

**BUILDERS OF  
OUR COUNTRY**

**BOOK II**



**BUILDERS OF  
OUR COUNTRY**

**BOOK II**

by

*Gertrude Van Duyn Southworth*

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# I

## PATRICK HENRY

### *“God Save the King!”*

QUEBEC fell. The French and Indian War came to an end. And with its close came the last of French power in America. On that September day of 1759 it seemed as if the might of England were established in America forever, and “God save the King” was sung in every village and town of the loyal English colonies.

The long struggle was over. The victory was won. And now the colonists turned to the peaceful duties of home once more. Life was much the same as before the war, and yet in some respects there were marked differences.

To begin with, the English colonists no longer dreaded the French and their Indian allies. Thanks to English courage and perseverance, that fear was gone.

Moreover, the courage and perseverance which had gained this great blessing had not all belonged to the King’s red-coated troops. The colonists justly felt that they themselves had done much toward conquering the foe. They had left their homes and families, had made long hard journeys over unbroken lands, and had

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fought shoulder to shoulder with the English troops on many battlefields. Yes, surely the victory belonged as fully to them as to the King's regulars. Their pride was great.

Before the war each colony had stood alone. But now the settlers from the different colonies had met in a common cause, had fought a common foe, and had come to realize that they dwelt in a common country—one well worth fighting for.

And so, with their enemy beaten, their ability to fight established, and their love for their land increased, these loyal colonists sent up the heartfelt petition, "God save the King!"

Meanwhile, however, in 1760, the King of England, George II, died; and immediately his grandson was proclaimed King in his place. Just as the colonists were settling down to work, and starting to enlarge their already profitable trade, this new king, George III, took a step which threatened trouble for them.

About one hundred years before George III became king, England had passed certain "Navigation Acts." These Acts had declared that the English colonies in America must not carry on trade with any countries other than England and her possessions, must not ship their goods in any but English or colonial ships, and must not manufacture their own products into finished articles. But these laws had not been enforced; and so, in spite of their existence, the colonies had sent their goods to Spain, France, and the West Indies, and had

## *PATRICK HENRY*

used their lumber, iron, furs, and other products as they saw fit.

All this was now to be changed. George III proposed to put the old Navigation Acts into force and to insist that his American colonies obey them.



*Arguing against the Writs of Assistance before the King's Court in Massachusetts*

This meant nothing short of ruin to colonial commerce. As the colonists had disobeyed the Navigation Acts for so long, without hindrance, there seemed no reason why they should obey them now. Hence they commenced to smuggle goods and to hide them in their houses.

The King was determined to stop the smuggling, so he issued "Writs of Assistance." These writs gave the King's colonial officers the right to enter any suspected house and search it. It was very easy for an officer who

suspected a colonist unjustly to enter his house, and very unpleasant for an innocent colonist to have his house searched from top to bottom at the whim of an officer. Bitter feeling sprang up, and appeal after appeal was sent to the King—but all in vain.

King George had found that, with his throne, he had inherited enormous debts. One of them was the great cost of the French and Indian War. Moreover, he intended to keep British soldiers in America, to prevent the French from regaining what they had lost. This standing army would be a further expense. But why should not his prosperous American colonists be made to pay for a war that had been fought chiefly in their behalf? Why should they not also help to support a standing army sent for their protection?

The next question was how best to get some of the colonists' money into the English treasury. The King and his Parliament decided to do this by means of a



*A Colonial Stamp*

stamp tax. Stamps of different kinds and values were to be issued and sent to America to be sold. Thereafter, in America, no business paper, such as an insurance agreement, a will, a note, or a deed, would be legal unless it were written on paper that bore one of these stamps—the stamp of right kind and value for that particular purpose. The stamps were to be so varied in their uses that they would cover nearly every line of business. Even each newspaper was to be stamped, so that the man who bought it would pay, not

## *PATRICK HENRY*

only for the thing itself, but for its stamp as well. All the money received from the sale of the stamps would go to the English Government.

To George III this seemed an excellent plan. Early in 1765 the Stamp Act, as it was called, was passed by Parliament. Word was sent to the American colonists that by November 1st of that same year they might look for their stamps; for on that day the Stamp Act would be put in force.

### *The First Breach*

THE news that the Stamp Act had been passed swept from end to end of the colonies. Everywhere men heard it with serious faces and asked each other what it meant. Never before had England tried to tax her American colonies without their consent. Were they to allow it now?

What worried the colonists was not that they must help pay England's war debt, although they had already fully paid their share; or that they were ordered to support in their midst an army of British soldiers, just when they had learned to defend themselves. The trouble was that they had not been consulted in these matters.

Virginia was the first to summon her House of Burgesses, as her legislative assembly was called, in an effort to find an answer to the grave question. Its members met at Williamsburg, on the 30th of May, 1765. The discussion began. All were opposed to the Stamp Act, but the remedies that they suggested for

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the evil were extremely mild. True Englishmen at heart were the Virginia burgesses, and the lifelong habit of obedience to their King prevented most of them from any thought of radical action. "Let us send the King a statement of our rights and petition him to consider them," said these conservative members.



For a moment no protest was raised. Then Patrick Henry rose slowly to his feet. All turned toward him wonderingly, and well they might. Only twenty-nine years old, roughly dressed, stoop-shouldered and awkward, surely this new member could have little to say on so great a subject. Quietly glancing from one to another of the dignified bewigged and beruffled older members, Henry began to speak.

According to English law, he argued, King George, could place no tax on his subjects at home or abroad without the consent of those subjects or their representatives in Parliament. Had the American colonies been asked their opinion of this Stamp Act? No! Had they any representatives in England's Parliament to give consent to such a measure? No! Then clearly King George had no right to demand that his American colonists pay this tax or buy his stamps. And he, Patrick Henry, had written some resolutions which he respectfully requested the burgesses to hear.

*PATRICK HENRY*

These resolutions he read from the fly leaf of an old book on which he had just jotted them down. They were a clear and concise statement of the rights granted the Virginians by their charter—rights which belonged to each and every subject of the English King, wherever he dwelt in that King's domains. And, concluded the resolutions, His Majesty's liege people, the inhabitants of this colony, are not bound to obey any law which imposes a tax, unless that law is made by the Virginia House of Burgesses. Moreover, any person who denies this exclusive right to the House of Burgesses shows himself an enemy to the colony.

At once all was excitement. On every hand the conservative members were attacking this open defiance of the King—this declared intention to disobey his stamp law.

Again Patrick Henry rose to his feet. This time his head was high, his eyes flashed, and his wonderful voice thrilled every listener. In plain terms he now repeated his views of the Stamp Act, and the King and Parliament who had passed it. "Cæsar had his Brutus," he cried, "Charles the First his Cromwell, and George the Third——"

"Treason! Treason!" rose on all sides.

"And George the Third may profit by their example. If this be treason, make the most of it," added Henry; and without another word he took his seat.

Now followed argument after argument for and against Patrick Henry's resolutions. And gradually, one

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by one, the members of the Virginia House of Burgesses began to see the situation with Henry's eyes.



*Patrick Henry Addressing the House of Burgesses*

Finally came the deciding vote. When it was counted, it was found that Patrick Henry's resolutions, in a slightly modified form, had been adopted.

Henry, content with the result, threw his saddlebags over his arm and set off for home, leading his horse. He had made his fight and won. Compared with this, it mattered little to him that he had been charged with treason. And yet to be charged with treason was no small affair. Treason means an attempt to betray one's country, or one's king. It is still considered the greatest crime that a soldier or a citizen can commit; and in Patrick Henry's day its punishment was death.

Troublous times followed. Into the peaceful relations with England a breach had come. Wider and wider it grew. Still, as at the beginning, the conservatives were in

*PATRICK HENRY*

favor of patching up the gap and holding to the mother country. Patrick Henry, on the other hand, felt that only galling chains could now tie the American colonies to England. Hear his words to the members of the House of Burgesses assembled in Richmond, when the crisis came in 1775:

“Gentlemen may cry ‘Peace! Peace!’ but there is no peace. The war is actually begun. The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms. Our brethren are already in the field. What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but, as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!”

## II

# SAMUEL ADAMS

### *The Stamp Act*

VIRGINIA was the first colony to declare her opposition to the Stamp Act after it became a law. Patrick Henry's resolutions against it were printed and scattered broadcast throughout the country. Their sentiments were read with satisfaction from north to south. But nowhere did they find a stronger echo than in the hearts of the Massachusetts colonists.

Here, even before the Stamp Act had been passed, these staunch New Englanders had begun to voice their opinions of old England's doings. No sooner had the mere rumor that such a law might be passed reached America than Samuel Adams made known his views on the matter.

This Samuel Adams was a Harvard graduate, a thinker, a lover of his country. For several years he had served in one office after another, until now, at the age of forty-two, he had come to be as well versed in colonial needs and conditions as any man in Massachusetts.

There was not the slightest question in his mind regarding this proposed Stamp Act. Not only through the common rights of all Englishmen, but also by their

## *SAMUEL ADAMS*

charter, the Massachusetts colonists could claim a voice as to the taxes they were to pay. England could not tax her colonies without the consent of their representatives. The American colonies had no representatives in Parliament. Therefore there was but one conclusion: England had no right to pass this law.

So Samuel Adams believed, and so he stoutly declared. And others were so convinced that he was right that a protest based on his views was sent to England, stating how Massachusetts felt.

However, as we have seen, the King and his Parliament passed the Stamp Act and notified the American colonies that it would go into effect on November 1, 1765.

When that day dawned in America, the sun shone on a state of affairs which King George had not foreseen. Flags waved at half mast, shops were closed, and business was at a standstill. The colonists had agreed that, come what might, they would not buy the stamps. Already boxes of them had been seized, and burned or thrown into the sea. And already the men chosen to sell the hated stamps had been pointedly warned not to attempt to carry out their orders.

How was it all to turn out? Surely the time had come for stern measures; and, thanks to Samuel Adams, stern measures were adopted throughout the colonies.

Now it was that his non-importation plan was put into practice. This meant that the American colonists refused to buy goods from England as long as the Stamp Act remained a law. "We will eat nothing; drink nothing,

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wear nothing coming from England, until this detested law is repealed," they declared.

Such a course was hard on the English merchants. Their large orders from America were canceled, and their goods left on their hands. So they, too, pleaded against the Stamp Act.

Even stubborn George III could see at last that a mistake had been made, and that he and his Parliament must give in to the colonists. But he would do it in his own way. The Stamp Act was repealed; but, with the repeal, word was sent to America that England declared her right to bind her colonies in all cases whatsoever.

The repeal was received with joy, while the declaration passed unnoticed. Once more flags floated free from the top of mast, tower, and steeple. Bonfires blazed, bells rang, and men shouted from sheer happiness.

But their joy was short-lived. The very next year they came to understand the meaning of England's declaration of her right to bind her colonies. Again the mother country tried to tax them. This time a duty was placed on glass, paper, paints, and tea.

Again the colonists refused to be taxed without their consent. And once more English merchant vessels were obliged to sail home with the same cargoes they had brought. The colonists would buy nothing from England. Bitter indeed was their opposition. Boston especially won the royal displeasure. Her citizens were so hostile to England's demands that the Massachusetts

# Glorious News.

BOSTON, Friday 11 o'Clock, 16th May 1766.  
THIS Instant arrived here the Brig Harrifon, belonging to John Hancock, Esq; Captain Shubael Coffin, in 6 Weeks and 2 Days from LONDON, with important News, as follows.

From the LONDON GAZETTE.

Westminster, March 18th, 1766.

THIS day his Majesty came to the House of Peers, and being in his royal robes seated on the throne with the usual solemnity, Sir Francis Mollineux, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, was sent with a Message from his Majesty to the House of Commons, commanding their attendance in the House of Peers. The Commons being come thither accordingly, his Majesty was pleased to give his royal assent to

An ACT to REPEAL an Act made in the last Session of Parliament, intitled, an Act for granting and applying certain Stamp-Duties and other Duties in the British Colonies and Plantations in America, towards further defraying the expences of defending, protecting and securing the same, and for amending such parts of the several Acts of Parliament relating to the trade and revenues of the said Colonies and Plantations, as direct the manner of determining and recovering the penalties and forfeitures therein mentioned.

Also ten public bills, and seventeen private ones.

---

When the KING went to the House of Peers to give the Royal Assent, there was such a vast Concourte of People, huzzing, clapping Hands, &c. that it was several Hours before His Majesty reached the House.

Immediately on His Majesty's Signing the Royal Assent to the Repeal of the Stamp-Act, the Merchants trading to America, dispatched a Vessel which had been in waiting, to put into the first Port on the Continent with the Account.

There were the greatest Rejoicings possible in the City of London, by all Ranks of People, on the TOTAL Repeal of the Stamp-Act,—the Ships in the River displayed all their Colours, Illuminations and Bonfires in many Parts.— In short, the Rejoicings were as great as was ever known on any Occasion.

It is said the Acts of Trade relating to America would be taken under Consideration, and all Grievances removed. The Friends to America are very powerful, and disposed to assist us to the utmost of their Ability.

Capt. Blake sailed the same Day with Capt. Coffin, and Capt. Shand a Fortnight before him, both bound to this Port.

It is impossible to express the Joy the Town is now in, on receiving the above, great, glorious and important NEWS—The Bells in all the Churches were immediately set a Ringing, and we hear the Day for a general Rejoicing will be the beginning of next Week.

---

PRINTED for the Benefit of the PUBLIC, by  
Drapers, Edes & Gill, Green & Russell, and Fleets.  
The Customers to the Boston Papers may have the above gratis at their respective Offices.

*Handbill Announcing the Repeal of the Stamp Act*

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governor finally called for British troops to back him in the doing of his duty.

*The Boston Massacre*

ONE day in September, 1768, the troops arrived. There were two regiments. They landed with great pomp and marched to Boston Common. The Governor insisted upon their being quartered in the center of the town, for his better protection. Naturally the colonists resented such treatment, but what could they do? There the soldiers were, and there they stayed.

To begin with, all went well. But gradually the soldiers grew tired of their quiet life in Boston, and gradually the Boston people came to hate the very sight of these men sent to force them to obedience.

At last the smoldering fire flamed up. It seems that one wintry night in March, 1770, a boy in the street yelled insults at a sentry on duty, until the redcoat, angry beyond control, struck the boy. Slight as was this offense, it was enough. A crowd gathered; the boy pointed out the sentry, and a rush was made at him.

“Help! Corporal of the Guard, help!” shouted the sentry.

Immediately the guardhouse gate swung open, and an officer and eight soldiers joined the sentry. Forming themselves in line, the soldiers raised their loaded muskets ready to fire, if necessary.

“Fire if you dare, lobsters, bloody backs! Fire if you dare, cowards!” yelled the crowd.

## SAMUEL ADAMS

And fire they did. No one knows whether the officer in charge really gave the signal, or whether his soldiers merely thought he did. The result was the same. A volley rent the air, and three men lay dead on the ice.



*The Boston Massacre*

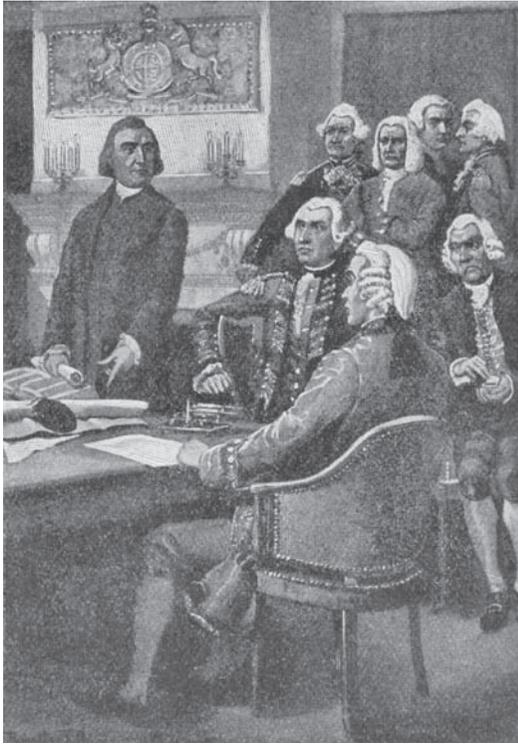
The town was wild. No longer should these redcoats be allowed in Boston!

Next day a great meeting was held. The people flocked from far and near. As usual Samuel Adams was there to guide the colonists and urge them to defend their rights. In stirring terms he spoke to them of the happenings of the night before—the Boston Massacre. When he had finished, he was appointed one of a committee to visit Acting-Governor Hutchinson and demand that the British troops be removed.

“I have no authority to remove the troops,” replied Hutchinson. This was no answer to carry back to an

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aroused people. The committee was not satisfied. So it was suggested that one of the regiments might be sent away.



*Adams before the Governor*

It had been agreed that the committee should report the result of their errand at three in the afternoon. By that time the meeting had grown so large that the building was packed and the crowd overflowed into the street. As the committee made its way through the people, Samuel Adams whispered to right and left, “Both regiments or none. Both regiments or none.”

The hint was taken. On hearing the Governor’s reply

that one regiment should go, a shout of “Both or none!” resounded through the hall.

Back to the Governor went the committee. “If you have the power to remove one regiment, you have the power to remove both. . . . The voice of ten thousand freemen demands that both regiments be forthwith removed. Their voice must be respected, their demands obeyed. Fail not then, at your peril.”

Thus spoke Samuel Adams. And, when in the gathering darkness, the committee for the last time returned to the meeting, they carried with them the Governor’s word of honor that both regiments should leave Boston at once. And leave Boston they did.

### *The Boston Tea Party*

SOON the colonists gained another short step in their struggle against oppression. King George agreed to take off the duty on glass, paper, and paints. The one little tax on tea, he positively would not remove; he would assert his right to levy duties. But a tax was a tax; and, were it small or large, the colonists would not pay it.

Now the Boston Massacre concerned Massachusetts alone. But the tax on tea concerned the whole thirteen colonies. If they were to work together against this common evil, it followed that they must be kept in touch with one another.

To make this possible, Samuel Adams originated the idea of Committees of Correspondence. The plan was a good one. Soon each colony had appointed a committee

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whose business it was to send out to the twelve other colonies letters telling of the doings at home, so that every colony might know the exact condition of the whole country.

In 1773 word came that several ships laden with tea were headed for America. "We will not buy it," agreed the colonists everywhere. And they kept their word.

Late in November the first of the ships sent to Boston entered the harbor. The patriots insisted that the tea should not be landed, and placed a guard to watch the ship. The Governor insisted that it should be landed, and would not permit the ship's captain to sail out of the harbor. Thus the matter stood for nineteen days.

Now there was a law that if a ship lying in the harbor was not unloaded by its owner within twenty days, the



*Sam Adams*

Custom House officers had the right to unload the cargo. This must not happen. So on the ship's nineteenth day in port the citizens were called together to determine what was to be done. By this time two other tea ships had arrived. Once more Samuel Adams was on hand with a clearly thought-out course of action.

The owner of the first ship was called, and he agreed to clear the harbor if only the Governor would give him the necessary permit. "Then go and ask him for it," directed the crowd.

*SAMUEL ADAMS*

It was December weather, cold and bleak; nevertheless the poor distressed merchant was obliged to make his way to Milton Hill where stood the Governor's country house.

The short winter day was over when he returned, but the patriots were still waiting, crowded in the gloomy meeting house, which was lighted by only a candle here and there.

"What news?" was anxiously asked, as the ship owner entered.

"The Governor refuses to give a pass," came the answer.

"This meeting can do nothing more to save the country," said Samuel Adams, rising.

These words were a signal given by the recognized leader. As if by magic, an Indian war whoop rent the air; and a band of men dressed as Indian warriors, in paint and feathers, appeared at the door for a moment. Then away they went.

With a mighty cheer the crowd followed at their heels. Down the street they dashed, headed for the tea ships. Once on board it was quick work to rip open three hundred and forty-two chests of tea and pour their contents into the sea. Their task finished, the Indians disappeared. But as they went, on many of their faces the watching crowd recognized the familiar smile of old friends.

From the days of the first rumor of the Stamp Act to this December night,—nine anxious years,—Samuel



*The “Boston Tea Party”*

Adams had led the people of Massachusetts. Always upholding colonial rights; always ready with helpful suggestions; always alive to the best interests, not only of his colony, but of the whole country, he richly deserved his title of “The Father of the Revolution.”

### *Lexington and Concord*

WHEN King George heard of the Boston Tea Party his anger knew no bounds. This rebellious colony should be punished, and that right soundly.

The Boston port was closed to all trade until the destroyed tea should be paid for. And General Gage, with several regiments, was sent to govern the people of Massachusetts.

## *SAMUEL ADAMS*

“We are outraged,” declared the colonists. “Such things are not to be endured.”

So they organized a new government quite independent of General Gage, with John Hancock and Samuel Adams at its head.

Nor was this all. Massachusetts decided to have an army of her own to defend her rights. “Minute men,” the soldiers were called, because they agreed to be ready to fight at a minute’s notice. Arms and ammunition were collected, and stored in Concord.

Before long, news of this hiding place reached General Gage. He determined to send a secret expedition to take the stores. Nothing seemed easier. Moreover, he knew that John Hancock and Samuel Adams were visiting in a town called Lexington. Why not kill two birds with one stone and direct his soldiers to march to Concord by way of Lexington? Thus they could seize not only the soldiers’ arms, but also their rebel leaders.

The plan seemed perfect. So at dead of night on April 18, 1775, General Gage ordered nearly eight hundred redcoats to slip quietly out of Boston and march through the darkness to Lexington. The start was made.

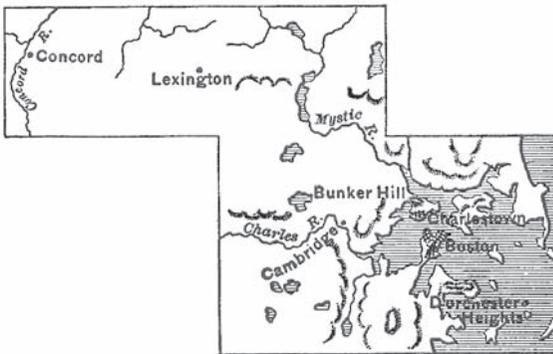
However, there was one thing General Gage did not count upon. He did not know that Paul Revere had already suspected this move, and had stationed a comrade in the steeple of the old North Church to signal the advance of the British. He did not know that Paul Revere himself was even now waiting, bridle in

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hand, for that signal to tell him to carry a warning to Lexington.

Suddenly two lights flashed out from the old North steeple. In an instant Paul Revere was in the saddle and away. His was a wild night ride. As his horse's hoofs clattered sharply in the stillness, men threw open their windows and were greeted with the cry, "To arms! To arms! The regulars are coming!"

On went the daring rider, until, reaching the house in Lexington, where Hancock and Adams were staying, he warned them of their danger and led them to safety.



*The First Battlegrounds of the Revolution*

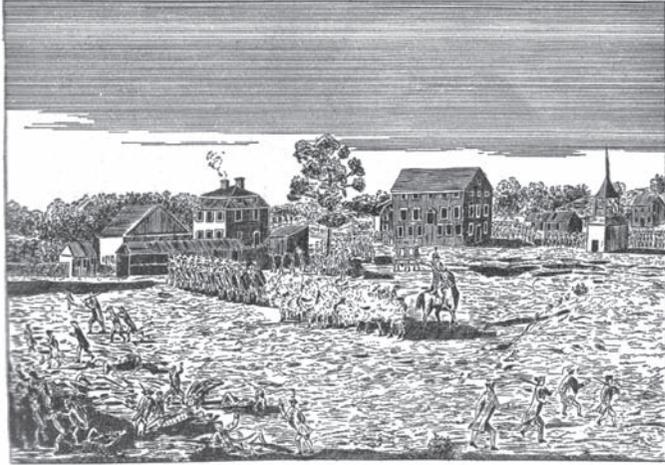
Just before daybreak of the 19th the redcoats appeared in Lexington and marched to the village green. Here they found themselves face to face with a band of minute men.

"Disperse, ye rebels!" shouted the British commander.

"Stand your ground!" urged the patriot leader. No one moved.

## SAMUEL ADAMS

Then in answer to their commander's order the regulars opened fire. Seven Americans fell. It would have been folly for the handful of minute men to have engaged in battle with so many regulars; so, firing an answering volley, they retreated.



*The Battle on the Village Green of Lexington*

Then on to Concord marched the King's troops. Here too they came too late. The patriots had already carried off most of their military stores. Two cannon had been left behind. These the British spiked.

By this time four hundred minute men had gathered and were marching against the regulars. At Concord Bridge the two forces met. And here it was that the Americans "fired the shot heard round the world."

Several redcoats fell, and soon the British soldiers gave up the bridge and began to march toward Boston.

But what a march! True to their name the minute

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men from all about had hurried to their duty. And from behind each wall and tree crouching figures now fired upon the retreating regulars.

All the way the minute men were at their heels. "They fairly seemed to drop from the clouds."

To go on was desperate. To stop was certain death. So, weak with hunger and thirst, the King's boasted troops pushed on through the six miles between Concord and Lexington, under an almost constant fire. Nearly three hundred English soldiers fell dead or dying on the road. At Lexington reinforcements joined them; and after a short rest, they went on to Boston.

*Bunker Hill*

It was certain now that war had begun, and the Americans went into it heart and soul. Collecting a goodly army, they formed a semicircle surrounding Boston on its land side and laid siege to the town.

There was a hill overlooking Boston known as Bunker Hill, and in June the Americans decided to fortify it. One night a detachment made its way up the side of the hill, and, working with a will, had dug trenches and thrown up breastworks by daybreak.

With the daylight, the finished fortifications dawned on General Gage's astonished sight. This would never do! From Bunker Hill the Americans could fire into his very camp. His only course was to drive them away at once.

That same day he sent a force of three thousand

soldiers against Bunker Hill. Up the hill they marched. Fifteen hundred Americans waited in the trenches. Their supply of powder was pitifully small, but their courage was of the finest. "Don't fire till you see the whites of their eyes," ordered the colonial officer in charge.



*The Last Defense  
behind the Breastworks  
of Bunker Hill*

On came the British troops, firing as they came. All at once a volley thundered from the breastworks. The front rank fell. There was a second's pause, and then the regulars retreated.

Rallying their men, the British officers urged them to a second attack. The result was the same. Waiting until they came within thirty yards, the Americans again fired a deadly charge; and again the English troops fell back.

But now the Americans' powder was spent. So when a third time the enemy advanced, there was no volley to check them. Still fighting, however—although clubs, the butt ends of their muskets, and stones were their only weapons—the Americans were at last driven from their fortifications.

The battle of Bunker Hill resulted in victory for

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the English and defeat for the Americans. The effect, however, was just what might have been expected had the reverse been true. England judged General Gage at fault in his methods and recalled him in disgrace. To the colonists one point stood out clear and bright above all others. Their colonial army had twice forced British regulars to retreat. What had been done could be done again. And so with renewed courage and stronger faith in their final victory, the whole country now bent every nerve toward defending their rights—the rights of the thirteen American colonies.

### III

## GEORGE WASHINGTON BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

### *His Boyhood*

AMONG the builders of our country one man looms up above them all. Thousands have risked their lives in America's battles. Hundreds have given the best of their energy to the building of America's institutions, and many have served as her chief executive. But none of these have needed the steadfast faith and courage to hold together a few crude colonists against a king's disciplined army. None of these have faced the problem of forming a nation out of thirteen impoverished colonies, at the close of a long war. At the very head of America's great men stands George Washington, the father of his country, "first in war, first in peace," and always "first in the hearts of his countrymen."

George Washington was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia, on February 22, 1732. While he was still a little fellow his father, Augustine Washington, moved to a plantation near Fredericksburg. Here the family lived in a frame house with an immense chimney at either end. There were four rooms on the first floor, and above was an attic under the steep sloping roof.

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One day during the summer of 1739 all was excitement in the frame house. "Lawrence is coming! Lawrence is coming!" shouted the boys, while their mother completed the last details of the homecoming she had long ago planned for her stepson. Lawrence and his brother Augustine had been in England, being educated; and now Lawrence was coming home to live.

There was no need to go far to meet him. In those days each large river plantation had its private wharf. Slowly the ship sailed up the Rappahannock to Augustine Washington's landing, and Lawrence was home.

And now life had many new interests for George. Lawrence, like all colonial men, was a good shot and a fine horseman, and loved hunting, horse racing, and sports of all kinds. In this older brother George saw what he himself wanted to become; and in George, Lawrence found a straightforward, honest, earnest boy. So, in spite of the fourteen years difference in age, the two became fast friends.

Lawrence had been back barely a year when war broke out between England and Spain, and Lawrence Washington set out to serve under Admiral Vernon.

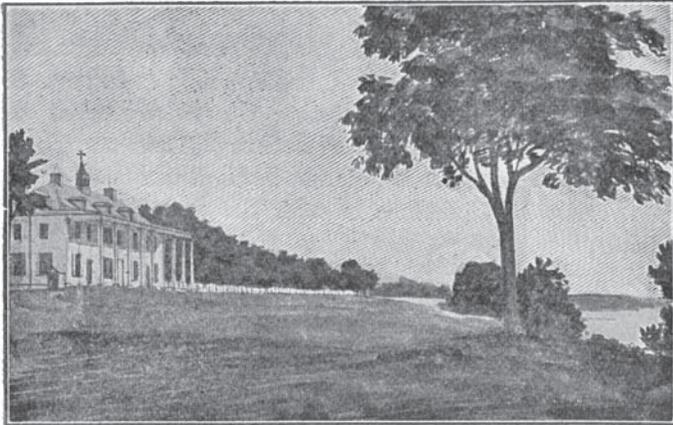
Soon came reports of the regiment's bravery, which gave George an added pride in his elder brother, and raised in his heart a great and lasting love for a military life. And George too became a soldier.

Mr. Hobby's schoolhouse stood out in a field, and there George was commander-in-chief. With school

## GEORGE WASHINGTON

out and work done, drills, parades, and battles became the order of the day. Although the young commander was quick-tempered and determined, he was generous and willing to play fair; and his companions loyally charged numberless walls and fought countless battles under his command.

In the autumn of 1742 Lawrence came home again; but it is doubtful if George saw quite as much of him as before the war, for the elder brother soon fell in love with Anne Fairfax, and became engaged to her.



*Mount Vernon a Century Ago*

The next spring George's father died suddenly. To Lawrence he left his estate on the Potomac, which Lawrence called Mount Vernon in honor of the Admiral under whom he had served. To the second son, Augustine, he gave his old estate on Bridges Creek in Westmoreland County. George was to have the house and lands on the Rappahannock, when he became of age. The other children were all provided for, and they

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and George were left under the guardianship of their mother.

In July Lawrence Washington and Anne Fairfax were married and went to live at Mount Vernon. Augustine, too, left the family home to take charge of his property on Bridges Creek.

There was no question as to the course these two were to follow. With George it was different. He had learned about all that his old schoolmaster, Mr. Hobby, could teach; and that was little enough. There was no other school near his home, and it was impossible to send him to England as the elder brothers had been sent.

A good school for those days was kept by a Mr. Williams not far from Augustine's home, and at length it was settled that George should live with Augustine and go to this school.

From the accounts of his life at Bridges Creek it is hard to decide whether he worked or played with greater diligence. His copy books still exist, all done with such neatness and care that it would seem as if they could have left no time for play. On the other hand he entered into so many sports, practicing each so thoroughly, that it would seem as if there could have been little time for study. In running he had no equal. Not a boy in the school could throw as he could, and with wrestling it was the same story.

While her son was away at school Mrs. Washington did not fail to keep in touch with him; and she arranged to have him at home whenever that was possible.

## GEORGE WASHINGTON

Here, thanks to her untiring efforts, affairs went on much as before her husband's death. She attended to every detail. She was stern and quick-tempered; and when she drove her open gig to any part of the plantation and found that the slaves had failed to carry out her directions to the letter, they had good cause to fear.

She was devoted to her children, but even they stood in awe of her and gave her unquestioning obedience.

There is a tale which shows that, while demanding much, she was just and willing to forgive. Early one vacation morning George and some companions were looking over his mother's splendid Virginia horses. Among them was a sorrel which especially pleased Mrs. Washington. George told how no one had ever been able to ride this horse, so fierce and ungovernable he was. And then because George was young and strong and looking for adventure, he impulsively proposed that if his friends would help him bridle the horse he would ride him. Of course they were ready to help, and somehow the bridle was put on. George sprang to the horse's back. Away they went. The horse reared and plunged. The other boys fairly held their breath expecting each moment to see George thrown. Still he held on. Finally the wild furious animal gave one mighty leap into the air, burst a blood vessel, and fell dead. Just then came the call to breakfast, and the frightened boys walked toward the house asking each other, "What shall we do? Who will tell what we have done?"

As luck would have it, at the table Mrs. Washington

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asked, "Have you seen my horses this morning? I am told my favorite is in excellent condition."

The boys exchanged a glance, and then George said, "Your favorite, the sorrel, is dead, madam," and went on to tell the whole story.

First an angry flush came to Mrs. Washington's face; but when George had finished she proudly raised her head and said to her guests, "It is well. While I regret the loss of my favorite horse, I rejoice in my son who speaks the truth."

When George was fourteen he took up the study of surveying, as that seemed to give the best promise for the future. By way of practice, he surveyed the fields around the schoolhouse and on the neighboring plantations, making exact and careful calculations, all of which he neatly put down in notebooks.

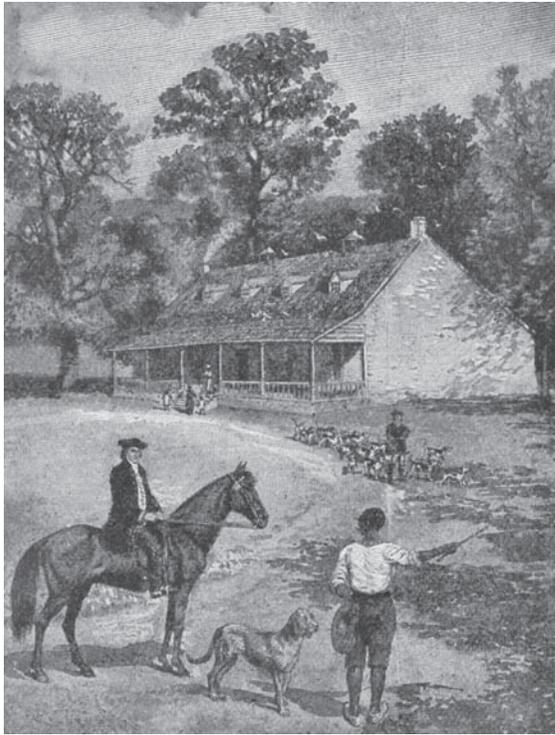
In the autumn of 1747, when he was under sixteen years of age, Washington's schooling came to an end, and he went to Mount Vernon to live with Lawrence.

*The Surveyor*

LORD FAIRFAX, a relative of Mrs. Lawrence Washington, owned large tracts of land in the beautiful valley of the Shenandoah. All this land had to be surveyed, and to his young friend George Washington, Lord Fairfax gave the work. Of course Washington was delighted with the opportunity; and in March, 1748, when he was sixteen years old, he set out on horseback with a small company of assistants.

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A hard month was before him. The rivers were so swollen from the spring thaws that fords were out of the question, and it was necessary to swim the horses across the ugly streams. The weather was cold. Fires were not always to be had. Food was none too plentiful. What there was each man must cook for himself on forked sticks over the fire. Chips were the only plates. Nights in a tent, or more often on the ground, were varied by an occasional night in a settler's cabin.



*Lord Fairfax on His Virginia Estate*

Such incidents with long hard tramps and constant work made up the story of Washington's first surveying

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trip. In April he reached Mount Vernon and laid the result of his work before Lord Fairfax. Lord Fairfax went over the carefully prepared maps and was so delighted that he used his influence to have Washington appointed Public Surveyor for Culpeper County. This appointment gave authority to his work, and how well it was deserved may be seen from the fact that his surveys are unquestioned to this day.

Now anxious times came to Mount Vernon. Lawrence became ill with consumption; and in July, 1752, this much loved brother died. When his will was read it was found that he had appointed George guardian of his little daughter, and heir to his estates in case the child herself should not live. And so it was that on her death, not long after, Mount Vernon became the property of George Washington.

### *Governor Dinwiddie's Messenger*

IN the early days when the English settlers were founding colonies along the Atlantic, the French were doing the same along the St. Lawrence River. Gradually, as the colonies grew, the settlers turned their attention to the great lands that lay beyond what they had already seen.

This was true especially of the French. First, missionaries worked their way along the northern border of New York, floated in canoes on the Great Lakes and even down the Mississippi River. And later, French explorers followed the missionaries and established forts here and there, as they went along.

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The English, too, were attracted by the wild western lands and sent fur traders to barter with the Indians there. Both France and England claimed the land.

Rich in game, fertile, covered with fine forests, the beautiful Ohio country seemed especially desirable. So, while the English formed what was known as the Ohio Company, and laid plans for sending out colonists to take possession of the disputed district, the French built forts and stirred up the Indians to attack English settlements.

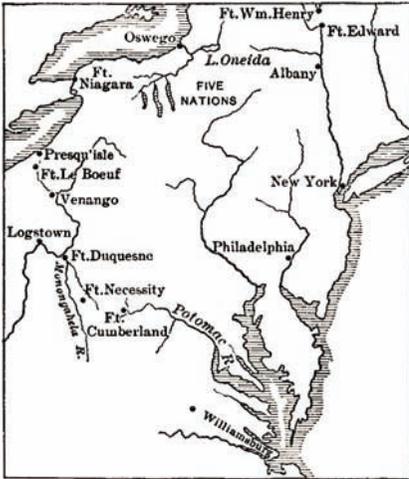
In the spring of 1753 fifteen hundred Frenchmen landed at Presqu'isle, erected a fort, and set about cutting a road through the forests to French Creek, where they built Fort LeBœuf. News of this move was not long in spreading throughout the English colonies. What was to be done?

Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia was one of the first to realize the seriousness of the question. He promptly sent letters to England, telling of the danger. England ordered, "Build forts near the Ohio if you can get the money. Require the French to depart peacefully; and if they will not do so, we do hereby strictly charge and demand you to drive them off by force of arms."

To require the French to depart peacefully was more easily said than done. The French were hundreds of miles away; many high and rugged mountains rose between Williamsburg, Virginia's capital, and the French fort; and over half the journey lay through the unbroken forests. The man who should carry England's message must know something of the country, must

understand Indian ways, must be used to hardships. He must be strong, full of courage, and ready for whatever might arise. Such a man was George Washington. And Governor Dinwiddie chose him as his messenger.

It was the middle of November when the twenty-



*The French and English Forts  
of the Western Frontier*

one-year-old leader and his party got away from Will's Creek—the end of civilization. Tramping through the forests amid blinding snowstorms, crossing raging creeks, always on the outlook for Indian treachery, slowly they worked their way toward the French fort. On December 4th they came to Venango, a French outpost, and

at dusk on the 11th reached Fort LeBœuf. Early the next morning, Washington presented Governor Dinwiddie's letter to the French commander.

For three days the Commander and his officers discussed the answer which was to be sent to the English Governor. Meanwhile Washington looked over the fort, drew its plan, and learned all he could regarding its strength and the number of soldiers detailed to guard it.

The days of waiting were anxious ones. The snow

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was falling faster and faster. Finally Washington and his companions got away from the fort, homeward bound.

On the journey home, the party encountered new difficulties. They had canoes that they had borrowed from the French; but in many places the creeks were so low that the men were obliged to get out of the boats and, wading in the icy waters, haul them over the shoals. After nearly a week of such traveling they came to the French outpost. Here Washington proposed to Christopher Gist, one of his men, that they leave the rest of the party and make for Will's Creek on foot; and so it was decided.

They walked eighteen miles the first day. The cold was dreadful. All the streams were so frozen that it was almost impossible to find water to drink. By night Washington was nearly exhausted. The next day they met an Indian who seemed so friendly that Washington asked him to guide them through that part of the forest. For ten miles all went well. Then, as they came to an open space, suddenly the guide, who was only fifteen paces ahead, turned and fired.

“Are you shot?” shouted Washington.

“No,” answered Gist.

Together they rushed on the Indian before he could reload. Gist wished to kill him, but Washington would not listen to that. “If you will not have him killed, we must get away and then travel all night,” urged Gist in low tones. “He will surely follow our tracks as soon as it is light, and we must have a good start.”

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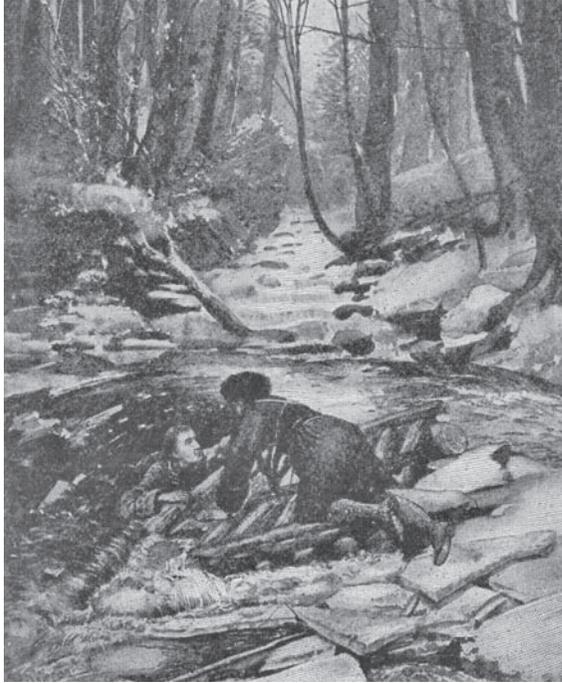
So, pretending that they thought the Indian's shot an accident, the two men let him go; and, when sure he was out of hearing, they crept away in the opposite direction. All that night and all the next day they hurried on, with no sleep and with sore and bleeding feet.

At last they came to a place where some Indians had been hunting. Mixing their tracks with those of the natives they separated for a time, in order that their bloodthirsty guide, if he followed them to this point, could find no two trails going on together. When they met again some distance farther on, they felt for the first time that it was safe to sleep.

They had now reached the Allegheny River, which was full of floating ice. A whole day was spent in building a raft on which to cross. They pushed off. The current was very swift, and before the raft was half way across the river it was being jammed on every side by cakes of ice. Every moment they expected that it would be forced under, and that they would perish. Struggling to keep a clear space for the raft with a long pole, Washington was all at once jerked into the water. It was by the merest chance that he was able to catch hold of one of the logs and so pull himself back on the raft.

There seemed no hope of reaching either shore now; so when the current carried them near an island, both Washington and Gist jumped into the freezing water and swam for the land. Gist had all his fingers and some of his toes frozen. By morning the ice in the river was solid, and it was comparatively easy to reach the mainland.

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*Gist Pulling Washington from the Frozen Stream*

A few days later Washington arrived at Williamsburg and gave to Governor Dinwiddie the letter that he had carried so carefully on his long and dangerous journey.

As usual, Washington had kept a journal of the trip; and this, too, he gave to the Governor, thinking it the simplest way to report all the events of his travels. So straightforward was the journal and so clearly did it set forth the exact conditions on the Ohio, leaving out all complaint of hardship, that Governor Dinwiddie ordered a copy of it sent to each of the colonial governors.

Washington found himself the hero of the hour. Not

yet twenty-two, he had faced a great responsibility and had done well all that he had been asked to do. But still, far from being proud and self-satisfied, when he was told that his journal was to be published he modestly wrote in it, "I think I can do no less than apologize for the numberless imperfections of it."

### ***Great Meadows and Fort Necessity***

THAT the French would not depart from the Ohio for the asking, was plainly shown by the French commander's reply to Governor Dinwiddie's letter. Then they must be driven away by force. Governor Dinwiddie determined that Virginia should do her full share, and ordered the enlistment of men at Alexandria. In February, 1754, he sent out a company to build a fort on a site chosen by Washington, where the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers join.

On the 2nd of April Washington set out with a small force to garrison the fort that was being built. Before long discouraging reports reached him. Five hundred Frenchmen had landed and demanded the builders of the fort to surrender. They had surrendered, and their victors were even now building Fort Duquesne on the very site chosen by the English.

Here was a gloomy outlook for Washington. However, it was decided to push on. When the little army had covered about half the distance, an Indian came to Washington bearing word that the French army was coming.

Washington had been expecting as much; so,

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hurrying his soldiers forward to a place called Great Meadows, he had the bushes cleared away and trenches dug. But no enemy appeared. A few nights later another Indian messenger reported that his chief was in camp six miles off and felt sure that the French were hiding near him.



*Attacking the French Hiding Place*

Prompt to act, Washington took forty of his men and joined the Indians. Scouts tracked the French to a hollow surrounded by rocks and trees; and in single file Washington, his men, and the Indian warriors crept to the French hiding place, and surrounded it. While

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Washington was moving through the trees, he was seen by the French. They sprang to their arms. In a moment both sides were firing. For fifteen minutes the fighting lasted, and then the French gave up.

This little skirmish proved of much greater importance than could have been foreseen. In it was shed the first blood of the French and Indian War. Moreover, the attack of the English added to the French determination to drive the English away from the Ohio. Washington appreciated the situation; and when he got back to Great Meadows, he began the work of strengthening Fort Necessity, as the encampment was now called.

On the morning of the 3rd of July, the French appeared before the fort, and a battle began. All day it lasted. At eight that night the French asked for a parley, which was granted.

The French proposed that, on condition that the English would surrender, the whole garrison might go back to Virginia. But for a year they must not attempt to build any more forts this side of the mountains.

With almost no provisions, with their powder about gone, with more than fifty of their men dead or wounded, while the French might be reinforced at any moment, Washington and his officers could see no course but to accept the conditions. So in the morning the fort was deserted, and the weary, half-starved soldiers started slowly home. On the way Washington shared their hardships and encouraged them by his cheerful and uncomplaining endurance. And all the time his heart

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was heavy. He was young; he had set out to win and was going back defeated.

At Williamsburg he reported to Governor Dinwiddie, and then went to Alexandria to recruit new companies to lead against the French.

But England had now decreed that any officer holding a commission from the King should outrank any officer holding a colonial commission. To have commanded an expedition, and then to be outranked by any upstart officer from England, was more than Washington's pride could bear. He therefore resigned from the service.

### *Braddock's Campaign*

By his little skirmish with the French in the wilderness hollow, Washington had started a war which was to spread beyond the colonies and become of grave concern abroad.

France sent eighteen war vessels filled with French soldiers to Quebec. And England, not to be outdone, likewise sent troops to her colonies here. Two regiments were assigned to Virginia; and early in 1755 the British ships sailed by Mount Vernon to put the soldiers ashore at Alexandria, only eight miles away.

Whether in the army or out, Washington could not withhold a lively interest in the redcoats. Many an early morning found him on horseback headed for the English camp, hoping to learn from the trained soldiers much that would help him, if ever he had the good fortune to reënter the service of his country.

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Knowing of course who he was and his story, the British officers watched the young Virginian as he went about their camp. He was six feet two inches tall, broad-shouldered, straight as an Indian; and he walked with a strong, swinging gait. His dignified bearing, and his way of looking each man in the face, could not fail to win friends. Soon General Braddock, the English commander, noticed Washington, learned of his desire to serve and the sole reason he was not on duty, and offered him a position on his staff.

Exciting times followed. It was easy to see that the strength of the French lay in their splendid line of forts. Troops, ammunition, and food could be hurriedly sent from one to another. To defeat the French, this line must be broken. Therefore it was agreed that one force should be sent to take the post at Niagara; that one should march against Crown Point, and a third against Acadia; and that General Braddock himself should take Fort Duquesne.

General Braddock was brave, resolute, and energetic. But his bravery was of the sort that made him despise his enemy; and his energy led him to underestimate the task before him. He knew nothing of the Indian way of fighting; nothing of the hardships of the wilderness. He was extreme in his British contempt for colonists.

By the middle of May, General Braddock's troops had arrived at Will's Creek; and on the 10th of June, 1755, the great procession headed for Fort Duquesne.

The 9th of July was chosen for the attack on the French fort, and at sunrise that morning the army was

## GEORGE WASHINGTON

on the move. What a sight it was! With drums beating, fifes playing, flags flying, bayonets flashing in the sun, and redcoats showing bright against the forest green, the army marched to victory. All was in perfect order. Riding with the General's staff, Washington was thrilled and delighted. Finally the last ford was made, and now Fort Duquesne was only eight miles away.



*Braddock's March*

“Forward! March!” ordered the officers, and the soldiers went briskly along the road that led through the forest to the fort.

Suddenly a French officer was seen rushing down the road, while behind him came swarms of French and Indians. At a signal, they darted into the woods, hid themselves among the trees and in the thickets, and with blood-curdling yells began pouring a deadly fire into the English lines.

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“Scatter your men as they have done,” Washington begged the General. But that was not the English way of fighting. The soldiers must stand in ranks to fire. The fearful yells and the smoke from the enemies’ rifles were all that told them where to aim.

The officers did everything in their power to keep order and encourage the men. But soldier after soldier fell, picked off by the shots of the hidden foe.

From time to time an Indian in war paint and feathers leaped from behind a tree to scalp a victim or seize a horse whose rider had been killed. And he in turn was killed by the sure aim of some Virginian, firing from the shelter of the trees. For the despised Virginians knew the fashion of native warfare, and, like the French and Indians, had scattered through the forest. By keeping their senses and fighting, every man for himself, they did much to protect the redcoats huddled in the open roadway.

The English troops were fast becoming panic-stricken. All orders were unnoticed. They shot at random. No foe was to be seen, and yet the constant firing from the thickets increased.

Washington was everywhere. With flashing eyes and determined face, he galloped back and forth in the thickest of the fight, repeating the General’s orders and shouting to the men to keep up their courage. His horse was shot under him. In a moment he leaped on another. Soon this, too, went down. Four bullets tore through his coat, and still he rushed on unwounded.

At last General Braddock was shot, and fell from his

## GEORGE WASHINGTON

horse. The troops broke and ran wildly. On, on they tore, leaving Washington and a few officers and provincials the task of carrying off the dying General. The defeated army returned to Virginia.

### *Second Attack on Fort Duquesne*

THE next three years Washington spent in protecting the Virginian frontier from Indian raids. He had been offered the command of Virginia's troops, and had gladly accepted.

In the fall of 1758 Washington's troops joined in another attack on Fort Duquesne. But the reception at the fort was very unlike the one given General Braddock. Scouts had reported to the French commander the English approach. Winter was coming on, and the French line of forts had been broken in the North. There was no hope of reinforcement or supplies from that direction. The whole garrison at the fort was not over five hundred. To wait for the English would mean certain surrender. So, when the British troops were within a day's march, the French commander blew up his magazine, burned the fort, and retreated with his men.

Imagine the astonishment of the English. A stout defense and a brisk battle was what they had expected, not an empty fort. On the 25th of November, Washington and the advance guard marched in and raised the British flag over the smoking ruins of Fort Duquesne.

Now, finally, the Ohio country was secured to the English. And no longer responsible for the safety of the

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Virginia frontier, Colonel Washington could honorably resign his commission.

The war was not yet ended. Fighting continued in the North. It was not until September of the next year that Quebec—the last great stronghold of the French—fell, and not until 1763 that the treaty was signed which put an end to French power in America.