

**The Many Deaths of General Braddock:
Remembering Braddock, Washington, and Fawcett at the
Battle of the Monongahela, 1755-1855**

*“The old English Hero was once bravely slain
but your dull Doggerel murders him again”*
P.M. to C.W in *The Boston Gazette*,
August 18, 1755

Braddock’s Grave:

On the morning of July 17, 2005, British Colonel Patrick Reese Davis of Countess Mountbatten's own Frontiersmen, Legion of Horse, prepared to speak in rural Farmington, Pennsylvania. Behind him stood a tall granite monument marking the grave of General Edward Braddock, who had been defeated and mortally wounded at the Battle of the Monongahela (also known as Braddock’s Defeat) in 1755. While cars whizzed by on Route 40 to Colonel Davis’s right, a steep depression to his left hid the remnants of the road that Braddock’s army had cut through the forested wilderness. Braddock’s original resting place lay in the middle of that segment of road, where the remnants of his retreating army marched over the spot to conceal it from the enemy. Davis’s remarks would conclude the observance of the 250th anniversary of that day.

With a line of colorfully outfitted re-enactors in the background and a crowd of comfortably attired spectators before him, Colonel Davis began his remarks. “Americans,” he quoted Winston Churchill, “always do the right thing, after they have exhausted every other possible alternative.”¹ After this short introduction, Davis shared the contents of a letter written by his countryman Captain Jones on behalf of his 1st Battalion of the Royal Anglican Regiment

¹ Col. Patrick Reese Davis “Remarks by Col. Patrick Reese Davis for the Commemoration at Braddock’s Grave” July, 17 2005. Found at <http://www.fortedwards.org/braddock/july1617/remarks.htm>

of the British Army. Jones explained that his unit descended from the 44th and 48th regiments that had fought under Braddock at the Monongahela. The letter, however, did not limit its remarks to the past. The Colonel continued,

It is extremely heartening to know that in this constantly changing and dangerous world there are still people of sufficient good heart who stand to remember and pay respects to the courage and fortitude of soldiers of times past. In 1755 British soldiers were fighting alongside the legendary George Washington and his Americans against a common enemy. Today, literally, as you gather to remember the fallen, the boys of the English County Regiments are once more standing alongside their American counter parts in IRAQ. The successors of the 44th of Foot and the 48th of Foot and the US Forces are standing side by side against adversity in the Brotherhood of Arms.²

The remarks offered by these two British officers offer a testament to the utility of memory. By invoking a battle 250 years in the past, they had suggested that cooperation between Americans and British was as old as the Battle of the Monongahela. One could not ignore the warfare and rivalry that had characterized British-American relations for much of the intervening centuries, but as Davis had suggested, it had only been a matter of time before Americans “did the right thing.” Braddock’s death showcased that natural partnership, and, therefore, it was worth remembering.

This paper adheres to historian Michael Kammen’s framework for understanding memory. The study of memory contends that the past is not truly “known” but instead is constructed by society and re-constructed while considering the needs of contemporary culture.³ Kammen asserts that “public interest in the past... comes and goes,” “that invocations of the past... may occur as a means of resisting change or achieving innovations,” and “that history is

² Reese, July 17 2005

³ Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1991) p 3

an essential ingredient in defining national, group, and personal identity.”⁴ The nature of memories may be “collective” or “popular”. A collective memory is the past as seen by the dominant civic culture, while popular memory is any number of memories held by the populace.⁵ Therefore, a dominant memory can coexist with any number of alternative memories, and conversely, an alternative memory can replace a dominant one. This paper investigates evolution of the American memory of Braddock’s Defeat. It identifies the major strands of memory that emerge in the first one hundred years following the battle. It analyzes how colonial and independent Americans used these memories to address contemporary needs. Finally, it interprets the significance of these memories and their relation to American self perception.

Recently, scholars have argued that Colonial Wars served as a crucible of American identity.⁶ Yet the memory of the Seven Years War has been largely neglected in scholarly studies. Instead many scholars argue that memory of the Revolution supersedes and replaces the Seven Years War in the early national period.⁷ Studies that do investigate early national

⁴ Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory* p. 10

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ See Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years’ War and the Fate of Empire in British North America*. (New York: Vintage Books, 2001.) and Jill Lepore *The Name of War: King Phillips War and the Origins of American Identity*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1998.). Anderson’s work in particular, both in *Crucible of War* and *A People’s Army*, places the American colonists’ experience in the Seven Years War as “not merely the backdrop to the American Revolution, but both as its indispensable precursor and its counterpart influence in the formation of the early republic.” (P. 745) After suggesting an essential continuity between the colonial and early national periods, however, Anderson ends his studies on the dawn of the revolution. Lepore traces the memory of King Phillip’s War and its utilization in Early American culture.

⁷ See Alan McNairn *Behold the Hero: General Wolfe in the Arts in the Eighteenth Century*. (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), Sarah Purcell *Sealed With Blood: War, Sacrifice, and Memory in Revolutionary America*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), Arthur H. Shafer *The Politics of History* (Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 1975). All three of these works, while initially detailing memory of the Seven Years War, also deal with the “forgetting” of the war in the early national period. In his study of artistic depictions of General Wolfe who died at the Battle of Quebec in 1759, McNairn details how the memory of Wolfe is gradually replaced by Revolutionary martyrs such as General Montgomery and heroes such as Washington, a conviction shared by Sarah Purcell in her study of the memory of the Revolution, *Sealed With Blood*. Shafer, in his study of early national histories contends that to the post-revolutionary generation the colonial period served merely as a prelude to the Revolution, in other words, “the colonial era blends into the Revolution.”

American society's memory of the Seven Years War suggest that Americans endeavored to "forget" the violence of Colonial rule through depictions of nature and progress.⁸ This paper disputes the views that the memory of the Seven Years War was replaced or forgotten during the early national period. The memory of Braddock's Defeat can be followed from the colonial period, through the Revolution and early republic, and finally into the antebellum period. Previously existing themes persist and evolve even when new actors, such as George Washington and frontiersman Tom Fawcett, or themes such as divine providence and western progress become associated with the nation's collective memory of the battle. For example, Washington did not replace the memory of Braddock when he first appeared in memory of the battle during the revolution and early national period but instead took a place beside him. This paper chronicles the continuous evolution of the memory of Braddock's Defeat in the one-hundred years following the battle.

While Colonel Davis invoked the memory of the Battle of the Monongahela to demonstrate and celebrate British-American brotherhood, Americans held a different understanding of the battle's significance in the first century following Braddock's Defeat. The memory of Braddock's defeat at the Monongahela and the General's death served an important role in defining American identity. Americans shaped the evolving memory of the defeat by

⁸ See Larry Fitzgerald Kutchen, "*The Dark Fields of the Republic: Pastoral, Georgic, and the Writing of Empire from Cotton Mather to James Fenimore Cooper*. Dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 2002, and Douglas McGregor "Braddock's Field: 'How Brilliant the Morning, How Melancholy the Evening'" *Western Pennsylvania History* 88:4 (2005) pps. 22-29. McGregor's work conforms with observations made by other scholars suggesting that the new nation sought to distance itself from its colonial past by replacing bloody scenes such as bone strewn Braddock's Field with pastoral scenes of progress. In Fred Anderson, *Just As They Occurred To The Memory They Were Committed*" in *George Washington Remembers: Reflections on the French and Indian War* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004) p. 126-134, Anderson discusses the theme of Providence that will be investigated in this paper, but focuses his study on Washington's self-perception, while I attempt to take a wider societal view.

seeking to define and illustrate a distinct American identity separate from their former English brethren. Ultimately, the battle provided Americans with an alternative memory of the Seven Years War. By constantly resuscitating the memory of Braddock's defeat, Americans throughout the Early Republic redefined the American experience of empire during the war. A conflict that the colonists had initially celebrated as a great victory, won by combined British and provincial exertions, was portrayed by independent Americans as an unmitigated disaster that exposed and heightened essential differences between virtuous Americans and arrogant English overlords.

The “Memorable Battle”⁹

Braddock's Defeat was the result of a British maneuver intended to secure the strategic Ohio River Valley. By the mid Eighteenth Century, the British and French Empires were locked in a struggle to decide the future of empire in North America. The strategic key to this contest were a series of rivers, the “Forks of the Ohio”. Providing fertile soil and relative ease of transportation throughout the Ohio River valley, the Forks were the key to British imperial dreams of colonial expansion, and French measures to command trade in the region and curtail British expansion.¹⁰ In 1754, the French gained a foothold in the region when the Marquis DuQuesne ordered the construction of a fortress at the convergence of the Ohio, Allegheny, and Monongahela rivers. This fort, at the site of what would later become Fort Pitt and then Pittsburgh, effectively controlled the Forks of the Ohio. The fort's garrison repelled an expedition to the Forks led by

⁹ The following section provides an overview of the Braddock's Defeat. Some of the events of the battle as described by modern historians would have been rejected as falsehood throughout the period discussed in this paper. For example, modern historians suggest that the French and British forces accidentally met in the wilderness outside of Fort DuQuesne. Throughout much of the period discussed, with French accounts often ignored or unread, colonists and early national Americans assumed that the French and Indians had waited in ambush. Therefore, while modern scholarship has identified the meeting as accidental, contemporaries accepted as fact that Braddock and his forces were ambushed. The reader must be cautioned then, not to accept the interpretations of modern scholars as general knowledge known to the historical actors discussed in this work.

¹⁰ Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War* (New York; Vintage Books, 2001) pps. 28-30

Major George Washington and the British realized that victory hinged upon the capture of the fort.

That task fell to Major General Edward Braddock, the newly arrived commander of British forces in America. As the most important prong of a three-pronged attack intended to bring the French in North America to their knees, Braddock personally took control of an expedition to Fort Duquesne. After a month of slow progress cutting through the forests of the western Maryland and Pennsylvania wilderness, Braddock detached a flying column of troops to move ahead of the baggage and heavy artillery and left the remaining troops under Colonel Dunmore. This column fought at the Monongahela. Although Historians disagree about the strength of the flying column, there is a general agreement that around thirteen hundred soldiers and officers were present. Approximately two-fifths of the rank and file were provincial troops and the remainder were British regulars.¹¹ Included in this party on the fateful July 9, were men who would play essential roles in the memory of the Battle. Braddock was accompanied by his aides-de-camp Lieutenant Robert Orme and George Washington. Commanding the vanguard was Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Gage, who would become infamous to the majority of Americans because of his actions as Governor of Massachusetts and Commander-in-Chief of British North American forces before and during the American Revolution. Finally, Thomas Fawcett and a bevy of Americans, destined for abnormally long lives, marched either with the rear guard or with a unit of “pioneers.”

After long months of cutting roads and marching through dense wilderness, Braddock’s men approached Fort Duquesne. The force was elated as it crossed the Monongahela River. Yet within two miles of the fort, Gage’s vanguard encountered a force of approximately two hundred

¹¹ Paul E. Kopperman, *Braddock at the Monongahela* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977) p. 31

French and Canadian troops as well as six hundred Indians. They had been sent to ambush Braddock's force but were surprised by the timing of the encounter. In the initial exchange of fire, the French commander was killed, but soon Gage's troops were overwhelmed by Indians who flanked the vanguard and fired from behind cover.¹² Gage's men fell back as Braddock ordered the rest of the column forward. These two contingents collided, causing hellish confusion. The performance of the British Regulars and their American counterparts was debated from the earliest days following the defeat, but convention states that British soldiers attempted to engage the enemy utilizing the Regular manual of the arms, standing and firing by platoons in the open.¹³ American troops, without the formal training of their British compatriots, often broke ranks and fought or hid behind trees and other cover.¹⁴ After nearly three hours of futile attempts to form an effective front against the French and Indians, Braddock was shot in the back, mortally wounded. As Braddock lay dying his men began an orderly retreat which devolved into a full-out rout as the Indians took up pursuit. The remnants of Braddock's Army splashed back across the Monongahela with their General in tow. Two days later the survivors encountered the Dunmore's main column and began a general retreat toward Fort Cumberland. Braddock died and was buried on July 14, hidden beneath the very road his men had constructed. The exhausted troops reached Fort Cumberland on July 25 where they would stay for the remainder of the summer. Two-thirds of the flying column were killed, wounded or captured in the battle and the subsequent retreat.

¹² Kopperman, 52

¹³ Anderson, 102

¹⁴ Ibid.

Colonial Memory: 1755-1775

The Battle of the Monongahela was a disaster. If the immediate death and destruction was not sufficient to cause despair, colonists realized the western frontier was now open to French and Indian raids. From this environment of fear and despair, however, newspapers and pamphlets across the colonies attempted to forge a collective memory of Braddock as a great tragic hero, worthy of British myth and veneration.¹⁵ Writing in the *Boston Gazette*, an author pen-named C.B. clearly compared Braddock to tragic heroes of ancient times. He wrote his ode to the “Questos de Ohio” or “Seekers of Ohio” entirely in Latin and in the Dactylic Hexameter.¹⁶ The combination of this language and meter invokes Virgil’s *Aeneid*, the classic story of defeat and redemption. C.B. suggested that Braddock’s men were defeated but, like the Trojan Aeneas, Britain would again be victorious. Even though another subscriber described C.B.’s work as “dull Doggerel,” he agreed that Braddock was an “Old English hero” who “was once bravely slain.”¹⁷ Early reports, primarily from officers, also praised Braddock’s bravery, often mentioning the number of horses shot out from under him. The official “confirmation” of the defeat, which arrived in Philadelphia from London in late October, similarly highlighted Braddock’s bravery.¹⁸

¹⁵ In his “Braddock at the Monongahela” Paul Kopperman suggests that in the Aftermath of the Battle Braddock was saddled with the lions share of the blame. I do not dispute Kopperman’s assessment because it deals with a longer-term view of Braddock than taken in this paragraph. By July, 28 Washington had written to Robert Orme describing the ubiquity of such blame. Washington might have been sensitive to criticism of his commander and mentor, or perhaps there were colonists who blamed Braddock in the first days after the defeat. Whether or not this occurred, colonial criticism of Braddock does not emerge in the printed sources that I investigated until months after the defeat. See Kopperman, p. 94

¹⁶ C.B., “Questus De Ohio” *Boston Gazette*, August 11, 1755 pg. 3 in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank,

Thank you to Will Burghart of the University of Maryland for the translation and identification of the meter and its relation to the *Aeneid*.

¹⁷ P.M., “Domo C.B.” *Boston Gazette*, 11 August 1755, p. 3 in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank

¹⁸ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 30 October 1755 in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

Remembering Braddock as a hero was important in manufacturing enthusiasm for a war that had thus far not been supported with manpower or material throughout the colonies. When Stephen Tilden of Connecticut collated a collection of poems to “animate and rouse the soldiers,” included was “Braddock’s Fate and an Encitement to Revenge” dated August 20, 1755. In it, the author pens Braddock’s “Epitaph,”

Beneath this stone brave Braddock lies,
Who always hated cowardice,
But fell a savage sacrifice;
 Amidst his Indian foes.
I charge you heros of the ground,
To keep guard his dark pavilion round,
And keep off all obtruding sound,
 And cherish his repose.¹⁹

Braddock’s body rested in an unmarked grave deep within the wilderness, but in the realm of memory the author provided the General with a tangible monument complete with a marker. Colonists were urged to rally around this marker to avenge the death of a hero. In the Virgilian tribute to Braddock’s Defeat, C.B. follows his depiction of the battle addressing his readers, “rise to arms while the force of your army reforms/ it is written/ a hero who fights and will win.”²⁰ Even those unsure of Braddock’s good performance such as Charles Chauncy, a Boston Congregational Clergyman, realized the potential utility of the defeat. “’Tis too evident to be disputed,” he wrote, “That the *Southern Colonies* needed something EXTRAORDINARY to rouse them out of that deep security they had sunk into.”²¹ Braddock’s death and defeat was a

¹⁹ Percy H. Boynton, *American Poetry* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1919) p. 58

²⁰ C.B., “Questus De Ohio” *Boston Gazette*, 11 August 1755, pg. 3, in *America’s Historical Newspapers* [database online], Newsbank. Translated from Latin “Hinoce Novangli de somno nune surgite vosmet/Dum cornu reformat vobis vi surgite ad Arma/ Incrribatur/ in enses vestras/ Pugnata & vincit HEROS”

²¹ Charles Chauncy, *A letter to a friend; giving a concise, but just, account, according to the advices hitherto received, of the Ohio-defeat* (Boston, Mass; Edes and Gill, 1755) p. 5 *Early American Imprints I* [database online], Newsbank

rallying cry. It beckoned colonists to support the war effort and unite with each other and the Metropolis against the allied French-Indian juggernaut.

Although Braddock's reputation was still intact, not all escaped blame. With time on their hands, reputations to defend, and promotions to gain, the expedition's surviving officers provided their accounts of the battle. While some of Braddock's enemies within his officer corps challenged the gestating consensus and blamed Braddock, the most widely published American accounts of this period often faulted the rank and file troops.²² The letter of one of these officers was the first account of the battle to be published in Philadelphia. The author explained that the men, overcome with confusion and panic, disregarded orders, used up ammunition by firing wildly, and finally broke and ran. Conversely, the officers "were sacrificed by their unparalleled good behavior," while trying to rally the troops. The packet arriving from London confirming the defeat, concurred by proposing that "had the private Men of the above Regiments done their Duty the Victory would have been on our Side."²³ It is important to note that these early published accounts do not differentiate regulars from provincial rank-and-file troops and barely acknowledge the provincial's presence. As the somber summer of 1755 turned to fall, the construction of a collective memory was underway.

On September 8, 1755, William Johnson, commander of the British forces moving toward Crown Point encountered and drove off a combined French and Indian force near Lake George, New York. "As the above news became publick," wrote the *Charleston Gazette*, "the Gloom that has sat on our countenances ever since the defeat of the late brave General Braddock was

²² For additional examples of blame placed on the rank and file see Kopperman pps. 67-76

²³ A city wide celebration followed, *Pennsylvania Gazette* [Philadelphia], 30 October 1755, p. 2 in *America's Historical Newspapers* [database online], Newsbank.

instantly removed and a great Joy took place.”²⁴ Similar reactions spread throughout the colonies. A poet in New York named “Respublica” wrote that Johnson’s men “overcame the *French* tumultuous host/ A *Sacrifice!* To General Braddock’s Ghost.”²⁵ Yet, with the death of the hero Braddock avenged, a challenge emerged to the memory constructed in the shadow of his defeat. An account of the battle boasted that a French officer used his dying words to entreat his men “Fight my Boys, you’ve not Braddock here, but Johnson!”²⁶ The original portrayal of Braddock was that of a heroic victim of cowardly troops and a foreign environment. In this account, however his memory became saddled with the onus of defeat. Similarly, John Jerman began his “American Almanack” of 1756 with a song exonerating the “Brave Britons” who fought hard but were forced to surrender. At the same time, Jerman implicated Braddock who would not retreat when he realized his troops were in a hopeless situation.²⁷ The memory of Braddock’s Defeat had been a rallying cry to promote unity, but it soon became evident how fragile that collective memory truly was.

Responsibility for defeat began to shift away from the rank and file soldiers to Braddock himself, sullyng his heroic image. Many of the initial reports in the press that were openly critical of Braddock came from London. Britons were not threatened by frontier attacks or a French invasion from Canada and had no pressing need to use Braddock’s heroism as a rallying cry. As war became increasingly possible in Europe as well, the British press was less desperate to engender a sense of unity in the colonies and more insulted by the embarrassment caused by Braddock’s Defeat. In June, the dominant memory of Braddock as a hero and martyr received

²⁴ *New York Mercury*, 10 November 1755, p. 3. in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

²⁵ *New York Mercury*, 16 February 1756, p. 1 in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

²⁶ *New York Mercury*, 15 September 1755, p. 3 in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

²⁷ John Jerman, *The American almanack for the year of Christian account 1756* (Philadelphia: Benjamin Franklin, 1756) Early American Imprints I [database online], Newsbank.

another blow when the French Court published embarrassing letters captured in the defeat. Widely discussed, and reproduced in newspapers, these letters were used to suggest that Braddock had ignored advice to be wary of an ambush and to consult locals familiar with the area.²⁸ The collective memory of Braddock as a hero and martyr was damaged as blame was placed directly at his feet.

The memory of Braddock as a hero was no longer useful to the colonial war effort. In 1756, war broke out in Europe expanding the scope of the conflict to theatres far away from the North American Colonies. In 1758 the tide of the war turned in North America and Fort DuQuesne was taken in 1758 by the Forbes expedition. When Wolfe sacrificed his life in the capture of Quebec the following year, Britain and the Colonies celebrated his heroism. Responding to the victories of 1758 and 1759, Pastor John Burt in Bristol, Rhode Island declared in a sermon, “the storm is abated and the appearance of things is like the clear of the sun after the rain.” Among the causes of this “storm” were military defeats on the North American continent. In the published pamphlet, Burt specifies that one of these defeats was “the defeat of Braddock and his gallant army.” Those present at the sermon, however, would have to come to that conclusion alone. Braddock was only mentioned in a footnote.²⁹

Braddock’s memory was not discarded by everyone. Colonists seeking more respect and provincial control in the war effort cited Braddock’s defeat to support greater provincial involvement. As early as 1756 when Charles Chauncy published the previously cited letter, some colonists had seen Braddock’s Defeat as proof that British armies in North America needed

²⁸ The letter was published in *Boston Evening Post*, September 13, 1756, *The Boston Gazette*, September 13, 1756, and *The New-York Mercury* September 20, 1756.

²⁹ John Burt, *The mercy of God to his people, in the vengeance he renders to their adversaries* (Newport Rhode Island; James Franklin, 1759) p. 6. Early American Imprints I [database online], Newsbank

provincial assistance. Chauncy did not question Braddock's valor or military skill, but he suggested that Braddock, "had no Idea of the manner of fighting in use here, and therefore wholly neglected the only effectual expedients to guard against the fatal consequences that arose from it."³⁰ Instead, Chauncy argued that any British commander in America should "be so restrained as to not have it in his power to act, but with the advice of a thoroughly experienced *American* actually present with him."³¹ Chauncy believed Braddock's Defeat resulted from confronting a concealed and irregular enemy with regular troops in formation. Irregular troops should be met with irregular troops. A provincial leader would have known better. Given the same respect as British regulars, American irregular troops could effectively defend against the French and their Indian allies.³² Chauncy was not alone. Arguments from both Provincials and Britons attacked Braddock's reputation for neglecting and under appreciating the martial prowess and knowledge of the provincials. These arguments would later become the foundation for the battle's most enduring myths.

In 1760 the French capitulated in Canada effectively ending the war in North America. The Peace of Paris concluded the war three years later and was greeted with great exuberance by Americans and Britons alike.³³ In this environment, filled with the celebration of empire, the memory of Braddock's defeat was subordinated to visions of imperial glory and victory. In *the Boston Post Boy's* "History of the Late War" Braddock was recalled as "abounding too much in his own sense for the degree of military knowledge he possessed, commanding in a country he did not know, and carrying on a species of war in which he had no experience." As a result

³⁰ Charles Chauncy, *A letter to a friend; giving a concise, but just, account, according to the advices hitherto received, of the Ohio-defeat* (Boston, Mass; Edes and Gill, 1755) p. 9 Early American Imprints I [database online], Newsbank

³¹ Chauncy, 9

³² Ibid.

³³ Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War* p. 709

Braddock had sacrificed his army, but “The General,” the account continued “was mortally wounded; wiping away all the errors of his conduct by an honorable death for his country.”³⁴ Braddock, though arrogant and incompetent, could again be considered a hero. His death, like Wolfe’s was the vision of Imperial glory.³⁵ In 1791, a 19 year old Phillip Freneau delivered *A poem, on the rising glory of America* during commencement exercises at the College of New Jersey. The young man, destined to devote his literary talents to the revolutionary cause in coming years, spoke elegiac words about the martyred heroes of the empire, “What Heart but mourns the untimely fate of Wolfe/ Who dying conquer’d, or what breast but beats/ To share a fate like his, and die like him/ And he demands our lay who bravely fell/ By Monongahela and the Ohio Stream;/ By wiles o’ercome the hapless hero fell ... What could avail O Braddock but the flame/ The gen’rous flame which fired his martial soul.”³⁶ In Freneau’s passage, Wolfe demands praise of other martyrs of empire, one of which is Braddock. General Braddock might have still been a footnote, but his name was again associated with heroism.

Not all concurred with Braddock’s rediscovered stature. As the Colonies and Britain clashed over the meaning and role of empire throughout the mid 1760s, some Americans turned to Braddock to differentiate themselves from their perceived oppressors.³⁷ According to an unnamed author protesting the Stamp Act in September of 1765, the King should remember the provincial service during the last war and privilege, not punish, the Colonies. He contrasts the dark early days of the conflict, including, “Braddock defeated! every man almost,” with the Battle of Lake George, where “every drooping heart was revived by the victory obtained by

³⁴ “History of the late WAR” *Boston Post-Boy* December 26, 1763 p. 2 in *America’s Historical Newspapers* [database online], Newsbank.

³⁵ See McNairn *Behold the Hero*

³⁶ Freneau, Philip, *A poem, on the rising glory of America; being an exercise delivered at the public commencement at Nassau-Hall, September 25, 1771*. (Philadelphia: Joseph Crukshank, 1772) p 12. *Early American Imprints I* [database online], Newsbank.

³⁷ In regards to clash over meaning and role of empire See Anderson *Crucible of War*

General Johnson, at the head of 3000 New England militia-men.”³⁸ Provincial victory had redeemed Britain where Braddock had failed. Such distinguished service demanded better treatment.

Two articles printed in the *Boston Post* from 1773 were more radical in their use of Braddock’s Defeat. The first documents the Massachusetts town of Bellingham’s decision to communicate with the Boston committee of correspondence, a possibly illegal act that they realized would ally them with opponents of the empire. After deciding in favor of doing so, they used a thinly veiled allegory of six sons to suggest that that Parliament had no right to tax the town.³⁹ If Parliament would attempt to use military force to collect taxes, these “sons” could wait with Indian allies in the woods, so that any pursuing British, “might come off like those who were defeated a few years ago in General Braddock’s Fight--be cut in Pieces and destroyed.”⁴⁰ Ten days before angry colonists dumped a shipment of tea into Boston Harbor, “A Ranger” from “Powder Horn Hill” succeeded in appearing even more insubordinate,

“I hear we must fight for our rights as all other methods fail, I have in former years fought against the French and Indians when they attempted to enslave us, and I am ready to fight *Enemies* from *Britain*, as *Indians* from *Canada*. Now Mess’rs Printers, I would have you inform my countrymen, that I think it will be best to let all our enemies land without opposition, and we can *bush fight* them and cut off their Officers very easily, and this way we can subdue them with very little loss. You may remember how the French and Indians fought General Braddock’s Army? That’s the way we must manage our enemies, and we shall meet with no difficulty I’ll warrant.”⁴¹

³⁸ *Boston Evening-Post*, 23 September 1765 in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

³⁹ “Proceedings of the town of Bellingham” *Boston Evening-Post*, 18 October 1773, p. 1 in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ “A Ranger” *Boston Evening-Post*, 6 December 1773 in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

With war on the horizon, an alternative memory of Braddock and his regulars emerged. The arrogant and impetuous Braddock, now conflated with the British Army as a whole, was seen as a foreign and inflexible enemy. Conversely, the hardy provincials had the skill and knowledge to employ frontier warfare that was essential to victory in North America. Defeating British overlords in an armed struggle was possible and even inevitable. Since 1755 American colonists had swapped perceptions of Braddock with the Metropolis. Seeking unity and security, the colonial press had originally sought to fashion Braddock as a hero, while their counterparts across the Atlantic used him as a scapegoat. Yet twenty years later, a flawed but heroic Braddock resided in the collective memory of the friends of empire, while among many in the Colonies, an alternative memory of Braddock's Defeat was used to expose the flaws of empire itself.

Enter Washington: 1779-1799

By 1779 the bravado that led colonists like "A Ranger," and the council at Bellingham to expect an easy victory over the British was swept away. Americans had little reason to remember Braddock's Defeat while their own armies were routinely being defeated and their former French enemies were now called allies. Americans printed little regarding Braddock's Defeat.

Despite the dearth of memory in print, important traditions regarding Braddock's Defeat were born during the conflagration. These traditions related to the behavior of a young George Washington who in 1755 served as Braddock's Aide de Camp and was present at the battle. In May of 1779, while Washington commanded American forces in the Northern Theatre, John Bell of Maryland penned "A Sketch of General Washington's Life and Character." His work was printed in Annapolis later that year. The character sketch was the first attempt at a biography of George Washington. The pamphlet was popular, and in 1780, it was printed in London to raise

money for American Prisoners of War held in England.⁴² The sketch was published again in 1781 and 1782 and excerpts were printed throughout New England and the Mid-Atlantic.⁴³

Bell was not the first to describe Washington's actions at the battle. In the first published account of the defeat in July 1755, an officer wrote "Mr. Washington had two Horses shot under him, and his clothes shot thro' in several Places, behaving with the greatest courage and resolution."⁴⁴ While Washington was commended for his bravery, in the years before the Revolution he did not play a major part in the memory of the battle. Bell's account, however, placed Washington and the expedition's provincials in a central role and blamed Braddock for the defeat. Bell wrote "It is allowed on all sides, that the haughty positive behavior of the general, his high contempt of the Provincial officers and soldiers, and his disdainful obstinacy in rejecting their advice, were the general causes of this fatal disaster."⁴⁵

This assessment of Braddock was merely a continuation of the printed criticisms that had abounded before the revolution. As Bell continued, however, the perceived differences between British and provincial troops were portrayed on the battlefield itself. Bell wrote "With what resolution and steadiness the provincials and their gallant commander behaved on this trying occasion and in covering the confused retreat of the army, let every British officer and soldier confess, who were rescued from slaughter on that day calamitous day by their valour and

⁴² Early American Imprints I [database online], Newsbank

⁴³ The sketch was reprinted in Providence Rhode Island in 1781, and then Springfield Massachusetts in 1782. It was attached to "poetical epistle to His Excellency George Washington, Esq; commander in chief of the armies of the United States of America" Written by Charles Henry Wharton. (Early American Imprints II [database online], Newsbank)

The sketch is also reprinted in the following newspapers, *Providence Gazette* (Providence, RI) 3/24/1781, *Independent Ledger* [Boston, MA] June 11 1781, *Massachusetts Spy* [Springfield, MA] March 23 1784, *The American Herald* [Boston, MA] April 5 1784, *Salem Gazette* [Salem, MA] April 8 1784, *Independent Gazetter* [Philadelphia] May 1 1784, *New Jersey Gazette* [Burlington, NJ] 5 10 1784. all in America's Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

⁴⁴ "Extract of a Letter from an Officer" *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 31 July 1755, p. 3 in America's Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

⁴⁵ Charles Wharton and John Bell, *A poetical epistle to His Excellency George Washington Esq.... To which is annexed, a short sketch of General Washington's life and character*. (Providence, Rhode Island: Bennet Wheeler, 1781) p. 19 in America's Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

conduct.”⁴⁶ Bell had outlined a crucial difference in behavior between the British and their American counterparts at Braddock’s Defeat. The British ran while the provincials fought. The provincials and their commander showed a courage and military prowess that contrasted markedly with their confused and fleet-footed English counterparts.⁴⁷ Bell infused long held notions of American martial superiority into the well-known image of Braddock’s defeat. Bell provided Americans with a vision of heroism and martial superiority that did not rely on the fleeting successes of the Revolution.

Though Bell attributed acts of heroism to Washington, the young Virginians survival had significance enough for many Americans. A poetic account of the battle featured in *Russel’s American Almanack* contrasted the fates of Braddock and Washington, “His name rever’d! Great Washington I sing,/ Decreed by fate in future deeds to ring/ His glory bloom’d while Braddock left the light/ Spurn’d by the Pagans to the shades of night.”⁴⁸

Braddock was dead, but fate had preserved Washington for later deeds, in this case his service as the Commander in Chief of American Armies during the revolution. Washington’s survival, resulting from fate and divine providence, became an important theme in the memory of Braddock’s Defeat. During the late Nineteenth Century, Most educated Americans had a teleological understanding of history, believing that “human events... did not occur randomly,

⁴⁶ Ibid. Bell cites Robert Orme’s account to support his assertions regarding Washington and the Provincials heroism at the Battle. Indeed, Orme’s account and others suggest Washington performed admirably and that the provincials fought effectively at the battle. These accounts however were not printed widely in North America until given voice by Bell’s account. See Kopperman 106-108

⁴⁷ Across the Atlantic a similar example of such differentiation was reported by the *Connecticut Journal* in 1780. An article discussing proceedings in the House of Commons reports that an unnamed Member of Parliament suggested, “The loss of America may not be productive of such fatal consequences as some demagogues imagine. Everyone who is versed in the history of the last war, will collect what an insignificant number of Americans were employed in our navy, and the base desertion of Gen Braddock by the Provincials.” “London, April 26,” *Connecticut Journal* [New Haven], August 10 1780, p. 3 in *America’s Historical Newspapers* [database online], Newsbank.

⁴⁸ Ezekiel Russel, *Russell’s American almanack, for the year of our redemption, 1781* (Danvers, Massachusetts: Ezekiel Russel, 1780) p. 5 *Early American Imprints I* [database online], Newsbank.

but worked toward some ultimate end.”⁴⁹ Sometime in the 1780s Early National writers began to argue that following Braddock’s Defeat, Washington’s destiny was prophesized by a Presbyterian minister named Samuel Davies. Davies was a pastor in Virginia at the time of Braddock’s Defeat. Later he would gain increased notoriety as president of The College of New Jersey. According to most accounts, after Braddock’s Defeat, Davies either stated in a sermon, or wrote in an attached note, “I may point out to the public that heroic youth, Colonel Washington, whom I cannot but hope, Providence has hithero preserved for some important service to his country.”⁵⁰

Davies remarks are first found in print during the early national period following the signing of the Constitution. An article from Philadelphia reprinted in the *Boston Gazette* restated Davies’ “prediction,” and suggested that the fulfillment of the “prophesy” was at hand. The author asked, “May not the providential preservation of the valuable life of this great and good man, on his way home from the [Constitutional] Convention, be for the great and important purpose of establishing, by his name and future influence, a government, that will render safe and permanent the liberties of America, which he has acquired by sword?”⁵¹ The notion of providential protection of Washington at Braddock’s Defeat not only aided in the deification of the General, it also provided a sense of divine favor toward the young United States as a whole. Emerging out of a hard fought military struggle for independence, many Americans saw the

⁴⁹ Fred Anderson, “Just As The Occurred To The Memory,” p. 129

⁵⁰ David Ramsay, “Oration on the Death of lieutenant-General George Washington, Late President of the United States” From *The Washingtoniana* (Lancaster, PA: William Hamilton, 1802) 163. Ramsay discusses the Davies remarks as occurring in an audible sermon. Robert Davidson’s eulogy suggests that the comments were only in written form. This can be found on page 281. Research has turned up several copies of Davies sermons but none mentioning Washington, however, given Washington’s popularity directly following the battle, his reported good fortune in dodging bullets, and his place as a prominent Militia officer in Virginia following the Battle, it is entirely possible that Davies did mention Washington in a version of his sermon.

⁵¹ “Philadelphia, Oct 6” *Boston Gazette*, 22 October 1787, p. 2. in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank. Word in bracket added for clarification.

political struggle to define the nation as equally dangerous.⁵² If God had spared Washington to lead his country to greatness, it followed that the nation would overcome the staggering obstacles that it confronted.⁵³

The Peace of Paris secured independence and Americans began to construct traditions and memory of their own. In his “Columbia’s glory, or British pride humbled,” a parody of a British ode written to honor the capture of Quebec, Benjamin Young Pride wrote, “To Britain once devoted was my lyre,” and a footnote explained,

“Often has the muse in soft rural strain,
Bewailed her bleeding countries woes;
Oft has it mourned her heroes slain,
And to the easy triumphs of her haughty foes
The conscious forests heard her tell
By savage hands how Braddock fell,
And sing sad dirges to his awful ghost;
Lament Britania’s slaughter’d sons &c.”⁵⁴

Pride continues to explain that those days had past, and “Columbia is my only country now; To her alone my services belong.” The memory of Braddock as a martyr of the empire was devoid of meaning in the new nation. The memory of Braddock’s Defeat, however, remained.

⁵² *George Washington Remembers: Reflections on the French and Indian War* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004) 133

⁵³ In his essay “Just As They Occurred To The Memory They Were Committed” within *George Washington Remembers* Fred Anderson discusses the importance of Washington’s perception of providence to his memory of Braddock’s Defeat. Washington himself believed that his survival at the battle was an act of providence and hoped that God was preserving him to lead his country through the difficulties it faced. While ideas of providence were undoubtedly important to Washington, it is important not to discount the respect and sense of indebtedness Washington probably felt toward Braddock. Washington constantly defended his former commander, and according to a congressman, attempted to find Braddock’s body following the revolution. While the image of Washington searching for his commander seems as far-fetched as it does endearing, the fact that Washington bought a large tract of land surrounding Fort Necessity in 1772, including the spot where Braddock’s grave was located, makes Washington’s search possible and even plausible. For the account provided by the congressman see “Historical. Braddock’s Defeat” *The Reflector*[Milledgeville, Georgia] p. 1 and Fred Anderson, Just As They Occurred To The Memory They Were Committed” in *George Washington Remembers: Reflections on the French and Indian War* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004) p. 126-134

⁵⁴ Benjamin Young Prime, *Columbias glory, or British pride humbled; a poem on the American Revolution: some part of it being a parody on an ode, entitled Britain's glory or Gallic pride humbled; composed on the capture of Quebec, A.D. 1759* (New York: Thomas Grenleaf, 1791) p. 2 in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

The first histories of the American Revolution often included accounts of Braddock's Defeat. In 1789 Dr. David Ramsay, Jedediah Morse and William Gordon (who used Ramsay as a source) all published accounts of the Revolution. Each of these included an account of the battle largely reproduced from Bell's earlier work.⁵⁵ The innovations in these accounts were scarce but would prove to include traditions that would emerge in future accounts. Ramsay suggested that Washington himself requested to lead a band of Virginians ahead of the army to avoid an ambush, further illustrating Braddock's arrogance and dismissal of provincials and casting Washington as the object of that scorn. He also explained how provincials were able to perform so effectively at the battle. While the British regulars were thrown into confusion "The provincials were more used to 'Indian fighting' were not so much disconcerted."⁵⁶ These accounts served as preludes to a larger story of the Revolution, and often introduced Washington. The story of Braddock's Defeat was a part of the chronology of Independence.

The condition of Braddock's Field also kept the battle's memory alive. The Whisky Rebels chose Braddock's Field, as the battlefield was known, as a meeting place to discuss their grievances. The Rebel's chose the field because the location was well known to westerners even

⁵⁵ David Ramsay, *The History of the American Revolution Vol I*, (Philadelphia: Aitkin & Son, 1789) pp. 38-39. Jedediah Morse, *The American geography; or, A view of the present situation of the United States of America. ... Illustrated with two sheet maps-- one of the southern, the other of the northern states, neatly and elegantly engraved, and more correct than any that have hitherto been published. To which is added, a concise abridgment of the geography of the British, Spanish, French and Dutch dominions in America, and the West Indies-- of Europe, Asia and Africa.* (Elizabethtown, NJ: Shepard Kollock, 1789) p 128. Early American Imprints I [database online], Newsbank.

William Gordon *The history of the rise, progress, and establishment, of the independence of the United States of America: including an account of the late war; and of the thirteen colonies, from their origin to that period.* By William Gordon, D.D. In three volumes. Vol. I (New York: Hodge, Allen, and Campbell, 1789). P. 107. All Early American Imprints I [database online], Newsbank.

Morse would later state that Bell was a strong influence on his version of Braddock's Defeat in: Jedediah Morse, *A prayer and sermon, delivered at Charlestown, December 31, 1799; on the death of George Washington; late president; and commander in chief of the armies of the United States of America; who departed this life, at Mount Vernon, in Virginia, on the 14th of the same month, in the 69th year of his age: with an additional sketch of his life.* By Jedediah Morse, D.D. Pastor of the church in Charlestown. (Charlestown, MA: Samuel Etheridge, 1800) p. 9.

⁵⁶ David Ramsay, *The History of the American Revolution Vol I*, (Philadelphia: Aitkin & Son, 1789) p. 39 Early American Imprints I [database online], Newsbank.

40 years after the battle.⁵⁷ The field showed signs of the battle throughout the late Eighteenth Century. Visitors and passers-by recorded a landscape scene of unburied bones and discarded instruments of war and reported them to newspaper subscribers.⁵⁸ Newly formed museums acquired bones and artifacts from the field for their collections. In 1795, Peale's Museum in Philadelphia announced the addition of some grapeshot and a thighbone from the field.⁵⁹ Americans still remembered Braddock's Defeat.

The memory of Braddock's defeat also had political uses. In the last decade of the Eighteenth Century, a debate raged over the future composition of the nation's military forces. Proponents of a militia based defense force and those of a European-style regular army presented differing views of Braddock's Defeat in their arguments. Militia proponents pointed to the provincial irregular forces and the failure of British Regulars at Braddock's Defeat. Their opponents countered that the army was not lost due to the style of fighting but, instead, because of Braddock's incompetence. A debate that had begun in the late colonial period continued in political discourse after Independence.

Indian policy also featured arguments invoking Braddock's Defeat. Americans utilized Braddock's Defeat as a cautionary tale about fighting Indians. In 1791, St. Clair's expedition, designed as a punitive expedition against Indians living near the Wabash River, was likened to Braddock's even before it ended in disaster. An article originating in Elizabeth-Town, New Jersey reported that four companies under St. Clair were preparing to leave for a western expedition. It continued, "Of our success against the tawny aborigines, many speak with

⁵⁸ See Douglas McGregor "Braddock's Field: 'How Brilliant the Morning, How Melancholy the Evening'" *Western Pennsylvania History* pps. 22-29.

⁵⁹ "Additions to Peale's Museum, Philadelphia," *Worcester Intelligencer* March 3 1795, p. 1 in America's Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

certainty; our hearty wishes attend to them; but when we recal to memory the fate of Braddock... we feel cautious in anticipating victory.”⁶⁰ After that force was defeated and nearly annihilated in a battle with the Indians, comparisons between St. Clair and Braddock emerged. A letter in Philadelphia declared that St. Clair’s impetuous nature led to his army’s destruction and that “From Braddock to St. Clair,” bravery was an impediment in fighting Indians.⁶¹ An article originating in Boston’s *Independent Chronicle* used St. Clair’s recent defeat to support peaceful relations with Indians. He signed his name as Braddock.⁶² Despite the Revolution and independence from Britain, Braddock remained an instructional symbol to Americans about how not to deal with Indians.

Washington continued to be associated with Braddock’s Defeat throughout his presidency and retirement. It does not follow however, that the memory of the battle was subordinated to the memories of Washington and the Revolution. The battle was remembered and utilized for purposes beyond detailing the causes of the Revolution and the life of Washington. Americans, such as Bell, Ramsay, and Morse, had constructed an important role for Washington and provincial soldiers at Braddock’s Defeat. Washington’s actions were recounted in histories, Fourth of July orations, and newspaper accounts. Marguaretta Faugeres recounted Washington’s actions in a poem. She wrote, “There clear intrepid see him haste/ To join the scattered troops again/ To stop, of human gore of frightful waste, / And drive the murderers from

⁶⁰ *New Jersey Journal* April 29 1791 p. 3. (ellipsis added) The paragraph virtually duplicates a similar English article addressing an expedition in India reads “Of the success of our troops many speak confidently; but when we recollect the state of Braddock and Burgoyne we feel cautious in anticipating victory” *Dunlap’s American Daily Advertiser* [Philadelphia] March 14 1791, p 2. in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

⁶¹ “For the American Daily Advertiser” *Dunlap’s American Daily Advertiser* February 1 1792, p.2. in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

⁶² *The Independent Chronicle*[Boston] December 22 1791, p. 3. Reprinted in *The American Mercury* [Hartford, Ct.] December 26 1791. in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

the plain.⁶³ Faugeres credited Washington with turning the tide of battle and defeating the French and Indian contingent. Her confusion is understandable. In the first decades following the Revolution, Americans had begun to construct a memory of Braddock's Defeat as more than a British defeat. The American provincials had preformed valiantly. Washington had forged a reputation and revealed a destiny. While Braddock and the British had been defeated, Washington and the Americans were increasingly remembered as victorious.

Washington's Death and the Construction of an American Collective Memory 1799-1820:

Washington died on December 14, 1799 and Americans mourned him with funeral observances throughout the nation. The focal point of these funeral observances were eulogies. Barry Schwartz, a historian of Washington, writes that these eulogies were "important in both crystallizing and to some extent forming popular opinion of Washington." Many fragmentary accounts of Washington were woven from several sources into a comprehensive and cohesive story.⁶⁴ Braddock's Defeat was one such account. The process of eulogizing Washington, and the subsequent work of historians, especially M.L. Weems during the first decade of the Nineteenth Century forged a collective memory of Braddock's Defeat that furthered ideas of British-American difference.

Eulogizing his cousin on behalf of Congress, Henry Lee asked his audience "Will you go with me to the banks of the Monongahela, to see your youthful Washington, supporting in the dismal hour of Indian victory, the ill-fated Braddock, and saving by his judgment and by his valor, the remains of a defeated army."⁶⁵ Lee's oration, and the orations of Americans across the

⁶³ Margaretta V. Faugeres, "George Washington: Commander and Chief of the United States of America." *The Weekly Museum* [New York], July 28 1798. in America's Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank

⁶⁴ Barry Schwartz *George Washington: The Making of an American Symbol* (New York: The Free Press, 1987) p. 98

⁶⁵ Henry Lee, *Funeral Oration* (Philadelphia: U.S. Congress, 1799) p. 7 Early American Imprints I [database online], Newsbank.

United States, included Braddock's Defeat in their account of Washington's life.⁶⁶ These eulogies focused less on drawing differences between British and Americans and instead used the battle to lionize Washington. Fisher Ames' popular oration, given before the Massachusetts legislature in Boston, was typical in its themes.⁶⁷ Ames declared "It is not in Indian Wars that heroes are celebrated, but it is where they are formed."⁶⁸ Ames used Braddock's Defeat, described as an Indian war, to show a crucible of Washington's character. "On his first trial," Ames continued "as on every other, [he] appeared firm in adversity, cool in action, undaunted, self-possessed." From the beginning, Ames and others explained, Washington demonstrated the qualities that would serve himself and his country through the rest of his life. Closely related was the idea of providence. Davies' sermon made frequent appearances, and orators credited superhuman deities such as "The Genius of America" who "first displayed her guardian care in protecting her future savior from secret ambuscade and poisoned arrow of Indian Warfare."⁶⁹ The intervention of providence thus became a key element of Washington's story at Braddock's Defeat.

On the Banks of the Monongahela, Lee, Ames, and others, located the origins of a hero. In doing so they integrated the myth of Braddock's defeat into the story of Washington's life. When Waldron's Museum in New York built an ornate Mausoleum in memory of Washington in 1802, a visitor described the shrine as richly decorated with statues and paintings, "but, above

⁶⁶ Listing all the orations I have uncovered would be a massive undertaking. Instead, I will point to the fact that a search of "Braddock" AND "Washington" in Early American Imprints turned up 88 funeral orations and eulogies from separate authors. All were for Washington. Early American Imprints I [database online], Newsbank

⁶⁷ Fisher Ames, *Oration on the sublime virtues of General George Washington, pronounced at the Old South Meeting-House in Boston, before His Honor the lieutenant-governor, the Council, and the two branches of the legislature of Massachusetts, at their request.* (Philadelphia: John Ormond, 1800) Also printed in the same year in New York (twice), Dedham, Massachusetts, Amherst, New Hampshire, and Boston. Early American Imprints I [database online], Newsbank.

⁶⁸ Ames, 12.

⁶⁹ Greenwood, Andrew, *An oration, composed at the request of the inhabitants of the town of Bath* (Hallowell, District of Maine: Peter Edes, 1800) p. 7. Davies is mentioned in orations by, Jedidiah Morse, Daniel Dana, Thomas Morrel, Nathan Strong, Samuel Taggart, and Asahel Huntington. Early American Imprints I [database online], Newsbank.

all, a skull from Braddock's field, which is placed at the foot of the shrine merits the greatest applause. Persons acquainted with the biography of General Washington, will duly appreciate this emblematic and truly funereal *momento mori*."⁷⁰ The memory of Braddock's Defeat had become an inexorable episode in the myth of Washington.

Braddock's Defeat was, therefore, one of the essential episodes consistently covered when historians inevitably followed the orators of 1799 and 1800 in recalling Washington's life. Throughout the next decade these historians, foremost among them Mason Locke Weems, synthesized the many strands of memory and tradition into a coherent collective memory. Weems published 12 editions of his "Life of George Washington" between 1800 and 1812.⁷¹ In several of these new editions, the story of Braddock's Defeat received major revisions. These revisions were influenced both by events in the news and other contemporary histories. Together these revisions and collaborations created an account that shaped American collective memory

Weems account started as an attempt to exploit the nation's mourning at Washington's death. In January 1800, he wrote to publisher Matthew Carey, "Washington, you know is gone! Millions are gaping to read something about him. I am very nearly primd & cockd for 'em. 6 months ago I set myself to collect anecdotes of him."⁷² His work focused on Washington's youth. Included with his famous cherry tree anecdote was an account from Braddock's Field.

Weems devotes the Third Chapter of his 1801 edition entitled *The life and memorable actions of George Washington, General and commander of the armies of America* to Braddock's Defeat. Using dialogue between Washington and Braddock, Weems accentuates the difference

⁷⁰ A Visitor of the Museum "Communication" *New-York Gazette* February 20 1802 p. 3 in America's Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

⁷¹ Number found in a search of Early American Imprints I [database online], Newsbank.

⁷² Sylvia Neely, "Mason Locke Weems's Life of George Washington and the Myth of Braddock's Defeat" *Virginia Magazine of History & Biography* 107:1 (1999) 45-72.

between the two military men. Miles from Fort DuQuesne, Washington, with “his usual modesty,” warned Braddock about the dangers regular troops faced from Indians in the wooded terrain they were traversing. Braddock, however, arrogantly dismissed a reconnaissance party Washington offered to lead, declaring “High times! when a young Buckskin can teach a British General how to fight.” The account of this dismissal remained constant throughout the rest of Weems’s editions. With three exclamation points Weems notes with disbelief that Braddock formed his men into columns, thereby presenting Braddock’s devotion to regular tactics. The British were routed. Washington “calm and self collected” led a successful charge checking the enemies pursuit, and took the shattered army off the field.⁷³ Modest Washington, respectful of the western wilderness and the military prowess of the Indians, was contrasted with the arrogant Braddock, dismissive of both the threat his regular army faced, and the provincials that accompanied them. Weems continued the theme of British American difference.

Weems also continued and expanded the theme of the providential protection of Washington. Weems included the Davies myth that he probably encountered in Washington eulogies. This is the first occasion that the Davies myth was included in an account of Braddock’s Defeat itself. Weems work thereby continued the work of the eulogists in synthesizing the many myths of Washington. To this synthesis he added a new myth. According to Weems an Indian Gunman proclaimed “Washington was not born to be killed by a bullet! I had SEVENTEEN fair fires at him... and I could not bring him to the ground.”⁷⁴ Weems added a second witness that attested to Washington’s divine protection, this time an enemy. Aside from the arrogant British, all recognized Washington’s divine favor.

⁷³ Mason Locke Weems, *The life and memorable actions of George Washington, General and commander of the armies of America* (Frederickstown, Maryland: Bartgis, 1801) Early American Imprints II [database online], Newsbank.

⁷⁴ Weems (1801) p. 25 (ellipses mine)

Little changed in the account of Braddock's Defeat by the time the fourth edition was released in 1805. This lack of innovation is seen despite the addition of ninety pages to Weems work.⁷⁵ In addition, Braddock was also rarely mentioned in newspapers from late 1802 to early 1805.⁷⁶ Braddock, however, was soon back in the news. Braddock's grave was discovered in April 1805 after being lost for just short of 50 years. His bones were discovered the middle of the new National Road built being built over Braddock's Road. The news swept across the country in an article entitled "BONES OF GEN. BRADDOCK."⁷⁷ Along with the news, Braddock's bones themselves became popular. Braddock was reburied on a hillock within yards of his original resting place, but not all of his body was laid back to rest. Portions of the General's hand bones and his vertebrae were left unburied and possibly made appearances at museums.⁷⁸ A wax sculpture in a Connecticut Museum in which Braddock is "presented in a striking manner, after receiving the fatal wound, his scalp is taken off by an Indian dressed in the habit of a warrior,"

⁷⁵ M.L. Weems, *A history of the life, death, virtues, and exploits of General George Washington faithfully taken from authentic documents. 4th ed. Improved* (Albany: Charles Webster & George Webster, 1805) pps. 7-10 Early American Imprints II [database online], Newsbank.

⁷⁶ In a search of Early American Newspapers the only account of Braddock's defeat that appeared is one obituary in June 1804 found in the *Philadelphia Evening Post* June 7 and the *Bartgis's Republican Gazette* in Fredericktown Maryland. America's Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank. (Search "Braddock", and "Battle AND Monongahela NOT Braddock")

⁷⁷ Originally printed in Union Pennsylvania reprinted in *Political Observatory*[Walpole New Hampshire] April 6, 1805 and May 11, 1805, *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser* [Baltimore] April 15, 1805, *Charleston Courier* [Charleston, South Carolina] May 2, 1805, *The Albany Register*, Albany, New York May 7, 1805, *Augusta Herald* [Augusta, Georgia] May 9, 1805, *The Providence Phoenix* May 18, 1805, *Newburyport Herald* [Newburyport, Massachusetts], May 24, 1805, *Portland Gazette* [Portland, Maine] May 27, 1805, *Connecticut Herald* [New Haven], May 28, 1805 and more throughout the summer. America's Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

⁷⁸ With help from the National Museum of Health and Medicine I have tracked down Braddock's 4th Lumbar Vertebrae to the now defunct Columbia institute in Washington D.C. in 1816, where it was transferred to the possession of the National Institute. When the National institute's collections were transferred to the new Smithsonian institute in 1831, Braddock's vertebrae became one of the Smithsonian's first artifacts. In 1868 the Smithsonian swapped the Vertebrae with the Army Medical Museum which became the National Museum of Health and Medicine in 1989. It is located today in Washington D.C. in the anatomical collection of the museum. A letter in the same file supports widespread rumors that Braddock's Hand bones were housed in Peale's Philadelphia Museum, before being transferred to Barnum's Museum in New York where it burned down with a fire in 1865.(Conversation with Franklin Damann, curator of the anatomical collections)

also made its first recorded appearance.⁷⁹ Braddock's memory had been overlooked for less time than his bones. Nonetheless, both were exhumed in 1805.

With Braddock again relevant, Weems's next edition, printed in 1806, featured new additions to his account of the battle. Some of these seem directly related to the discovery in Western Pennsylvania. Weems credited Washington with burying Braddock's body, the first instance of a tradition that later became commonplace. Another innovation regarded Braddock's last words. Dying from his wounds and seeing his regulars retreating around him, Braddock confirmed the notion of difference Americans had built in the fifty year since his death' "*O my brave Virginia blues! I would to God I could but reward you for such gallantry.*"⁸⁰ Braddock's dying words were expanded in Weems seventh edition, and further exposed differences between the American provincials and the British regulars. Again dying at the end of the battle, Braddock yields to the young officer's judgment. When Braddock asks Washington how to proceed, Washington replies "*retreat by all means; for the regulars won't fight, and the Rangers are nearly all killed!*" Braddock agrees and before his death he regretted his prior dismissal of Washington who "*he often begged for having treated so badly that fatal morning- heartily wished he said, he had but followed his advice.*"⁸¹ Washington and the Americans had finally been vindicated. Braddock himself had attested to their military superiority over the British and Washington's superior leadership skills.

⁷⁹ "Advertisements" *The Witness* [Litchfield Connecticut], February 9, 1806 p.2, a similar wax figure is advertised at a Kentucky museum in *The Reporter* [Lexington, Kentucky], August 29 1809, p. 3 and at a Museum in *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, June 7, 1813. All found in America's Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

⁸⁰ M.L. Weems, *The life of George Washington the Great [microform] enriched with a number of very curious anecdotes, perfectly in character, and equally honorable to himself, and exemplary to his young countrymen* (Augusta: Geo P. Randolph, 1806) p. 21 Early American Imprints II [database online], Newsbank.

⁸¹ M.L. Weems *The life of George Washington with curious anecdotes, equally honourable to himself and exemplary to his young countrymen* (Philadelphia: 1808) p. 43 The topic of Military superiority seen in Weem's accounts of Braddock's defeat can also be found in Neely, "Mason Locke Weems's Life of George Washington and the Myth of Braddock's Defeat" [Italics from text]

Weems's histories were very popular. Elements of his account of Braddock's Defeat were reprinted in newspaper articles, other histories, and even a popular children's textbook.⁸² He synthesized the many strands of memory that were presented in the eulogies of Washington and provided innovations of his own. In doing so he solidified the collective memory of Braddock's Defeat.

While writing about the Seven Years War in 1813, John Dickenson distinguished Braddock's Defeat from other battles by stating "Braddock's misfortune at the Monongahela is still familiar to the very children of our country."⁸³ The memory, however, became increasingly related to Washington and American military superiority.⁸⁴ Manifestations of the new collective memory of Braddock's Defeat can be seen in several ways. Obituaries of the battle's veterans increasingly identified the dead with Washington. When Benjamin Cotton died in 1808 the obituary remarked "He was perhaps the last man of those saved by Washington, when the brave

⁸² A widely published obituary claims that Captain John Vincent was an Indian who fought against Braddock and Washington at Braddock's Defeat, but was so impressed by Washington's performance he fought under him during the Revolution. The obituary abounds with themes from Weems, including Braddock's apology (said to be widely believed by the author of the article), and the Indians' acknowledgement of Washington's divine protection. *Rutland Herald*[Vermont] July 18 1810 p. 3. Reprinted in *Boston Patriot* July 25, 1810, *Public Advertiser* July 30, 1810, *The Pittsfield Sun; or, Republican Monitor* [Pittsfield, Massachusetts], August 1, 1810, *Northern Whig* [Hudson, New York], August 3, 1810, *Spirit of Seventy-Six* [Washington D.C.] August 7, 1810, *The National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser* August 10, 1810, *Columbian Gazette* [Utica, New York] *Farmer's Repository* [Charlestown, West Virginia] August 17, 1810, *American Advocate* [Hallowell, Maine] August 23, 1810 etc. The account of the Indian gunman is noted here verbatim, *Boston Patriot* August 8 1810 p. 4.

For Histories see the later account of George Washinton Parke Custis.

On children's Textbook- *The child's assistant in the art of reading being a collection of pieces suited to the capacities of children*. (Boston: Shaw & Shoemaker, 1801) The book had at least 7 editions and was republished 1801, 1802 (twice), 1803, 1805, 1807, 1808, 1809, 1813 (twice). The new editions mirrored the changes in Weems work.

⁸³ "From the Democratic Press" *American Mercury* October 26 1813 p. 2 in America's Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

⁸⁴ Sylvia Neely in "Mason Locke Weems's Life of George Washington and the Myth of Braddock's Defeat" also discusses Weems role in tying Braddock's Defeat to American military superiority. I differ with Neely, however, in portraying Weems' contribution as merely a continuation of earlier authors (especially Bell's) endeavors to the same end. Neely's article valuably contextualizes Weems account of Braddock's Defeat with the political debate over military establishment in the first decade of the nineteenth century.

Braddock, fell to sacrifice his military pride.”⁸⁵ While Americans during the Revolution seemed to shy away from comparing their British opponents to Braddock, an orator during the war of 1812 seemed more willing. Two days after the American defeat at Bladensburg and the burning of the Capitol, a Baltimorean calling himself “A Militia-Man of 76” declared “There is no magic in the name of Britons, there is no secret skill or power,” and in footnotes “Witness Braddock’s defeat by a few French and Indians.”⁸⁶ Even in a moment of defeat “A Militia Man” was able to invoke the Battle of the Monongahela without any self consciousness. Though Americans were facing defeat as had Braddock, Braddock’s Defeat came to symbolize American martial superiority, and such superiority would win out in the end.

Washington’s relationship to the battle became entrenched in American memory. When Revolutionary War General Israel Putnam was criticized posthumously for his conduct during the Revolution, an admirer in the *Salem Gazette* sought to remind the readers of the General’s service and virtue. This hagiographical account was complete with the assertion that Putnam had served at Braddock’s Field as a young man and was second in his performance only to Washington.⁸⁷ As a reader of the *Boston Patriot* later pointed out, however, Putnam did not fight at Braddock’s Field.⁸⁸ The mistake is illuminating. Braddock’s Defeat had become associated with the beginnings of great men. When the author attempted to portray Putnam as one such great man, placing him at Braddock’s Field was an obvious way to do so.

⁸⁵ “Obituary” *Newburyport Herald* [Massachusetts] August 16 1808, p. 3 See also the Obituary of Robert Creighton in *Alexandria Advertiser* November 20 1801, p.2, and John M’Donough *American Commercial Daily Advertiser* [Baltimore] March 22 1809, p. 2. And a Cognawagga Indian named Captain John Vincent *Rutland Herald* [Vermont] July 18 1810 p. 3. All in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

⁸⁶ A Militia Man of ’76 “To the People of Baltimore” *Baltimore Patriot*, September 10 1814, p. 2 in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

⁸⁷ “Review of General Dearborn’s Defense of His Attack on General Putnam,” *The Salem Gazette* [Massachusetts], July 17 1818, p. 1 in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

⁸⁸ *Boston Patriot* October 16 1818, p. 1 in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

As the second decade of the Nineteenth Century ended, the American version of Braddock's defeat was secure as a collective memory. Two articles from the second half of the decade assaulted accounts perceived as deviating from the accepted American collective memory of the battle. John Burke, editor of the *Virginia Argus*, contested Scottish poet Tobias Smollett's account in his *Complete History of England* from 1765. Like other pre-revolutionary British and American accounts, Washington is conspicuously absent from Smollett's.⁸⁹ Such an absence, however, demanded explanation,

Smollett's eiation [sic] of the event is consistent with his character, he was a *Scotch Tory* writer, and while he could not condemn one of his subjects, it was not in his nature to praise an American hero though he saved the lives of several hundred Englishmen. He indirectly gives 'to lieut. Col. Gage' the credit of preserving the army... All the world, except such tory writers as Smollett has attributed this to Washington... It is through such sources that we receive these notions about [sic] *monarchs* which, if they were not so serious, a man might crack his side laughing at.⁹⁰

To Burke, Smollett's omission amounted to a support of monarchism. Americans like Burke believed Washington's heroic role at Braddock's Defeat was beyond dispute and had been that way since the battle itself. An article from 1820 addressed a similar theme and criticizes several British histories. The author chronicled the "many unintentional blunders... too ludicrous for serious correction," that nonetheless were useful "as serving to shew the inaccurate

⁸⁹ Smollett's work refers to *The History of England*. It is described by Burke as "a favorite in America and is perhaps the most read of any history of England that we have." Smollett's work was a continuation of David Hume's work of the same name, and was published in the United States in 1796 with further additions from later authors. After being published in 1793 and 1795 in London (credited to Hume) it was printed four times in Philadelphia in 1796 and once in Baltimore in 1810. The account of Braddock was penned when Smollett wrote his share of the collaborative work in one of the many versions of the history that were published in England between Braddock's Defeat and his death in 1771. Early American Imprints I & II [database online], Newsbank

⁹⁰ "Copy of Colonel G. Washington's Letter to His Mother Immediately after Braddock's Defeat" *Virginia Argus*, June 22 1816, p. 4 (ellipses my additions) in *America's Historical Newspapers* [database online], Newsbank.

information these trans-Atlantic gentry possess for the real state of our country.”⁹¹ Accounts from British historians describe shaggy unicorns on the Canadian border, biting two headed tortoises, and small hamlets mistaken by European authors to be large cities. Each of these mistakes is pointed out and dismissed quickly. An account of Braddock’s Defeat written by a British historian named Wynn is recounted and serves as the article’s punch line. The account contains no serious deviations from the American collective memory until the final lines. Braddock, proceeding into the ambush as haughtily as American accounts would describe, is stopped by one of his officers who warns him to scout with Indians and proceed with caution. That the name of this officer was Sir Peter Halket considered such an identifiable blunder that it was left uncorrected. The reader would know that the man who counseled Braddock and was rebuked was Washington, not Halket.⁹² The collective memory of Braddock’s Defeat, rooted in colonial notions of difference, adopted for revolutionary aims by John Bell, then finally crystallized by over a decade of amalgamation and revision, could now be taken for granted.

Fawcett, the West, and American Empire 1820-1855

After the War of 1812 noticeable shifts began to occur in the way that Braddock’s Defeat was portrayed. Americans identified Braddock’s Defeat with the distant past. Tales of old survivors of the battle abounded. Among the most colorful of these was the story of Donald McDonald. McDonald “probably the oldest drunkard in the world,” was followed by New England papers in his exploits, including being jailed at the ages of 101 and 107.⁹³ To allay the suspicions of those who questioned his age, McDonald submitted to and passed a quiz regarding

⁹¹ “For the National Gazette, European Accounts of America.” *The National Gazette* [Philadelphia] May 10 1820 p. 4 in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ On being jailed at the age of 101, *Independent Chronicle and Boston Gazette* October 1 1823 p. 1, On being the oldest drunk in the world, *Berkshire County Eagle* [Salem, Massachusetts] September 11 1828 p. 2 On being back in prison at 107 “Old Boy Donald McDonald” *Eastport Sentinel* [Maine] September 13 1828 p. 2. All in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

Braddock's Defeat, where he had allegedly served.⁹⁴ Nathan Young at 108 sat at the head of a fourth of July dinner honoring him as a veteran of Braddock's Defeat and the Revolution.⁹⁵ In 1830, John Hill another veteran of the battle was reported to be between the ages of 120 and 130.⁹⁶ Such reports of longevity were common and very popular.⁹⁷ Braddock's Defeat was often used as a benchmark in these cases attesting to the increasing perception of the battle as a relic of a time long past.

This convention was noticeable enough to be used in satirizing Andrew Jackson as he ran for President in 1828. Contrary to the Tennessean's assertions, opponents from the Eastern Sentinel suggested that "Old Hickory" was too young to have served militarily during the revolution. They penned a mock speech supposedly from a Jackson supporter claiming that Jackson, "Served with Washington under Braddock ... was at all the Battles of the Revolution, as well as the last war."⁹⁸ To skewer Jackson for allegedly padding his credentials and his age, opponents utilized the perceived antiquity of Braddock's Defeat

American memory of the battle seemed to have undergone a decided shift in place as well. As the 1820's progressed and the Canal age along with Andrew Jackson's ascendance focused the eyes of the nation on the West, Braddock became identified with the region. In 1825, an advertisement offered straw hats "said to have been gathered on the identical spot where

⁹⁴ "Old Boy Donald McDonald" *Eastport Sentinel*[Maine] September 13 1828 p. 2.

⁹⁵ *Daily National Intelligencer* [Washington D.C.] July 21 1820 p.3 all in America's Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

⁹⁶ "Longevity" *Baltimore Patriot*, March 3 1830 all in America's Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

⁹⁷ As an example, I will list the reprinting of the 1830 notice of Donald McDonald's death. *Brattleboro' Messenger* [Vermont] October 9, 1830, *Essex Gazette* [Haverhill, Massachusetts] October 9, 1830, *Baltimore Patriot* October 13, 1830, *Rhode-Island Republican* [Newport] October 14, 1830, *The Southern Patriot* [Charleston, South Carolina] December 31, 1833. All in America's Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

⁹⁸ *Eastport Sentinel* [Maine] June 7 1828, p. 2 in America's Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

General Braddock pitched his tent on the bank of Lake Ontario.”⁹⁹ Braddock never approached Lake Ontario so no such spot existed. To a huckster, however, attempting to sell his goods by any means, it only mattered that potential buyers believed that Braddock had slept on the shores of the lake. Braddock and his defeat were of the West and therefore his yarn could hope to make a profit. Days before that advertisement a poem entitled “On the Housatonic” appeared in the Berkshire Star in Stockbridge Massachusetts. “Lamented Braddock! here thy train,” the author “Mervin” declares, “In glittering legions trode this plain.”¹⁰⁰ Like Lake Ontario Braddock never passed the Housatonic, a river in Western Massachusetts. Through poetic license, however, Mervin suggested that Braddock belonged to the West and, therefore, he had a place on the western Housatonic.

Braddock’s Defeat was also connected to the west as depictions of the battle began to focus more on nature. In these accounts, Braddock and his troops often transformed into nature itself. Mervin’s “On the Housatonic” provides a prime example, “But now that time is rolled away/ the actors of that scene are clay. / And still with moss and grass o’egrown/ rears its umbrageous head the stone/ to mark the place the warrior brave/ sleeps in his long forgotten grave.”¹⁰¹ An excerpt from “The Story of Maurice” in the Norwich Courier, declared an old Indian, “was young and full of vigor when Braddock and his soldiers strewed the earth like autumn leaves.”¹⁰² Braddock and his men were disappearing. Killed in battle, they were portrayed as just another aspect of the landscape.

By vanishing into the clay and leaves, Braddock’s men were making room for progress. An account written in 1819 celebrated the Adams-Onis treaty with Spain that secured further

⁹⁹ “Productions of the West” *Salem Gazette* November 15 1825, p. 2 in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

¹⁰⁰ Mervin, “On the Housatonic,” Berkshire Star in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² “The Story of Maurice,” June 9 1824, p. 1 in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

western lands from the Louisiana Purchase. The author marveled at the progress of the nation in the sixty years since the Seven Years War, and reminded the reader that Braddock was defeated “in the neighborhood of what is now the large, wealthy, flourishing city of Pittsburg.”¹⁰³ 1825, another widely published article originating in the Pittsburgh Mercury, authored by a westerner with the pseudonym “Ohio,” starkly contrasted modern progress with bloody scenes of the past in his depiction of Braddock’s Field.¹⁰⁴ He wrote, “For many years bones of men and horses were shrouded by mourning wilderness and shadowy woods but yielded to a busy axe and the plough is driven amongst the skulls of the slain and the bones of the brave, Rich harvests wave over fields fertilized by the blood and bodies of hundreds of unburied men.”¹⁰⁵ Historians Douglas MacGregor and Larry Kutchen have noticed similar trends in the portrayal of the violence of the Seven Years War by American writers in the early national period. Kutchen claims that a focus on nature in the depiction of the Seven Years War shows American writers distancing themselves from the violence of empire.¹⁰⁶ MacGregor, who investigated the memory of Braddock’s Field, argued that Ohio’s article showed that “Braddock’s Field had come to symbolize not only an epic battle but also the success of America and of peace over war.”¹⁰⁷

McGregor was only partially correct. Ohio’s article undoubtedly was meant to symbolize the success of America. The last paragraph of the article, however, which was not discussed in McGregor’s account, casts doubt that Ohio wished to portray Americans as practicing peaceful

¹⁰³ *New York Daily Advertiser* March 15 1819, p. 2 in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank

¹⁰⁴ *Connecticut Mirror* [Hartford] October 3, 1825, *Connecticut Courant* [Hartford] October 4, 1825, *The Farmers’ Cabinet* [Amherst, New Hampshire] October 8, 1825, *National Aegis* [Worcester, Massachusetts] October 12, 1825, *Middlesex Gazette* [Middletown, Connecticut] November 2, 1825, *Boston Commercial Gazette* January 19, 1826, all in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

¹⁰⁵ “Braddock’s Defeat,” *Connecticut Courant* [Hartford] October 4 1825, p. 2 in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

¹⁰⁶ Larry Kutchen, *The Dark Fields of the Republic’: Pastoral, Georgic, and the Writing of Empire from Cotton Mather to James Fenimore Cooper*, PhD diss. University of California, Berkeley, 2002

¹⁰⁷ McGregor, 28

progress. Ohio's article became best known for introducing the rest of the nation to Thomas Fawcett. Ohio began his final paragraph by stating, "It has been rumored from an early period that Braddock had been shot by his own men."¹⁰⁸ He then laid out the basic story that would form the origins of the myth of Tom Fawcett. Drawing on familiar traditions, Ohio suggested that Braddock tried to force the Provincials to "form a column" and, thereby, fight like Regulars. When the Provincial troops continued to fight in "the Indian mode" by firing from behind trees, "Braddock, in his vexation rode up to a young man by the name of Fawcett with his sword and rashly cut him down."¹⁰⁹ Fawcett's Brother, Thomas, "revenged his brother's blood, by shooting Braddock through the body, of which wound he died."¹¹⁰ Fawcett was a product of the time, a synthesis of the many traditions that had come to represent Braddock's Defeat. He was western, residing in western Pennsylvania nearby Braddock's grave and he was old. Ohio's account suggested he was still living at the age of 97.¹¹¹ Fawcett was the American perception of Braddock's Defeat, and his newly rediscovered story was widely published across the nation.¹¹² Fawcett's legend would take many different forms, and aroused suspicion in some.¹¹³ Fawcett's story, however, became a well known, if not always accepted myth.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸ "Braddock's Defeat," *Connecticut Courant* [Hartford] October 4 1825, p. 2. in America's Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² See footnote 84. Shortened accounts discussing only Fawcett and Braddock are found also in *National Gazette and Literary Register* [Philadelphia] October 13, 1825, *American Advocate & General Advertiser*[Hallowell, Maine] October 15, 1825, *Jamestown Journal* [Jamestown, New York] July 12, 1826, *The Amrican*[Wilmington, North Carolina] April 11, 1827, *The Berks And Schuylkill Journal* [Reading, Pennsylvania], and many more. All in America's Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

¹¹³ An interesting debate regarding Fawcett's culpability and existence can be found in the summer of 1839. A first article claimed that Braddock could not have been killed by Fawcett because it was not mentioned in Orme's account of the battle, and that the chaos mentioned in that account shows that Braddock could have been killed by anyone present at the battle, "On Braddock's Death" *Daily National Intelligencer* July 25 1839, p. 2. Responding to this "A Traveler" claims that certain parts of Orme's account do indeed support Fawcett's story, and that he heard the story from Fawcett himself. "To the Editors" *Daily National Intelligencer* August 7 1839 p. 3 all in America's Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

¹¹⁴ When an account of a western traveler from the Yale Literary Magazine claimed that a man named "Hammond" had killed Braddock, Fawcett's tale was widely known enough that subsequent reprintings corrected the alleged

Fawcett's role in Ohio's article suggests that Ohio was not portraying Americans as peaceful inheritors of the west. Ohio's account should not be seen as an American distancing himself from the notion of violence. He cast an American as Braddock's killer, a role that was filled for decades by an unnamed Indian or Frenchman. Instead, it should be seen as expounding a differing view of empire. Contrasting the remnants of a hellish battle with scenes of progress was not comparing British colonial violence to American republican peace. Ohio was contrasting British failure with American success. Braddock had hoped to subjugate the West with European methods, and instead was felled by an American bullet. Conversely, Americans showed at Braddock's Defeat that their combination of European civilization and Indian embrace of nature allowed them to be natural inheritors of the West.

In 1826 George Washington Parke Custis illustrated this emerging view of American empire in his "Indian Prophecy." The idea of providence which had been tied to Samuel Davies and the hand of god for decades was popularized with a decidedly western slant in the year after the introduction of Fawcett. Custis, Washington's step grandson and adopted son, published accounts of his patriarch's life in the *United States Gazette* and later the *National Intelligencer* in 1826. His "Recollections of Washington" were widely printed.¹¹⁵ "The Indian Prophecy" was among the most popular, later serving as material for a play held in at least three cities, Philadelphia, Washington, and Macon, Georgia.¹¹⁶ Custis account combines Samuel Davies

mistake. "General Braddock" *The Easton Gazette* [Maryland] January 20 1840, p. 1 in America's Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

¹¹⁵ "The Indian Prophecy" was reprinted in the *Easton Gazette* [Maryland] May 13 1826, *American Mercury* [Hartford] June 6 1826, *Norwich Courier* [Norwich, Connecticut] June 14 1826, *Portland Advertiser* [Portland, Maine] June 20 1826 *Middlesex Gazette* [Middletown, Connecticut] June 21 1826, *Louisiana State Gazette* [New Orleans] June 1 1826. It was retold in Jared Sparks *Writings of Washington* and George Bankroft's *History of the United States* (1852) all in America's Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank

¹¹⁶ Shown in Washington, "From the National Intelligencer: Theatrical and Historical" *Providence Patriot* November 17 1827 p. 1, Shown in Macon- *Macon Telegraph* [Macon, Georgia] July 16 1827 p. 150, Shown in Philadelphia- Murray Nelligan. "American Nationalism on the Stage: The Plays of George Washinton Custis" *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* Vol. 58, No. 3 (Jul., 1950), pp. 299-324.

prophecy with Weems's tale of the Indian Gunman. The story follows Washington and a band of explorers trekking through the "wild and unfrequented" western wilderness in 1792.¹¹⁷

Washington and his party encountered an Indian party headed by a "Grand Sachem... the same who commanded the Indians on the fall of Braddock," who had sought out the Virginian for a mysterious purpose. The Chief seemed thunderstruck by the presence of Washington, and after an evening of reverent silence, he finally spoke,

I have travelled a long and weary path that I might see the Young Warrior of the Great Battles. It was on that day that the White Man's blood mixed with the streams of our forest, that I first beheld this chief; I called to my young men and said, mark yon tall and daring warrior, he is not of the red coat tribe, he hath Indian's wisdom and his warriors fight as we do, himself is alone exposed.

After describing his men's inability to kill Washington the Chief continued,

I am old, and soon will be gathered to the great council fire of my fathers... but ere I go there is something that bids me speak in the voice of prophecy. Listen! The Great Spirit protects that man and guides his destinies- He will become the chief of nations, and a people yet unborn, hail him as a founder of a mighty empire!¹¹⁸

Custis' "Indian Prophecy" and "Ohio's" article taken together explain the trajectory of Braddock's memory until the Civil War. By claiming that "Washington was not of the redcoat tribe," The Great Sachem reminded readers and audiences that at Braddock's Defeat Americans had shown that they were a different people. More Indian than British in action, Washington revealed that he was destined to lead a mighty empire. Even more significant, however, was that

On popularity, "The Indian Prophecy" was savaged by its only critic (most newspapers did not consider drama news at this time and critics were self appointed.) Despite claims that the play was "Absolutely destitute of plot, incident, character, and stage effect," the play and other Custis' works were shown several times at the theatre in Philadelphia, and the play was shown in Washington a few months later. Therefore the play might be considered a moderate success or at least not a total failure. The play also supposedly inspired John Augustus Stone to write *Metamora, or Last of the Wompanoags*. Neligan, 308. For discussion of this Genre and an excellent interpretation of its relation to memory see, Jill Lepore *The Name of War: King Phillips War and the Origins of American Identity*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1998.) p. 194-207

¹¹⁷ "The Indian Prophecy" *Eastern Argus* [Portland, Maine] May 19 1826, p. 1 in America's Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

¹¹⁸ "Indian Prophecy" (ellipsis mine)

the United States was to be that empire. Therefore the greatest of the many differences between Washington and Braddock, as well Americans and the British, was simply that the United States was destined for empire in North America while Britain was not. Speaking at an 1839 St. Patrick's Day celebration in Alexandria, Custis' telling of "The Indian Prophecy," and specifically the promise of empire, won the orator his loudest cheers of the night.¹¹⁹ During that same year Jane McManus Storm, known as "Cora Montgomery" penned *The Great Nation of Futurity* and coined the phrase "Manifest Destiny".¹²⁰ Custis had been a prophet in his own right.

Braddock and the British faced a darker destiny. In 1842 the title poem in Hiram Kaine's *Braddock's Field and Other Original Poems* recounted the battle concluding,

With martial pomp they sought the west,
To light war with its solid gloom-
The splendor of their fame o'er-cast,
They won no conquest but a tomb-
Nor friends or kindred ever gave.
One tear to wet their lonely grave.¹²¹

Braddock's men sought glory in the west through a traditional European show of force. This only resulted in a lonely death. During the 1830's and 1840's Braddock's grave became a favorite subject of writers either living or travelling through the west. Again the writers sought to contrast the fate of British and American imperial outcomes. An author from 1835 suggested that Braddock's resting place inspired him to discuss his nation's imperial success. Braddock's grave was once the farthest reaches of civilization, but now "civilization has stretched a thousand miles

¹¹⁹ "Sketches of the Address of Ma. Custis" *Daily National Intelligencer* p. 2, The statement that the crowd reacted "loudest" to the Indian Prophecy relies on the interpretation that "immense cheers" are louder than "great cheers." The audience also offers immense cheers at the mention of America's liberties.

¹²⁰ Amy Greenberg *Manifest Manhood and the antebellum American Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

¹²¹ Hiram Kaine, *Braddock's Field and Other Original Poems* (Pittsburgh: 1842) p. 12

beyond them ‘towards the setting sun.’ The vast and then untrodden wastes of the West... have disappeared...and the earth now teams with the fruits of human industry.”¹²²

As Braddock lay in a non-descript grave, the United States fulfilled its destiny. In 1848 a wealthy inhabitant of New Orleans awarded General Zachary Taylor the sash that Braddock wore at The Battle of the Monongahela. Taylor’s service in the Mexican War and expansion of the American Empire earned him the sash.¹²³ Americans utilized the memory of Braddock’s Defeat to differentiate themselves from the British since the dark days of the revolution. Nearly one hundred years later the memory of Braddock’s defeat, and the differences that it symbolized, became a justification for an American Empire.

¹²² “Miscellaneous” *Phenix Civilian* [Cumberland, Maryland] May 5 1835 p. 1 in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank (ellipsis is mine)

¹²³ “The Sash of a Military Hero” *Boston Evening Transcript* February 13 1847 p. 4 in America’s Historical Newspapers [database online], Newsbank.

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