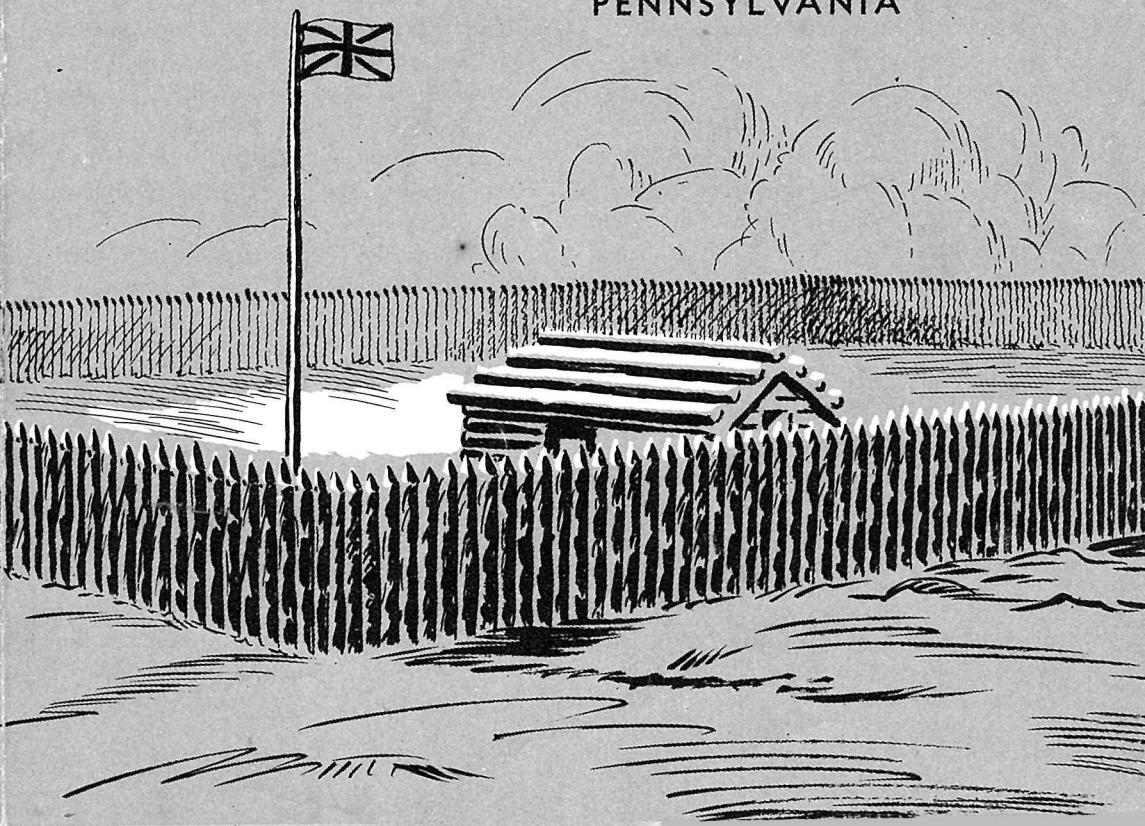




Washington

FORT NECESSITY

NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD SITE
PENNSYLVANIA



Fort Necessity

National Battlefield Site

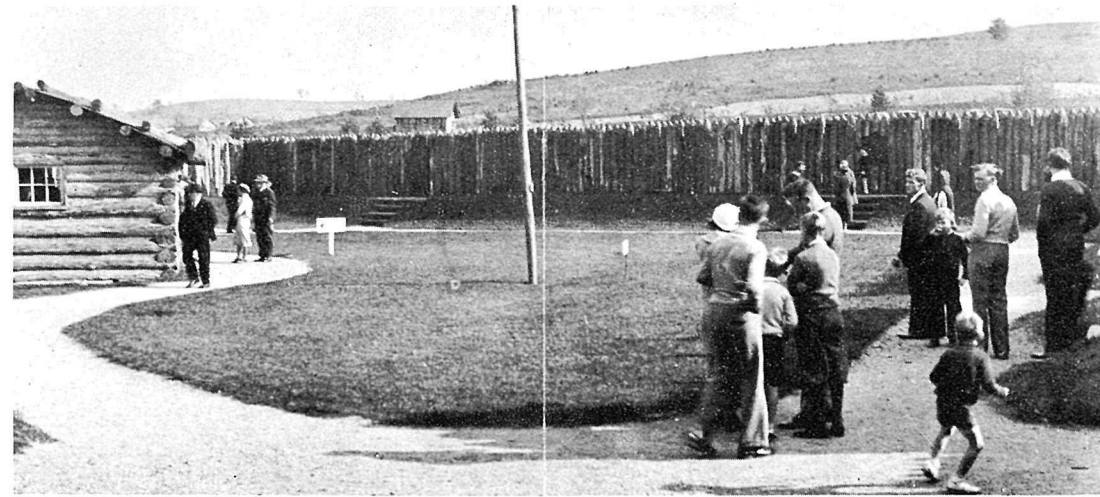
★ *Washington's first major battle and the opening engagement of a seven-year struggle between England and France for control of North America*

AT Fort Necessity, July 3, 1754, occurred the opening engagement of the French and Indian War fought by England and France for the control of the North American continent. Braddock's advance toward the forks of the Ohio in 1755 was a direct result of the French success at Fort Necessity in Great Meadows the year before.

These events in the unbroken solitude of the Indian wilderness were the opening episodes of a world-wide conflagration, known in America as the French and Indian War and in Europe as the Seven Years' War, which ended in 1763 with the French power being expelled from North America and India.

The action at Fort Necessity was the first major episode in the military career of George Washington.

French and English Rivalry
Rival claims between the French and English to the trans-Allegheny territory approached a



Within the reconstructed stockade at Fort Necessity

climax about 1750. Based on the English claims, the Ohio Company (organized in 1748 by a group of Virginians) obtained a large grant of 200,000 acres of land in the upper Ohio Valley and established a post at Wills Creek, now Cumberland, Md. From here the Company started to open an 80-mile wagon road westward to the Youghiogheny River over the Nemaquin Trail.

Meahtime, the French advanced southward and westward from Fort Niagara, driving out the English traders. Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia, in 1753, sent an expedition to warn the French to withdraw. He selected his adjutant for the Southern District of Virginia, George Washington, to head the expedition. Washington, then only 21 years old, made the journey in midwinter of 1753-54, but the mission failed. Dinwiddie then sent a small force to build a fort at the forks of the Ohio River, where Pittsburgh is now situated, but the French drove off the Virginians and built Fort Duquesne on the site.

Early in April 1754, a small regiment of

Virginians under Colonel Joshua Fry proceeded westward from Virginia toward Monongahela. Washington, then a lieutenant colonel, was second in command. While Fry remained at Wills

Creek, where he died May 31, Washington pushed on with a few companies over the Nemaquin Trail.

The Jumonville Fight

On May 24, 1754, Washington descended the hills to the east of Great Meadows. Despite the fact that the open land in the meadow was nearly all marsh, a stop was made here and the site was considered to have military advantages.

Three days later, on the evening of May 27, a runner from Tenacharison, the Half King, a chief of the Senecas and a bitter foe of the French, arrived at Washington's camp at Great Meadows with the news that the hiding place of a body of French had been discovered on Laurel Mountain.

A party led by Washington, comprising 40 or more men, immediately set out from Great Meadows in darkness and at dawn reached Half King's camp, only 6 miles away, after an arduous all-night march over mountain trails in inky blackness and heavy rain. The united

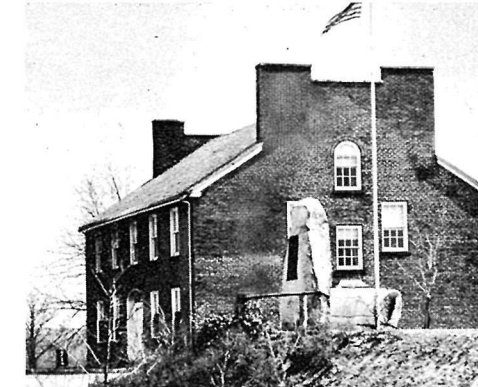
Virginians and Indians started for the camp of Jumonville, the French commander, which was situated about 2 miles to the northward.

Jumonville was taken by surprise. Ten of his men were killed; one wounded. Jumonville was among those killed. Twenty-one survivors were made prisoners, one man escaping to carry the news to the French at Fort Duquesne. In Washington's command only one man was killed and two wounded. The man who was killed was buried on the spot.

Surrender of Fort Necessity

After the Jumonville fight, Washington undertook to fortify his position at Great Meadows. He built a palisade fort during the last 2 days of May and the first day of June. In his journal entry for June 25, Washington speaks of this structure as "Fort Necessity."

On June 9, reinforcements reached Washington, increasing his force of Virginians at Great Meadows to 293 officers and men. An independent company of approximately 100 men from South Carolina, under the command of Captain Mackay, also arrived. With these reinforcements came supplies and nine swivel guns.



Mount Washington Tavern, located a few hundred feet from the site of Fort Necessity

The month of June was spent in opening a road from Fort Necessity to a clearing in the forest, known as Gist's Plantation, in the direction of the forks of the Ohio. Alarming reports about the French reached Washington and it was decided to withdraw to Wills Creek, but Great Meadows, reached on July 1, was as far as the exhausted troops could travel. The next day was spent in strengthening Fort Necessity, which enclosed only a small area of less than one-third of an acre.

Shortly before noon on July 3 a force of about 600 French and 100 Indians appeared before the



Old tollgate house built in 1814 on Old National Pike, a few miles east of Fort Necessity

fort and began the attack. The fighting, which began about 11 o'clock in the morning, continued sporadically until about 8 o'clock at night. The South Carolinians fought in trenches outside the fort. Washington and the Virginians were drawn up inside the palisade. Rain which fell throughout the day soon flooded the marshy ground. Both sides suffered heavily, although the losses were greater among the Colonials than among the French and Indians.

After considerable negotiation, extending from 8 o'clock in the evening until near midnight, following a proposal by Coulon de Villiers, brother of Jumonville and commander of the French, that Washington capitulate, the terms were finally reduced to writing and accepted by Washington and Mackay. The Colonials were to withdraw with honors of war, retaining their arms and baggage. Their nine swivel guns were to be surrendered.

The Colonial troops marched away from Fort Necessity and Great Meadows on the morning of July 4 for Wills Creek and from this point returned to Virginia. The French destroyed Fort Necessity and then returned to Fort Duquesne at the forks of the Ohio.

The reconstructed stockade and the site of Great Meadows as seen from the point where Washington first saw the marshy opening in the forest. The old Braddock Trail ran just to the left of the large tree in the right foreground.



Historical Areas in the Vicinity

Braddock's Grave—Following the failure at Great Meadows in 1754, England decided to send a large force against the French. On September 24, 1754, the Duke of Cumberland appointed Maj. Gen. Edward Braddock as Captain General of all British soldiers in the American Colonies. This army of British and Colonial troops left Alexandria, Va., on March 15, 1755. They pushed westward to the Ohio Company's post at Wills Creek, which was renamed Fort Cumberland, and hence over a road, 12 feet wide, which Braddock ordered cut through the forest past Fort Necessity toward the forks of the Ohio. Braddock was mortally wounded in the Battle of Monongahela, and died during the retreat of his defeated army. His body was buried in the middle of the road at the site of the Old Orchard camp, about 1 mile west of the site of Fort Necessity. In 1804, remains said to be those of General Braddock were discovered by workmen in the old roadbed near a ravine. Later they were removed to the crest of an adjacent knoll. A monument marks this latter site in an area known as Braddock Park, along U. S. No. 40, a short distance west of Fort Necessity. This site is under the control of the Fort Necessity Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution.

Site of Jumonville Fight—This area, the scene of the opening episode of the French and Indian War, is situated about 5 miles northwest of Braddock's grave and about 6 miles from Fort Necessity. It is reached by an improved road extending 3 miles north from U. S. No. 40. The site of the wild scene that was enacted in the primitive forest high along the east slope of Laurel Mountain on that 28th of May, 1754, is almost as lonely and secluded today as it was more than two centuries ago. This site is owned by the Methodist Center of Pittsburgh.

Mount Washington Tavern (Fort Necessity State Museum)—This historic structure is located on the Old National Pike (U. S. No. 40), on a hill overlooking the site of Fort Necessity. Built about 1818, it was one of the

numerous stage stations on the old highway which, during the early part of the nineteenth century, was the principal artery of travel between the Atlantic seaboard and the Ohio Valley. The building contains a collection of colonial documents, relics of the Fort Necessity campaign, and military equipment.

The Site

Fort Necessity National Battlefield Site, consisting of a 2-acre plot, was acquired by the War Department in 1931 and was transferred in 1933 to the National Park Service. The reconstructed stockade, which now stands on the site of the original fort, was erected in 1932 by the Fort Necessity Memorial Association.

Fort Necessity is surrounded by a State Park of 311 acres, including most of the 234½ acres at Great Meadows, which Washington bought in 1769 and held during his lifetime.

How to Reach the Site

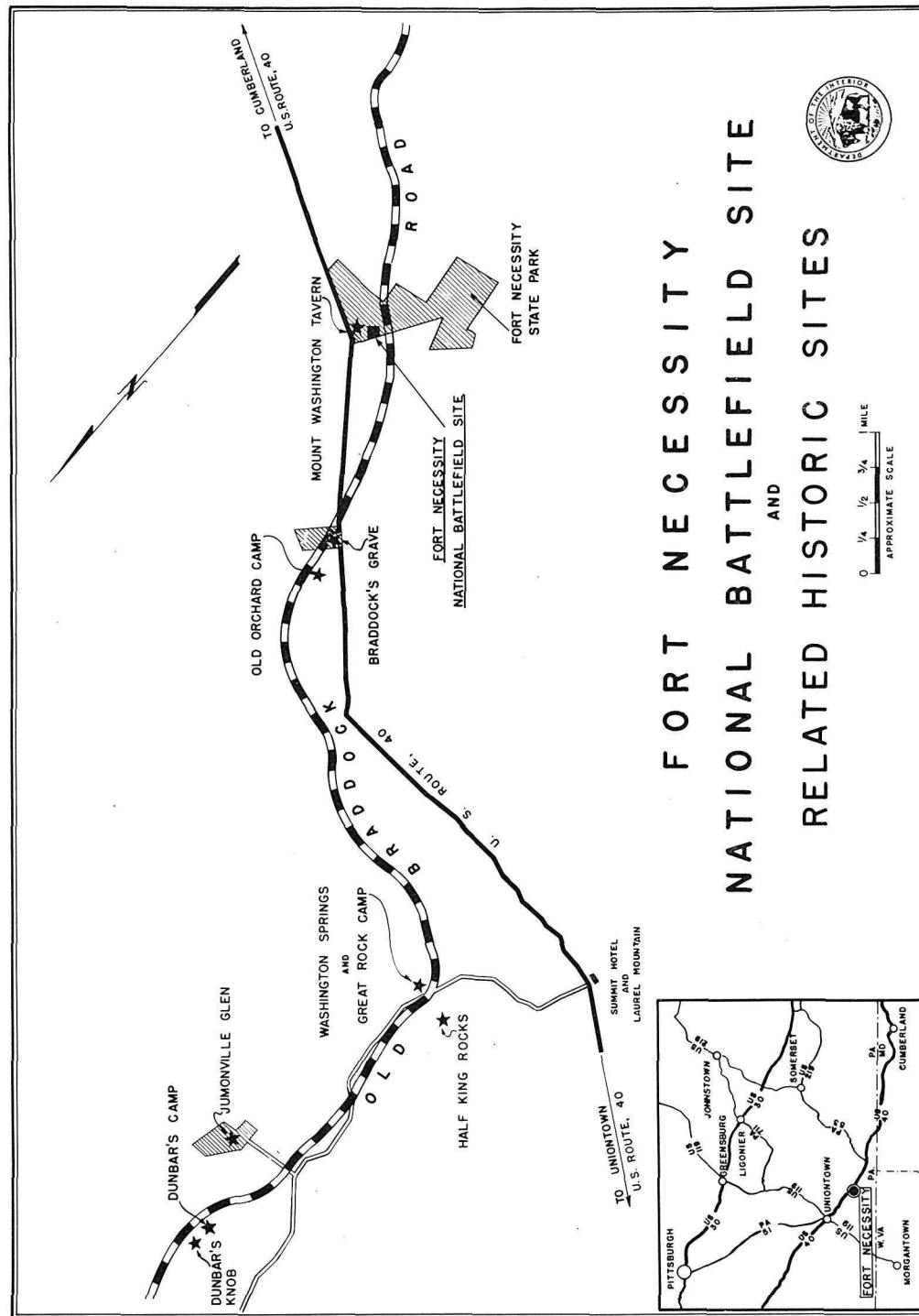
Fort Necessity is located on U. S. No. 40, 11 miles east of Uniontown, Pa.

Service to the Public

Information and literature relating to the site may be obtained from the attendants at the stockade which is open daily. A 16-page booklet containing a summary account of the battle of Fort Necessity, illustrations, and a map of the area may be obtained at the site and from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C., at 10 cents a copy. Organizations and groups are given special service if arrangements are made in advance with the superintendent.

Administration

Fort Necessity National Battlefield Site is a part of the National Park System owned by the people of the United States and administered for them by the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior. Communications concerning the site should be addressed to the Superintendent, Fort Necessity National Battlefield Site, Farmington, Pa.



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