

# WASHINGTON WITH GENERAL BRADDOCK

Elbridge S. Brooks



The King of England and his advisers determined to make a stand in America against the French. So they sent over two regiments of British troops under command of a brave soldier whose name was Braddock, and told him to get what help he could in Virginia and drive out the French.

General Braddock came to Virginia with his splendid-looking fighting men. When he had studied the situation there, one of the first things he did was to ask Colonel George Washington of Mount Vernon to come with him as one of his chief assistants. Washington at once accepted. He saw that now the King of England "meant business," and that if General Braddock were as wise as he was brave, the trouble in the Ohio country might be speedily ended and the French driven out.

But when he had joined General Braddock, he discovered that that brave but obstinate leader thought that battles were to be fought in America just the same as in Europe, and that soldiers could be marched against such forest-fighters as the French and Indians as if they were going on a parade. Washington did all he could to advise caution. It was of no use, however. General Braddock said that he was a soldier and knew how to fight, and that he did not wish for any advice from these Americans who had never seen a real battle.

At last everything was ready, and in July, 1755, the army, led by General Braddock, marched off to attack Fort Duquesne, which the French had built at Pittsburgh.

Washington had worked so hard to get things ready that he was sick in bed with fever when the soldiers started; but, without waiting to get well, he hurried after them and caught up with them on the ninth of July, at a ford on the Monongahela, fifteen miles from Fort Duquesne.

The British troops, in full uniform, and in regular order as if they were to drill before the King, marched straight on in splendid array. Washington thought it the most beautiful show he had ever seen; but he said to the general: "Do not let the soldiers march into the woods like that. The Frenchmen and the Indians may even now be hiding behind the trees ready to shoot us down. Let me send some men ahead to see where they are, and let some of our Virginians who are used to fighting in the forest go before to clear them away." But General Braddock told him to mind his own business, and marched on as gallantly as ever.

Suddenly, just as they reached a narrow part of the road, where the woods were all about them, the Frenchmen and Indians who were waiting for them behind the great trees and underbrush opened fire upon the British troops, and there came just such a dreadful time as Washington had feared. But even now Braddock would not give in. His soldiers must fight as they had been drilled to fight in Europe; and when the Virginians who were with him tried to fight as they had been accustomed to, he called them cowards and ordered them to form in line.

It was all over very soon. The British soldiers, fired upon from all sides and scarcely able to see where their enemies were, became frightened, huddled together, and made all the better marks for the bullets of the French and Indians hiding among the trees and bushes. Then General Braddock fell from his horse, mortally wounded; his splendidly-drilled redcoats broke into panic, turned, and ran away; and only the coolness of Washington and the Virginia forest-fighters who were with him saved the entire army from being cut to pieces.

Washington fought like a hero. Two horses that he rode were killed while he kept in the saddle; his coat was shot through and through, and it seemed as if he would be killed any moment. But he kept on fighting, caring nothing for danger. He tried to turn back the fleeing British troops; he tried to bring back the cannon, and, when the gunners ran away, he leaped from his horse and aimed and fired the cannon himself. Then with his Virginians, that Braddock had so despised as soldiers, he protected the rear of the retreating army, carried off the dying general and, cool and collected in the midst of all the terrible things that were happening, saved the British army from slaughter, buried poor General Braddock in the Virginia woods, and finally brought back to the settlements what was left of that splendid army of the King. He was the only man in all that time of disaster who came out of the fight with glory and renown.

## NOTES AND QUESTIONS

### Biography

Elbridge S. Brooks (1846-1902) was a native of Massachusetts. He was always interested in stories of history, for his mother descended from the Monroes, who fought bravely at Lexington. He was for a time one of the editors of St. Nicholas.



### Discussion

1. Tell what you can of the contest for territory in America between the French and the English.

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2. Who was General Braddock and for what was he sent to America?

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3. Compare Washington and General Braddock in as many ways as you can.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

4. Why did Washington do all he could to help General Braddock in spite of the fact that he knew Braddock was not acting wisely?

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5. How did Washington gain glory from the engagement?

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6. What are you told in Home and Country about the value to us of studying the lives of great Americans? What do you owe to Washington and Lincoln?

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

7. Find in the Glossary the meaning of:

advisers - \_\_\_\_\_

situation - \_\_\_\_\_

caution - \_\_\_\_\_

ford - \_\_\_\_\_

array - \_\_\_\_\_

gallantly - \_\_\_\_\_

huddled - \_\_\_\_\_

collected - \_\_\_\_\_

disaster - \_\_\_\_\_

renown - \_\_\_\_\_

8. Pronounce: Duquesne; Monongahela; mortally; wounded.

# HOME AND COUNTRY

One of the most famous stories in American literature tells about a man who spoke of his country with sneers and insults and acted in such a way that he was forbidden ever to set foot on American soil again. So he became a wanderer. He saw how men from other countries looked upon their homelands with pride and affection, and how his countrymen loved America better even than their lives. He came to be known as "the man without a country," and he lived a wretched and lonely life. At last he came to the hour of death, and he wrote these words for all Americans to think about if the temptation should ever come to speak scornfully of their country:

"If you are ever tempted to say a word or to do a thing that shall put a bar between you and your country, pray God in His mercy to take you that instant home to His own heaven. Stick by your family, boy; forget you have a self, while you do everything for them. Think of your home, boy; write and send, and talk about it. Let it be nearer and nearer to your thoughts, the farther you have to travel from it; and rush back to it when you are free. And for your country, boy"—and the words rattled in his throat—"and for that flag"—and he pointed to the ship—"never dream a dream but of serving her as she bids you, though the service carry you through a thousand hells. No matter what happens to you, no matter who flatters you or who abuses you, never look to another flag, never let a night pass but you pray God to bless that flag. Remember, boy, that behind all these men you have to do with, behind officers, and government, and people even, there is the Country Herself, your Country, and that you belong to Her as you belong to your mother. Stand by Her, boy, as you would stand by your mother."

Such was the dying message of "the man without a country" to the Americans of his time; such is his message to us. When we were at war, it was to be expected that all men would answer the call of patriotism. But now that peace has come, it is not so easy to forget self in a loyalty to our country and its flag. It is easy to be on guard when we know that an armed enemy is close by; it is not easy when the enemy is hidden, and the guns are silent. These hidden enemies of our country do not fight in armies; they are the bad citizens who are scattered about; often you do not realize who they are.

Generally these bad citizens, who are enemies of our country, possess one or all of the following characteristics:

In the first place, they have no love for home and its festivals. Now, our nation is a collection of homes. The government was formed to protect these homes. The good citizen is a lover of his native soil, a lover of his home, a lover of Thanksgiving and Independence Day and Christmas. These festivals bind men more closely together, make them one, join them to their native land. But there are many bad citizens, enemies of America, who seek to destroy these influences that lead men to work together to make the community a better place in which to live.

Second, the history of the United States, the stories of the founding of our nation, the stories about our flag and its defenders, have no interest for these bad citizens. You remember how mother used to tell you stories about when she was a little girl, and how these stories made you love her the more. It is the same with the stories about the days when our country was young: how the young George Washington showed the kind of man he was, or how the young Abraham Lincoln struggled to fit himself to become a leader of men. Through these stories we learn what the flag really means and what it has cost, and we love our country as we love our mother. But the enemy, the bad citizen, laughs at these things. He just thinks of himself. He thinks he has a right to do as he likes because this is, he says, "a free country." He doesn't think that he owes anything to Washington and Jefferson and Lincoln, or to those who kept the flag at the masthead when it was in peril.

And the third test of a man's loyalty to our country is met only if he has the true feeling of democracy in his heart. This feeling of democracy means *service*, willingness to help others. The man or woman who thinks only of his own good time or his own fortune is a bad citizen.

You see, it is this way. In olden times men had no part in the government unless they were born into a high place in society. The ordinary man did as he was told, went to the wars at the king's pleasure, and paid taxes that often took all he could save. He had little opportunity to make money or collect property. If he did, very probably the king would hear of it and would take away from him all that he had saved. But America was founded with a different idea of these matters. Here men got together and set up the kind of government they wished. They taxed themselves in order to support this government. They worked together to drive away hostile Indians, to kill wild beasts, to conquer the forests, to plant their crops, to make their lives safe and happy. In this cooperation, or working together, in government and in all the ways of living we find the spirit of democracy.

This spirit has made America what it is today. It has opened up farms, built railways and ships and great industries, built also mighty cities, and made laws for the protection of property and life. All this men have done through the cooperation that means democracy.

If any man thinks that this freedom gives him the right to trample on others, he is no better than one of the wicked kings of former times. If he thinks that under this freedom he may devote himself wholly to the selfish gain of wealth without giving a share of his money, his time, and his skill to making his community a better place to live in and his nation stronger and more secure, he cheats his fellows, because he takes, without making any return, the blessings that the founders and defenders of the Republic established with their lives.

In the old stories the youth who was ready to be made a knight had to do certain things. He had to take the vow of knighthood, that he would lead a pure and blameless life. He had to render a service to someone in distress. And he had to watch, his arms beside him, through a night.

You boys and girls, lovers of America, her defenders if need be, her guardians in the years to come, must also watch by your arms. These arms are not guns and bayonets; they belong to your heart and mind. They are three in number: the love of home, the inheritance of freedom, and the will to work with others. The first is a foundation to make strong your heart; the second is a bulwark to make safe your life; the third is a sword wherewith to slay the enemies of the Republic.

This foundation in the love of home, this bulwark of our inheritance of freedom, and this sword of unselfish service are subjects often dealt with by great writers. In the pages that follow you will find pieces selected in order to bring out these ideas. You should read each of these selections not only for itself but also as a member of the group to which it belongs; and you should try to get the central idea that unites all the pieces that make up the group. Thus, little by little, you will come to see how your joy in Thanksgiving, the thrill that Old Glory can give you, and the service that you can render to someone else, are all related to each other. To defend home and country by being a good citizen is to be your mission in life. It is more important than a successful career, or than great personal happiness. For both your career and your happiness will depend upon the way in which you, and the other boys and girls of America, thousands 'upon thousands, keep watch by these arms, keep faith with home and country.