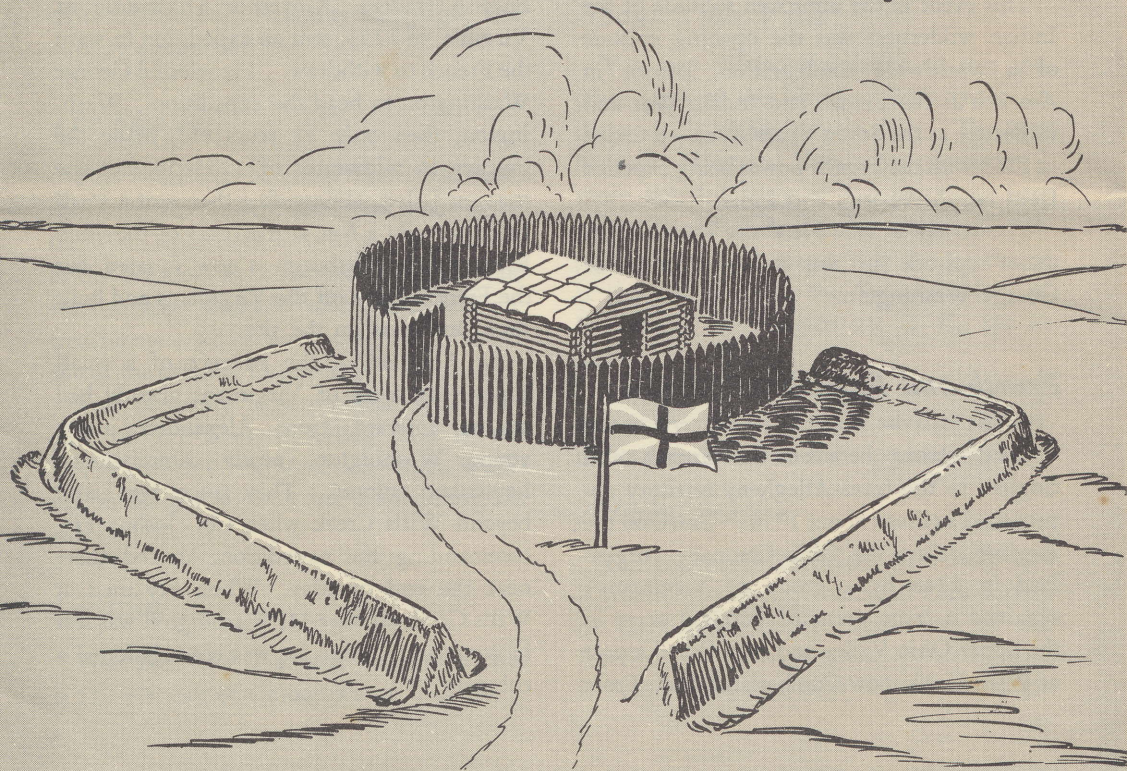


FORT NECESSITY



Washington



NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD SITE
PENNSYLVANIA

Fort Necessity

NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD SITE

Washington's first major battle and the opening engagement of a 7-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.

This event in the unbroken solitude of the Indian wilderness was the opening episode of a worldwide conflagration, known in America as the French and Indian War and in Europe as the Seven Years' War. It 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 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 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.

Meantime, the French advanced southward and westward from Fort Niagara, driving out English traders. Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia, in 1753, sent an expedition to warn the French to withdraw. He selected 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.

By April 1754, the advance of a small supporting force of Virginians already had started forward from Alexandria under young Washington, newly commissioned lieutenant colonel. This force was well beyond Wills Creek when Col. Joshua Fry, commanding the expedition, arrived there near the end of May. When Fry died at Wills Creek on May 31, Washington was left in command. Soon he was commissioned a colonel.

The National Park System, of which this area is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of its people.

The Jumonville Fight

On May 24, 1754, Washington descended the hills to the east of Great Meadows, as the Fort Necessity area was then called. Despite the fact that the meadow was nearly all marsh, a stop was made here, as the site was considered to have military advantages.

Three days later, a runner from 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 Chestnut Ridge.

Washington, leading a party of about 40 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, about 2 miles to the northward.

Jumonville was taken by surprise. Ten men were killed, including Jumonville, and one was wounded. 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.

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.

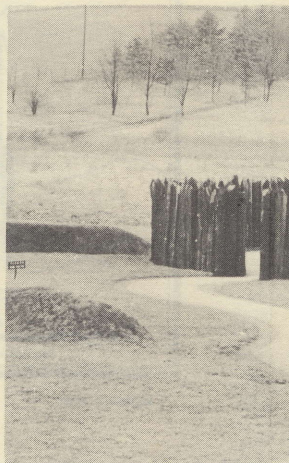
June was spent in opening a road from Fort Necessity to a clearing in the forest, known as Gist's Plantation, in the direction of the forks of the Ohio. Alarming reports about the French reached Washington and it was decided to withdraw to Great Meadows which was reached on July 1. The next day, they strengthened Fort Necessity, which covered an 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 fort and began the attack. The fighting continued sporadically until about

Great Meadows and Fort Necessity from the southwest, the direction from which the French first approached the fort.



Reconstructed Fort Necessity.



8 p. m. First attempting a stand in front of the Fort, Washington soon withdrew his men to the entrenchments. 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.

Negotiations were in progress from 8 p. m. 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 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.

Historical Areas in the Vicinity

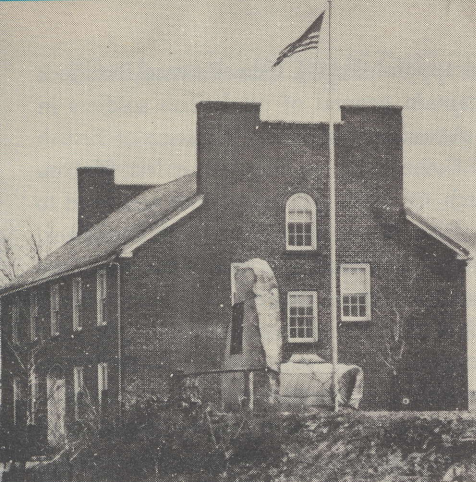
Braddock's Grave.—Following the failure at Great Meadows in 1754, England decided to send a large force against the French. On September 24, 1754, the Duke of Cumber-

land appointed Maj. Gen. Edward Braddock as captain general of all British soldiers in the American Colonies. An 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 on July 9, in the Battle of Monongahela, 8 miles from Fort Duquesne, 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. 40, a short distance west of Fort Necessity. This site is under the control of Fort Necessity Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution.

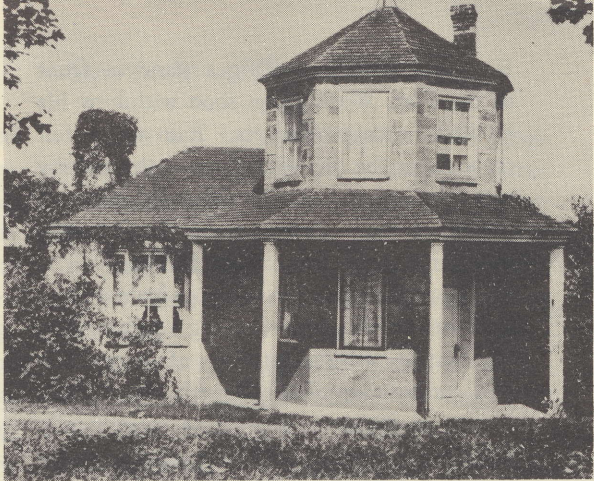
Site of Jumonville Fight.—This area is about 5 miles northwest of Braddock's grave and about 6 miles from Fort Necessity. It is reached by an improved road extending 3 miles north from U. S. 40. The site of the wild scene that was enacted in the primitive forest high along the east slope of Chestnut Ridge, May 28, 1754, is accessible to visitors. This site is owned and preserved by the Methodist Center of Pittsburgh.

Mount Washington Tavern (Fort Necessity State Museum).—This historic structure is on the Old National Pike (U. S. 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 19th century, was the principal artery of travel between the Atlantic seaboard and the Ohio Valley. The building contains colonial documents,





Mount Washington Tavern.



Old tollgate house built in 1814 on Old National Pike.

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 transferred to the National Park Service in 1933. The reconstructed stockade, storehouse, and entrenchments, which now stand on the exact site of the original fort, were erected in 1954.

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.

Location

Fort Necessity National Battlefield Site is 11 miles east of Uniontown on U. S. 40.

About Your Visit

You may obtain information on this and other areas of the National Park System at the stockade which is open daily. The Fort Necessity Historical Handbook, containing a more detailed story of the battle of Fort Necessity and of Braddock's campaign, with photographs and maps, may be purchased at the site or from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington 25, D. C., for 25 cents.

Those who plan to visit the site in a group may receive special service if advance arrangements are made with the superintendent.

Administration

Fort Necessity National Battlefield Site is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Farmington, Pa., is in immediate charge.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

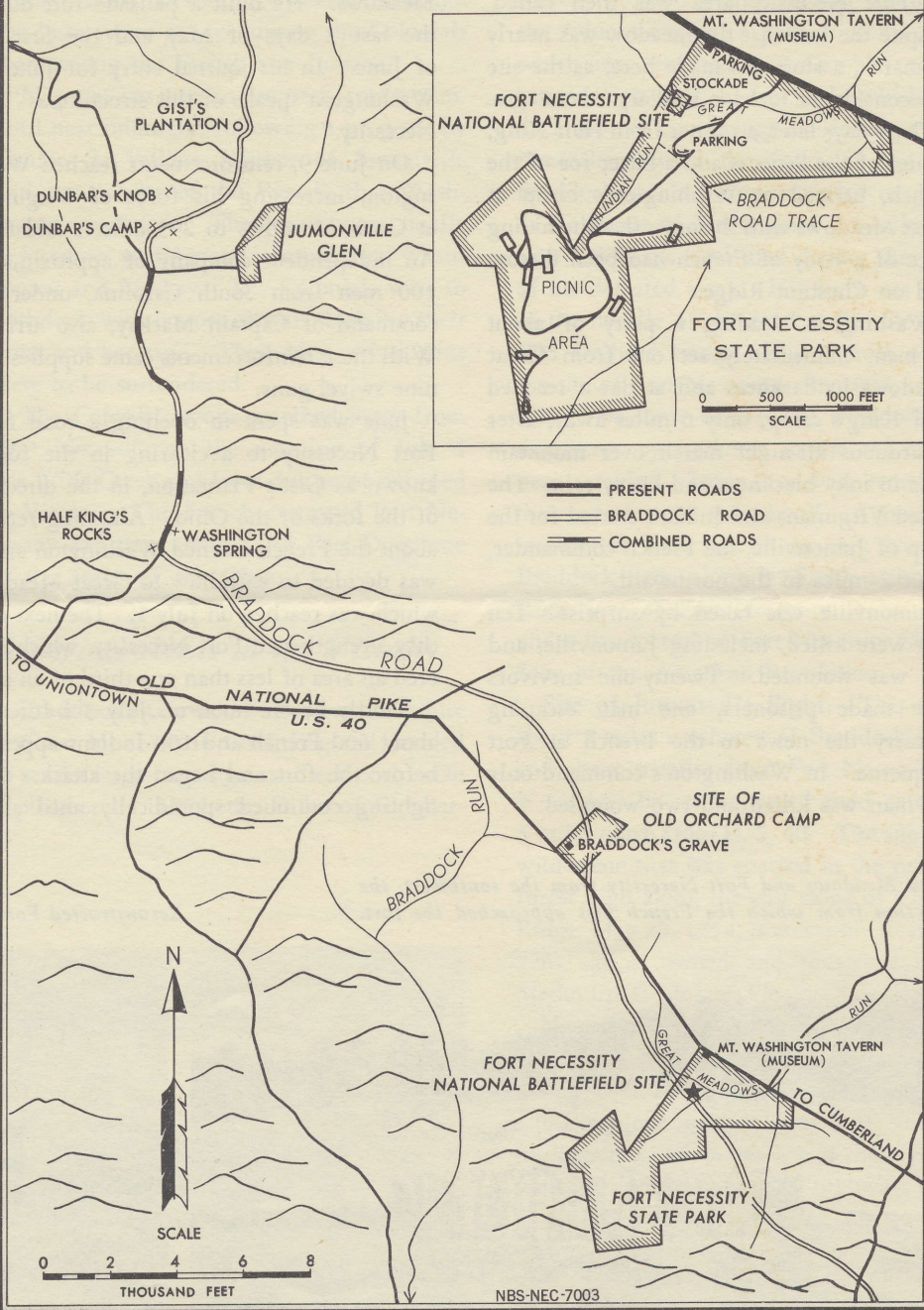
Fred A. Seaton, *Secretary*

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Conrad L. Wirth, *Director*



FORT NECESSITY AND RELATED AREAS



- PRESENT ROADS
- BRADDOCK ROAD
- COMBINED ROADS

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