

**THE VEIL REMOVED; OR,
REFLECTIONS ON DAVID
HUMPHREY'S ESSAY ON THE
LIFE OF ISRAEL PUTNAM**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649728619

The Veil Removed; Or, Reflections on David Humphrey's Essay on the Life of Israel Putnam by
John Fellows

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

JOHN FELLOWS

**THE VEIL REMOVED; OR,
REFLECTIONS ON DAVID
HUMPHREY'S ESSAY ON THE
LIFE OF ISRAEL PUTNAM**

THE
VEIL REMOVED;
OR
REFLECTIONS
ON
DAVID HUMPHREYS' ESSAY ON THE LIFE
OF
ISRAEL PUTNAM.

ALSO,
NOTICES OF OLIVER W. B. PEABODY'S LIFE OF THE SAME,
S. SWETT'S SKETCH OF BUNKER HILL BATTLE,
ETC. ETC.

BY JOHN FELLOWS.

"History has been styled, 'The evidence of time—the depository of events.' It should oblige all who have performed any distinguished part on the theater of the world to appear before us in their proper character; and to render the account of their actions at the tribunal of posterity, as models which ought to be followed, or as examples to be censured and avoided."—*Gordon. Hist. Am. Rev.*

NEW YORK:
JAMES D. LOCKWOOD,
5 JOHN-STREET.

1843.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

PREFACE.

“Is the time never to arrive when an honest man can tell the truth as to the events of the revolution? Are facts, in regard to the character and conduct of Gen. Putnam, to be refuted by idle denials, and tales to be deemed veracious because they have been often repeated? I trust not, but that the time will come when the candid and impartial historian will do full justice to the men who were distinguished in the war for national independence.”

The above is an extract of a letter in reference to the work I had commenced. The prophecy of the writer is, I believe, already fulfilled. *The fullness of time*, in respect to this matter, has at length arrived.

Judge Marshall has done much to dissipate the mist that enveloped a portion of our revolutionary history, and other lights have appeared since his publication, that clear the way for Mr. Bancroft to complete the work.

Objections are made to my undertaking; that it is too late to correct erroneous statements of occurrences which happened so long ago as our revolutionary war; that the sacred ashes of the dead should not be disturbed, *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*, etc. As though the truth should not be told, for the benefit of the living, from fear of injuring the deceased, who are beyond the reach of harm. This principle acted upon would render history as worthless as romance.

Many even say, if they suspected they had been

cheated in respect to the history of Putnam, they would not wish to be undeceived ; showing thereby the tenacity with which the generality of mankind cling to preconceived opinions. With such, all argument would be vain and useless.

It is, moreover, said that the feelings of the descendants of Gen. Putnam would be wounded by any remarks tending to depreciate the military fame of their ancestor. To this I answer, that in the United States every person is estimated by his individual merits, and the descendants of Gen. Putnam may be entitled to the highest respect, without claiming one of the greatest military heroes in the world for their ancestor.

If the history of our glorious revolution has been perverted by awarding undue honor to some, to the neglect of those more deserving ; if the stories promulgated to the world by Col. Humphreys and others of the wonderful prowess and achievements of Israel Putnam are not true, and the credit bestowed upon them disreputable to an intelligent, free people, I can see no reason why they should not be shown to be at variance with fact. This is the object I have in view, without any ill-will towards Gen. Putnam, or any of his family, none of whom have I ever known.

I have not written without book ; but if any errors, in matter of fact, should be pointed out, that have crept into the work, they will be acknowledged with pleasure, and corrected. Vituperative abuse will be suffered to pass unheeded.

NEW YORK, Feb., 1843.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PUTNAM'S Birth and Education—Singular Adventure in Killing a Wolf, p. 32.—Engages in the French War—Expedition in quest of a Prisoner, 38.—Putnam and Durkee tumble into a Clay-pit, 40.—A Singular Race, 46.—P. goes on a Scout *in open daylight*, 48.—Chivalrous Adventure, 52.—P.'s remarkable Courage in extinguishing a Fire which had taken place in the Barracks at Fort Edward, 55.

CHAPTER II.

Expedition against Ticonderoga, 57.—Perilous descent of the Rapids, near Fort Miller, 66.—Scout to South Bay—Putnam made prisoner, and taken to Montreal, 67.—Col. Peter Schuyler and Mrs. Jemima Howe, 77.

CHAPTER III.

Expedition against Montreal, 86.

CHAPTER IV.

Putnam offered a Bribe by Gen. Gage to support the Royal cause, 97.—Gen. Charles Lee—Skirmish on Hog and Noddle Islands, 103.—Letter from Roger Sherman to Gen. Wooster on the appointment of a Major-general by Congress, from Connecticut, 106.—Letter from Gen. Washington to the President of Congress on the appointment of general officers, 107.—

Trumbull's Painting of the Battle of Bunker Hill, 109.—Extracts from the Histories of the Battle of Bunker Hill by various authors, with the testimony of persons in the action, 116.

CHAPTER V.

Sketch of Bunker Hill Battle, by S. Swett, 141.—George E. Ellis's Oration, in commemoration of the Battle of Bunker Hill, 155.

CHAPTER VI.

Battle of Long Island, 165.—Letter of Gen. Sullivan to the President of Congress, 171.—Letter of Gen. Washington to Gen. Sullivan, 172.

CHAPTER VII.

Putnam's command on the North River. Forts Montgomery and Clinton taken, 174.—Col. Hamilton's Letters to Gen. Washington respecting Gen. Putnam's neglect to obey his orders to forward reinforcements to him in the vicinity of Philadelphia, 193.—Washington's Letter to Putnam requiring him in the most peremptory manner to forward the troops, before ordered, immediately, 199.—Chancellor Livingston's Letter to Gen. Washington, complaining of Gen. Putnam's "imprudent lenity to the disaffected, and too great intercourse with the enemy," 211.—Horse Neck Expedition, 213.—Gen. Putnam's command of fifty men, stationed at Princeton—Capt. McPherson, 219.—Mrs. Coghlan, 221.—Military conduct of Col. Burr and Gen. Putnam contrasted, 225.—Putnam's death—Reflections.

INTRODUCTION.

I SHALL have frequent occasion to refer to the journal of Major Robert Rogers, who commanded a corps of provincial troops denominated Rangers, during the French or Seven Years' War, so called. The journal was published at London, in 1765. And as the work is probably little known in America, it will doubtless be satisfactory to the reader to be made acquainted with the character and standing of the author. For this purpose, I will in the first place give an abstract of the introduction to the work; followed by official documents, establishing the reputation Major Rogers acquired with the respective commanders; likewise examples of his hazardous enterprises.

"I claim," says the author, "the merit of impartially relating matters of fact without disguise or equivocation. Most of those which relate to myself can at present be attested by living witnesses."

As an apology for defects in the style of his journal, he says: "It is the soldier, not the scholar, who writes; that many things here were written in deserts, on rocks and mountains, amidst the hurries, disorders, and noise of war. This was my situation when the following journals were transmitted to the generals and commanders I acted under; which I am not now at liberty to correct, except in some very gross and palpable errors."

Major Rogers was a native of a frontier town in the

then province of New Hampshire, where, he says, "I could hardly avoid obtaining some knowledge of the manners, customs, and language of the Indians; and my manner of life was such as led me to a general acquaintance with the British and French settlements.

"At the opening of the campaign, in 1755, troops were levied in the several provinces of New England, New York, and New Jersey. The general rendezvous was appointed at Albany, in the province of New York, and the troops put under the command of Major-general (since Sir William) Johnson. I had the honor of commanding a company in the troops furnished by New Hampshire; and was recommended to the general as a person well acquainted with the haunts and passes of the enemy, and the Indian method of fighting."

"The 24th of September, [1755,] I received an order from the general to proceed with four men to Crown Point, and, if practicable, bring a prisoner from thence; and with an account of the manner in which I executed this order, I shall begin my journals."

The major then proceeds to detail his various expeditions and rencounters with the enemy; of which I shall presently give an account of two, that proved very disastrous to the rangers. Reference to others will also occur, in the course of this work.—I now pass to the official documents alluded to above.

"In January, 1758," says the author, "Lord Loudoun informed me of his intention to levy five additional companies of rangers, desiring me to name the persons whom I thought fit for officers, and such as might be depended upon to levy the men, giving me the following instructions: 'Whereas, I have thought proper to