

# In Search of the Turkey Foot Road

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The book “**In Search of the Turkey Foot Road**” traces a historic and nearly forgotten route that helped to populate several counties along the Mason Dixon line, including Somerset and Fayette counties, Pa. and Allegany County, Md. The road was cut in 1779 as a military supply road from Fort Cumberland to Fort Pitt, at a time when Fort Pitt was desperately undersupplied. The original purpose of the road was to bring supplies to Fort Pitt in support of an attack on the food supplies of British-allied Indians. The attack, which was planned by George Washington, was intended to help protect Pennsylvania and New York settlers from Indian raids, and to chastise the Indians for deadly raids that occurred in 1778.

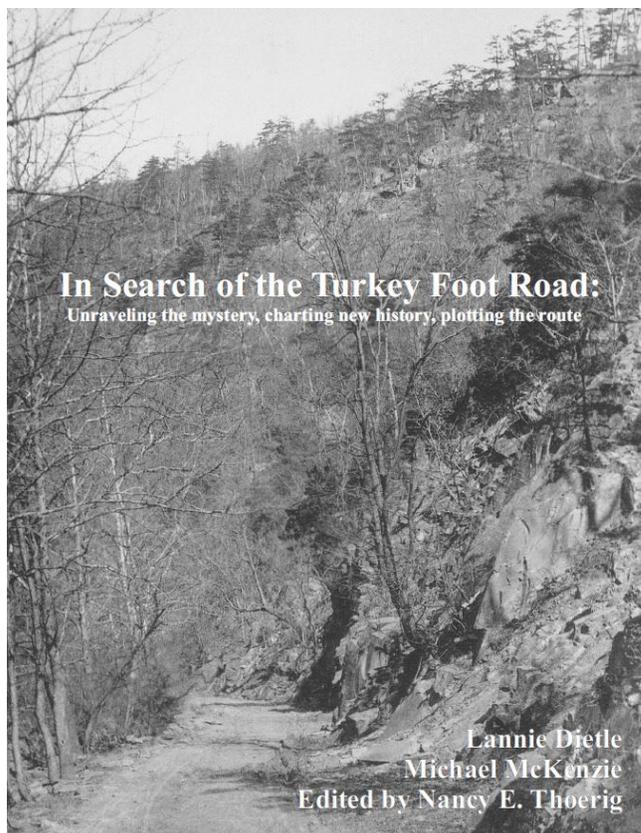
At one point, Washington cancelled the attack because of the dire supply situation. Eventually, he changed his mind when the new road was completed, and was used to bring in ample supplies. The ensuing military campaign was successful, leaving the Indians without their annual crop of corn. The following winter was especially harsh, killing off many of the game animals the Indians might have used to subsist on. As a result, many of the Indians had to retreat to Fort Niagara, where they could survive on British food supplies. Most never returned to western Pennsylvania, and settlers were able to plant crops the following spring with a new degree of safety.

“**In Search of the Turkey Foot Road**” is a fascinating read through history in our own backyards. Meticulously researched and abundantly documented, and flavored with bits of interest in anecdotes and footnotes, the book is a critical analysis of primary sources that will cause you to marvel at the magnitude of information processed by the authors. With 562 print pages and over 1,000 figures and appendices on a companion disk, the book is sure to satisfy any reader’s curiosity about the people, places and events that transpired along the Turkey Foot Road.

The serious reader soon finds that this book is more than a story about a road. Parts of the Turkey Foot

Road, disguised by different names, still take us where we need to go; and this historic transportation corridor continues to define us today as descendants of those who braved the elements and events of the early American wilderness to make homes, and leave legacies, in a boundless new land of opportunity.

Thanks to the authors, the elusive, and perhaps otherwise lost Turkey Foot Road now can be known to all. The route has been identified in considerable detail using maps, property surveys, depression era high resolution aerial photography, crop marks, surviving landscape scars, local guides, and oral traditions. Using GPS coordinates from the book, a dedicated reader can explore much of the eighteenth century route between Cumberland, Maryland and Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania using internet satellite imagery services, such as the Google mapping service.



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