

Colonel Samuel Elbert's Letter

Dear General, Frederica, April 19, 1778
I have the happiness to inform you that about 10 o'clock this forenoon, the Brigantine *Hinchinbrooke*, the Sloop *Rebecca*, and a prize brig, all struck the British Tyrant's colors and surrendered to the American arms. Having received intelligence that the above vessels were at this place, I put about three hundred men, by detachment from the troops under my command at Fort Howe, on board the three galleys—the *Washington*, Capt. Hardy; the *Lee*, Capt. Braddock; and the *Bulloch*, Capt. Hatcher; and a detachment of artillery with a field piece, under Capt. Young, I put on board a boat. With this little army, we embarked at Darien, and last evening effected a landing at a bluff about a mile below the town; leaving Col. White on board the *Lee*, Capt. Melvin on board the *Washington*, and Lieut. Petty on board the *Bulloch*, each with a sufficient party of troops. Immediately on Landing, I dispatched Lieut. Col. Ray and Major Roberts, with about 100 men, who marched directly up to the town, and made prisoners three marines and two sailors belonging to the *Hinchinbrooke*. It being late, the galleys did not engage until this morning. You must imagine what my feelings were, to see our three little men of war going to the attack of these three vessels, who have spread terror on our coast, and who were drawn up in order of battle; but the weight of our metal soon damped the courage of these heroes, who soon took to their boats; and, as many as could, abandoned the vessels with everything on board, of which we immediately took possession. What is extraordinary, we have not one man hurt. Capt. Ellis [of the *Hinchinbrooke*] is drowned, and Capt. Mowbry [of the *Rebecca*] made his escape.

I am, SAMUEL ELBERT, Col. Commandant

APRIL 19, 1778

As he wrote with flourishing stroke,
Elbert rejoiced, and well he should:
His eyes beheld through clearing smoke
Raccoon Gut strewn with splintered wood,
And ragged stumps where mast had stood;
His galleys' cannons well had spoke.

Hardee aboard the *Washington*,
Braddock commanding the *Lee*,
Hatcher on the *Bulloch*, these three,
Matched wit for wit and gun for gun
With awesome terrors of the sea
Until victory they had won.

None know how long St. Simon shook
From seeming endless cannon roar
Nor just how long the battle took;
But well we know the Hinchinbrook
And sloop Rebecca did no more
Terrorize the seas as before.

Britannia may rule the wave,
But not that day. To its regret
Goliath had its David met
In form of men who freedom crave
Enough to choose it or the grave
And make the payments on its debt.

By J. G. (Jerry) Braddock, Sr.
4th great-grandson of John Cutler Braddock
Commander of the *Lee* Galley.

Presented at the first Georgia Patriots
Day Celebration April 19, 2005