

**COLONEL EPHRAIM
WILLIAMS, AN
APPRECIATION**

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Colonel Ephraim Williams, an appreciation by William A. Pew

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WILLIAM A. PEW

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COLONEL EPHRAIM WILLIAMS

Colonel Ephraim Williams
An Appreciation

BY

WILLIAM A. PEW

LATE MAJOR, U. S. A., SOMETIME COLONEL, 5TH MASS. INF. U. S. V., AND
MAJOR GENERAL RETIRED, MASS. NATIONAL GUARD

WITH A FOREWORD BY

GENERAL LEONARD WOOD

WILLIAMSTOWN, MASS.

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FOREWORD

GENERAL PEW, in his "Appreciation" of Colonel Ephraim Williams of the Massachusetts Colonial Forces, has effectively removed an oft-repeated charge of carelessness and want of military skill and precaution from the record of a brave soldier who fell in a well conducted and, so far as he was concerned, bravely fought action.

In doing this he has gathered and arranged in a convincing manner much information concerning a generally misunderstood action, and has added materially to our fund of information concerning the struggles of our arms during the Colonial period.

General Pew has done this with the same thoroughness and efficiency which he displayed in the operations of the Spanish-American War and in the conduct of the National Guard of his State since that war.

The "Appreciation" is an act of tardy justice to one who well and gallantly played his part in the bitter struggle between British and French for control in North America.

LEONARD WOOD,

Maj. Genl., U. S. A.

CHICAGO, ILL.,
June 10, 1919.

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COLONEL EPHRAIM WILLIAMS

An Appreciation

BY

WILLIAM A. PEW

Late Maj. U. S. A., Sometime Colonel 8th Mass. Inf. U. S. V., and
Major General retired, Mass. National Guard

WHAT do we know of Colonel Ephraim Williams? Is it possible to form a truer estimate of his worth as a soldier than history has allowed him?

In regard to his private life, the story comes down to us, that he left his small fortune as a foundation for learning, not so much from a desire to serve his fellow men, as because his cousin Elizabeth had refused his hand and all his worldly goods. Investigation discloses two cousins Elizabeth. At the time of the supposed rejection one had long since married and for some years had been dead. The other was a girl who, in Williams' lifetime, never used more than one digit to tell her age. To the latter he left his silver service and one hundred dollars. It is hardly to be supposed he offered his heart either to a lady in the grave or to one in the cradle.

May there not be some discrepancies in the other

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tradition, that he was a soldier of little capacity, fell into an ambush and was killed as a result of his own stupidity in not sending out scouts?

There is not much to guide us as we read contemporary records except common sense. We must remember Colonel Williams was not only a tried soldier, but also a man of superior intelligence, the friend of men in high places of his day and generation. There may have been a touch of irony in the man who called the Williams' family the "River Gods," but it showed them as outstanding figures among their fellows.

The fighting between the English and the French colonists was a primitive warfare. The country through which they passed was in itself an ambush. There were no railways, no telegraph or telephone connections, no air service, only paths through the forest, few and rough. Some chances had to be taken, and caution was associated with boldness but never with temerity. The commanding officer marched at the head of his troops armed with a musket. He wore his sword only on state occasions or when he had his portrait painted. In the forest forays an advance guard and scouting were the only protection. It is no more to be thought that Colonel Williams neglected his scouts, than that he left his musket hanging over the mantel shelf.

On September 8, 1755, Colonel Williams fell