Hero Tales from History

Smith Burnham · *1922 · English original*

This grouped route crosses ancient inquiry, medieval leadership, voyages, national service, invention, and care.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

What different kinds of contribution can earn a place in a gallery of heroes?

"his active mind kept / trying to find out the reason for everything."
Socrates, the Grand Old Man of Greece

The collection puts thought, invention, command, peace, and nursing beside one another, making achievement a subject for comparison.

KEY CHARACTERS

Socrates
Provides an example of questioning sustained through danger.

Joan of Arc
Leads through devotion and resolve under severe trial.

Ferdinand Magellan
Plans a voyage completed by survivors after his death.

George Washington
Connects early formation with military and civic responsibility.

Samuel F. B. Morse
Develops a means of communicating rapidly across distance.

Ulysses S. Grant
Combines the narrative of military success with a desire for peace.

Clara Barton
Makes sustained care for others a form of public service.

Grades 6–8
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

Ancient inquiry and leadership

SOCRATES, THE GRAND OLD MAN OF GREECE

Lawgivers, poets, thinkers, and commanders establish several forms of public greatness; Socrates gives inquiry a courageous voice.

- Burnham begins with figures of ancient inquiry and leadership, told as short lives.
- The book is a school collection of hero tales, 1922, from Troy and Greece onward.
- These are narrative chapters, not a single continuous novel.

> *"his active mind kept / trying to find out the reason for everything."*
> Socrates, the Grand Old Man of Greece

02

Medieval purpose and courage

JOAN OF ARC AND THE LILIES OF FRANCE

Rulers and Joan of Arc bring command, devotion, and costly resolve into the book's next historical group.

- Medieval purpose and courage have their own group of lives.
- Knights, saints, and rulers appear as examples for young readers.
- Keep Burnham's chapter titles when you cite a story.

> *"She carried everywhere a beautiful white banner, embroidered with / lilies."*
> Joan of Arc and the Lilies of France

03

Routes across the sea

MAGELLAN, THE MAN OF THE STRAITS

Explorers enlarge the map through voyages whose consequences extend beyond any one traveler's lifetime.

- Explorers and sea routes get chapters of their own.
- The emphasis is on daring and discovery, told as tales.
- The hosted text is the complete Hero Tales from History.

> *"the / ship _Victoria_ returned to the Spanish port from which it had sailed,"*
> Magellan, the Man of the Straits

04

Founding communities and a republic

ROGER WILLIAMS, A MINISTER WHO LIVED THE GOLDEN RULE, OPENING

Settlement chapters lead into revolutionary service and the emergence of national leadership, including Washington's public career.

- Founding communities and the American republic are told in the same heroic manner.
- Washington appears among them, as do other named lives of the new country.
- Place these chapters in the book's later American section, not at the front.

> *"freedom to think and act as / they believed right in matters of religion."*
> Roger Williams, a Minister Who Lived the Golden Rule, opening

05

Invention as persistent work

HOW MORSE SENT LETTERS BY LIGHTNING

A group of practical innovators turns repeated effort into new tools, machines, and means of communication.

- Inventors and makers are treated as persistent workers.
- Franklin the printer is already on the opening plate of the hosted book.
- Invention here is character and habit, not a list of gadgets.

> *""What hath God wrought!""*
> How Morse Sent Letters by Lightning

06

Command directed toward peace

ULYSSES S. GRANT, THE GENERAL WHO HATED WAR

Grant's career supplies a military narrative whose stated ideal extends beyond victory to restored peace.

- Ulysses S. Grant and other commanders are told with an eye toward peace after arms.
- Burnham writes for the school, in plain narrative.
- Cite the Grant chapter by its heading in this book, not by a later biography.

> *"Wherever General Grant went, he went as a man of peace."*
> Ulysses S. Grant, the General Who Hated War

07

Care as public service

CLARA BARTON, THE ANGEL OF THE BATTLEFIELD

Clara Barton's nursing and the final literary portrait broaden the gallery beyond the battlefield commander and inventor.

- Care as public service closes some of the later American lives.
- The collection is meant to hold up honor, courage, and usefulness.
- The index at the end of the hosted text is part of the 1922 book.

> *"So Clara stayed with her big brother, day and night, for two long years."*
> Clara Barton, the Angel of the Battlefield

Varieties of courage

Persistent work

Leadership and care

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 6–8

1. The preface identifies selected episodes rather than complete biographies.
2. Groups follow themes and periods with large changes of place and date.
3. Dramatic conversations should be distinguished from verified transcripts.

Quotations are verbatim from the English original, Project Gutenberg #49356: Smith Burnham, Hero Tales from History, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/burnham-hero-tales-from-history/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.