

Cover Sheet

Overview

This is a chapter from the fourth edition of the e-book “**In Search of the Turkey Foot Road: Unraveling the mystery, charting new history, plotting the route**” (2014). To access other chapters, see the [online table of contents](#).

As described on pages 3 to 6 of [Addendum A](#), the fourth edition mistakenly claims that a dashed line route on the 1755 Fry and Jefferson map is an antecedent to the Turkey Foot Road. Shortly after publication, I realized that the dashed lines actually represent Christopher Gist’s second Ohio Company Tour. If that or another known mistake affects this or another chapter of the book, the relevant text will be highlighted in yellow, and the mistake will be briefly described in a comment that is accessible via a clickable comment icon.

In this and other chapters of the book, any supplemental information will be provided via clickable comment icons, inserted yellow sheets, or other readily identifiable means.

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1. Introduction

Overview

An early route known as the Turkey Foot Road is described in the traditions of several counties along the Mason-Dixon line. In Allegany County, Maryland, the traditions survive in the Mount Savage area, but the early route has long been a mystery. According to tradition, Arnold's Settlement was established along the old Turkey Foot Road, which began as an Indian¹ or packer's path. A tradition that the road was preceded by an Indian or packer's path also survives in and around the town of Salisbury, in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. From these traditions, the route is often called the Turkey Foot Path, or the Turkey Foot Trail. In Fayette County, Pennsylvania, several books briefly mention the road in the context of America's early wars.

This book presents the most extensive research to date concerning the history and route of the Turkey Foot Road. When our country was young, this early route crossed the mountain barrier between Fort Cumberland² and the Turkeyfoot region³, and continued on toward Pittsburgh. It was cut during the Revolutionary War as a military supply road to Fort Pitt. Several eighteenth century records suggest that the eastern part of the route followed an earlier path, supporting the Mount Savage and Salisbury area traditions. In its post-Revolutionary War heyday, the Turkey Foot Road was important enough to be depicted on state maps as a principal route.

This book documents the origins of the road, the identifiable portions of the post-Revolutionary War route, and several alternate routes. Early individuals, events, and landmarks along the route are also presented, to provide context. The conventional wisdom concerning the origin of the road is also presented, and disproven. Although the understanding that has been developed is imperfect, it is hoped that this book will stimulate additional research, so that a more complete and accurate account of the road will evolve.

A 1751 trading path followed Jennings Run

In 1751, Christopher Gist set out on a westerly journey of discovery for the Ohio Company. His jumping off point is now Ridgeley, West Virginia. One of his assignments was to find a suitable route for the future Ohio Company road. In his first journal entry, he describes following the gap between Piney and Dan's Mountains (which Route 40 now follows), and indicates this gap is several miles closer to the Potomac, compared to the one "*the Traders commonly pass thro*". To anyone familiar with local geography, this can only mean that traders commonly followed the Jennings Run water gap. Since a path was necessary to accommodate the traders' packhorse trains, Gist's journal

¹ While the term "*Native American*" is now often used, we have consciously elected to use "*Indian*" because it is historically accurate, and harmonious with the early North American documents. Context prevents anyone from mistakenly thinking the term refers to individuals from the Indian subcontinent. We are not insensitive to this issue, as Mr. McKenzie's wife is of nearly full-blooded Lumbee descent, and Mr. Dietle's employer and esteemed colleague of 31 years emigrated from India.

² The general locale was known as Fort Cumberland, even after the fort was demolished. This initial use of "*Fort Cumberland*" should be construed to mean a locale, not the actual structure.

³ "*Turkeyfoot*" is the name of the general area near present-day Confluence, Pennsylvania. The name refers to joining of three waterways in a manner that resembles the toes of a turkey's foot.

implies that a packer's path ran through the Jennings Run valley in 1751. That valley, which lies west of Corriganville, Maryland, is also the route of the Turkey Foot Road that is shown on various post-Revolutionary War maps.

The 1755 Fry and Jefferson map⁴ illustrates a path from Wills Creek⁵ (now Cumberland) passing through the vicinities of present-day Mount Savage, Maryland and Salisbury, Pennsylvania, and continuing on to the Ohio River via Turkeyfoot and Mount Braddock.⁶ Presumably, this is the path along Jennings Run implied by Gist's journal. Gist's journal and the Fry and Jefferson map help to substantiate the Mount Savage and Salisbury area traditions. A path to Turkeyfoot indeed existed before the Turkey Foot Road was cut.

The trader's path helped to incite the French and Indian War

The antecedent to the eastern part of the Turkey Foot Road was part of a cross-country network of paths used for trade with Indians inhabiting the Ohio River⁷ valley⁸.

In the mid-eighteenth century, the Twightwee (Miami) Indians⁹ of the Ohio valley decided to join in alliance with the English, and trade exclusively with them. The Twightwee had a town known as Pickawillany¹⁰ in the vicinity of present-day Piqua, Ohio. The English established a trading post there, and trade with the Twightwee flourished. About the same time, the Ohio Company of Virginia received a large grant of land from the English crown to settle in the Ohio valley. To support its trade and settlement activities in the west, the company built a storehouse along the Potomac River at the mouth of Wills Creek, at present-day Ridgeley, West Virginia. The Ohio Company eventually built a road westward from the storehouse, but it came too late to support trade with Pickawillany.

By 1751, the French, or their Indian allies, had threatened war. In the first significant offensive action of the ensuing war, a force consisting of two Frenchmen and about 240 Indians, attacked Pickawillany on June 21, 1752. George Washington's subsequent attack on Jumonville's party would occur two years later, on May 28, 1754.

⁴ The 1755 version of the Fry and Jefferson map was published after Fry's 1754 death, and bears a confusing 1751 date. It includes some post-1751 information, including the Ohio Company road and information pertaining to the French and Indian War that was clearly added after Fry died.

⁵ "Wills Creek" is the name of the stream that empties into the Potomac River at Cumberland, Maryland. It was also an early name for the general area. According to Lowdermilk's 1878 book "**History of Cumberland...**", Wills Creek and Wills Mountain are named after an Indian named Will who remained in the area with his family after the arrival of the white men.

⁶ Between the locations of present-day Salisbury and Confluence, the trail on the Fry and Jefferson map takes a wide northern detour that seems to correlate to a traditional Turkey Foot Road variation that ran by Compton's Mill, Shelter Rock, and the fire tower, and then generally followed the Old Fort Hill Road.

⁷ The name of the Ohio River has Indian origins. The 1834 "**Transactions of the American Philosophical Society**" contains Peter S. Du Ponceau's edited version of Reverend John Heckewelder's 1822 writings about Indian names. The article is subtitled "*Names which the Lenni Lenape or Delaware Indians, who once inhabited this country, had given to the Rivers, Streams, Places &c. &c. within the now States of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia...*". In a section on Allegany County, Heckewelder states: "*When I listened to discourses of the Indians with the white people of that country, they on both sides would say 'high O,' and not Ohio, as we pronounce it, which evinced that something must be wrong or wanting in this word, to give it a meaning. And I followed their example in calling the river (Ohio) by the name they did, which is Kithanne, or, as the Minseys call it, Giethanne—either of these words signifying the main, superior stream in that part or country.*"

⁸ The "Ohio River valley" (more commonly referred to as the "Ohio valley") is the region drained by the Ohio River; i.e. the Ohio River drainage basin.

⁹ Although this nation of Indians is typically referred to as "Twightwee" in early British writings, their autonym is "Miami".

¹⁰ An archaeological dig was taking place at the Pickawillany site in 2011, according to reporter Tom Millhouse.

A 1752 magazine article indicates the French were inspired to attack Pickawillany to ruin the British interests there, to destroy the Twightwee Nation, and to “*kill a certain Virginia trader*” who was drawing the Indian trade away to the British. English trade across the contested Ohio valley, and French knowledge of the Ohio Company land grant, precipitated the French and Indian War. Since the Ohio Company road did not exist in 1752, the “*certain Virginia trader*” presumably used the path through the gap “*the Traders commonly pass thro.*” **What other trade route can be proven that connected Virginia to the Ohio River valley and preceded the Ohio Company road?**

The interwar years

No map has been found from the time between the French and Indian War and the Revolutionary War that clearly illustrates a path crossing the Casselman River at Salisbury. However, due to the proven existence of early settlements near Salisbury and Confluence, Pennsylvania, and the survival of Indian/packer’s path traditions, it seems probable that **the path** remained open between the wars, even though it was eclipsed by Braddock’s wagon road in fame and utility.

A 1776 route to the Casselman River

The October 15, 1776 Sayer and Bennett map of the middle British colonies ([Figure 0639](#))¹¹ is a slight variation of the highly schematic 1755 Lewis Evans map.¹² One difference from the Evans map is a route to the Casselman River that lies north of, and generally parallel to Braddock’s road.¹³

There is only one suitable place for such a westerly route, and that is the valley of Jennings Run. Based on this, at least the eastern part of the route to the Casselman River on the 1776 Sayer and Bennett map is believed to be the Turkey Foot Path, even though the route is seemingly illustrated as going to the mouth of Blue Lick Creek or Buffalo Creek.

An early survey mentions part of the route

Dr. David Ross’s 1762 “*Herts Field*” property survey references “*the old Indian war road that leads up on the West side of Wills Creek*”, north of Cumberland. This is a reference to the western branch of the “*Warrior’s Path*”, which is credited with sharing a section of route with the path to Turkeyfoot. Other early property documents also mention the route.

A new supply road to Fort Pitt is cut during the Revolutionary War

In 1778, Americans were outraged by massacres at Wyoming Valley, Pennsylvania and Cherry Valley, New York. In January 1779, Quartermaster General Nathaniel Greene advised George Washington to respond by launching a two-pronged attack against the Indian food supply, with one division marching from a desperately undersupplied Fort Pitt.

¹¹ The figures and appendices do not appear in numerical order; rather, they are typically numbered in the sequence they were created. Some of the figures and appendices are quite large, and (depending on computer speed) may take noticeable time to load. There are gaps in numbering. Certain appendices and figures were omitted when research proved that the content was in error or irrelevant. The figures and appendices are not included in the print version of this book, and instead reside on the companion DVD, along with a hyperlinked PDF copy of the book.

¹² The Evans map was copied many times by various printers. Henry N. Stevens wrote a detailed book on this subject in 1924 titled “**Lewis Evans His map of the Middle British Colonies in America a Comparative Account of Eighteen Different Editions Published between 1755 and 1814...**”

¹³ No such route appears on the 1775 Sayer and Bennett “*Map of Pennsylvania*” ([Figure 0434](#)), which was based on a 1770 Scull map, or on Scull’s 1775 map of the frontiers of Pennsylvania.

In preparation for the attack, Washington asked Greene and Commissary General Wadsworth to improve the transportation of supplies from the “*frontiers of Virginia*” to Fort Pitt. Greene contacted Colonel George Morgan, who was the “*purchasing Commissary for the Western department*”. Morgan assigned Captain Charles Clinton and Providence Mounts¹⁴ to cut a new, shorter packhorse road from the town of Fort Cumberland to supply Fort Pitt.

The route passed through the southern end of what is now Somerset County to take advantage of forage in the “*two plentiful Settlements*” there. By April 20, 1779, the new road was completed to within four or five miles of Turkeyfoot. North of Turkeyfoot, the route passed through property in the vicinity of Mill Creek reservoir that was surveyed for Morgan and his brother in 1776. Morgan located his wartime “*bullock Pens*” on this property. The bullock pens were used for holding livestock that was being driven westward to supply the western troops.

By June 25, 1779, Fort Pitt was adequately supplied for the campaign, with more than 400 cattle and nearly 1,000 kegs of flour on hand. The new road played a significant role in the delivery of these provisions. One letter describes 1,500 packhorses being used on the new road.

Major General John Sullivan led the primary attack from the Wyoming Valley on July 31, 1779, destroying at least 40 Indian villages in New York. Colonel Daniel Brodhead led a successful parallel campaign from Fort Pitt on August 11, 1779, marching as far north as the upper Seneca towns. The campaigns were followed by an exceptionally harsh winter, which was devastating to the now under-provisioned Indians.

The post-Revolutionary War Turkey Foot Road

Soon after the war, several documents identify the Turkey Foot Road by name: A 1784 letter from Washington’s physician James Craig; Washington’s Sept. 22, 1784 journal entry; and his Nov. 30, 1786 letter to Tobias Lear. Craig refers to the route as “*the Turkey-foot road*”, and reportedly purchased property near Morgan’s “*bullock pens*”. Washington calls the route “*the New (or Turkey foot) Road*” and “*the New road by the Turkey foot*”. The earliest known maps to identify the new postwar road were printed in 1791 and 1792.

As a result of our research, the postwar route is now known in considerable detail. It has been identified using maps and property surveys, depression era high-resolution aerial photography, cropmarks, surviving landscape scars, and oral traditions. Certain sections of the route are the clear antecedents to various present-day roads, while other sections have been long abandoned and largely forgotten. The route is summarized below, and covered in detail in Chapters 9 to 34. It apparently followed the general route of the trader’s path east of the Casselman River, resulting in the Indian/packer’s path traditions that survive in and around the villages of Mount Savage and Salisbury.

A summary of the post-Revolutionary War route

Introduction to the route description

A primitive road was not a static, unchanging entity. The Turkey Foot Road mutated over time as offset alignments were created. From the perspective of centuries, “*the route*” is composed of a

¹⁴ Charles Clinton was a resident of Cumberland, Maryland, and Providence Mounts was a miller who lived at the site of Connellsville. Biographical information is included in Chapter 9.

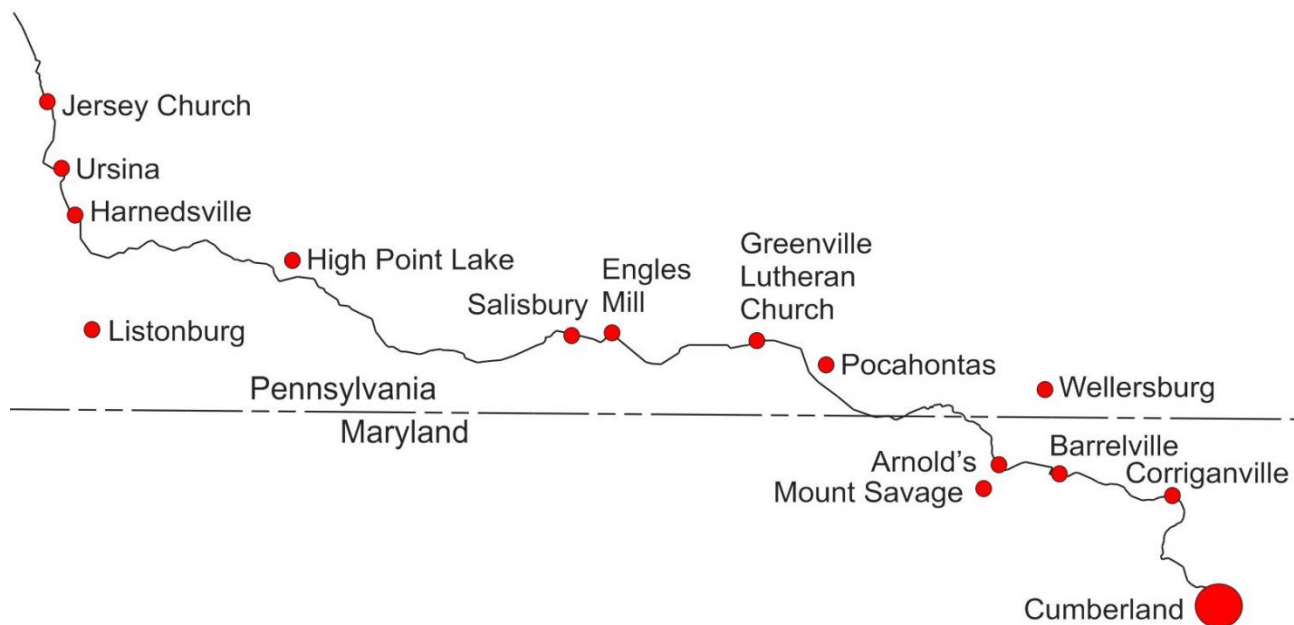
maze of alignments resulting from both minor and major revisions. Here and there, sections still remain in service.

This chapter, and the accompanying maps, use modern names of places, such as towns, to orient the reader. This is not meant to imply that all the towns existed, or that the modern place names were used, in the 18th century. Even the boundaries of counties and townships were still evolving in the early days of the Turkey Foot Road.

The big picture

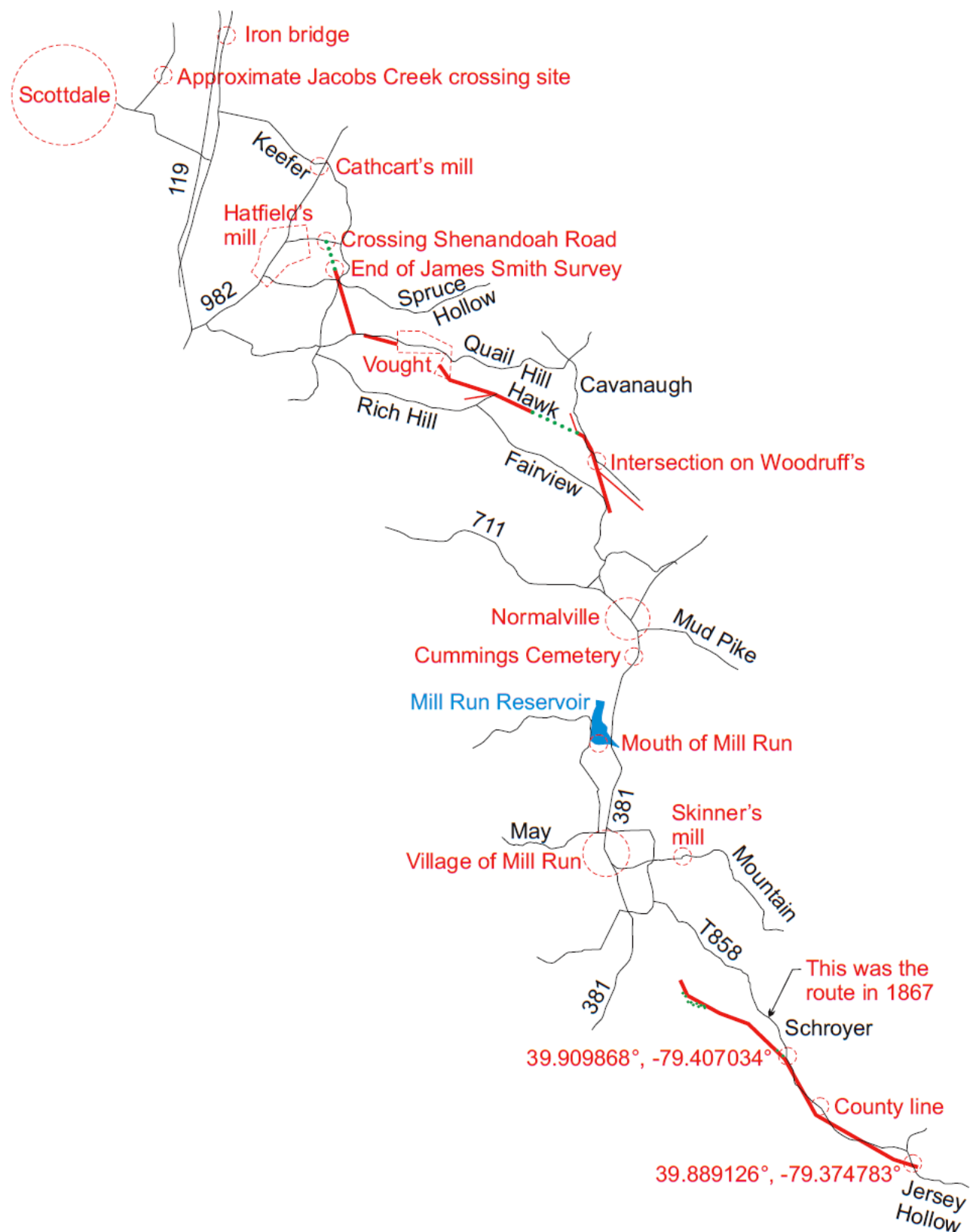
As the Turkey Foot Road wound northwest from Cumberland in Allegany County, Maryland, it passed through the locations of Corriganville and Barrelville, and passed near the location of Mount Savage. (A later variation passed through the town of Mount Savage.) In Somerset County, Pennsylvania, the route passed through the locations of Salisbury, Savage, Harnedsville, and Ursina. In Fayette County, the route passed through the locations of Mill Run, Normalville and Wooddale, and then crossed into Westmoreland County just east of Scottdale.

The map immediately below is a schematic representation of the route from Cumberland, Maryland to a point near the border between Somerset and Fayette counties, Pennsylvania. The second map shows the known portions of the route across Fayette County. Each map is drawn to a different scale. These are the only two figures provided in the print version of the book. The rest of the figures are provided on the companion disk.



This is a schematic of the southern part of the Turkey Foot Road in the period following the Revolutionary War. The actual route varied significantly with the passage of time. The first version of this map, printed in the November 2011 issue of the "**Laurel Messenger**", has an inadvertent error in the region immediately east of Harnedsville.

In Search of the Turkey Foot Road



This map shows the known portions of the Turkey Foot Road across Fayette County, Pennsylvania. Black lines are present-day roads. Thick red lines are schematic representations of the route, based on early surveys. Green dots represent sections of route that have been identified on 1939 aerial photos.

Northward from Fort Cumberland

From Fort Cumberland, Maryland, the Turkey Foot Road followed the west side of Wills Creek, turning west at Corriganville, to follow the Jennings Run water gap. The circa 1878 route through the Narrows is illustrated in Lowdermilk's "**History of Cumberland...**". The earlier route had to be in substantially the same location as the 1878 route due to the close confines of the Narrows. By 1897, the road below the circa 1833 stone bridge had been obliterated by a double set of railroad tracks.

Little is known of the early route between the Narrows and Corriganville except that it ran along the west side of Wills Creek. The circa 1832 turnpike, the circa 1850 Plank Road, and the old alignment of Route 36 are the successors of the Turkey Foot Road, just as the current alignment of Route 36 is the successor to the old alignment. A section of old Route 36 survives just north of the Narrows as the Old Mount Savage Road.

One of the more picturesque sites along the Turkey Foot Road was Devil's Backbone, which was located across Wills Creek from Corriganville. This landmark, quarried away long ago and forgotten, is a critical clue to the location of Indian Will's cove.

At Corriganville (where surveyor Ninian Cochran had a store in 1797), old Route 36 survives as Kreighbaum Road, and Corrigan's brick tavern and the Old Log Inn remind us of stagecoach traffic from a bygone era. Another nineteenth century stagecoach stop was located midway between Corriganville and Barrelville, Maryland. The locations of these three facilities prove the old alignment of Route 36 correlates to the mid-nineteenth century route.

From Corriganville to Barrelville, the route was located on the north side of the originally meandering route of Jennings Run. Terrain dictates that the old alignment of Route 36 has to be at least similar to, and in some places identical to, the Turkey Foot Road. Several 1897 to 1906 photos show locations where the road was shoehorned between Jennings Run and rocky cliffs. The present alignment of Route 36 is possible only because Jennings Run has been moved into an engineered channel. A section of the old alignment survives as the Portertown Road. A rock retaining wall from the early 1900s also survives. The road location was dictated by the proximity of Jennings Run to a cliff face (now quarried away). The retaining wall partitioned the roadway from Jennings Run to inhibit flooding. Other fragments of the old alignment can be detected in various places along present-day Route 36.

Deakins' 1787 survey of lots west of Fort Cumberland shows that the site of Barrelville (lot 3350) was then occupied by Robert Parker. Ninian Cochran's 1804 plat of the antecedent to Route 47 identifies Parker's residence, and proves the Turkey Foot Road was the antecedent to Route 36 at Barrelville. Several resources mistakenly attribute this survey to a distant Somerset County, Pennsylvania location.

Across the historic Arnold's Settlement area

Just west of Barrelville and the North Branch of Jennings Run, the early route angled northwest to the circa 1845 Robertson stone house, which (according to tradition) was an inn. At the stone house, the route turns to the northeast in the form of two deeply worn primitive roadbeds, briefly returning to lot 3350. An abrupt switchback turns the route to the west-northwest, toward the Level Ridge section of Arnold's Settlement. One of the hallmark characteristics of an old horse road can be observed above the switchback: Rocks that were dragged to the side of the road as erosion exposed them.

As the abandoned route approaches Mile Lane near Bobby Fuller's house, it crosses the "*Mule Field*", which is named for the stagecoach stop that was once located there. 1939 aerial photos reveal a number of primitive roadbeds across the Mule Field. New offset replacement roads were created as old ones became problematic.

Mile Lane follows the early nineteenth century route¹⁵ across the Level Ridge section of Arnold's Settlement, at first tacking southwest, then turning north past the pioneer Archibald Arnold's residence. In 1827, part of this section of route was officially abandoned, but remains in use. An 1804 survey shows the then new route ran northwest from Archibald Arnold's residence to the south end of the present-day Bald Knob Road. The survey proves that Bald Knob Road is part of the 1804 route. Bald Knob Road now terminates on Blank Road near the 1817 Fredrick Rigert stone house, but in 1804 the Turkey Foot Road continued west over Savage Mountain.

After Blank Road (which was surveyed in 1837), the Turkey Foot Road headed generally west for several hundred yards before turning abruptly to the north, temporarily crossing into Southampton Township, Somerset County, Pennsylvania¹⁶. After circling north of a high point on Savage Mountain to minimize the grade, the route temporarily dipped back into Maryland, before angling to the northwest and back into Pennsylvania¹⁷. It re-crossed the state line not too far from where the present-day Greenville Road crosses. (The location is identified on a 1785 survey.)

From the state line to Salisbury

In Pennsylvania, the Turkey Foot Road headed northwest, crossing over, and then running parallel to and west of the present-day route of the Greenville Road. Northwest of Pocahontas, the Turkey Foot Road turned generally west, joining the present route of the Greenville Road about where Red Dog Road joins today.¹⁸ From there until turning sharply south, the Greenville Road (LR 55002) is the modern version of the Turkey Foot Road. In the vicinity of the Greenville Lutheran Church, the Turkey Foot Road met a private wagon road from Bontrager's mill (Meyersdale).

Where the Greenville Road turns abruptly south toward the Greenville Gap at Latitude 39.748671°, Longitude -78.998512°, ¹⁹ the Turkey Foot Road headed west across Adam Faidley's 1819 survey. (The eighteenth century route was located farther north.)

¹⁵ An alternate route across Arnold's Settlement (by tradition a stagecoach route) left the Mule Field and temporarily followed the Level Ridge property boundary northwest, crossing Deakins' Survey lot 3373, and then followed the Bear Camp property boundary past the misunderstood BCCP stone as the antecedent to the present-day Bear Camp Lane. This alternate route rejoined the main route of the Turkey Foot Road near present-day Blank Road. Over time, the Turkey Foot Road had several different alignments in the vicinity of Arnold's Settlement. For example, by the late 1800s, what was known as the Turkey Foot Road ran from Barrelville to the town of Mount Savage, and from there crossed Savage Mountain. Maps as early as 1842 illustrate this alternate route.

¹⁶ Within the memory of living men, the portion of the route that first crosses into Pennsylvania was known as the Old Mount Savage Road. By tradition, it was an old stagecoach route. Stagecoaches would have remained popular relatively late, because most of Somerset County was not served by railroad until 1871. The route of the Old Mount Savage Road turned off from the Turkey Foot Road in Pennsylvania, and then headed north. A short surviving portion comes out on McKenzie Hollow Road in Greenville Township.

¹⁷ This meandering route across Savage Mountain first appears on the 1826 Melish map of Pennsylvania.

¹⁸ Red Dog Road joins the Greenville Road at Latitude 39.748349°, Longitude -78.970652° ([Figure 0739](#)).

¹⁹ The formula for converting degrees and minutes of latitude to decimal degrees is $B/60+A$, where A=degrees and B=decimal minutes. The formula for converting degrees and minutes of longitude to decimal degrees is $(B/60+A) \times (-1)$, where A=degrees and B=decimal minutes.

On the eastern flank of the Allegheny Mountain, the route tacked to the southwest across the old Findley place (already Findley in 1818, later occupied by Shunk and Meyers families), where it crossed a still surviving stone culvert near the present-day barn.

At the crest of the mountain, the route turned generally west, heading straight down the steep mountainside to avoid tipping wagons over. Here deep landscape scars remain from roadbed erosion. The road was so steep that it would have been difficult to control a descending wagon. Indeed, history records a fatal wagon accident on the mountain.

Part way down the western slope, the route crossed Bill Mast's upper fields, and then headed northwest to Clement Engle's 1807 mill site. After Engle's Mill, the route turned toward the south, and then took a westerly route through present-day Salisbury.

From Salisbury to the county line

The 1807 survey of Abraham Peachy proves that the Turkey Foot Road corresponds to Salisbury's Ord Street. As the Turkey Foot Road came into Salisbury, it passed the old cemetery, and a commodious, weather boarded 1809 log church that was located there.

Near the Salisbury fire station, an observer may see a ditch on the south side of Ord Street, angling to the southwest across a grassy area. That is where the route turned toward the 1794 Beachy farm, and then forded the Casselman River²⁰ just north of Meadow Run. The ditch is the old deeply eroded roadbed, and appears on the current Elk Lick Township parcel map as a closed road. It seems to follow the property line of the early settler Peter Livingood. In 1819 the Casselman River was bridged, apparently on Ord Street.

Immediately west of Salisbury, the present-day Springs Road (Route 669) passes the 1809 Beachy stone house and generally follows the now proven 1785 route of the Turkey Foot Road. West of Sandflat School Road, the route took a northerly turn that correlates well to the present-day Savage Road, which is otherwise known as State Route 2002 or Legislative Route 55010.²¹

Beyond Savage, the route follows the north side of Winding Ridge along the south side of a swamp that is now the site of High Point Lake. A portion of High Point Road, the picturesque single lane dirt road known as Green Road²², and the Fort Hill Road follow the 1780s route of the Turkey Foot Road. Between Salisbury and Ursina, this early but still surviving route is seven miles shorter than the present-day blacktop route.

The route re-crossed the Casselman River at Harnedsville. In 1815 a contract was let for a bridge in the vicinity of Green's fording. The bridge washed away in 1832, and its replacement was built by John Mong. The old bridge approach road ([Figure 0922](#)) is now known as "Deer Haven".

²⁰ Volume 2, page 63 of the 1906 book "**History of Bedford and Somerset Counties...**" states: "According to the traditions connected with this locality, a hunter named Jacob Castleman had his camp somewhere along the river on one of the Saylor farms. ... It is from this hunter that the Castleman's river takes its present name..." The book also describes a tradition that Negro Mountain was named after Castleman's servant, and acknowledges that "there are four or five traditions relating to the origin of this name, all of which assign a different owner to this negro." See the November 1968 "**Laurel Messenger**" for more information about Jacob Castleman.

²¹ In the region between Salisbury and Savage, an alternate route survives in local tradition, and as an identifiable corridor of primitive road related landscape scars. The scars prove that the alternate route did indeed exist, was heavily used, and was shorter than the route that is recorded in early property surveys. It may be an earlier route that preceded the documented 1780s route.

²² Parts of Green Road remain in a very primitive state, and are a perilous undertaking without four-wheel-drive.

The Turkey Foot Road crossed Laurel Hill Creek at Ursina. Andrew Ream's 1796 survey and Benjamin Pursell's 1786 survey identify the route. In the area just north of the Jersey Church, the April 13, 1814 John Melick survey and the 1785 Aaron Royse survey prove that Jersey Hollow Road follows the Turkey Foot Road between Conn Road and Back Road. This, and local history, suggest that the Jersey Church (organized August 14, 1775) was built along the Turkey Foot Road.

Do not be misled by the sunken road that crosses Jersey Hollow Road just north of Back Road, at Latitude 39.878084°, Longitude -79.355967°. This is simply an older alignment of Cranberry Road that came out on Back Road, as shown by the 1939 aerial photo of [Figure 0742](#). [Figure 0741](#) shows an abandoned sunken road about midway between Cranberry Road and T445, approximately situated at Latitude 39.883133°, Longitude -79.35854° that may be an earlier alignment of the Jersey Hollow/Turkey Foot Road.

North of the 382¼-acre Aaron Royse survey, the 103-acre April 12, 1814 John Melick survey illustrates a road that may be the antecedent to the present-day Back Road. Just north of Back Road, Robert Skinner had a farm along the Turkey Foot Road in 1794.

The route across Fayette County

This description of the route across Fayette County includes GPS coordinates for use with Internet mapping services and GPS devices. The coordinates are based on best available fits between surveys and aerial imagery, and are estimates that necessarily vary in accuracy. While some are relatively precise, others are very rough estimates, intended only as a general guide to those who may attempt much needed on-the-ground studies.

At the county line on Laurel Hill (Latitude 39.900733°, Longitude -79.399017°), the present-day name of the road changes from Jersey Hollow Road to Maple Summit Road. Farther north, the name changes to Steyer Road, then Schroyer Road. This route correlates to the 1794 Turkey Foot Road from about Latitude 39.889126°, Longitude -79.374783° on Jersey Hollow Road near Robert Skinner's place in Somerset County to about Latitude 39.909868°, Longitude -79.407034° ([Figure 0851](#)) on Schroyer Road in Fayette County. An old stagecoach stop was located at the fork. From there, the old route deviates from the present-day road, heading generally northwest toward the village of Mill Run. As shown by green dots on the preceding map, some portions of the old route are visible on 1939 USDA aerial photos.

North of where the old route deviates from Schroyer Road, Schroyer Road was already known as "*the Old Turkeyfoot road*" in 1867. Farther north, the same blacktop road is still officially called the "*Turkeyfoot Road*" today.

The thick red lines on the preceding map are the schematic representation of the Turkey Foot Road that is provided on early property surveys. Unfortunately, the surveys in the southern part of Springfield Township do not show the Turkey Foot Road. Tantalizing clues are all that is available. One such clue is the 1816 Reubin Skinner survey, which states: "*Situate on the South side of Indian Creek or Salt Lick Creek and Eastward of the Turkey-foot Road*". Skinner's mill was located east of the village of Mill Run, near where Mountain Road crosses the Mill Run stream at Latitude 39.950444°, Longitude -79.434073°. The properties west of Skinner's mill were surveyed in 1774, before the Turkey Foot Road was cut, and therefore do not show the route. According to a tradition recorded in Ellis' 1882 history of Fayette County, the Turkey Foot Road ran through the village of Mill Run.

According to a book written circa 1858 by James Veech, the route came to Indian Creek near the mouth of Skinner's Mill Run (Mill Run Reservoir) and George Morgan's Revolutionary War "*Bullock pens*". This route is shown on the 1817 Melish-Whiteside manuscript map of Fayette County. Veech describes it as crossing above (east of) the mouth of Mill Run.

The next clue is provided by Ellis' 1882 book, which states: "*Another well-known pioneer was Alexander Cummings, a Scotchman, who lived on the George Kern farm, on the old Turkey Foot road. ... He ... was interred on his old farm.*" The Cummings cemetery is located at Latitude 39.99007°, Longitude -79.446723°, about 150 feet west of Route 381. A 1939 aerial photo shows an older alignment of Route 381 in this area that follows the edges of fields. The fidelity of this older route with the Turkey Foot Road is unknown.

Veech describes the route as "*crossing... the Mud Pike near where Springfield now is*". Veech's "*Springfield*" is Normalville, and east of Normalville the "*Mud Pike*" is now Route 653. Normalville is located on Christopher Bink's 1773 survey, which precedes the Turkey Foot Road and therefore does not show it. Based on the foregoing information, Route 381 can easily be thought of as the modern alignment of the Turkey Foot Road between Mill Run and Normalville.

Cornelius Woodruff's place on Chestnut Ridge is a landmark on the 1792 Reading Howell map. It is situated where the road from Jones Mill (the mill located on a tributary of Laurel Hill Creek) joined the Turkey Foot Road. Woodruff's 1788 survey shows this intersection. His property is located at the intersection of Gas Well Road, Cavanaugh Road, and the farm lane known as Simon Schultz Road (Latitude 40.029027°, Longitude -79.45673°), 2.5 miles north of Normalville. Gas Well Road and Cavanaugh Road correspond well to the route shown on Woodruff's 1788 survey and Zachariah Connell's adjacent 1799 survey. Both Woodruff and Connell served as township road supervisors in the 1780s.

West of the Woodruff property, Hawk Road is a surviving alignment of the Turkey Foot Road. An aerial photo shows that Hawk Road came out on Cavanaugh Road north of Woodruff's at Latitude 40.033858°, Longitude -79.459552° in 1939.

West of Hawk Road, the route of the Turkey Foot Road crosses into Bullskin Township, continuing on to an acute corner of the 1794 John Trueby survey, and then turning northwest on a heading of about 320 degrees toward Quail Hill Road.

Northwest of Trueby's survey, the next important clue is a 1796 transaction for the unpatented land of John Vought, which was "*situated on both sides of the state Road*" and straddles Quail Hill Road. Vought's property was later patented by Jas. and Robert Thompson in 1865. Immediately west of the Vought property, from about Latitude 40.053176°, Longitude -79.508657° ([Figure 0844](#)) to about Latitude 40.054227°, Longitude -79.519601° ([Figure 0845](#)), Quail Hill Road is the modern alignment of the Turkey Foot Road, and corresponds very closely to the route shown on the 1794 Peter Smith survey.

The distinctive shape of Adam Hatfield's 1786 survey was used to orient other early surveys in this area to facilitate this route study. Hatfield's property is readily identifiable as the site of the Pleasant Valley Country Club on Route 982, south of Wooddale. Part of the millrace is still visible on a 1939 aerial photo.

East of Hatfield's mill, the 1794 James Smith survey shows that the Turkey Foot Road turned north-northwest on a heading of about 344 degrees toward Cathcart's (Kithcart's) mill approximately at

Latitude 40.054227°, Longitude -79.519601°. The route exited the James Smith survey approximately at Latitude 40.067423°, Longitude -79.524547°. A 1939 aerial photo shows traces that indicate the Turkey Foot Road continued on the same compass heading, crossing Shenandoah Road somewhere near Latitude 40.072694°, Longitude -79.526789° ([Figure 0846](#)). From there to Cathcart's mill, the route is unknown.

According to Veech, the Turkey Foot Road “crossed Mountz's creek at Cathcart's, or Andrews' Mill”. That mill was located near where Keefer Road comes out on Route 982 (Latitude 40.088197°, Longitude -79.527047°) at Wooddale. The 1858 Barker map does not show the Turkey Foot Road between Quail Hill Road and Cathcart's mill, which suggests that the Turkey Foot Road had already been abandoned in favor of Breakneck Road by 1858.

Veech indicates that the Turkey Foot Road “crossed Jacob's creek about a mile below the old Chain Bridge”. Findley's innovative 1801 bridge was located “on the great road leading from Uniontown to Greensburg”. If Veech's estimate is reasonably accurate, the Turkey Foot Road crossed Jacobs Creek and entered Westmoreland County somewhere near where State Route 1059 crosses at Latitude 40.105403°, Longitude -79.569345°. Intervening swampy ground makes this the first logical crossing site below the chain bridge. In Westmoreland County, the Turkey Foot Road merged with Braddock's road, which ran through the Old Sewickley settlement, and on to Pittsburgh.

Earlier Turkey Foot Road research by Doctor Paul A. W. Wallace

The most extensive antecedent to this research is published in Dr. Paul A. W. Wallace's 1965 book “**Indian Paths of Pennsylvania**”. Wallace's book covers 132 different Pennsylvania Indian paths and convincingly describes a sophisticated network of Indian paths that bear striking similarity to the present-day highway system. The book has a three-page chapter on the “*Turkeyfoot Path*” that relates to the road variation that existed in the latter part of the nineteenth century ([Appendix 0069](#)).

²³ While Wallace's book is a study of sweeping breadth on the general subject of Pennsylvania Indian paths, our aim is to provide a more in-depth study of only one.

Turkeyfoot is now known as Confluence, Pennsylvania

Turkeyfoot was an early name for the location that later became the town of Confluence, at the western edge of Somerset County, Pennsylvania. The location gets both names from the confluence of three watercourses, which come together like the three toes of a turkey's foot ([Figure 0002](#)). [Figure 0230](#) shows the juncture of two of those three watercourses, the Youghiogheny²⁴ and Casselman rivers. Page 557 of the 1884 book “**History of Bedford, Somerset and Fulton Counties...**” provides a brief history of Confluence, and states that the “town was laid out in 1870,

²³ Material from Chapter 115 of Wallace's book is incorporated in this book by written permission from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. This is in keeping with Wallace's expressed desire that his book would help others advance the knowledge of America's Indian related heritage.

²⁴ In his book “**Christopher Gist's journals...**”, Darlington includes the etymology of “Youghiogheny”, indicating that Indians sometimes counted the river formed by the junction of smaller streams as one of the forks: “*The name Youghiogheny—Youghanné—was evidently given to this stream by the Indian tribe of the Kanhawhas, Conoys or Canawese, who, in the beginning of the last century, inhabited the country around the heads of the Potomac and back of the great mountains in Virginia. They were of the same nation and language as the Nanticokes, of the Algonquin, Lenape or Delaware stock. Yough—four—and hanne —stream or rapid-flowing stream. As before mentioned, the three head branches of this river join at the point and form a fourth or main stream.*” According to William C. Reichel's study of Moravian missionary John Heckewelder's papers, published in Volume 1 of the 1876 “**Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society**”, Youghiogheny is “*corrupted from Juh-wiah-hanne, signifying, a stream flowing in a contrary direction, or in a circuitous course.*”

under the direction of the Confluence Land Company...” and was incorporated as a borough in 1873.”²⁵

The 1847 book “**Early History of Western Pennsylvania...**” ([Appendix 0001](#)) provides names of early settlers, and indicates that the initial settlement of Turkeyfoot occurred in 1765²⁶ and 1766. This was after the close of the French and Indian War, but before the English obtained the region from the Indians. A more detailed history of the Turkeyfoot region is provided in Chapter 41.

The earliest written use of the phrase “*Turkey Foot*” encountered during this study is on the map (Figures [0432](#) and [0433](#)) that accompanied George Washington’s January 17, 1754 “*Journal to the Ohio*”. Washington composed his journal from notes he took during a journey with Christopher Gist to the French forts. The journey took place from October 31, 1753 to January 16, 1754. He went to deliver a message and to surveil the French forts.

The next written use that has been encountered is in George Washington’s May 18, 1754 letter to Lieutenant Governor²⁷ Dinwiddie from Great Crossings, which included the following paragraph:

The water is now so high, that we cannot possibly cross over with our men, which likewise secures us from any immediate attacks of the enemy. I have therefore resolved to go down the river to the fall, which is at the Turkey Foot, to inform myself concerning the nature and difficulty attending this fall. I have provided a canoe, and shall, with an officer and five men, set out upon this discovery to-morrow morning.

Since Ohiopyle Falls²⁸ is about 10 miles from Confluence, this quote helps to demonstrate that the term “*Turkey Foot*” referred to more than just the specific place where the rivers joined at present-day Confluence. It also referred to the surrounding area. Washington’s words also demonstrate that even as late as 1754, the difficulty the falls and rapids²⁹ pose to water transportation was not yet widely understood.

Washington’s journal goes on to describe reaching “*Turkey-Foot*” on the evening of May 20, 1754. On May 21, 1754 Washington writes that “*the mouth of the three branches*” would be “*very suitable for the erection of a fort*”. According to Volume II, page 47 of the 1906 book “**History of Bedford and Somerset Counties...**”, settlers eventually did build a fort or blockhouse “*at the point of junction between the Castleman’s and the Youghiogheny rivers*”.

²⁵ Also see pages 624 and 625 of the 1906 book “**History of Bedford and Somerset Counties...**”.

²⁶ According to page 35 of the 1906 book “**History of Bedford and Somerset Counties...**” Volume II, a circa 1798 document by surveyor Alexander McLean references “*the first cabin built by Henry Abrams, in 1765.*” As shown by [Figure 0365](#), Abrams’ property was located at the junction of the Youghiogheny and Casselman rivers.

²⁷ Dinwiddie’s title is from the “**Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie, Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Virginia, 1751-1758**”.

²⁸ According to William C. Reichel’s study of Moravian missionary John Heckewelder’s papers, published in Volume 1 of the 1876 “**Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society**”, Ohiopyle is “*corrupted from Ohiopéhelle, signifying, water whitened by froth from its rapid descent over rocks and stones.*”

²⁹ Ramcat rapids, which is located less than two miles below Confluence, is inexplicably listed as a waterfall on Shippen’s November 1759 “*Draught of The Monongahela & Youghiogany Rivers*” ([Figure 0829](#)). Ohiopyle is identified as the “*Gr. Falls*”.

Fort Cumberland was the forerunner of Cumberland, Maryland

Gateway to the west

Fort Cumberland was located where Wills Creek joins the Potomac River, at the present-day location of Cumberland, Maryland. That general area was called “*Wills Creek*” in many colonial documents, evidently because the mouth of Wills Creek was an arrival and departure point. Up to the mouth of Wills Creek ([Figure 0907](#)), the Potomac River³⁰ was useable for water transportation. For example, in 1782 Thomas Jefferson wrote “...*Fort Cumberland, the head of the navigation on the Patowmac...*” The Narrows³¹ ([Figure 0444](#)), and the valleys of Braddock Run, Wills Creek, and Jennings Run provided natural passages to the west. Because of these simple geographical influences, the present-day Cumberland area became an important gateway to the west.

The earliest recorded route heading west from “*Wills Creek*” is implied by Gist’s November 4, 1751 journal entry, **and is illustrated on the 1755 Fry and Jefferson map.** By 1753, branches of a second route, financed by the Ohio Company, went to the present-day areas of Brownsville and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. At least part of the Ohio Company road was laid out and marked by the Indian Nemacolin. The Ohio Company road was repaired by Washington’s forces in 1754, and further improved by Braddock’s forces in 1755. Braddock’s road and the Turkey Foot Road became the principal routes of travel west from Cumberland.

The 1818 National Road further cemented Cumberland’s status as a transportation center. Cumberland’s importance was elevated by the discovery of vast natural resources in the Jennings Run and Georges Creek basins, including coal and fire clay. When the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad reached Cumberland in 1842, Cumberland became the western terminus of railroad traffic. This status was a great stimulus to local freight wagon and stagecoach traffic. The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal provided an alternate transportation connection with the east, and further raised Cumberland’s status as a transportation center.

Summary of the early history of the Cumberland area

The Ohio Company was granted the right to a vast quantity of land along the Ohio if they could settle it. They built a storehouse at the mouth of Wills Creek circa 1750³² as a base of operations. The Ohio Company financed road construction west from Wills Creek, passing through the Allegheny Mountains, in order to facilitate trade with the Indians, and to promote western settlement. Some historians have mistakenly written that the Ohio Company cut the Turkey Foot Road.

English trading activities in the region drained by the Ohio River caused the French to take steps to enforce their claim to the region. Some of these steps included attacking the English trading post at the Twightwee town of Pickawillany, and building Fort Presque Isle, Fort Le Boeuf, and Fort Machault. The English decided to build a fort at the present-day location of Pittsburgh to oppose the

³⁰ According to William C. Reichel’s study of Moravian missionary John Heckewelder’s papers, published in Volume 1 of the 1876 “**Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society**”, Potomac is “*corrupted from Pethamook, signifying, they are coming by water.*”

³¹ According to Thomas and Williams’ 1923 book “**History of Allegany County Maryland**”, “*The famous Cumberland Narrows has been aptly described as ‘the front door of the Alleganies...’*”

³² The **1750 date** is from page 68 of William Darlington’s 1893 book “**Christopher Gist’s journals: with historical, geographical and ethnological notes**”. The second petition of the Ohio Company indicates that the company sent for trade goods and purchased land for storehouses after July 12, 1749, and the storehouse was already built by May 1751.

French. Colonel Trent's forces arrived there in early 1754 for construction activities. A French military force expelled Trent's forces on April 16, 1754, and built Fort Duquesne. This fort blocked the trading routes, and dominated the juncture of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers³³. The French attacked Logstown on May 14, 1754. Ensuing events led to Captain Jumonville's fatal encounter with George Washington, the battle of Fort Necessity, and the construction of Fort Cumberland.

Braddock used Fort Cumberland as his base of operations during his flawed³⁴ and ultimately disastrous campaign against the French at Fort Duquesne. Braddock's army set off from Fort Cumberland to advance against Fort Duquesne on June 10, 1755³⁵, generally following the Ohio Company road. [Figure 0155](#) is a copy of an early map of "*Fort Cumberland and Vicinity*" from Winsor's 1887 "**Narrative and Critical History of America**". It shows a blockhouse and the Ohio Company's "*New Store*" on the Virginia (now West Virginia) side of the Potomac River, and Fort Cumberland on the other. [Figure 0178](#) is a 2010 photo that shows a descriptive historical marker at the site of Fort Cumberland. Information on the fort structure is provided in Chapter 40.

³³ According to William C. Reichel's study of John Heckewelder's papers, published in Volume 1 of the 1876 "**Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society**", the word Allegheny is "*corrupted from Alligéwi—the name of a race of Indians said to have dwelt along the river of that name, and in Alligewinink, i.e., all the country west of the Alleghenies, drained by the tributaries of the Ohio and their numerous sources.*" Reichel also indicates that Monongahela is "*corrupted from Menaungehilla, a word implying high banks or bluffs, breaking off and falling down at places.*"

³⁴ Braddock arrogantly refused to employ flanking parties of scouts to search ahead for the enemy, walked his command into a deadly ambush, and then forbade his men to fight from behind cover. A numerically inferior force of French and Indians were able to attack from behind solid cover that was provided by several ravines, and decimated the British. England did not declare war on France until May 17, 1756, long after Braddock's defeat. The declaration is printed in Volume XXV of the 1756 "**The London Magazine**", and includes the following statement: "*We have therefore thought proper to declare war; and we do hereby declare war against the French king, who hath so unjustly begun it...*". [Figure 0936](#) is a 2013 photo of the historical marker at the site of Braddock's defeat.

³⁵ Washington Irving's 1900 book "**Life of George Washington**".

