

BOOK REVIEWS



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

By David Preston

Oxford University Press, 2015

Hardback, 480 pp.,

20 illus., \$29.95

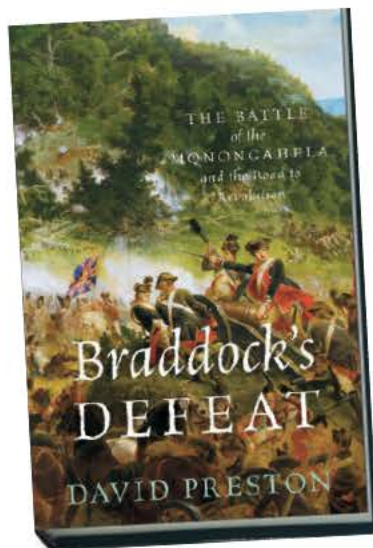
Reviewed by Bob Hoover, retired book editor of the
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The name Braddock can be found from Northern Virginia to Western Pennsylvania on roads, parks, lakes, and communities although its namesake, British Gen. Edward Braddock, lived only a few months in that region.

At 61 years old, General Braddock arrived in America in March 1755 as head of the largest military expedition in the British colonies at that time. His mission was to oust the French from Fort Duquesne at the confluence of the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers, opening the territory for British developers. His 300-mile march from Alexandria, Virginia, to what is now Braddock, was a triumph of ingenuity and endurance.

Braddock, however, was dead four months later in the woods south of Uniontown, his retreating army in tatters. The magnitude of his defeat immortalized his name. It was a catastrophe for Great Britain, the high tide of France's power in North America and a respite for American Indians threatened by the westward expansion of Europeans.

While military historian David Preston acknowledges the immediate impact of



the battle, he argues that the long-term effect was to pave the way for the victory of Americans over their British rulers 28 years later: "Indeed, the memory of Braddock's Defeat cast a long shadow, one that stretched to include the origin of the American Revolution," he writes, "and particularly the colonists' decision to take up arms."

What the result told colonists was that the formidable English army could be defeated using the tactics of the French and their Indian allies. The performance of colonial troops at Braddock's Defeat—they covered the retreat as British fighters fled—added to their confidence.


Preston's account of the fighting on July 9 draws from a variety of sources, some cited for the first time, and brings the awful nature of the battle into sharp focus. Perhaps 300 French forces were involved, but the bulk of attackers were Indians from many tribes, nearly 700, firing into the column of British troops on both flanks. Braddock was wounded, evacuated by his aide George Washington. He died four days later and was buried in the road so that the army's footsteps and wagon tracks would hide his grave. Today, his relocated gravesite is marked with a memorial on U.S. 40, just north of Fort Necessity.

Between 1,200 to 1,400 British and colonial soldiers fought that day; Preston puts the casualty rate at more than 60 percent killed or wounded, many slaughtered as they lay helplessly injured. Some wounded were stripped, marched to Fort Duquesne, tortured, and burned alive.

While the battle is the centerpiece of "Braddock's Defeat," Preston paints a full picture of conditions in 1755 North America that brings a clear perspective to that complicated era which included the defeat of France in the New World and the American Revolution.

He also rehabilitates Braddock's reputation as dismissive of native help, reinforces the stalwart character of Washington, and praises Benjamin Franklin for his help in bolstering the expedition.

Braddock's Defeat also tells the French side of the story. Experienced military officers are credited at last with the strategy that defeated a much larger force, an action that included a journey from Montreal that rivaled Braddock's march in its efforts.

Preston sought to write a definitive history of the seminal 1755 battle of the Mon and he succeeded. 

Always a Home Game: Our Journey Through Steelers Country in 140 Days

By Josh Miller and Shawn Allen

St. Lynn's Press, 2014

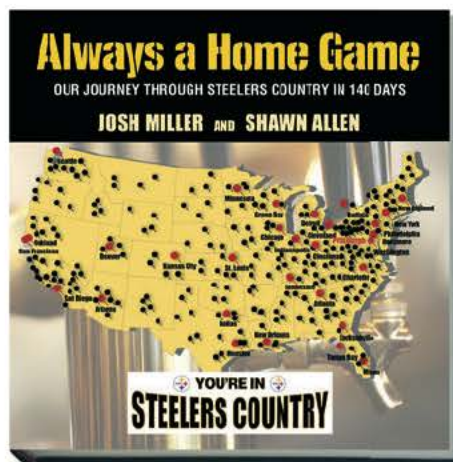
240 pp., illustrations, chart

\$19.74 hardcover

Reviewed by Carrie Hadley,
Cataloger for the Museum Division

It's an intimidating feeling—it's Sunday morning, and you, a loyal Steelers fan, are vacationing or living outside of Pittsburgh and need a reliable bar to watch the game later.

BOOK REVIEWS



Where do you go? Who can you trust? Will the bar have a good selection of beer?

Former Steelers punter Josh Miller and his friend Shawn Allen have done the work and answered these difficult questions for you. Using suggestions made by fans, the duo traveled the country for 140 days looking for the best bars to watch Steeler games. They bravely took on rival towns and city traffic to co-mingle with fans, make new friends, and revel in Steelers pride. The result is an exhaustive yet entertaining travel companion any Steelers fan will enjoy. Not only do the authors rate each bar for its Pittsburgh and Steelers enthusiasm—Terrible Towel decorations, Iron City beer specials, and all!—Allen, a craft beer enthusiast and self-proclaimed “hophead,” created a scale to rate the beer served at each bar as well.

Filled with funny anecdotes, inspiring examples of dedication, and honest evaluation, this book is a perfect casual read for any Steelers fan, home or away. The chapters are themed as

cities or NFL markets the men visited, and each bar visited in that city has its own sub-section. The beginning and end of chapters include Allen’s “Two Cents” and Miller’s “Extra Points,” or comments that each author wanted to make from a personal viewpoint.

The hypocycloids (the precise name for the “diamonds”) from the Steelers logo are used to rate each bar (three for “a Steelers bar 24/7/365,” two for “a Steelers bar on Game Days” and one for just a “sports bar”). They provide contact information for each bar visited so that you may visit and cheer on your beloved team with others in a home away from home.

There are a couple locations that Allen and Miller skim in their explanation, but one can assume that long weeks of traveling and beer-drinking catches up. Also, whether or not they visited on Steelers Game Day surely made a difference in their experiences as well.

More perplexing, especially to this Buffalo native, was Miller and Allen’s analyses of Buffalo, New York. They concluded that since Erie, Pa., is technically part of the Bills’ franchise market, they would not make the drive up I-90 to find bars closer to the city. Their trip to Erie was successful, and their rationale to stop there understandable as their itinerary was nothing short of exhausting. But after such a thorough treatment from coast to coast, fans would have appreciated the extra 90-mile drive to find a Steelers bar in the thick of Bills country. In fact, a quick internet search found at least one Steelers fan club in Rochester, 75 miles beyond Buffalo. Additionally, in a city with as much

dedication to craft breweries as Pittsburgh, I doubt Allen would have been left disappointed. Perhaps a second edition will bring treasures left off the first list.

Overall, this light-hearted and fun read is a must for any Pittsburgh fan looking to do some traveling this fall, or even one staying home for the season—the authors rated Pittsburgh bars as well. Admirably, Miller and Allen will donate part of the book’s earnings to charities that help former Steelers players, a wonderful illustration of how strong and close knit the Steelers community truly is.

Book Events

November 7, 2015 • 11:00 a.m.

History Center, Museum Shop

America’s Cradle of Quarterbacks: Western Pennsylvania’s Football Factory
Reading, discussion, and book signing with author Wayne Stewart

December 3, 2015 • 7:00 p.m.

History Center, Detre Library & Archives

Beyond Rust: Metropolitan Pittsburgh and the Fate of Industrial America
Reading, discussion, and book signing with author Allen Dieterich-Ward

December 5, 2015 • 1:00 p.m.

History Center, Museum Shop

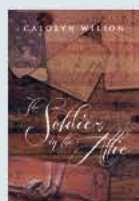
Golden Arms: Six Hall of Fame Quarterbacks from Western Pennsylvania
Book signing with author Jim O’Brien

All three events are free and open to the public but do not include admission to the rest of the museum.

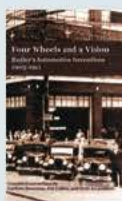
For more information, please contact Caroline Fitzgerald at ccfitzgerald@heinzhistorycenter.org or 412-454-6373.

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NEW FOR
SEASON



The Soldier in the Attic



Four Wheels and a Vision: Butler's Automotive Inventions 1905-1941