



## Chapter 8 by Kay Hively

# Three Generals

The car quickly picked up speed and soon they arrived in Laclede. Eddie watched as they turned out into the country. Soon Mr. Barnes stopped the car, although there was no house nearby.

By now the boys knew someone important was born there. They

rushed to Mr. Barnes' side to hear the story.

Mr. Barnes asked the boys if they remembered that General Bradley had been

a five-star general. Eddie said yes, and so was General Eisenhower. They were in the class that the stars fell upon.

Mr. Barnes said the five stars are given along with the title of General of the Army. However, Congress passed a law creating the General of the Armies, which was a rank better than five stars. The rank was given to General John J. Pershing.

And on this little piece of ground was where General Pershing, the greatest general in the U. S. Army, was born in 1860. Like many boys in

rural Missouri, Pershing had many ambitions. He started working to make them come true early in life.

Because his father was a businessman, he could afford to send John Pershing to school. In the 1860s most boys could not afford to go to

school, or there wasn't even one for them to attend.

Eddie and Michael began to ask questions. Did he have any brothers and sisters?

Did he go to West Point?

Yes, Mr. Barnes said, General Pershing had three sisters and two brothers.

And he did go to West Point. And years later he would go back to West Point to teach and earn the nickname "Black Jack Pershing."

He was a fighting man, Mr. Barnes said. He fought in the Indian Wars and in Cuba with Theodore Roosevelt. In Cuba he fought in the famous battle of San Juan Hill. But John J. Pershing made a real name for himself when he was made

the commander of two million troops in World War I.

The boys stood looking around, and finally Eddie asked how come so many great generals were born, not only in one state, but just miles apart.

This time Mrs. Barnes answered. No one knows that answer, she said. But she liked to think it was because they got a good education and practiced great leadership. Good leadership will make anyone a success, no matter what career they choose, she said.

The weather was turning colder as the boys looked over the countryside.

Eddie thought to himself, maybe leaders can be grown like corn out here in the country. Maybe I can grow up to be a leader like General Pershing.

As the car pulled away, the boys stared out the window and didn't say a word. Maybe they were thinking about the next time they played army. Did they learn something today that would make them better at the game?

It had been a long day for the boys. They had left home early in the morning not knowing where they were going. The day had been far better than going to Kansas City.

Mr. Barnes asked the boys if they were hungry. Both said yes. They began to look along the roadside for a picnic table. Eddie hoped his mother had saved some of those dinner rolls.

But suddenly, Mr. Barnes stopped in a town and parked along the street near a cafe. Quickly the boys jumped out. Mr. Barnes told them to be good soldiers and lead the way.

Neither boy had to be told twice; they led the way.



## Things to Think About and Do

- On a map, find the distance from Clark to Keytesville to Laclede, Missouri.
- In 1976, President Gerald Ford named a new General of the Armies. Who was it?
- Write a Letter to the Editor of your local newspaper to tell others about the three generals and how they became great leaders.