

Norman L. Baker. *Braddock's Road: Mapping the British Expedition from Alexandria to the Monongahela* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2013). Pp. 190. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Paper, \$19.99.

Major General Edward Braddock's ill-fated expedition to seize and hold the forks of the Ohio River has been the subject of numerous articles and more than a handful of books. Generally the historical analysis has focused on Braddock's often-justified complaints concerning the lack of support the colonial governments of Virginia and Pennsylvania provided to the expedition, although in truth, when it came time to move, sufficient logistical assistance was present to permit Braddock to move forward toward his objective, Fort Duquesne. Other studies have focused on Braddock's inability to coax more than a handful of indigenous people willing to serve as guides and scouts for the expedition. Finally, some scholars have addressed the nature of Braddock's army, particularly the inexperience of many of the regular units and their lack of preparation for operations on the European frontiers of the North American continent. Norman L. Baker's book, *Braddock's Road: Mapping the British Expedition from Alexandria to the Monongahela*, is, as the title suggests, a simple book aimed at laying out the route Braddock took from Alexandria to his defeat just short of the walls of Duquesne. The reader should expect little more from the book. There will be no great debates on tactics, political discussions concerning support and who pays for it, or after-action recriminations for the debacle the French and their indigenous allies inflicted on Braddock.

What Baker has provided is a travel narrative complete with exhaustive work as to the route Braddock took. It makes little if any comment on the topics of earlier studies. What Baker does succeed in doing is describing each move, camp by camp, Braddock took using an exceptional array of primary documents as well as the simple process of walking as much of the route as is physically possible given the current topography of the region. He has exhaustively studied early land ownership records, noting that frequently early boundary lines used Braddock's road as a clearly visible marker to separate private farms as well as township and county borders. He has worked the archives in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia to find post-Civil War photos of the road as it looked nearly a century after the army passed. One gets a feeling for how time ravages the past as images of the road fade rapidly before the onslaught of modernity. Baker's juxtaposition of a 1908 picture postcard of the road clearly evident in Braddock Park in Frostburg, Maryland,

with a photograph of the same area in 2012, in which the author notes that a housing area has now claimed the glen of trees as well as the roadbed itself drives home the point.

Baker has provided a very solid account of Braddock's march from a geographical perspective. There is sufficient information to allow the modern traveler to walk most of the road Braddock and his men followed. Could a good book be made better? The answer is clearly yes. The inclusion of larger-scale maps where place names and topography lines are readable would certainly help. As things are, the reader needs a magnifying glass to make out some place names as well as get a better feel for elevation. The photos he uses also might well have been colorized. Some of the photos were deliberately done in black and white. While the use of the latter gives an old feel to the road, a colorized version would make the idea of hiking parts of this more inviting than the current book suggests. I might even suggest a little more effort in letting the reader know what sections are easily hiked today given land ownership issues.

If one were to turn this into a larger work, questions such as why Braddock thought he was going to move an artillery train of twelve- and six-pound artillery across the Indians trails and mountains by brawn alone warrants discussion as the size of the French fortress at Duquesne would never have withstood bombardment by even the six-pounders, let alone the twelves. The size and weight of this train made them nearly impossible to move, save by river, and that was simply not possible given the route. During the American Revolution, Major General John Sullivan attempted to move a similar although lighter artillery train up the Susquehanna River intending to use it against Iroquois settlements and possibly even Fort Niagara. Sullivan found that once river movement was not possible, much of his artillery had to be left behind in the interests of speed. Another issue Baker might have discussed was how Braddock adopted this logistics to the demands of the terrain. Feeding soldiers and providing fodder to horses would have been no small feat.

Baker's mapping of Braddock's Road is a limited book, given its scope, but a necessary one for anyone needing to match geography with history. Nothing of this quality existed prior to Baker's work, rendering the effort a must have for historians who need to get a little mud on their boots to better understand the past.

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