



In This Issue

- *Braddock's Encampment at Little Meadow*
- *Spring2Action*
- *Calendar of Events*
- *Happy Hour*

**CARLYLE
HOUSE**

Susan Hellman
Site Manager

Kerry Mitchell
Site Specialist

Allison Kelley
Curator of Education

Docent Dispatch

April 2017

Braddock's Encampment at Little Meadow

By Steve Kimbel

If folks driving by know about the legend of "Braddock's Gold" they probably think the people lined up across the meadow waving their metal detectors across the ground are searching for it.

In "Braddock's Defeat," his history of General Edward Braddock's expedition, David L. Preston makes clear that the £ 25,000 in gold the General brought with him to the British Colony of Virginia in 1755 is not among the many things lost or left behind after the Battle of the Monongahela. Never the less, every year unethical metal detectorists hunting for treasure invade public lands and private property to plunder archaeological sites.

We know any search for "Braddock's gold" is bound to be fruitless because the vast bulk of Braddock's gold is never lost, it is used to pay for initial military operations in the French and Indian War. It's even possible some of Braddock's gold ends up in the hands of John Carlyle in payment of his services resupplying military forces in the field.

Mark Michael Ludlow is a professional archaeologist, a PhD candidate at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David in the United Kingdom and a

Member-at-Large of the Alexandria Archaeological Commission. In his presentation to the Friends of Alexandria Archaeology (FOAA) he recounts his participation in the metal detector survey of a site in Western Maryland's Garrett County that historical research shows may be one of several places where General Edward Braddock encamped.

At the start of the French and Indian War (1755 to 1763) The Commander-in-Chief of all British Forces in North America departs his temporary headquarters at the Carlyle House on April 17, 1755 to attack the French at Fort Duquesne where the Allegheny and the Monongahela rivers join to form the Ohio River. During the disastrous "Battle of the Monongahela," on July 9, 1755, Braddock is mortally wounded and nearly two-thirds of his force of 2,500 British and Colonial troops is either killed or wounded. But before the battle Braddock's force makes camp dozens of times along its route.

From June 16 to 19 the General and his soldiers camp at Little Meadow. Maryland's Department of Transportation (MDOT) plans to widen a road in the area and that's why Ludlow joins a crew working for MDOT and looking for Braddock's encampment. The study area is located north of US

**CARLYLE HOUSE
HISTORIC PARK**

Route 40, “The National Road” between Frostburg and Grantsville.

Professional archaeologists deplore the unethical use of metal detectors. The technology has a disreputable record among professional archaeologists because of its use by treasure hunters who destroy archaeological sites. But metal detectors in the hands of professional archaeologists, or closely supervised avocational archaeologists, are looked upon more kindly.

The data collected with metal detectors at Little Meadow will be used to mitigate or avoid damage to the site when MDOT begins construction to widen a state highway in the area. The investigation of the site is lead by Julie M. Schablitsky, Ph.D., the Chief of the Cultural Resources Section at MDOT. During an episode of the Maryland Public Television program “Outdoors Maryland” Dr. Schablitsky explains that she knows where Braddock’s Road enters Little Meadow and where it exits the campsite, but she loses the road in the open Meadow.

In Alexandria, we all know where to find Braddock’s Road. It starts at its intersection with West Street in front of the Braddock Road Metro Station. On April 17, 1755, General Braddock leaves John Carlyle’s house and takes this road from Alexandria to the banks of the Monongahela River and his death in the Battle of the Monongahela.

Today it takes only four and a half hours to travel the 235 miles from the Carlyle House to Braddock, Pennsylvania where the battle occurs 262 years ago this coming July. Braddock’s force consists of the 44th Regiment of Foot under the command of Sir Peter Halkett and the

48th Regiment of Foot commanded by Colonel Thomas Dunbar. The colonial militiamen are mostly from Virginia and Maryland. Some accompanied Halkett and the 44th and some traveled with Dunbar’s 48th.

The first element of the expedition departs Alexandria on April 5. Right from the start Braddock splits his force with Halkett’s 44th heading west from Alexandria for the Old Fairfax County Courthouse near present day Tysons Corner shopping center, while Dunbar and the 48th head north toward Georgetown and the Rock Creek. At Frederick, Maryland Colonel George Washington and General Braddock catch up with the troops.

As the expeditionary force departs Frederick it again heads in its separate ways toward “The King’s Fort” at Cumberland, Maryland. From its disjointed beginning to its disastrous end the Braddock expedition encompasses 95 grueling days for the men and women who participate. Along the entire route, but especially at the encampments, there are plenty of opportunities for members of the expedition to lose stuff.

On the 10th of June 1755 a reunited British force departs Cumberland. The 44th and 48th Regiments of Foot with the expedition's artillery pieces in tow march off together with their 500 or so colonial recruits but only eight of the Native American allies expected to guide them west. On June 16 they stop at Little Meadow.

During his lecture and her television appearance, Ludlow and Dr. Schablitsky



**CARLYLE HOUSE
HISTORIC PARK**

talk about what they are looking for and what they find at Little Meadow.

The “Brown Bess” musket is the nickname for the standard weapon used by British infantry in the 18th Century. It was a muzzle-loading smoothbore “Land Pattern Musket” made using 53 separate parts and most are metal. The metal detectors easily pick up the signal of a flint lock, the firing mechanism from a “Brown Bess” musket. The flint lock found at Little Meadow is mangled from being hit several times by plows.

The barrel of a “Brown Bess” has a .75 caliber bore and the typical musket ball is about .69 caliber. Considering that the standard issue for each infantryman is at least 40 rounds there should be some musket balls lying around the encampment at Little Meadow. But the metal detectors are picking up signals from some very strange pieces of lead shot.

The balls did not hit anything, but they are not spherical. They are smashed nearly flat. They look like someone bit down and crunched them between their teeth. There is the clear impression of a tooth in the lead, a very large tooth. You can even see the cusp marks in the metal. It takes some investigating to determine how the tooth impressions get into the lead balls. The culprits are clearly pigs. The pigs probably chew on shot for the same documented reason soldiers suck on lead shot. It tastes sweet.

Besides the infantryman’s cartridge box full of lead shot and all the metal parts to a “Brown Bess” there are lots of other sources for pieces of metal on a battlefield and in a military

encampment. In his lecture Ludlow describes the mid-18th Century foot soldier as “a walking scrap metal yard.” His uniform is studded with dozens of metal buttons. He wears metal buckles on his shoes as well as his belt and he carries a metal canteen and mess kit.

The archaeologists find quite a few uniform buttons. The buttons are dateable by the way the metal loop used to sew them onto clothing is attached. One of Ludlow’s slides shows a metal button found at Little Meadow that dates from 1750 to 1812.

Metal detectors sound off when they come in range of aluminum pull tabs. They produce the same signal as gold. The detectors sweeping Little Meadow detect some precious metals: silver coins. They are the same kind of silver coins displayed on John Carlyle’s desk.

During the Braddock Road survey the MDOT archaeologists find silver Spanish Reals in the form of “pieces of eight”. The finds include a whole eight Real coin dated 1722 and minted in Madrid and pieces of two other silver coins. If you use the information in footnote #3 to view “Road to the Past,” Episode 2901 of OUTDOORS MARYLAND, you’ll see Dr. Schablitsky and her crew in the act of finding “pieces of eight” at Little Meadow.

Foreign coinage, especially Spanish coin, is highly valued because of its fineness. The minted in Madrid mark assures the 18th century merchant that the coin is of the finest pure silver. Spanish and other foreign currency made of silver or gold is accepted as legal tender in the United States until the



**CARLYLE HOUSE
HISTORIC PARK**

Currency Act of 1857. Even during the Civil War, Spanish gold and silver coins are found in the pockets of soldiers killed on both sides.

In 1755 Braddock's Road took him from Alexandria to defeat and death at the beginning of the French and Indian War. Today, more than two hundred and fifty years after that war ends, his road over the mountains and through the wilderness remains one of the ways west for American travelers. And, shortly that way will be both wider and straighter and history will know more about Braddock and his soldiers because of the work of some adventuresome archaeologists and their metal detectors.