

LETTER OF GEORGE WASHINGTON RE BATTLE OF THE MEADOWS

Letter July 1755 - by George Washington - To Mrs. Washington near Fredericksburg.

Hon'd. Madam, I doubt not but you have heard of our defeat and perhaps had it represented in a worse light, if possible, than it deserves. I have taken this earliest opportunity to give you some account of the Engagement as it happened within 7 miles of the French Fort on Wednesday, the 9th (July).

We marched on to that place without any considerable loss, having only now and then a stragler[sic] picked up by the French & scouting Indians. When we came there we were attacked by Body of French & Indians, whose number (I am persuaded) did not exceed 300 men; while ours consisted of about 1,300 well-armed troops, chiefly, regular soldiers, who were struck with such a panic that they behaved with more cowardice than it is possible to conceive. The Officers behaved gallantly in order to encourage their men, for which they suffered greatly, there being near 60 killed and wounded, a large proportion out of the number we had.

The Virginia Troops showed a good deal of Bravery, and were nearly all killed, for I believe out of three Companies that were there, there are nearly(?) thirty men left alive: Capt. Peyrouny and all his officers down to a corporal were killed. Capt. Polson had nearly as hard a fate, for only one of his was left. In short, the dastardly behavior of those they call Regulars, exposed all others that were inclined to do their duty to (almost) certain death; and, at last, in despite of all the effort of the Officers to the contrary, they ran, as sheep pursued by dogs, and it was impossible to rally them.

The General was wounded, [My Note: English General Braddock] of which he died three days after; Sir Peter Hathes was killed in the Field, were died many other brave Officers. **I luckily escaped without a wound, tho' I had four bullets thro' my coat and two horses shot under me.** Captains Orme & Morris, two of the Aids de Camp, were wounded early in the Engagement, which rendered the Duty harder upon me, as I was the only person then left to distribute the General's orders, which I was scarcely able to do, as I was not half recovered from a violent illness that had confined me to my bed and a waggon, for above ten days. I am still in a weak and feeble condition, which induces me to halt here two or three days in hope of recovering a little strength to enable me to proceed homewards; from whence, I fear, I shall not be able to stir 'till towards September, so that I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you 'till then, unless it be in Fairfax. Please to give my love to Mr. Lewis and my sister; and compliments to Mr. Jackson, and all other friends that inquire after me.

I am, Hon'd. Madam, Your most dutiful Son, GW

P.S. You may acquaint Priscilla Mullican(sp?), that her son, Charles, is very well, having only received a slight wound in his foot which will be cured without detriment to him, in a very small time. We had about 300 men killed & as many or more wounded, and this chiefly done by our own men.