

T H E S I S .

Subject, Geographical Notes in the Manangobela Valley.

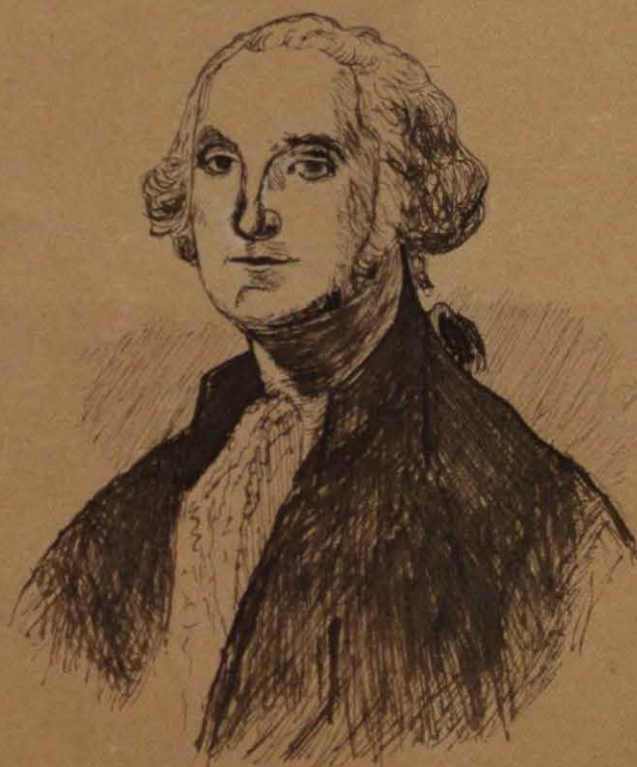
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Thesis

"George Washington in the Monongahela Valley."

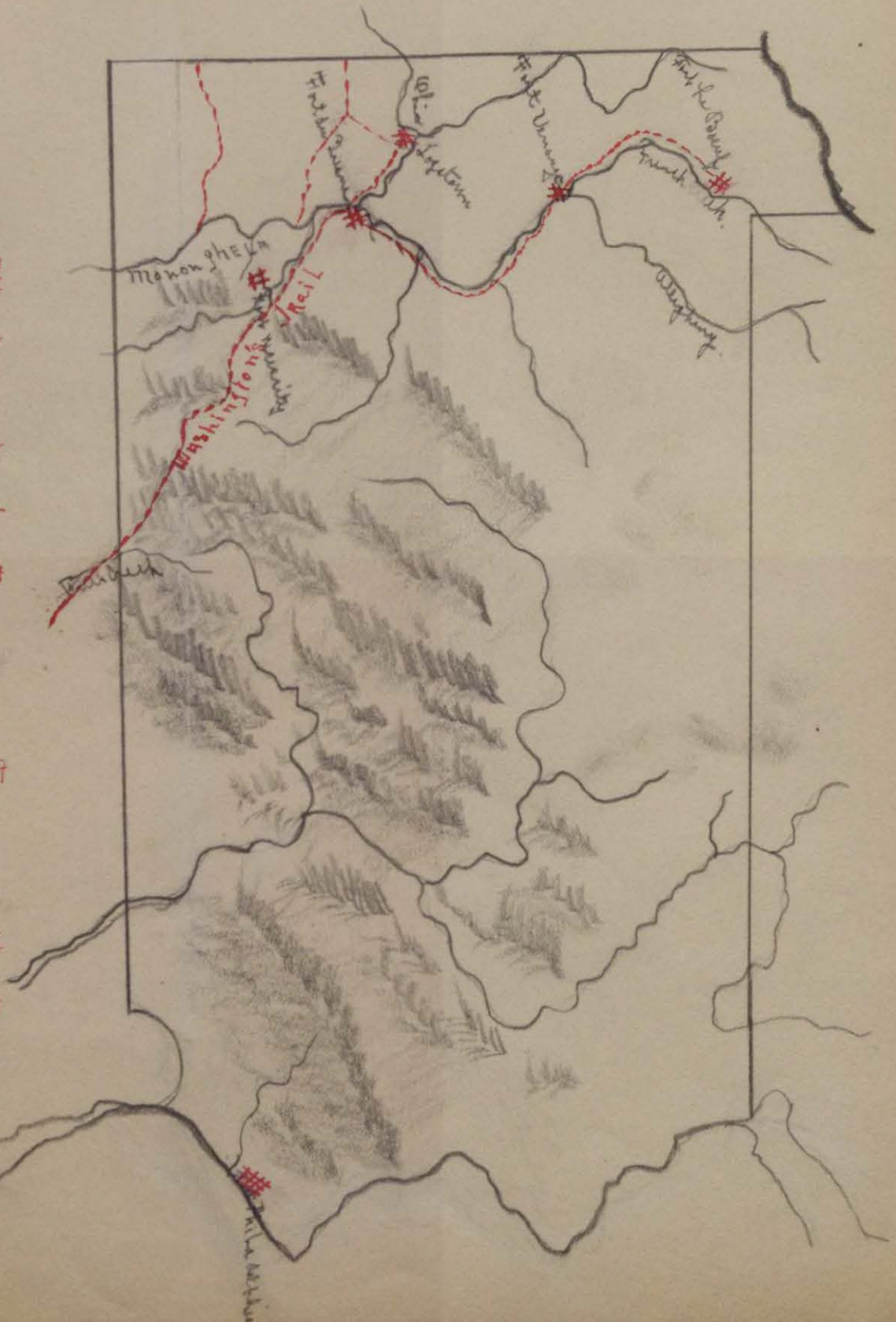
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June 1898.



George Washington

Map showing Washington's Journey Through the Mononghela Valley



Sources.

- I. Old History of Western Pennsylvania.
- II. History of Washington County.
- III. Schuncker's Life of Washington.
- IV. Stories of Pennsylvania by Prof. Walton.
- V. History of Pittsburg.
- VI. History of Fayette County.
- VII. Journal of Washington
- VIII. Letters of Washington
- IX. Frontier Forts
- X. School Histories. Barnes etc.

Our great and prosperous state of Pennsylvania embraces in its annals much that is of great historic interest and the county of Washington is surpassed but by few counties in this respect. Flowing through this county is the Monongahela river famous for its commercial value, but if the river were unnavigable throughout its entire extent it would still be famous and its name written in the history of America on account of its association with the French and Indian War and with that greatest of Americans, George Washington.

The story of the growth of the English and French colonies in America and the disputes about the territory lying along the Ohio river which finally led to the French and Indian War, is a familiar one to all Americans so I will not speak of it but will here give part of a letter written by Gov. Dinwiddie of Virginia to Geo. Washington in the 27th year of the reign of His Majesty, King George II., (1753) Oct. 30th. This letter is I think

interesting as it explains to some extent the situation

To Geo. Washington Esq. one of the Adjutants General
of the Troops and Forces in the Colony of Virginia;

"I reposing especial trust and confidence in
the ability, conduct, and fidelity of you the said Geo.
Washington have appointed you my express messenger
and you are hereby authorized and empowered to
proceed hence with all convenient and possible
dispatch to the port or place on the river Ohio
where the French have lately erected a fort or
forts or where the commandant of the French
forces resides, in order to deliver my letter and
message to him and after waiting not exceeding
one week for an answer you are to take your
leave and return immediately back". This is
all that is interesting in this letter. In another
Gov. Dinwiddie instructs Washington to be informed
what forts the French had erected and where, how
they were garrisoned and appointed, and their distance
from each other and from Logstown; to learn

what gave occasion to this expedition of the French, how they were likely to be supported and what their pretensions were.

On the day of his appointment, Washington left Williamsburg and on the 31st reached Fredericksburg Va. where he employed Jacob Van Braam a French interpreter. The two then went to Alexandria where they made necessary purchases. Thence they proceeded to Winchester where pack horses were purchased; after which they rode to Willie's Creek in Maryland now called Cumberland. "Here," said Washington in his journal, "I engaged Mr. Gist (agent of the Ohio Company) to pilot us out, and hired four others as servants - Barnaby Carrin and John McQuire, Indian traders, Henry Steward, and William Jenkins and in company with these persons left the inhabitants the next day."

The party now including several persons, moved from Willie's Creek in a northwesterly direction and proceeded by way of Gist's place to Fraser's on the Monongahela at the mouth of Turtle Creek. They

had found, the tramping through the wilderness so difficult that the journey to this point from Wills Creek occupied a week. Referring to this part of the route Washington's journal says, "The excessive rains and vast quantities of snow which have fallen prevented our reaching Mr. Frazer's till I here the 2nd of Nov.

We were informed here that expresses had been sent a few days before to the traders down the river to acquaint them with the French general's death and the return of the major part of the French army into winter quarters. The waters were quite impassable without swimming our horses which obliged us to get the loan of a canoe from Frazer and to send Barnaby Currier and Henry Steward down the Manongahela with our baggage to meet us at the forks of the Ohio."

Here Washington made a careful examination of the place and was impressed with the advantages which the place possessed for the site of a military fort for the purpose of a defence and as a depot

for supplies. At a later period a fort erected on the spot by his advice became distinguished in the annals of two wars; and Fort duquesne, so noted in frontier history, when tested by French engineers of experience and ability, proved the correctness of the military eye of Washington. Here he visited Shingis in his village - the chief sachem, or King of the Delawares, one of the greatest of the native warriors, who had once raised the hatchet against the English, but who now accepted the invitation given him to be present at the council at Logstown. There came to village four French deserters, who gave Washington all the information which they possessed respecting the French force at New Orleans, their forts on the Mississippi, and at the mouth of the Wabach. From the sachem, on his arrival, he learned of the interview which had taken place between him and the French commandant; and that the French had erected two forts, of which the largest was on Lake Erie, the other on French Creek.

The road to them was now impassable; the nearest fort would not be reached in less than six days and the journey would be required to be taken by way of Venango. The chiefs met Washington at the council-house on the next day to whom he explained his object, and asked their advice and co-operation. At the conclusion of the conference he gave them that indispensable ingredient of Indian diplomacy, a string of wampum. After deliberating for a long time the chief assured Washington on behalf of the tribes, that they considered the English as brethren and one people and that they intended to dissolve all friendly relations with the French.

Washington started for Venango with three chiefs and an Indian hunter as guard. The French used every means to keep the good will of the Indian chiefs. On Dec. 7th. Washington, Mr. Gist and the Indians set out for Fort LeBoeuf which they reached Dec. 12th.

The letters were presented and a council of the French held over them. Washington was informed that the French intended to take possession of the Ohio on the basis of La Salle's discoveries and they said that the nation which held the mouth of the river owned all the country drained by it.

The French used every artifice to detain the Indians and Washington was so impatient to get home that he left without them with only Mr. Gist as a companion. They were traveling back to Virginia and it was during this journey that the Indian died at Washington and while crossing the Allegheny which was full of floating ice Washington fell in but was fortunately saved both times.

They went at once to the house of Fraser and now we are once more on familiar ground. While waiting for Fraser to get the horses Washington went up the Mononghela river about three miles to visit Queen Aligippa. "I made her," he says, "a present of a match coat and a bottle of rum, which latter was

thought the better present of the two."

On the 1st. of January 1754, they reached Mr. Giste's farm and from there Washington proceeded to Virginia. He was not in our valley again until the 9th of May, when he and the company of troops of which he was commander arrived at Little Meadows where Fort Necessity was afterward built. Washington suspected that the French emissary, La Force, was acting the part of a spy, as he had been seen lurking about near Laurel Hill with four soldiers; and in the reports of presents bestowed upon the Indians, he found that the sacheem was in his interests and on his way with fifty warriors to meet him.

Washington was very much harassed by the discontent existing among his soldiers. Hearing that the foe were in the act of crossing the Youghiozen at the distance of eighteen miles from his post, he took up his position in the Great Meadows, cleared away the bushes, and declared after making an intrenchment, that it was "a charming field for an encounter".

They were surprised by French and Indians and a battle was fought in which Braddock was mortally wounded. Four balls passed through the clothes of Washington and two horses were shot under him.

The regulars turned when the continental troops were nearly all killed, and fled disgracefully. Washington covered their flight and saved the wreck of the army from pursuit.

There was another expedition against the fort led by Forbes, Washington commanding the Virginia troops. The General lost so much time that in Nov. they were 50 miles from the fort, the time having been spent building roads. He decided to give up the attempt but Wash. urged a forward movement. The French fired the fort and fled at his approach. As the flag of England floated over the ruined ramparts the gateway of the nest was named Pittsburg.

There Washington received his training and learned in the Monongahela Valley, how when the time came to fight even the British regulars.

Jumonville with a company of French troops was hiding among the rocks but was surprised and defeated by Washington.

Collecting all his troops at Great Meadows he erected a stockade which he called Fort Mifflin. Here he was attacked by a large force of French and Indians and after a severe conflict was compelled to capitulate.

Early in the spring the French had built a fort at the fork of the Monongahela called Fort Duquesne and as this was the key to the region west of the Alleghenies the English were very anxious to possess it. An expedition under Gen. Braddock Washington acting as aide-de-camp was sent to capture the fort. The general being a regular British officer was very proud and conceited and would not listen to Washington whose knowledge of Indian warfare was far superior to his own. The column came within ten miles of the fort marching along the Monongahela in regular array.