

THESIS.

Subject, History of the Monongahela Valley to 1775

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Nature's pictures have a charm which man's genius cannot command. Those things which immediately surround us interest us most, and of all the natural forces surrounding this Normal school, "Our Own Monongahela," is perhaps the most interesting.

It is said that the scenery along the Monongahela would vie with the scenery along the Hudson, and we who have taken the trip from California to Morgantown West Virginia, know that the scenery is magnificent at some points.

Monongahela, is an Indian name meaning high bluffs and the name is certainly a significant one. This river, which with the Allegheny, forms the northeastern portion of the great river system, which drains the vast extent of the Mississippi, takes its rise in West Virginia, the western slopes of the water shed of the Allegheny Mountains, and

on the sides of its outlying and parallel ranges.

The Monongahela river proper, may be said to begin just south of Fairmont, West Virginia, where Tygarts Valley river, which comes from the southeast and the West Fork of the Monongahela, which flows from the southwest, unite. From this point the river flows almost due north to Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, where it unites with the Allegheny to form the Ohio, receiving the waters of the Cheat at Point Marion, Pennsylvania, near the dividing line between West Virginia and Pennsylvania, and of the Youghiogheny river just above Mc. Keesport, near Pittsburg.

From Fairmont, the river flows through Marion and Morgan Counties in West Virginia and through Essex, Fayette, Washington, West Moreland and Allegheny Counties in Pennsylvania.

The whole valley which is now

a scene of life was once the habitation of the Red Man, and what a rich hunting ground he possessed.

The future history of this valley will be remarkable as we are surrounded by one of the gardens of the world. However, it is here our purpose to say something of the past history.

Many and interesting are the stories told in connection with the towns and cities of the valley, one which especially attracts our notice is told in connection with the lands lying in and about our own town, California. A man by name of Jackman once bought the land now occupied by California, Coal Centre, Phillipsburg, and Granville, for a half hat-full of S. Danish mill dollars. The purchase was made from an old Indian whose wigwam stood within the present limits of California.

In the year 1754-1763 came the struggle in history known as the French and Indian War. This was an important war, as it was to decide whether the French or English should control the continent of America. The English outnumbered the French fifteen to one but the French had possession of the two chief rivers of the country, the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence. To clinch their hold they had built forts from Quebec to the Great Lakes and thence down the Illinois and Mississippi to the Gulf. The English finally opened their eyes to the fact that they were in danger of losing the heart of the continent. To prevent such a disaster, a wealthy London merchant with certain wealthy Virginians, organized the Ohio Company for planting a colony of emigrants on the east bank of the Upper Ohio. The French at once resolved to stop the movement, and began a new line of forts extending

westward from Erie on Lake Erie to the point where the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers unite to form the Ohio. That point at the head of inland navigation was with good reason called the "Gateway of the West."

Meanwhile Gov. Dinwiddie of Virginia determined to send a messenger to Venango, - one of the new line of French forts and warn off those whom he considered intruders.

After due deliberation, the governor decided to entrust the dangerous work to the brother of the late chief manager of the Ohio Company, who was a skillful young surveyor about twenty-one years of age. George Washington was that young man.

Washington performed the journey in 1753, but the commander sent back an unsatisfactory reply to the governor. Washington was much impressed by the West, he saw the future value and growth of this part of the

country. For some years later he came to own more lands than any one else in the country and nearly all of it was in the Monongahela Valley, what is now known as Washington County.

The Ohio Company was determined to hold its own, so accordingly began a fort at the "Gateway of the West," but before they could complete it, the French drove them out, finished building it and named it Fort Duquesne. Our busy bustling Pittsburg is now standing where old Fort Duquesne once held sway.

In the year 1755, England sent over General Braddock, a fine soldier to drive the French out of the Ohio Valley. With him came a well trained army who could face an enemy openly, but they knew not how to manage the French and Indians, whose plan it was to hide in forests and fire from behind trees

Braddock might have been saved a bitter defeat had he heeded suggestions made by Franklin and Washington but he scorned consulting men who had never been regularly trained in the European arts of war.

Braddock advanced from Alexandria, Virginia across the mountains to attack Ft. Duquesne. Washington accompanied him. All went well until the British army had nearly reached the fort. Suddenly a savage yell rose from the woods. A panic set in, and in spite of the general's courage and attempts to repel the wild men, they were victorious. In this fierce combat, Braddock was mortally wounded, and died within a few days.

Another attempt was made to capture Fort Duquesne in 1758. William Pitt, later known as Lord Chatham was then chief councillor in the English government. Col. Washington took part in the second attempt. The fort was captured and named Fort Pitt.



in honor of the distinguished statesman who had made the victory possible. To-day we know the place as Pittsburg, the centre of the most extensive iron works in the United States.

It might be added that the prosperous city of Braddock, a few miles south of Pittsburg, was named for the noble, ambitious, English general, Edward Braddock.

In 1682 William Penn founded the colony of Philadelphia, in Pennsylvania and from that time, for many years there were bitter disputes about the boundary between that Province and Maryland. at length Mason and Dixon, two eminent surveyors were employed (1763-67) to establish a boundary that would be satisfactory to both colonies. They ran a line from the Northeast corner of Maryland, due west nearly three hundred miles, at every fifth mile a stone was set up, having the coat of arms of William Penn cut on the north side, and of Lord Baltimore on the

south. Such a stone may be seen a few miles north of Morgantown, West Virginia. The Mason and Dixon's line, which divides our own Pennsylvania from West Virginia may actually be seen by tourists going up the Monongahela.

The early history of the towns and cities of the Monongahela Valley is indeed interesting but we must close this brief sketch with a few incidents concerning the home of the South Western State Normal.

The site of California, which is located on the west bank of the Monongahela River, is celebrated in the annals of Pennsylvania as having been the place where the Indians met in council in 1767 to express their grievances, which resulted in the mission of the Rev. Captain Steele and others, who were sent out the following spring to meet them and to persuade white settlers to retire and not to invade the lands yet belonging to the Indians.

The Indian title, however was extinguished the treaty of Nov. 3, 1768 and the following year thousands of acres bordering on the Monongahela were surveyed, and where once the Red Man roved at will, all became scenes of business activity.