

T H E S I S .

Subject, Fort Duquesne

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This fort was built during the French and Indian war, which lasted from 1754 to 1763. This war was caused by these nations claiming the region west of the Allegheny mountains along the Ohio river. Before this war there had been three intercolonial wars which had produced hatred, and about this time quarrels were very abundant. The people along the Ohio river saw that they would have to protect this region of country and one way they tried to protect it was by building a fort at the forks of the Ohio river.

Governor Dunwiddie gave Captain Trent orders to build this fort and he began the erection of the fort at the forks of the Ohio under the guide of the Ohio

Company, on Sunday, Feb. 17, 1754. They kept working steadily at the fort, but it was not finished when the people heard the news that the French were coming. The French advanced to the fort by way of the Allegheny river. The French were under guide of Captain Contrecoeur and at this time Captain Trent and his Lieutenant being absent the fort was given over to the French who then took possession of it. The French came down from Canada and their object was to secure the post and erect a fortification. The fortification which they erected at this place was called Fort Duquesne in honor of a Governor of Canada. This fort which was built by the French was the key to the region

west of the Alleghenies and so long as the French held this position, Virginia and Pennsylvania were exposed to Indian attacks. The fort was completed on the 6th of July, 1755 and was well guarded, being mounted with six pieces of cannon of six pound balls, and was not in want of ammunition, it was well supplied.

The next important thing is to know what the fort consisted of and how built. It is situated on the east side the Monongahela in the fork between that river and the Allegheny and where now stands Pittsburg, with its swarming population, its numerous important industries. The shape of the fort is four square with a bastion

at each corner, about fifty yards wide. In the center of the fort a well was situated, but the water was not fit for use. About half the fort was made of square logs placed transversely as in mill dams and filled with earth; the length of these logs was about sixteen feet which was the thickness of the Rampart. The two sides of the fort that do not front the water, was surrounded with a ditch about twelve feet wide and very deep. There were intrenchments on all sides of the fort about seven feet high, and they consist of logs driven in the ground about four rods from the fort against which earth was thrown up; in a gradual ascent. The steep part was next the fort

but had steps for the men to go up and down. The fort had two gates, one on the land side and one on the water side. These gates were also made of logs, the one on the land side was a drawbridge. These bastions at the corners of the fort were filled with earth about eight feet high and each had four guns.

The buildings inside the fort were the same height as the wall of the fort. Between the buildings and the logs of the fort it was filled with earth about eight feet high, and the logs of the fort extend about four feet higher, so that the whole height of the fort was about twelve feet. The fort was situated on dry ground, in the fork was

a woods full of large timber.

In the summer of 1754 the French at the fort numbered about 1,400. Seven hundred were ordered out to meet Washington and a great number of them was sent to the several forts between that place and Canada. Many others were away building forts at other places near the head of the Ohio, so in October the garrison at Fort Duquesne numbered 400 men. The number of men at the fort was increased and by the beginning of the next year about one thousand regular soldiers and several hundred Indians had been brought to the fort and after their arrival they were employed in digging mines in

order to blow up the English vessels on their approach to attack them. The French said that they would soon make the English join with them, but this was easier to say than to do.

The campaign was opened in the spring of 1755 and the first expedition against the fort was under General Braddock. His army consisted of about twelve hundred men with this number he crossed the Monongahela about ten miles from the fort and started to march across the country to the fort but before they reached the fort they were met by the French and Indians and as the English were not used to fighting in the manner that the Indians did, they were

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defeated and General Braddock was slain and his army almost destroyed but Washington acting as aid-de-camp here showed his skill and good management and saved the wreck of the army. This first expedition against the fort was a failure. The second expedition against Fort Duquesne was undertaken in 1758. Washington had command of a large number of Virginia troops. The French saw that they were going to capture the fort, but before they would be captured they fired the fort and fled. Washington and his army occupied the place and the flag of England floated over the ruined fort and the gateway

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of the west was now in the hands of the English.

After the burning of this fort the English commenced building a new one in 1759 and called it Fort Pitt. It was at this time that William Pitt was prime minister of England, he had great friendship for the American colonies during this time and this place at the fork of the Monongahela and Allegheny was named in honor of him. Soon after this some Scotch and Irish settlers arrived, who began a village here, and in 1773 the site was surveyed by members of the Penn family and the lower part of the city still retains the streets and general arrangement given by them.