on the tops of the knolls looking down into the fort, and many of the Indians climbed into the treetops where, concealed by thick foliage, they fired down into the fort upon the exposed Americans. For nine long hours, a continuous shower of musket balls was poured in upon them.

The Americans returned the fire of the French with unabated vigor, but Washington's men were steadily being killed. Washington – greatly outnumbered, unreinforced, and without sufficient food and supplies – knew it would be impossible to hold out much longer; so when De Villiers proposed that the Americans surrender, Washington accepted the honorable terms of capitulation offered him. On July 4th, 1754, his little army (which had been allowed to keep its remaining equipment and provisions) marched out of the tiny fort they had so courageously defended and returned to Virginia.



Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada

THE DOCUMENT OF SURRENDER SIGNED BY WASHINGTON AT FT. NECESSITY

Soon after this seizure a body of 1100 *French* and *Indians* attacked Major *Washington*, commander of the *Virginia* forces, who had then with him only 300 men, and obliged him to surrender upon articles of capitulation; altho' in the year 1744 the *Virginians* had purchased those very lands of the *Indians* for a valuable consideration.

1755 NEWSPAPER ACCOUNT OF THE ATTACK  
ON WASHINGTON AND HIS SURRENDER

Upon his arrival, the Virginia House of Burgesses voted Colonel Washington a public thanks for the gallant stand he and his men had taken in the face of overwhelming odds. However, the Ohio Valley was now in complete possession of the French, who ravaged and plundered English trading posts and settlements along the inner frontiers.

## Chapter 3

### British Intervention

Across the ocean in England, the British Cabinet saw that a war with the French was inevitable; and unfortunately for English military plans, the American colonies posed no significant military threat to the French. In fact, not only was there no actual military force in America but the colonies had never before even taken meaningful measures for their own defense; they were unable to undertake the costly task of building forts and maintaining an army.

The British Ministry, seeking a way to strengthen the Americans and impede the French in the Ohio Valley, instructed the colonies to cultivate the friendship of the Six Nations Indians and to renew their treaty with the Iroquois Confederacy, the most powerful of their Indian allies. The Ministry also encouraged the separate colonial authorities to band together for their common defense and to undertake some sort of joint action against the French.



MEETING WITH THE INDIANS

The individual colonies agreed that this was a sound idea and unanimously resolved to form a united alliance for their own protection and preservation. Desiring that their combined counsels, wealth, and strength be directed jointly against the French, each colony sent one representative to Albany, New York, to meet together and draw up a plan of union for the colonies. On June 14th, 1754, those representatives gathered at Albany, along with one hundred and fifty Indians of the Six Nations tribes, who signed a treaty with the colonies. Significantly, it was the proposal of Dr. Benjamin Franklin of Philadelphia that was eventually accepted by the other delegates.

Of that Albany meeting, Franklin later recalled:



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

In 1754, war with France being again apprehended, a congress of commissioners from the



different colonies was . . . assembled at Albany, there to confer with the chiefs of the Six Nations concerning the means of defending both their country and ours. . . . On our way [to Albany], I projected and drew up a plan for the union of all the colonies under one government, so far as might be necessary for defense and other important general purposes. . . . It then appeared that several of the commissioners had formed plans of the same kind. . . . A committee was then appointed, one member from each colony, to consider the several plans and report. Mine happened to be preferred . . . and the plan was unanimously agreed to and copies ordered to be transmitted to the Board of Trade [in England] and to the Assemblies of several [colonies].



FRANKLIN DREW THIS FIGURE TO  
ILLUSTRATE HIS ALBANY PLAN

Under Franklin's plan, the new government would be composed of representatives from the King and each of the colonial assemblies. The president and council of the new government would have the power to declare war and peace, negotiate treaties, purchase land from Indian nations, regulate trade, settle new colonies, and adopt measures for their general defense. To accomplish these objectives, the government could impose taxes in a means least burdensome to the people, but all laws passed by the American body would be sent to England for the King's approval.



FRANKLIN LATER HELPED DRAFT  
AND THEN SIGN THE DECLARATION

Franklin's plan, known as "The Albany Plan of Union," was signed by the attending delegates on the 4th of July, 1754 (the same day George Washington was retreating from Fort Necessity, and twenty-two years before another 4th of July, when Franklin voted to approve the Declaration of Independence and separate from Great Britain.) Copies of the Albany Plan were distributed to each colonial assembly and were also sent to the King's Council for approval.

Both the American and British response to the plan was identical – each flatly rejected it. The British Ministry did so because it gave too much power to the colonies, and the colonies rejected it because it gave too much power to the King. Perhaps this rejection by both sides was the strongest proof that the plan had steered a course in the middle of both American and British interests at that time. (Although Franklin's plan was discarded, it contained several features that were incorporated



into the federal Constitution three decades later.)

The British, having refused the American Plan of Union, instead proposed that the colonial governors (most of whom were directly appointed by the King) and some of their council members periodically meet and adopt measures for their general defense. Under this proposal, the governors would have the power to draw on the British treasury for any money needed, but money thus drawn was to be fully repaid by taxes to be imposed on the colonists. The colonies were unwilling to submit to this taxation by Great Britain and rejected this plan.

Franklin later commented on the original rejection of his Albany Plan and then of the subsequent British proposal:

The [American] Assemblies did not adopt it as they all thought there was too much prerogative [and arbitrary power] in it; and in England it was judged to have too much of the democratic [element]. . . . I am still of opinion it would have been happy for both sides of the water if it had been adopted. The colonies so united would have been sufficiently strong to have defended themselves; there would then have been no need of troops from England; [and] of course the subsequent pretence for taxing America and the bloody contest it occasioned [in the American Revolution] would have been avoided. But such mistakes are not new; history is full of the errors of states and princes.



CARRYING TROOPS TO AMERICA

Preparations for war between the French and the British moved rapidly forward even though there had been no official declaration of war; the ministers of France and England kept reassuring each other of peaceable intentions. But when King Louis XV of France sent three thousand soldiers to reinforce the French army in Canada, the British responded in kind. King George II ordered veteran British General Edward Braddock to proceed to America with two full regiments of English regulars to forcibly oust the French from the Ohio Valley, pointing for justification to the recently dispatched French fleet, the establishment of French forts along the Ohio, and the attack upon Colonel Washington at Fort Necessity.



GENERAL EDWARD BRADDOCK

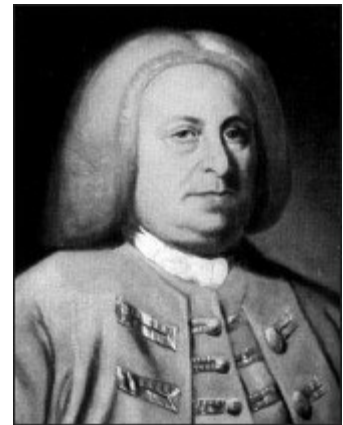
Braddock was an experienced Irish officer, over sixty years old but with forty years of military experience. He thought well of himself and his own abilities and was well thought of by others, but he was not pleased with the prospect of the war. He despised the American colonies and colonists; he also knew that he had no military support in America and was therefore pessimistic about the conflict. The night before he sailed from England, he went with two of his aides to see a Mrs. Bellamy, leaving with her his will and designating her husband as his beneficiary. While there, he unfolded a map and displaying both his anger and melancholy, complained that he was “going forth to conquer whole worlds with a handful of men, and to do so must cut his way through unknown woods.” Braddock became the first British general to conduct a major campaign in a remote wilderness; tragically, he had neither historical precedents nor the experience of others to guide him.

# Chapter 4

## The Plans for War



On February 20th, 1755, General Braddock and his force arrived in America and dropped anchor in Hampton Roads, Virginia. The American colonists were elated by his arrival; this was the first substantial body of British regulars ever to land in America, and the colonists were now confident about the outcome of the military campaign. They believed that all that was needed to drive the French from the country (or at least to whiten American fields with French bones), was the presence of the formidable and highly respected English army. The arriving British force, however, was not as happy to be in America as the Americans were to have them; the British believed themselves to have arrived in a backward country filled with backward people.



GOVERNOR DINWIDDIE

Upon his arrival, General Braddock proceeded to Williamsburg (at that time the capital of Virginia) to meet with Governor Dinwiddie. Braddock then requested that the other colonial governors travel to Alexandria, Virginia, for a planning meeting. (While awaiting their arrival, Braddock's force was boosted by the enlistment of about 100 Virginians.) On April 14th, Braddock met with the colonial governors in what was called the Council at Alexandria, during which Braddock laid out his plans to attack the French at four separate locations.

One force would be led by Governor Lawrence of Nova Scotia, who would secure that province according to the English version of boundaries. A second force would be led by General Johnson of New York, who would recruit and pay a force of volunteers and Mohawk Indians to capture the French post at Crown Point. Governor Shirley of Massachusetts would lead the third force, equipping

a regiment to drive the French from their fortress at Niagara (near the current location of Buffalo, New York).

The fourth and most important campaign would be personally directed by Braddock. He would first lead his two regiments against Fort Duquesne and afterwards drive the remaining French from the Ohio Valley. Of the commanders Braddock placed over his two regiments, one was Sir Peter Halkett, a superb officer; the other was Colonel Dunbar, inept and cowardly.

The four forces set out on their separate missions. For the expedition against Nova Scotia, three thousand men under Generals Monckton and Winslow sailed from Boston on May 20th. On June 1st, they were reinforced by 300 additional British troops and advanced against the principal French post in that region. After a bombardment of five days, the French set fire to their own works and fled the country. With the loss of less than twenty men, the English were in possession of the whole of Nova Scotia.



FRENCH FORT AT CROWN POINT

The expedition by General Johnson against Crown Point on Lake Champlain did not secure its main objective but nevertheless did provide a victory for the English. In a major encounter near Whitehall, seven hundred of the French were killed with three hundred more wounded while the colonies lost scarcely two hundred. (Interestingly, the famous story, “The Last of the Mohicans,” by James Fenimore Cooper deals with this general region and time in the French and Indian War.)



GOVERNOR SHIRLEY

The assault against Niagara by Governor Shirley of Massachusetts with his twenty-five hundred men was started too late in the year. The troops proceeded only as far as Oswego on Lake Ontario before the planned attack was abandoned. No further attempts were undertaken until the following year after the formal declaration of war.

The fourth campaign – that of General Braddock against Fort Duquesne – was the one in which the young George Washington participated.



YOUNG COLONEL WASHINGTON

Interestingly, Washington's love for the military had begun early. Tradition holds that the first battles he commanded were the imaginary ones in which he and his schoolmates engaged. In 1751 (when Washington was only nineteen), Governor Dinwiddie made him a major in the Virginia Militia and gave him command over one-fourth of Virginia's troops. Washington promptly introduced a uniform discipline and infused his own military spirit throughout his command. Within only three years, he was promoted to colonel and led the initial military expedition against Fort Duquesne that ended at Fort Necessity. Shortly thereafter, however (and before the British forces arrived in America), for some unexplained reason, Governor Dinwiddie reorganized the militia and permitted no rank higher than that of captain. Colonel Washington promptly offered his resignation and left in disgust, retiring to private life at Mount Vernon, prepared to spend his life there in agricultural pursuits.



MOUNT VERNON

However, when Braddock arrived in America, he heard numerous favorable reports about Colonel Washington, so in April 1755, he invited Washington to join him as a military aide, allowing him to retain his previous rank of Colonel. With this invitation, Washington's military excitement was again aroused. The thought that only a few miles away preparations were being made for an extensive campaign under the command of one of the most experienced generals in the British army stirred Washington and made him yearn to go back to the field. He was eager to study military tactics under a professional soldier of such high standing as Braddock.

Washington's mother, Mary, concerned for her son's safety, set out on a two-day coach ride from her home at Ferry Farm, Virginia (east of Fredericksburg), to her son's home at Mount Vernon. She attempted to persuade him not to accept the invitation but was unable to discourage him. Washington was confident that this was an opportunity to which he should respond and was convinced that it was what God would have him do. In fact, he reminded his mother of how God had already protected him during his dangerous trek to visit the French general, telling her: "The God to whom you commended me, madam, when I set out upon a more perilous errand, defended me from all harm, and I trust He will do so now. Do not you?" His mother yielded and pledged her continued prayer, promising him:



That God may protect you through all the dangers and hardships of war and return you in safety will be my constant prayer. With His blessing you can be a useful man in war as in peace, and without it you can expect nothing.

She then returned to her home on the Rappahannock River.

Washington departed for Alexandria, where the young colonel and the veteran general met together for the first time. Washington was eagerly welcomed into Braddock's military family by Braddock's other military aides, Captains Orme and Morris.

Braddock was almost ready to set out on his mission when a difficulty arose that nearly cancelled the expedition. Even though American enthusiasm for Braddock's endeavor was high, the Americans were slow to contribute the horses, teamsters, and wagons necessary for transporting provisions for the large army; and if the British could not move their equipment and supplies, they could not move their army. It was Benjamin Franklin who saved the day.

Franklin was serving as Postmaster-General for all the colonies and had been sent by the Pennsylvania Assembly to visit Braddock in an attempt to help dispel some of his severe prejudice against the Americans. Braddock gladly received Franklin, who dined daily at his table. Braddock was highly impressed with Franklin and called him "The first capable and sensible man I have met in the country."



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Franklin learned of the dilemma facing Braddock and later recounted:

We found the General at Frederick [Maryland], waiting impatiently for the return of those he had sent through the back parts of Maryland and Virginia to collect wagons. When I was about to depart, the returns of wagons . . . amounted only to twenty-five, and not all of those were in serviceable condition. The General and all the officers were surprised, declared the expedition was then at an end, . . . and exclaimed against the [British] ministers for ignorantly landing them in a country destitute of the means of conveying their stores, baggage, etc., not less than 150 wagons being necessary. I happened to say I thought it was a pity they had not been . . . in Pennsylvania, as in that country almost every farmer had his wagon. The General eagerly laid hold of my words and said, "Then you, sir, who are a man of interest there, can probably procure them for us; and I beg you will undertake it."

Franklin consented and turned with great effect to Pennsylvania, a colony of prosperous farmers who possessed abundant resources but were apathetic to the war. Franklin began running public advertisements in local communities, announcing the willingness of the British to lease horses and wagons. For example, his April 1755 advertisement in a Lancaster, Pennsylvania, newspaper declared:

Whereas 150 wagons, with 4 horses to each wagon, and 1,500 saddle or pack horses are wanted for the service of His Majesty's forces . . . and His Excellency, General Braddock, having been pleased to empower me to contract for the hire of the same; I hereby give notice that I shall attend . . . Lancaster from this day to next Wednesday evening, and at York [Pennsylvania] from next Thursday morning till Friday evening, where I shall be ready to agree for wagons and teams, or single horses. . . . Note – My son, William Franklin, is empowered to enter into like contracts with any person in Cumberland County.



The response to his appeal was very weak, so Franklin utilized a more direct approach, pointedly informing the colonists that if they didn't voluntarily lease their horses and wagons to the British, then their equipment would be forcibly dragooned by the British army. Having appealed to their patriotism and pocketbooks, he now resorted to direct threats in a piece he circulated across the state, warning:

# ADVERTISEMENT

*Lancaster, May 6th. 1755.*

**N**OTICE is hereby given to all who have contracted to send Waggon and Teams, or single Horses from *Fork* County to the Army at *Will's Creek*, that *David McConaghy* and *Michael Schwoepe* of the said County, Gentlemen, will attend on my Behalf at *Fork Town* on *Friday* next, and at *Philip Forney's* on *Saturday*, to value or appraise all such Waggon, Teams and Horses, as shall appear at those Places on the said Days for that Purpose; and such as do not then appear must be valued at *Will's Creek*.

The Waggon that are valued at *Fork* and *Forney's*, are to set out immediately after the Valuation from thence for *Will's Creek*, under the Conduct and Direction of Persons I shall appoint for that Purpose.

The Owner or Owners of each VVaggon or Set of Horses, should bring with them to the Place of Valuation, and deliver to the Appraisers, a Paper containing a Description of their several Horses in VVriting, with their several Marks natural and artificial; which Paper is to be annexed to the Contract.

Each VVaggon should be furnished with a Cover, that the Goods laden therein may be kept from Damage by the Rain, and the Health of the Drivers preserved, who are to lodge in the VVaggon. And each Cover should be marked with the Contractor's Name in large Characters.

Each VVaggon, and every Horse Driver should also be furnished with a Hook or Sickle, fit to cut the long Grass that grows in the Country beyond the Mountains.

As all the VVaggon are obliged to carry a Load of Oats, or Indian Corn, Persons who have such Grain to dispose of, are desired to be cautious how they hinder the King's Service, by demanding an extravagant Price on this Occasion.

**B. FRANKLIN.**

ONE OF FRANKLIN'S MANY ADVERTISEMENTS FOR BRADDOCK

To the Inhabitants of the Counties of Lancaster, York, and Cumberland

Friends and Countrymen,

I found the General and officers extremely exasperated on account of their not being supplied with horses and carriages, which had been expected . . .

It was proposed to send an armed force immediately . . . to seize as many of the best carriages and horses as should be wanted and compel as many persons into the service as would be necessary to drive and take care of them.

I apprehended that the progress of British soldiers . . . on such an occasion (especially considering the temper they are in and their resentment against us) would be attended with many and great inconveniences to [us], and therefore [I] more willingly took the trouble of trying first what might be done by fair and equitable means . . . You [now] have an opportunity of receiving

and dividing among you a very considerable sum; for if . . . this expedition should continue (as it is more than probable it will) for 120 days, the hire of these wagons and horses will amount to upwards of £30,000, which will be paid you in silver and gold of the King's money. . . .

If you are really (as I believe you are) good and loyal subjects to His Majesty, you may now do a most acceptable service and make it easy to yourselves. . . . But if you do not this service to your King and country voluntarily when such good pay and reasonable terms are offered to you, your loyalty will be strongly suspected. The King's business must be done; so many brave troops, come so far for your defense, must not stand idle through your backwardness to do what may be reasonably expected from you; wagons and horses must be had, violent measures will probably be used. . . .

I am obliged to send word to the General in fourteen days; and I suppose . . . a body of soldiers will immediately enter the province for the purpose – which I shall be sorry to hear because I am very sincerely and truly your friend and well-wisher,

*Benj. Franklin*

Franklin's blunt message had its desired effect, and he happily reported:

In two weeks, the 150 wagons with 259 carrying horses were on their march for the camp.



OBTAINING WAGONS AND SUPPLIES

However, Franklin's success was due not just to his direct approach but especially to the fact that he had given his personal guarantee for the safety of the equipment. As he acknowledged:

The advertisement promised payment according to the valuation in case any wagon or horse should be lost. The owners, however, alleging they did not know General Braddock or what dependence might be had on his promise, insisted on my [personal] bond . . . which I accordingly gave them.

It was largely because of Franklin's reputation that the desired results were achieved, and Braddock was satisfied with the outcome. As Franklin reported:

The General, too, was highly satisfied with my conduct in procuring him the wagons . . . thanking

me repeatedly and requesting my further assistance in sending provisions after him. I undertook this also and was busily employed in it.

## Chapter 5

### The Advance

Finally having the wagons and teams in hand, in the latter part of April, General Braddock set out from Alexandria to expel the French from Fort Duquesne. Braddock's army numbered almost two thousand men, most of whom were British veterans who had seen service in the wars of Europe. Reaching Will's Creek in northwestern Maryland, Braddock briefly halted his march and constructed Fort Cumberland to serve as a staging ground for the attack. On May 30th, he resumed the march.



THOMAS GAGE

Ahead of him there were no roads on which to travel, so Braddock sent an advance party of seven hundred men to open a path for the army and wagons over the rugged, forested land. In that advance group, several guides led the way, followed by three hundred and fifty soldiers under Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Gage, and then a working party of two hundred and fifty axmen. (By the way, one of those axmen was a very young Daniel Boone, who later became a famous frontier trailblazer and scout.) The latter part of the advance party was composed of the tool-wagons, cannons, and rear guard.

With strenuous effort, the advance party opened a twelve-foot-wide road through the wilderness, across mountains and rocky ridges, over ravines and rivers, and through the dense forest country that stood between them and Fort Duquesne. And because so many heavily-laden artillery, equipment, and baggage wagons were following with Braddock's main body, the workers were required to level high spots and erect bridges over creeks. It was hard work and the progress was slow.



MARCHING THROUGH THE WOODS

General Braddock's main force trailed behind the road-building detachment, and his horses had great difficulty pulling the burdensome wagons over the newly cut road. The troops (along with the pack horses, cattle, and their drivers) filed through the woods and thickets on both sides of the road and wagons. Bringing up the rear was a body of British regulars and the American provincials. Braddock's army extended in a slender column stretching almost four miles long behind the work



crew.

With the progress being so slow, Braddock feared that the French at Fort Duquesne would use the additional time to entrench and reinforce themselves. Considering it essential to move ahead rapidly and surprise the French and cut off additional relief forces, on June 19th, relying on the advice of Washington, Braddock placed himself at the head of 1,300 select troops and proceeded by more rapid marches toward Fort Duquesne with only the equipment that was absolutely necessary. He left behind the heavy baggage wagons with Colonel Dunbar and an escort of 600 men to follow as best they could.

Shortly after the army was split, Washington came down with a high fever that lasted for days and brought him near death. The physician was so alarmed that Braddock ordered Washington to drop out of the march until he recovered. With a wagon for his hospital, Washington remained under the physician's care, but after two weeks, even though not fully recovered, he was so eager to overtake the column that he decided to move forward despite his weakness, suffering great pain because of the constant jolting of the ambulance wagon over the rough ground.

As the army continued its rapid march toward Fort Duquesne, a band of Shawnee and Delaware Indians (faithful allies of the British and Americans) appeared, wanting to join Braddock's force. They had frequently offered to attack the French and now renewed that offer, seeking to help the English in the forthcoming conflict.

Washington, having caught up with the main force, knew that the Indians would be invaluable in battle and strongly urged General Braddock to accept their offer. The General did so, but with such a cold indifference that he offended the Indian volunteers. That initial offense was so intensified by Braddock's subsequent neglect of them that they soon left. According to Franklin's account:

This General was, I think, a brave man, and might probably have made a figure as a good officer in some European war. But he had too much self-confidence, too high an opinion of the validity of regular troops, and too [low] a one of both Americans and Indians. George Croghan, our Indian interpreter, joined him on his march with one hundred [Indians] who might have been of great use to his army as guides, scouts, etc., if he had treated them kindly; but [Braddock] slighted and neglected them, and they gradually left him.

Braddock, while not deficient in courage or military skill, was totally unacquainted with the style of warfare necessary for the American woods; confident in his own British soldiers, he saw no need for Indian warriors. Thoroughly skilled in the tactics of European warfare, he mistakenly believed that battles could be fought in America as they had long been fought in Europe – that soldiers would march directly against their opponents on an open field of battle just as if both were on a military parade ground before an arena of spectators. Furthermore, Braddock – arrogant, proud, and self-willed – generally held the suggestions of the Americans in contempt. Even Franklin had tried to warn him about the Indian style of warfare:



WAITING IN AMBUSH

In conversation with him one day, he was giving me some account of his intended progress. “After taking Fort Duquesne,” says he, “I am to proceed to Niagara . . . for Duquesne can hardly detain me above three or four days . . .” Having before revolved in my mind the long line his army must make in their march by a very narrow road to be cut for them through the woods and bushes. . . . I had conceived some doubts and some fears. . . . But I ventured only to say, “. . . The only danger I apprehend of obstruction to your march is from the ambuscades of Indians. . . . And the slender line, near four miles long, which your army must make, may expose it to be attacked by surprise in its flanks and to be cut like a thread into several pieces. . . .” He smiled at my ignorance and replied, “These savages may indeed be a formidable enemy to your raw American militia, but upon the King’s regular and disciplined troops, sir, it is impossible they should make any impression.” I was conscious of an impropriety in my disputing with a military man in matters of his profession and said no more.

Braddock ignored Franklin’s warning, just as he had those of other Americans. In fact, when Colonel Washington repeated the same warning and pointed out the danger of ambushes and the need for scouting parties, Braddock flew into a rage. He strode up and down in his tent and said that it was high times when a buckskin colonial could teach a British general how to fight. “The Indians,” said Braddock, “may frighten continental troops, but they can make no impression on the King’s regulars!”

On July 7th, after nearly ten weeks of marching, the column was finally within twelve miles of Fort Duquesne; the difficulties seemed almost at an end. The British believed that they had arrived before the French had been able to bolster their numbers, reasoning that if the French had actually amassed a sizeable force, they would have already attacked the British – especially since the Indian allies of the French greatly disliked battling from within the confines of a fort.

The next day, Braddock’s force reached the junction of the Youghiogheny and Monongahela Rivers. That evening, the friendly Indians again showed themselves and offered their services to the British. Washington once more intervened on their behalf. Repeating to Braddock the Indian’s style of warfare, of laying ambushes, and of fighting from behind trees, he recommended that the Indians go ahead of the British as scouts and reconnoiter the woods and ravines to uncover any waiting ambush. Braddock again scorned their assistance and this time curtly refused their offer of help, even offending the Indians by his rudeness. That decision sealed the unfortunate fate of the British army on the following day.

## Chapter 6

### The Battle at the Monongahela

Early the next morning, July 9th, 1755, the British army crossed the river and continued its march along the shore of the Monongahela. At noon, from the heights overlooking the river, Washington looked down upon the army which had just forded the river for the second time, drawing ever nearer to Fort Duquesne. The British in their crimson uniforms, with shining weapons and banners floating in the breeze, were snappily marching to cheerful music as they reentered the forest.



Washington was often heard to say that the most beautiful spectacle he ever beheld was that morning's sight of the brightly-clad British troops far below, stretching miles into the distance. He recounted:

Every man was neatly dressed in full uniform; the soldiers were arranged in columns and marched in exact order; the sun gleamed from their burnished arms; the river flowed tranquilly on their right, and the deep forest overshadowed them with solemn grandeur on their left. Officers and men were equally inspirited with cheering hopes and confident anticipations.

The slender line of soldiers, still having seen no sign of the enemy, was moving forward in fine spirits and with military precision. Being only a few miles from Duquesne, they were confident that within a few hours they would be its master. To all appearances, the country was as calm and uninhabited as the morning of creation, but appearances were deceiving.

The French were not willing to give up their fort without a struggle; they had been receiving reinforcements for two months but they were still unevenly matched against Braddock's much greater numbers; even the Indian allies of the French realized the disparity. Having been kept abreast of Braddock's progress by daily reports from their scouts, the French finally decided that an ambush would be their best defense.



READY TO LAUNCH THE AMBUSH

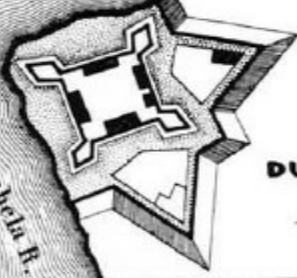
The night before the battle, the French commander of Fort Duquesne with great difficulty persuaded the Indians to join the ambush against the British. The next morning, a combined force of 72 French regulars, 146 Canadian militiamen, and 637 Indians (a total force of 855) set out from Duquesne to harass and annoy the 1,300 English, not intending to face them in serious battle. The French, already familiar with the territory, chose an ambush point that was seven miles from the fort. They were just settling into their positions when the first British troops came into view.

It was almost one o'clock in the afternoon, and Colonel Gage's forward detachment was progressing up an incline with a few guides and some small flanking parties in the advance. General Braddock followed behind with the artillery, light baggage, and the main body of the army. (Colonel Dunbar's 600 soldiers with the heavy baggage was now more than forty miles to the rear.)



OHIO RIVER

Monongahela R.



Fort  
DU QUESNE  
1755.

OHIO R.

Monongahela R.

Alleghany River



PITTSBURG  
1759.

# A Plan of the **FIELD OF BATTLE** AND DISPOSITION OF THE TROOPS

as they were on the March at the time  
of the Attack July 9<sup>th</sup> 1755.

## REFERENCES.

X French and Indians when discovered by the Guides.  
British Troops.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| A Guides with 6 Light Horse                                  | L Sergeants & 10 Grenadiers  |
| B Van of the advanced party                                  | M Subalterns & 20 Men  |
| C Advanced party commanded<br>by Lieu. Col. Gage 350.        | N 12 Pounders  |
| D The Working party coman-<br>ded by St. John St. Clair 250. | O Comp <sup>ts</sup> of Grenadiers                                   |
| E Two Field Pieces 6 Pounders                                | P Vanguard   |
| F Guard to Ditto   | Q Train of Artillery   |
| G Tool Waggon  | R Sir Peter Halket's   |
| H Flank Guards   | S Col. Dunbars   |
| I Main Body of the Army                                      | T Rear Guard to the whole Army                                       |
| K Light Horse  | U A Hill   |
| L Sailors  | X Ground where the principal<br>part of the Engagement<br>was fought |
- The Distance from Frazier's House to Fort Du Quesne  
is 7 Computed Miles.

Engraved for Bancroft's History of the United States  
By George G. Smith.

A dry hollow way

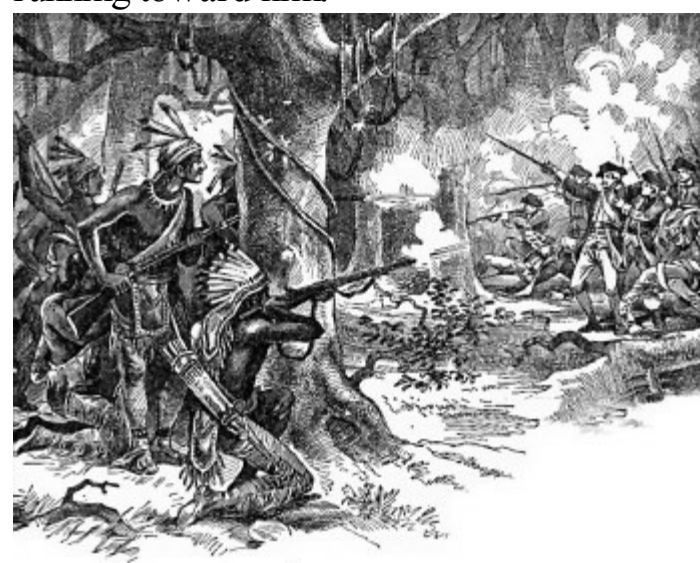
Frazier's House

Part of the Narrows

Turtle Creek



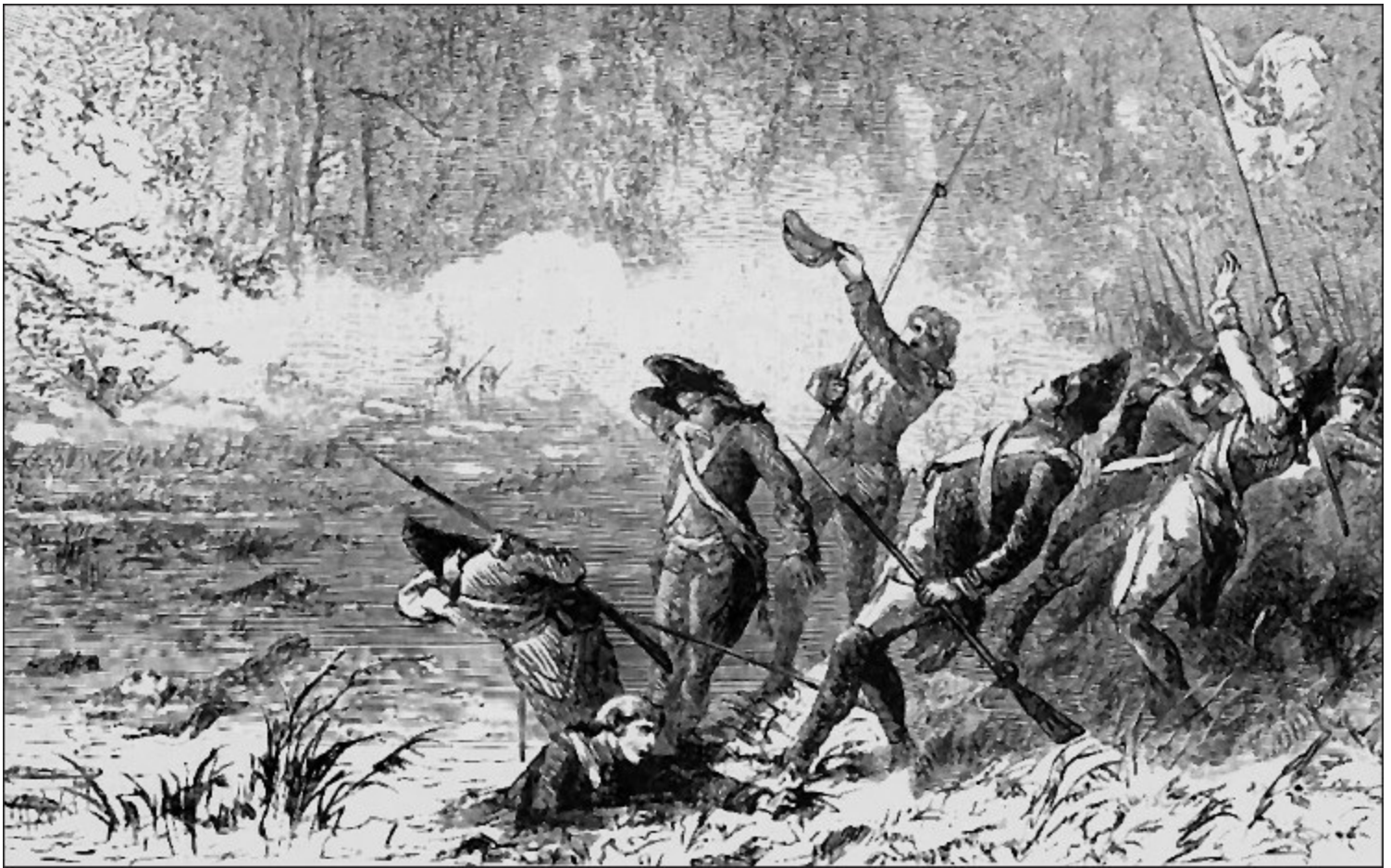
Gage's forward detachment had just crossed a shallow ravine with a hill and dense undergrowth on the right and a dry hollow on the left when his scouts and flanking parties came running back. At the same instant, Gordon, the engineer who was marking out the road for the British, spotted an Indian running toward him.



AMBUSHED!

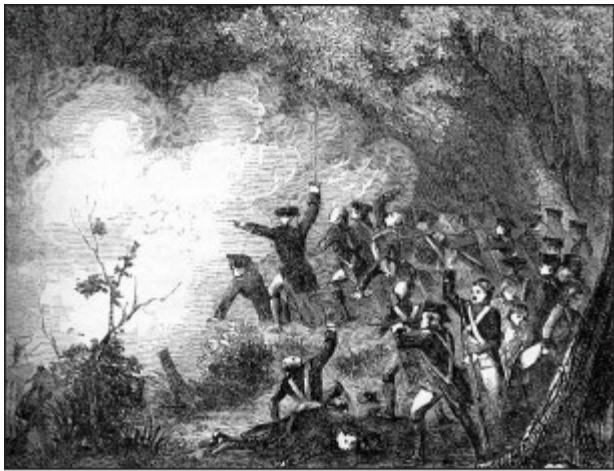
The Indian pulled up short and waved his hat over his head. With that signal, an immediate and sudden volley of shots erupted from the surrounding woods – a shower of musket balls was poured into the front of Gage's company, sending metallic messengers of death among the unsuspecting soldiers. A storm of bullets, piercing flesh and shattering bones, swept the astounded ranks. To the British, it was like a supernatural attack from invisible spirits; not a musket was seen; the enemy was completely hidden. The blue smoke rising after every discharge revealed that the firing came from the trees, so the disconcerted British soldiers wildly fired back into the woods but did little more than sliver bark and cut saplings.

The Indians, however, were unerring marksmen; skilled in the art of ambush and guerilla warfare, they had clearly visible targets at which to fire. Volley followed volley in rapid succession, and the ground became littered with the dead and the dying. The horses, many wounded but all in a frenzy, reared and plunged and tore along the road, dragging wagons after them, trampling the living and the dead. The British ranks were in utter confusion. The teamsters and axmen fled while the soldiers remained, but there was no defense that could be made. A deadly storm of bullets continued to rain down upon them, with the Indians laughing derisively at the powerless struggles of their victims.



FLEEING IN CONFUSION

Braddock, hearing the firing and knowing that his forward detachment was seriously engaged, rapidly moved up with the main column, leaving Sir Peter Halkett and 400 men (including most of the Virginians) to guard the baggage. But before Braddock could reinforce Gage, Gage's men had retreated, leaving their forward cannons in the hands of the enemy. The retreating men collided with the advancing men coming to their aid, mixing the two groups together and throwing the entire army into confusion. The officers, unlike the soldiers, remained calm but their level-headed efforts to restore order were unsuccessful.



FIRING AT AN INVISIBLE ENEMY

One of the greatest difficulties was that the advancing soldiers, just like the retreating ones, were unable to see whom they were fighting. In fact, in the Court of Inquiry held by the British authorities after the battle, none of the English involved in the fight could say they had seen even a hundred of the enemy, and “many of the officers who were in the heat of the action the whole time would not assert that they saw [even] one” – and this was with over 800 French and Indians concealed in the forest shooting at them.



TRYING TO FIRE AT UNSEEN ATTACKERS

The British soldiers, with their officers and comrades falling around them on every side with each discharge from the woods, were so panic-stricken that they became disoriented – they were uncertain where to go or what to do. They therefore remained stationary, huddled together in frightened groups in the midst of the ravine, some facing one way and some another, firing at unseen targets but all exposed without shelter to the bullets that pelted them like hail.

The Virginia provincials, exhibiting greater savvy than the others, adopted the Indian style of warfare, fighting gallantly according to backwoods custom. Each man found a tree from behind which he fired whenever an arm, a head, or any portion of an enemy became visible.

Other soldiers began to adopt this manner of fighting, but Braddock was furious about this skulking mode of battle – it was completely contrary to his ideas of courage and discipline. In his thinking, this was the behavior of cowards, so he issued a stern order that none of the troops should protect themselves behind trees. He then busied himself in efforts to form his men into regular platoons and columns according to the customary rules of British military tactics, even beating his men with his sword if they attempted to take cover.

The typical British regular was brave when facing conventional dangers, but fighting a deadly enemy he could not see was something completely new to him. The French and Indians, from the relatively safe concealment of ravines, rocks, and trees, sent out a hail of bullets that hardly tested their aim; the beautiful red coats were targets they could not miss. It was butchery rather than battle, and the scene was capable of intimidating the boldest of heart: the yells of the Indians, the panic of the



soldiers, the frantic running of wounded horses, the unceasing rattle of musketry, the storm of leaden hail, the groans of the wounded and the screams of the dying all combined to form a scene of complete despair and chaos.



Braddock, however, was a lion in combat. Although showered with bullets and having five horses shot from under him, he continued undaunted, but his reckless courage did not turn the tide. As the battle continued, nearly every member of his staff – including his secretary and two of his military aides – was shot down; Washington, Braddock's only uninjured staff member, rode over every part of the field carrying the general's orders.

Halkett's 400 men at the tail of the column were faring somewhat better than the main body, although Sir Peter Halkett himself was killed, and his son – while trying to help his father – was shot dead at his side.

Despite Braddock's wishes to the contrary, it was purely an Indian-style fight, and a fight more one-sided than had ever occurred in the history of woodland warfare. The pandemonium lasted over two hours, but the events surrounding Colonel Washington during those two hours provide compelling evidence not only of God's care but also of His direct intervention on Washington's behalf.



GEORGE WASHINGTON DELIVERING ORDERS AND DIRECTING THE TROOPS

Although Washington had not fully recovered from his illness and was still quite weak, he stood unflinching in the face of disaster. Carrying the general's orders to subordinates in all parts of the field made him a particularly conspicuous target for the enemy, who did not fail in their attempts to take advantage of it. As one eyewitness exclaimed: "I expected every moment to see him fall. Nothing but the superintending care of Providence could have saved him!"

Significantly, following the battle, the Indians confirmed that they had specifically singled out Washington and repeatedly shot at him, but without effect. They therefore became convinced that he was protected by an Invisible Power and that no bullet could harm him. Indeed, even though hundreds of victims fell around him, shielded by God's hand he escaped without a scratch, untouched by bullet or bayonet, arrow or tomahawk.





GENERAL BRADDOCK (CENTER) IS SHOT

After two hours, Braddock was finally shot in the side and sank to the ground seriously wounded. Like the other officers on horseback, he, too, had been a special target, for the Indians knew that if they could shoot down the officers, they could scatter the remaining troops and easily destroy them later. Consequently, every mounted officer except Washington had been slain before Braddock fell.

When Braddock was hit, he was no longer able to beat the regular troops into obedience, so they swiftly fled the scene of battle. It became a rout – a race for life by every man who could drag his legs behind him. Everything – the wagons, guns, artillery, cattle, horses, baggage, and provisions – was abandoned to the enemy; even the private papers of the general were left on the field. Braddock, unable to mount a horse, was hurried from the field in a litter and was a mile from the battlefield before they stopped to dress his wounds.



BRADDOCK CARRIED FROM THE FIELD OF BATTLE

When the fleeing troops reached what was left of Halkett's group at the rear, Washington found that scarcely thirty men of his three companies of Virginians were left alive. He quickly took charge and organized the remaining Virginians to cover the panicked flight of the once glorious British army.

The brutality of the battle was indicated by the number of casualties: of the 1,300 British soldiers, 714 were killed or wounded; and of the eighty-six officers, sixty-two were killed or wounded. The losses of the French and Indians were slight, amounting to only three officers and thirty men killed, and as many others wounded.



A BLOODY MASSACRE

The forest abandoned by the British was strewn with bodies of the dead and dying, and the Indians emerged from their concealments with tomahawk and scalping-knife to seize their bloody trophy of

scalps from the dead and even from the wounded who were still struggling on the ground (although their tomahawks soon numbered the wounded with the dead). So elated were the Indians over their unexpected success, and so eager were they to secure the rich spoils left by the British, that instead of pursuing the retreating army and perhaps totally destroying it, they remained on the field celebrating; they had never before known such a rich harvest of scalps and booty.



GATHERING SCALPS

Meanwhile, Washington guided the remnants of the retreating army, moving to rejoin Dunbar's heavy baggage division forty miles to the rear. General Braddock lingered in great pain for several days during the retreat, remaining under the care of Dr. James Craik (a close personal friend of Washington who later attended Washington at his own death). According to Franklin:

Captain Orme, who was one of the General's aides-de-camp, and being grievously wounded, was brought off with [Braddock] and continued with him to his death (which happened in a few days), told me that [Braddock] was totally silent all the first day and at night only said, "Who would have thought it?"; that he was silent again the following day, only saying at last, "We shall better know how to deal with them another time," and died a few minutes after.

Braddock's death finally occurred near the Great Meadows, a mile west of Fort Necessity. That night by torchlight, Washington conducted the funeral service of the Anglican Church over Braddock's hastily dug grave, reading Scriptures and offering prayers. Braddock was then buried in the middle of the road and wagons were rolled over the fresh mound of dirt to keep his remains from being found and desecrated by any Indians that might pursue, but no attempt at pursuit was ever made.





WASHINGTON READING SCRIPTURES OVER THE HURRIED BURIAL OF BRADDOCK

With Braddock's force now annihilated, the British army no longer posed an imminent threat to the French, so they left the starving, bleeding remnant to struggle back to Virginia. Meanwhile, the victors, with the Indian chiefs wearing the coats, boots, and decorations of the slain British officers, returned to Fort Duquesne to rejoice over their triumph and prepare for another assault should the British unwisely attempt to return.

Significantly, Colonel James Smith, an English officer captured before the battle, was being held captive at Duquesne throughout this affair and his personal narrative provides a vivid portrayal of the scenes that transpired at the fort before, during, and after the battle. Smith reports that Indian scouts for the French were constantly watching the British from mountain crags and from within the depths of the forest, and every day runners would return to the fort with a fresh report. Late in the afternoon of July 9th (the day of the battle), the triumphant shouts of fleet-footed runners were heard in the forest, bringing the initial news of the great victory and reporting that the English were huddled together in a narrow ravine from which escape was impossible. The concealed Indians were shooting down the British as fast as they could load and fire and before sundown all would be killed.

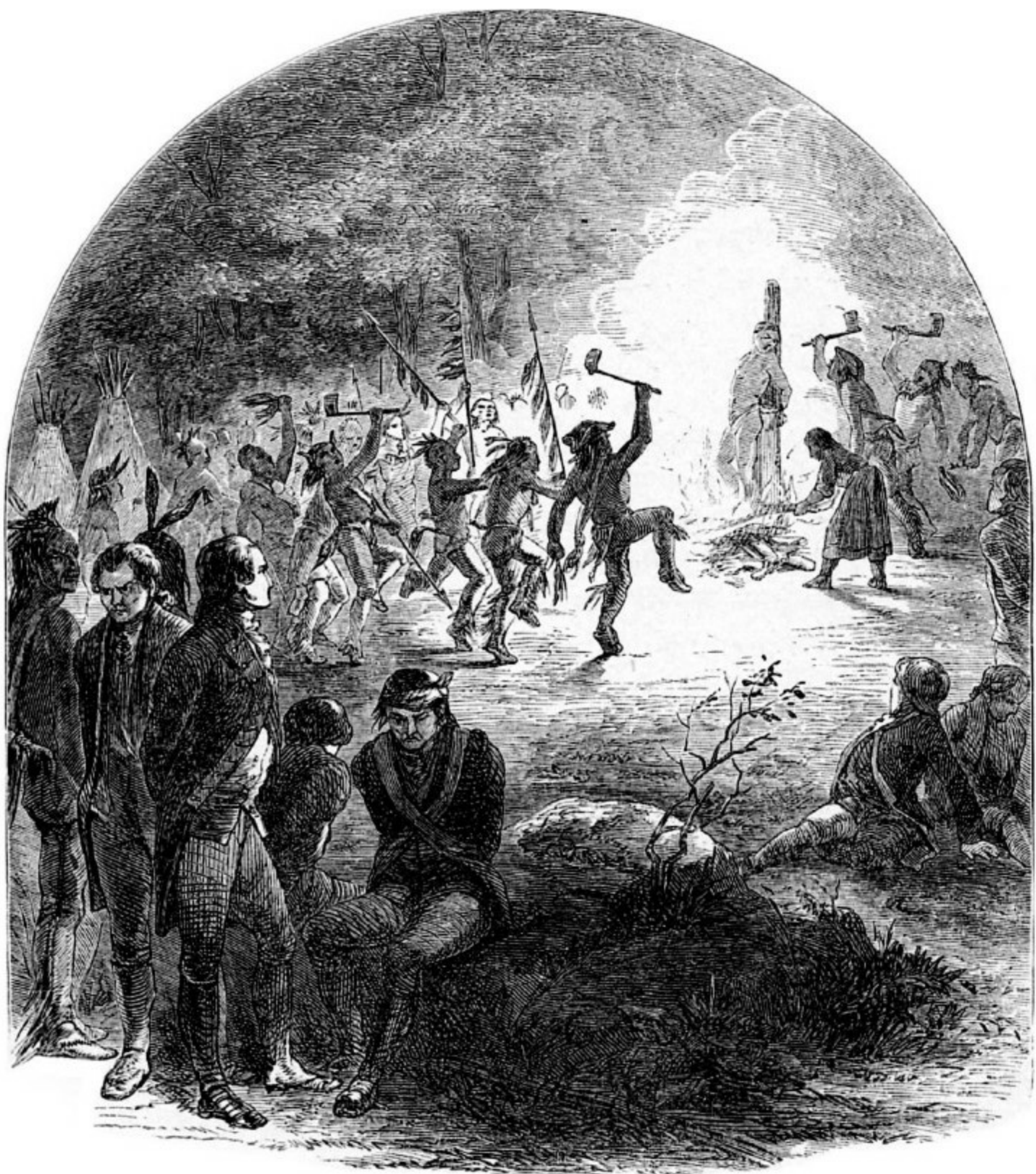


SPORTING THE SPOILS OF VICTORY

Smith then reported that some time later, a larger band of about a hundred Indians appeared at the fort, yelling and shrieking in boisterous joy. It was the greatest victory they had ever known or imagined, and they were stunned – even shocked – at both the quantity and the richness of their plunder. Braddock's army had been laden not only with all the necessities for living but with many luxuries as well, and it was more than the Indians could carry away. They returned to the fort stooping beneath the loads of caps, canteens, muskets, swords, bayonets, and rich uniforms they had stripped from the dead. Most had dripping, bloody scalps, and several had money. Smith further reported:

Those that were coming in and those that had arrived kept a constant firing of small arms and also of the great guns in the fort, which was accompanied by the most hideous shouts and yells from all quarters so that it appeared to me as if the infernal regions had broken loose. About sundown I beheld a small party coming in with about a dozen prisoners, stripped naked, with their hands tied behind their backs. Their faces and parts of their bodies were blackened. These prisoners they burned to death on the banks of the Allegheny river, opposite to the fort. I stood on the fort walls until I beheld them begin to burn one of these men. They tied him to a stake and kept touching him with fire-brands, red-hot irons, etc., and he screaming in the most doleful manner. The Indians, in the meantime, were yelling like infernal spirits. As this scene was too shocking for me to behold, I returned to my lodgings, both sorry and sore. The morning after the battle, I saw Braddock's artillery brought into the fort. The same day I also saw several Indians in the dress of British officers, with the sashes, half moons, laced hats, etc., which the British wore.





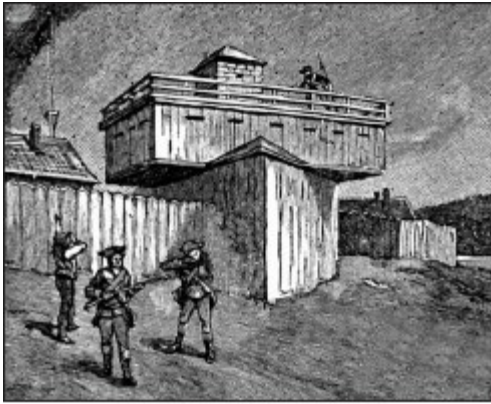
BURNING THE PRISONERS

## Chapter 7

### Return to Fort Cumberland

The retreating British regulars finally arrived at Dunbar's camp, and the panic they brought with them instantly gripped the inept Dunbar and his troops. Once again, the scene became one of total confusion.

With Braddock and Halkett now dead, the command of all the remaining forces moved back from Washington to Colonel Dunbar – a man of incompetence and no courage. Counting his own force and the remnants of Braddock's, Dunbar still had almost 1,000 men but he made no attempt to recover any of the lost provisions. In fact, pretending to have the orders of the dying general (and even though there was no longer any threat from the enemy), Dunbar ordered that the remaining artillery, ammunition, baggage, and provisions be destroyed so that he would have additional horses to assist his frightened flight back to Fort Cumberland.



SAFETY AT THE FORT

On July 17th, Washington and the disconsolate remainder of the once proud British army reached the Fort. However, several fleeing soldiers had arrived before the main body and spread far and wide embellished reports of the disaster. Washington, knowing the terrible anxiety of his family upon hearing such reports, immediately wrote his mother to assuage her great concern for him.

July 18, 1755

Honored Madam:

As I doubt not but you have heard of our defeat, and perhaps had it represented in a worse light, if possible, than it deserves, I have taken this earliest opportunity to give you some account of the engagement as it happened, within seven miles of the French fort, on Wednesday the 9th . . .

We marched to that place without any considerable loss, having only now and then a straggler picked up by the French and scouting Indians. When we came there, we were attacked by a party of French and Indians . . . our [force] consisted of about one thousand three hundred well-armed troops, chiefly of the English soldiers, who were struck with such a panic that they behaved with more cowardice than it is possible to conceive. The officers behaved gallantly in order to encourage their men, for which they suffered greatly, there being nearly sixty killed and wounded – a large proportion of the number we had.

The Virginia troops showed a good deal of bravery and were nearly all killed, for I believe out of three companies that were there, there is scarce thirty men are left alive. Captain Peyrouny and all his officers down to a corporal were killed.

Captain Polson had nearly as hard a fate, for only one of his was left. In short, the dastardly behavior of those they call regulars exposed all others that were inclined to do their duty to almost certain death; and at last, in spite of all the efforts of the officers to the contrary, they ran as sheep pursued by dogs and it was impossible to rally them.



WASHINGTON'S MOTHER OFTEN PRAYED  
FOR HIS PROTECTION AND SAFETY

The General was wounded, of which he died three days after. Sir Peter Halkett was killed in the field, where died many other brave officers. I luckily escaped without a wound, though I had four bullets through my coat and two horses shot under me. Captains Orme and Morris, two of the aids-de-camp, were wounded early in the engagement, which rendered the duty harder upon me as I was the only person then left to distribute the General's orders, which I was scarcely able to do as I was not half recovered from a violent illness that had confined me to my bed and a wagon for above ten days. I am still in a weak and feeble condition, which induces me to halt here two or three days in the hope of recovering a little strength to enable me to proceed homewards, from whence I fear, I shall not be able to stir till toward September. . . .

I am, honored Madam, your most dutiful son,

*G. Washington*

On the same day, he wrote his brother, John:

As I have heard since my arrival at [Fort Cumberland] a circumstantial account of my death and dying speech, I take this early opportunity of contradicting the first and of assuring you that I have not as yet composed the latter. But by the miraculous care of Providence I have been protected beyond all human probability or expectation; for I had four bullets through my coat and two horses shot under me yet escaped unhurt, although death was leveling my companions on every side of me.

To Governor Dinwiddie, Washington related what he described as the “dastardly behavior” of the British regulars, reporting:

[They] broke and ran as sheep before hounds, leaving the artillery, ammunition, provisions, baggage, and every individual thing we had with us, a prey to the enemy; and when we endeavored to rally them . . . it was with as little success as if we had attempted to stop the wild bears of the mountains.

When the cowardly Dunbar and his force of 1,000 troops arrived at Fort Cumberland, he received requests from the Governors of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania (colonies whose territory fell within the Ohio Valley) to post some of the troops along the frontier in an attempt to offer some protection to the settlers. Dunbar, however, felt that he should enter winter quarters with his troops – even though it was still July and winter was months away. He therefore evacuated Fort Cumberland and withdrew to the safety of Philadelphia (as far away from the Ohio Territory as he could get) to encamp for the winter, leaving the entire frontier open to the pillage and depredations of the French and Indians. Regarding Dunbar’s behavior, Benjamin Franklin quipped:

Dunbar continued his hasty march through all the country, not thinking himself safe till he arrived at Philadelphia where the inhabitants could protect him. This whole transaction gave us Americans the first suspicion that our exalted ideas of the prowess of British regulars had not been well founded.

The defeat of Braddock, followed by Dunbar’s subsequent destruction of the wagons, created a great hardship on Franklin since he had issued large personal bonds for the wagons and equipment used on the expedition. With the destruction of that property, the colonial owners were anxious for repayment; unwilling to wait for British reimbursement, they pressed Franklin to make immediate restitution for their losses. Franklin, having already advanced considerable money for the campaign, was unable to pay all the notes at once, so the owners began to sue him. He described the tenuous situation and its resolution:



FRANKLIN

As soon as the loss of the wagons and horses was generally known, all the owners came upon me for the valuation which I had given bond to pay. Their demands gave me a great deal of trouble. I acquainted them that the money was ready in the [British] paymaster’s hands, but that orders for paying it must first be obtained from General Shirley [of Massachusetts], and that I had applied for it . . . and they must have patience. All this was not sufficient to satisfy, and some

began to sue me. General Shirley at length relieved me from this terrible situation by appointing commissioners to examine the claims and ordering payment. They amounted to near £20,000, which to pay would have ruined me.

By the way, £20,000 is over four-and-a-half million dollars in today's money, which certainly would have ruined Franklin.



## Chapter 8

# The Celebrated Epilogue



BRADDOCK

If the advice that Washington offered Braddock had been followed, and if the Indians had been used as scouts before the advancing army, the French ambush undoubtedly would have been discovered and it is quite possible that victory might have been secured by the British. But due in large part to the foolish and haughty arrogance of Braddock, they were crushed in bloody and infamous defeat. However, this resulted in no dishonor for Washington. His fearlessness, perception, and quick decisions in the heat of battle were praised in the strongest terms by his fellow officers and soldiers. And because of the direct intervention and favor of Divine Providence, Washington gathered acclaim and honor from the same field where his commander received only disgrace and death.

As time passed after the great battle, several previously unknown facts surfaced. These not only gave a better perspective to the drama that had surrounded Washington during the battle but also provided further convincing evidence of the remarkable extent to which God had directly intervened in his behalf.

For example, one famous Indian warrior who was a leader in the attack was often heard to testify, “Washington was never born to be killed by a bullet! I had seventeen fair fires at him with my rifle, and after all could not bring him to the ground!” When one considers that a rifle aimed by an experienced marksman rarely misses its target, his utterance seems to have been prophetic and confirms that an Invisible Hand had indeed turned aside the bullets.

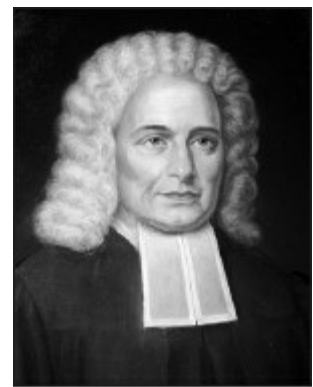


Another verification was provided through the famous account of Mary Draper Ingels, who was kidnapped by a band of Shawnee Indians from her home in Draper Meadows, Virginia, on July 8th, 1755, and carried far away, deep into the Ohio Valley. In her celebrated account, she wrote of her capture, escape, and midwinter return to civilization through 1,000 grueling miles of wilderness.



TELLING THE  
AMAZING STORY

She recounts an occasion during her captivity when the French arrived and held a council with their Indian allies. The Frenchmen were talking excitedly and gesturing wildly; Mary listened to their conversation, which was about George Washington. Having personally met Washington in Virginia, she began to inquire more specifically about him from the French trappers. They related the account given them by Red Hawk, an Indian chief integral to the victory at Fort Duquesne, who told of shooting eleven different times at Washington without hitting him; and because his gun had never before missed its mark, Red Hawk ceased firing at him, convinced that the Great Spirit protected him. The Frenchmen related additional details about the battle and its grizzly outcome, but Mary doubted their account – surely the British could not have been so completely crushed. It was only after her return to civilization that she learned the details had indeed been accurate.



REV. SAMUEL DAVIES

Washington's escape from the numerous perils to which he had been exposed during that battle was so obviously miraculous that special mention of it was made in a famous sermon preached by the Rev. Samuel Davies only weeks after the battle. (Davies, considered the greatest pulpit preacher in America, was an active leader in the American revival known as the Great Awakening and later became President of Princeton University.) In his 1755 sermon, Davies first commended the military qualities that the Virginia provincials had displayed during the fight and then added, "I may point out to the public that heroic youth, Colonel Washington, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a manner for some important service to his country."

# RELIGION

AND

## PATRIOTISM

The CONSTITUENTS of a Good

## SOLDIER.

A

## SERMON

Preached to

Captain OVERTON'S Independant  
Company of Volunteers, raised in  
*Hanover County, Virginia, Au-*  
*gust 17, 1755.*

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By SAMUEL DAVIES, *A. M. Minister of*  
*the Gospel there.*

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*PHILADELPHIA*, Printed :  
*LONDON*; Re-printed for J. BUCKLAND, in  
*Paternoster Row*, J. WARD at the *King's-Arms* in  
*Cornhill*, and T. FIELD in *Cheapside*. 1756.

REV. DAVIES' 1756 SERMON MENTIONING THE INCIDENT WITH WASHINGTON



this End that you should be at Peace with God, and your own Conscience, and prepared for your future State. Guilt is naturally timorous, and often struck into a

\* As a remarkable Instance of this, I may point out to the Public that heroic Youth Col. *Washington*, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a Manner, for some important Service to his Country.

WASHINGTON'S PROTECTION BY GOD CITED IN THE DAVIES' SERMON

Davies' expectant hope for the young George Washington proved to be quite accurate, and twenty years later it was apparent that God had indeed selected Washington for an "important service to his country"; the entire nation has benefited as a result.



As time passed, even more specific details were revealed about the battle. For example, in 1770, fifteen years after the crushing defeat, Washington and Dr. James Craik (Washington's close friend and personal physician who had attended Braddock in 1755) were traveling toward the western territories to explore uninhabited regions. While near the junction of the Great Kanawha and Ohio Rivers on the border of what is now Ohio and West Virginia, a company of Indians led by an old respected chief arrived at their camp, asking to talk with Washington. A council fire was kindled and the chief addressed Washington through an interpreter, explaining that after being informed of his

approach to that part of the country, he had set out on his long journey to meet Washington and personally speak with him about the legendary battle fifteen years earlier. Through the interpreter, the chief told him:



PROTECTED IN BATTLE

I am a chief and ruler over my tribes. My influence extends to the waters of the great lakes and to the far blue mountains. I have traveled a long and weary path that I might see the young warrior of the great battle. It was on the day when the white man's blood mixed with the streams of our forest that I first beheld this chief [indicating Washington]. I called to my young men and said, "Mark yon tall and daring warrior? He is not of the red-coat tribe – he hath an Indian's wisdom, and his warriors fight as we do – himself is alone exposed. Quick! Let your aim be certain, and he dies." Our rifles were leveled – rifles which, but for you, knew not how to miss. 'Twas all in vain; a power mightier far than we shielded you. Seeing you were under the special guardianship of the Great Spirit, we immediately ceased to fire at you. I am old, and soon shall be gathered to the great council fire of my fathers in the land of shades; but ere I go, there is something bids me speak in the voice of prophecy. Listen! The Great Spirit protects that man [again indicating Washington], and guides his destinies – he will become the chief of nations, and a people yet unborn will hail him as the founder of a mighty empire. I am come to pay homage to the man who is the particular favorite of Heaven and who can never die in battle.

True to the chief's prediction, and because God sovereignly and Divinely protected him, Washington not only did not die in that 1755 battle but he was not even wounded in that or in any of the numerous subsequent battles in which he fought.



MAJOR PATRICK FERGUSON

In fact, at the 1779 Battle of Brandywine during the American Revolution, British Major Patrick Ferguson, a renowned rifle shot and head of the British sharpshooters, quietly moved his men around in the forest as professional snipers during that battle, singling out one American soldier after another,

shooting them down and then moving to a new location. On one occasion, he identified an American target and he and three of his best sharpshooters drew down on him.

Just before Ferguson ordered them to fire, he experienced a surprising impulse and declared that the idea of shooting that particular American suddenly disgusted him. The American officer, in pointblank range, turned and looked directly at Ferguson, locking eyes with him over the sights of Ferguson's unerring rifle; after a few moments, the officer slowly turned his horse around, deliberately showed his full back to Ferguson, and then calmly cantered away.

Ferguson recounted: "I could have lodged half a dozen balls in him before he was out of my reach . . . but it was not pleasant to fire at the back of an unoffending individual who was acquitting himself very coolly of his duty – so I let him live." Ferguson later discovered from other British officers that it had been George Washington whom he had allowed to live. Ferguson lamented, "I am sorry that I did not know at the time who it was." If he had known, he would have shot him down, but because of some seemingly illogical inclination, he let him live – affirming the Indian warrior's testimony from years earlier that "Washington was never born to be killed by a bullet!"

In 1881, historian Lyman Draper observed of the Brandywine incident: "Had Washington fallen, it is difficult to calculate its probable effect upon the result of the struggle of the American people. How slight, oftentimes, are the incidents which in the course of human events seem to give direction to the most momentous concerns of the human race. This singular impulse of Ferguson illustrates in a forcible manner the overruling hand of Providence in directing the operation of a man's mind when he himself is least aware of it."

Early historian George Bancroft ("The Father of American History") reported other occasions of miraculous intervention in Washington's behalf – including in 1777 when the Americans faced off against the British in the Battle of Princeton. "Washington, from his desire to animate his troops by example, rode in the very front of danger and when within less than thirty yards of the British, he reined in his horse with its head towards them as both parties were about to fire, seeming to tell his faltering forces that they must stand firm or leave him to confront the enemy alone. The two sides gave a volley at the same moment; when the smoke cleared away, it was thought a miracle that Washington was untouched." (Bancroft reports a similar outcome at the Battle of Trenton.)

As a result of numerous Providential interventions throughout his life, Washington became – just as the old Indian chief had accurately prophesied – the chief of a nation and was hailed by subsequent generations as a founder – in fact, as the Father – of his country.



PRESIDENT COOLIDGE

What would have been the impact on America had Washington been shot down in the 1755 battle, the 1777 battle, or the 1779 battle, or so many others? Nearly two centuries later, President Calvin Coolidge answered that question, declaring:

Washington was the directing spirit, without which there would have been no independence, no Union, no Constitution, and no republic. . . . We cannot yet estimate him. We can only indicate our reverence for him and thank the Divine Providence which kept him to serve and inspire his fellow man.

Significantly, Washington recognized that he had indeed played a critical role in America's formation, but he also recognized that his momentous influence was not the result of his own skills but rather the favor of God. As he humbly acknowledged, "I have only been an instrument in the hands of Providence." But Washington would never have become an instrument in the hands of God had not God watched over him throughout his life and made him "The Bulletproof George Washington"! ■

## Time Line of Events

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| 1749-<br>1753   | Numerous boundary disputes occur between British and French traders  |
| 1753            | Britain directs her American colonies to seek friendship with the Six Nations Indians and to form a union among the colonies |
| 31 Oct.<br>1753 | George Washington departs for the French Commander General St. Pierre with a letter from Governor Dinwiddie                  |
| 12 Dec.<br>1753 | Washington arrives at the French camp  |
| 16 Jan.<br>1754 | Washington returns to Williamsburg   |
| Spring<br>1754  | France reinforces troops in Canada   |
| 2 April<br>1754 | Washington leads troops from Alexandria to Will's Creek in first step of repulsing the French                                |
| 1 May<br>1754   | Washington marches to the Great Meadows  |
| 24 May<br>1754  | Washington reaches Great Meadows and constructs Fort Necessity   |
| 27 May<br>1754  | Washington captures a French detachment near Fort Necessity  |
| 14 June<br>1754 | Council convenes at Albany to construct a plan of union between the colonies   |
| 3 July<br>1754  | Battle at Fort Necessity; Washington attacked by French forces under De Villiers   |



4 July 1754	Albany plan is approved by commissioners and sent to both the colonies and Great Britain for approval Washington surrenders and withdraws from Fort Necessity
20 Feb. 1755	General Edward Braddock arrives in Hampton Roads, Virginia
14 April 1755	Braddock meets with colonial governors in Alexandria, Virginia; four-pronged campaign against the French is planned
April 1755	General Braddock meets George Washington
20 April 1755	Braddock leaves Alexandria for Will's Creek
10 May 1755	Braddock constructs Fort Cumberland at Will's Creek
30 May 1755	Braddock leaves Fort Cumberland for Fort Duquesne
19 June 1755	Braddock, at Washington's suggestion, divides the army and begins to press forward, leaving Dunbar and the heavy baggage to follow
9 July 1755	The Battle at the Monongahela; British slaughtered
12-15 July 1755	General Braddock dies
	Dunbar destroys remaining artillery and baggage
17 July 1755	Washington and troops return to Fort Cumberland
18 July 1755	Washington writes members of his family to inform them personally of the battle
Aug. 1755	Dunbar enters winter quarters with the British troops
1770	George Washington and Dr. Craik return to the same vicinity as the battle and are met by an Indian chief

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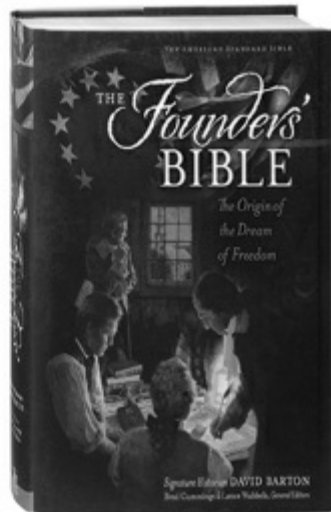


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