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NEWSLETTER

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DATE: September 23, 2015

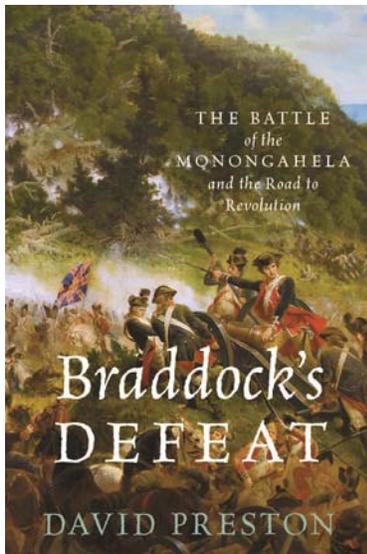
PLACE: The Lyceum, 201 North Washington Street, Alexandria, Va.

TIME: 7:30 PM

SPEAKER: David L. Preston, Westvaco Professor of National Security Studies at The Citadel

LECTURE

Braddock's Defeat: The Battle of the Monongahela and the Road to Revolution



On July 9, 1755, British regulars and American colonial troops under the command of General Edward Braddock, commander in chief of the British Army in North America, were attacked by French and Native American forces shortly after crossing the Monongahela River while making their way to besiege Fort Duquesne in the Ohio Valley, a few miles from what is now Pittsburgh. The long line of red-coated troops struggled to maintain cohesion and discipline as Indian warriors quickly outflanked them and used the dense cover of the woods to masterful and lethal effect. Within hours, a powerful British army was routed, its commander mortally wounded and two-thirds of its forces casualties in one the worst disasters in military history.

David Preston's gripping and immersive account of Braddock's Defeat, also known as the Battle of the Monongahela, is the most authoritative ever written. Using untapped sources and collections, Preston offers a reinterpretation of Braddock's Expedition in 1754-1755, one that does full justice to its remarkable achievements. Braddock had rapidly advanced his army to the cusp of victory, overcoming uncooperative colonial governments and seemingly insurmountable logistical challenges, while managing to carve a road through the formidable Appalachian Mountains. That road would play a major role in America's expansion westward in the years ahead and stand as one of the expedition's most significant legacies.

Please arrive early—seating is limited. Free for AHS members—\$5 for all others.

The causes of Braddock's Defeat are debated to this day. Preston's work challenges the stale portrait of an arrogant European officer who refused to adapt to military and political conditions in the New World and the first to show fully how the French and Indian coalition achieved victory through effective diplomacy, tactics and leadership. New documents reveal that the French Canadian commander, a seasoned veteran named Captain Beaujeu, planned the attack on the British column with great skill, and that his Native allies were more disciplined than the British regulars on the field.

Braddock's Defeat establishes beyond question its profoundly pivotal nature for Indian, French Canadian and British peoples in the eighteenth century. The disaster altered the balance of power in America, and escalated the fighting into a global conflict known as the Seven Years' War. Those who were there, including George Washington, Thomas Gage, Horatio Gates, Charles Lee and Daniel Morgan, never forgot its lessons, and brought them to bear when they fought again—whether as enemies or allies—two decades hence. The campaign had awakened many British Americans to their provincial status in the empire, spawning ideas of American identity and anticipating the social and political divisions that would erupt in the American Revolution.

David L. Preston is an award-winning historian of early America with a special interest in war and peace among the French, British and Indian peoples of the eighteenth century. He is currently the Westvaco Professor of National Security Studies at The Citadel, where he teaches cadets and officer candidates about U.S. military history and early American history. Growing up in western Pennsylvania instilled in him a passion for the French and Indian War era and, inevitably, for the Pittsburgh Steelers. He went on to earn his doctorate in American history at The College of William & Mary, where he studied with the influential ethno-historian Professor James Axtell. His first book, *The Texture of Contact* (2009), was hailed as an innovative study of how French, British and Indian communities coexisted near the Iroquois Confederacy between 1667 and 1783. *The Texture of Contact* received the 2010 Albert B. Corey Prize, for best book on American-Canadian relations, a prize awarded biennially by the American Historical Association and Canadian Historical Association. It also received the 2010 Annual Archives Award for Excellence in Research from the New York State Archives. *Braddock's Defeat: The Battle of the Monongahela and the Road to Revolution* grew out of Preston's interest in the French and Native perspectives on the battle. Preston's research in archival collections in the U.S., Britain, Canada and France uncovered new evidence on Braddock's Defeat, including a revealing French account of the battle and an Iroquois warrior's account of George Washington and the Jumonville Affair. The author also gained "ground truth" from his extensive fieldwork, such as walking Braddock's Road and canoeing along the Allegheny River and French Creek.



The Real Mercy Street: The History of the Mansion House Hospital and Civil War Alexandria

[Saturday, January 30, 2016, 10 a.m. at the Carlyle House, 121 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.](#)

Go behind the scenes and learn about the true story of the nurses, doctors, soldiers and Alexandrians who star in PBS's new series *Mercy Street*. The program will begin in one of the original lobbies of the famous hospital, normally closed to the public, with coffee, bagels and a presentation lead by Sarah

Coster, curator of the exhibit *Nurses, Soldiers, Spies: The Mansion House Hospital*, and Audrey Davis, historical consultant for *Mercy Street* and Director of the Alexandria Black History Museum. Then, join us for tours of the Carlyle House, the Green family's stately Southern mansion whose history goes back to the 1740s.

COST: \$10 for Alexandria Historical Society and Friends of Carlyle House members and \$20 for all others. Visit www.alexandriahistorical.org to become a member.

Alexandria Historical Society 2015-2016 Speaker Schedule*

[September 23, 2015](#): *Braddock's Defeat* (Dr. David L. Preston). [October 28, 2015](#): *Slave Labor in the Capital: Building Washington's Iconic Federal Landmarks* (Bob Arnebeck). [March 23, 2016](#): *Woodward & Lothrop: A Store Worthy of the Nation's Capital* (Michael Lisicky). [April 27, 2016](#): *Alexandria History Awards*. [May 25, 2016](#): *Alexandria's 1939 Library Sit-in: Its Impact, Aftermath & Legacy* (Dr. Brenda Mitchell-Powell). [June 22, 2016](#): *The Real Mercy Street* (Sarah Coster and Audrey Davis).

*Lectures are free for Alexandria Historical Society members and \$5 for non-members starting on September 23, 2015. All lectures are on the fourth Wednesday of the month at The Lyceum at 7:30 PM.

The Alexandria Historical Society Board for 2015-2016

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NEWSLETTER

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The AHS Newsletter is published by the Alexandria Historical Society, Inc., and mailed free to members. To join the Society, submit your check made payable to "Alexandria Historical Society," together with your name, address, and telephone numbers, to the Alexandria Historical Society, 201 South Washington Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314. Annual dues are: \$10.00, Student; \$20.00, Single; \$30.00, Couple; \$50.00, Sustaining; and \$100.00, Patron. The membership year is July to June. Dues are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

The purpose of the Society shall be to promote an active interest in American history and particularly in the history of Alexandria and of Virginia.

The Society is organized exclusively for educational purposes.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
www.alexandriahistorical.org