

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.

L. Dietle

August 23, 2026

6. Contrary to conventional wisdom, the Ohio Company did not cut the Turkey Foot Road

Conclusion after reviewing the historical record

The Ohio Company was chartered in 1748. The members petitioned the crown for a vast quantity of land, and in March 1749, received it in a conditional grant. The conditions required them to seat 100 families on the land within seven years, and maintain a fort and garrison for protection.

When they realized they were running out of time, they wrote a second petition requesting a time extension with modified terms: Seating 300 families, and erecting two forts, one at Chartiers Creek and the other at the mouth of the Kanawha River. The petition, which was reviewed by the Council Chamber in April 1754, states that the Ohio Company:

...at their General Meeting in May 1751, judging it necessary for their Trade and passage to the Ohio, to have a Grant of some Land belonging to Maryland and Pennsylvania, wrote to Mr. Hanbury to apply for the same to the Proprietors, and laid out and opened a wagon road thirty feet wide from their Store house at Wills Creek, to the three branches on Ganyangaine River, computed to be near Eighty Miles...

Several historians have interpreted this, and other information, to mean the Ohio Company cut the Turkey Foot Road in 1751. Although this interpretation has been widely accepted as fact, it is incorrect.

Proving a negative

Since this chapter has the unenviable task of trying to prove a negative, it necessarily delves into what the Ohio Company *did* do. A 1753 road that is known to history as the Ohio Company road was followed and improved by Washington in 1754, then by Braddock in 1755.

Ample evidence proves that neither the Ohio Company road nor the Turkey Foot Road was 30 feet wide. The stated width of the Ohio Company road was an exaggeration that was evidently intended to influence passage of the petition. This obvious exaggeration casts significant doubt on the stated 80-mile length of the road. That doubt led to two different theories about the Ohio Company's road "to the three branches on Ganyangaine River". Each theory fits the known facts better than the accepted interpretation. The first theory seems much more likely than the second, and is believed to be factual.

In a "who done it" court case, the prosecutor is required to prove his case, while the best an innocent defendant's attorney can typically do is establish reasonable doubt. This chapter shows that historians have simply not proven their case concerning alleged Ohio Company construction of the Turkey Foot Road. Reasonable doubt is established by the records of what the Ohio Company actually did and when they did it, how their road was used for military purposes and where it went, by the competing theories in this chapter, and by Gist's journal, which **indicates** that the antecedent

to the eastern part of the Turkey Foot Road already existed in 1751. Chapter 9 proves that what became known as the Turkey Foot Road was really cut as a military supply route to Fort Pitt in 1779.

Summary of the theories about the road described in the second petition

The Ohio Company had an overland route to the beginning of the Ohio River by 1753. It crossed the Youghiogheny River at two different locations. Part of the route was capable of handling wagon traffic, and is the wagon road the second petition describes.

Based on early documents, the “*three branches on Ganyangaine River*” reference could conceivably describe two¹⁵⁹ different locations. Here are the theories, presented in the order of their strength:

- **First theory**—The 80-mile wagon road statement was an exaggeration, and the second petition was just describing progress to somewhere in the general vicinity of the Youghiogheny River¹⁶⁰ on the now well-known Ohio Company road.
- **Second theory**—If the 80-mile statement was approximately correct, then the Ohio Company wagon road ran far past Turkeyfoot, and ended somewhere along the navigable portion of the Youghiogheny River.

The petition references the general vicinity of a landmark

Regardless of which “*three branches*” location is referenced by the second petition, the petition most likely references the general vicinity of the landmark, rather than implying that the Ohio Company road went directly to the landmark. Even the post-Revolutionary War embodiment of the Turkey Foot Road did not literally go the forks of the Youghiogheny. Instead, it passed through the sites of Harnedsville and Ursina, which are 2.1 and 3.1 miles away from the forks, respectively.

Weighing the theories against each other

The name Turkeyfoot was applied to a large area

The present-day location of Confluence, Pennsylvania is identified as “*Three Forks*” on the 1755 Evans map, and was also known as “*Turkeyfoot*” and “*the Crow Foot*”. These names arise from the confluence of three waterways, which form a well-known landmark. Then and now, the name “*Turkeyfoot*” refers to the territory for many miles around the actual landmark. The term “*the three branches on Ganyangaine River*” probably refers to “*Three Forks*”. If one assumes that the second petition 80-mile statement is an exaggeration, “*the three branches on Ganyangaine River*” was

¹⁵⁹ The first two editions of this book contained a third theory that was based on a statement by Moravian missionary John Heckewelder, who resided among the Indians for more than 40 years. In a posthumously published article in the 1834 “**Transactions of the American Philosophical Society**”, he indicates that Indians called the Ohio River the “*Giethanne*”. The second petition refers to the Ohio River interchangeably as the “*Alleghany or Ohio River*” and the “*Ohio or Alleghany River*”. The 1755 Fry and Jefferson map ([Figure 0010](#)) identifies the Ohio River as the “*Ohio or Fair River Called also by the English Alliganey River*”. In giving the etymology of “*Youghiogheny*”, Darlington explains that Indians sometimes counted the river that is formed by the junction of smaller streams as one of the forks. The Pittsburgh location bears this out, as it is often referred to as “*Three Rivers*”. The third theory speculated that the term “*three branches on Ganyangaine River*” in the second petition could be referencing “*Giethanne*” or “*Alliganey*” instead of “*Youghiogheny*”. It is now noted that the word “*Youghogane*” is used in a May 1751 meeting resolution that the second petition references. This invalidates the third theory. Clearly “*Ganyangaine*” and “*Youghogane*” reference the Youghiogheny River.

¹⁶⁰ In the second edition of this book, the summary of the first theory inexplicably names the Casselman River, rather than the Youghiogheny River. When reviewing a draft shortly after it is written, an author often sees what he thinks he wrote, rather than the actual printed words. This mistake is an example of the phenomenon. Such mistakes are easier to catch with the passage of time. The sentence had been expanded to include the (wrong) waterway name for the second edition. During proofreading, the sentence did not stand out as an obvious revision, and was not closely scrutinized.

certainly located close enough to the Ohio Company road to have been referenced as a landmark¹⁶¹. This is the most likely of the theories because it fits best with the historical record.

The second theory is plausible

When a credible eighteenth century traveler crossed the Youghiogheny River in near present-day West Newton, he described the river as “*the forks of Yough*”. This name was also applicable to the northern part of the region between the Monongahela and Youghiogheny rivers.

Braddock, who generally followed the Ohio Company road, crossed the navigable portion of the Youghiogheny River, at which point he would have been roughly 71 miles from Fort Cumberland. If one believes the 80-mile statement in the second petition, then it certainly makes more sense to accept the second theory than it does to blindly accept statements that the Ohio Company cut the Turkey Foot Road to the location of present-day Confluence.

One of the theories seems to rise to the level of a proven fact

The limited purpose of this chapter is merely to present and support the primary conclusion: **The Ohio Company did not cut the Turkey Foot Road**. The first and second editions of this book explored three theories, which were simply intended to create enough reasonable doubt to comfortably reach the primary conclusion. Those editions included the admonition that none of the theories “*should be accepted as fact without far more independent research.*” Considering the new information provided by the third edition of this book, the admonition is no longer strictly true.

A 1754 Pennsylvania government record mentions a 52-mile-long wagon road from Wills Creek to the Great Meadows, and that wagon road is very clearly depicted on the Fry and Jefferson map. It is the only wagon road on the map that heads west out of Wills Creek. The Great Meadows is only about 11 miles west of where the Ohio Company road crossed the Youghiogheny River, which is certainly close enough to use the Turkeyfoot landmark as a reference. With these new interconnected observations, the first theory seems to rise to the level of a reasonably proven fact. Even so, this chapter should not be considered the last word on the Ohio Company road. That one subject would, by itself, require a research effort that would far exceed what has gone into this entire book.

Some may still wish to cling to the belief that the Ohio Company cut the Turkey Foot Road – simply because some historian offhandedly said so, and other historians copied him. The second theory is retained to establish overwhelming reasonable doubt, even though the first theory is believed to be correct.

This chapter explores a diverse range of topics

This chapter is necessarily long and tedious, and the casual reader will be forgiven for skipping it altogether. In order to reach its conclusion, this chapter explores a variety of complex, interconnected topics. With more time, the topics could have been hammered into more manageable form. Life’s exigencies dictated otherwise. Without apology as to form, this chapter is (as far as can

¹⁶¹ It is theoretically possible – but unlikely – that some unknown northerly branch of the Ohio Company road went to the Turkeyfoot; i.e. to the location where the waters of the Casselman River and Laurel Run are added to the Youghiogheny River. If there was such a branch road, then why? Perhaps they did not yet realize that passage down the Youghiogheny was blocked by rapids, and the Ohiopyle Falls. It was apparently not common knowledge. Washington, for example, decided to go see for himself in May of 1754, which was *after* the second petition was written. The weakness to this line of thought is that the Ohio Company surely would have determined whether the river below the Turkeyfoot was navigable before going to the expense of building a wagon road.

be determined) the first attempt by anyone to investigate and refute the “*conventional wisdom*” concerning the origins of the Turkey Foot Road.

Examples of topics to look for

This chapter analyzes the exploration and road building activities of the Ohio Company, as revealed by their company records. Various statements in the company records are illuminated within the context of relevant aspects of regional history and geography. Since there is some confusion about where the Ohio Company road even went, it is necessary to prove that a branch of it went to the present-day location of Pittsburgh. For that reason, this chapter also explores military use of the Ohio Company road by Washington and Braddock.

The early importance of the northern end of the Youghiogheny River as a transportation corridor is explored in Chapters 38 and 39, revealing the significance of Connellsville and West Newton.

Here ends the introduction. The substance of the chapter begins now.

We disagree with several books about the origins of the road

Page 44 of Professor Emeritus Walter J. Switala’s 2001 book “**Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania**” indicates that the Ohio Company built the Turkey Foot Road in 1751 along the route of the Indian path known as the Turkeyfoot Path. His book has received widespread notice because certain portions are available for review on the Internet. He was likely relying on Wallace (below) for his information¹⁶².

Chapter 115 ([Appendix 0069](#)) and page 12 of Wallace’s well regarded 1965 book “**Indian Paths of Pennsylvania**” indicate much the same thing as Switala. Page 12 identifies the road as the 1751 Turkey Foot Road. Chapter 115 is about the Turkey Foot Road between present-day Cumberland and the general Confluence area, and notes that the Ohio Company was preparing to cut it in 1751.

Research was performed with high hopes of proving these books right. Instead, what was found, in our opinion, proves them wrong. This chapter presents the reasoning. The critical examination of this one point is not intended to impugn the overall content of the Wallace and Switala books.

Anyone who studies the Turkey Foot Road owes Wallace, in particular, a huge debt of gratitude. He reported on many different Indian paths in his commendable book, and it would have been nigh impossible to avoid all mistakes. Despite our best efforts, this book will undoubtedly have its own share of errors that someone else will discover and dismember¹⁶³. Such is the natural progression of any field of research, be it science, medicine, or history.

Switala’s main point was not who built the Turkey Foot Road; rather, it was the possibility that the road may have been used by fugitive slaves. Local tradition does support the use of the Turkey Foot Road by fugitive slaves. For example, the Springs Historical Society pamphlet “**A Visitor’s Guide To the Springs Museum**” describes Adolph Hanning’s farm along the Turkey Foot Road north of Springs as comprising a part of the underground railroad.

¹⁶² Switala’s endnotes reference Wallace’s book.

¹⁶³ Despite prodigious effort, earlier editions of this book certainly contained their fair share of mistakes. No detailed historical study, including the current edition of this book, is likely to be error free.

Darlington's 1893 book may have inadvertently started the confusion

William Darlington's 1893 book "**Christopher Gist's journals with historical geographical and ethnological notes**" ([Appendix 0011](#)) mentions the building of a road to Turkeyfoot by the Ohio Company in 1751. Darlington's page 225 introduction to the Ohio Company states:

The Company bought and sent out a large Cargo of goods from England in 1749-50, and built a Store House opposite the mouth of Wills Creek, now Cumberland Maryland, from which place to Turkey Foot, or the Three forks of the Youghiogheny, they had a road opened in 1751.

The 1751 date is based on a misreading of the second petition. The only other seemingly relevant statement Darlington made is his page 138 interpretation of two of Gist's journal entries. That description references "*Turkey-foot, or Three Forks, near the present town of Confluence*", as follows:

November 22.—The Youghiogheny River has three heads or forks: the main, or south fork, rises in Preston County, West Virginia, near the spring-head of the Potomac; the middle fork, or Castleman's River, rises in Garrett County, Maryland, and the north fork, or Laurel Hill Creek, rises in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. The name first appears, marked "Spring heads of Yok-yo-gane river a south branch of the Monongahela," on a "Map of the Northern Neck in Virginia, the Territory of Thomas Lord Fairfax according to a late survey drawn in the year 1737 by Wm. Mayo."¹⁶⁴ It next appears on Fry and Jefferson's Map of Virginia and Maryland, of 1751, as the "Yawyawganey River." Gist seems to have reached the middle fork this day, above Lost Run, in the northwest part of Addison Township, Somerset County, Pennsylvania, thence crossed into Upper Turkey-foot Township.

November 24.—Crossed the south fork at Turkey-foot, or Three Forks, near the present town of Confluence, in Somerset County, where the three branches of the Youghiogheny unite; thence proceeding, he encamped about the head of "Gabriel's Run," in Henry Clay Township, Fayette County. 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.

In summary, page 138 of Darlington's book mentions "*Turkey-foot, or Three Forks, near the present town of Confluence, in Somerset County*". Later, when page 225 of his book mentions "...*opposite the mouth of Wills Creek, now Cumberland Maryland, from which place to Turkey Foot, or the Three forks of the Youghiogheny, they had a road opened in 1751*", his readers naturally interpret it to mean somewhere "*near the present town of Confluence*". It would be no surprise if some of his readers concluded that the Ohio Company built **the** Turkey Foot Road in 1751. The contemporaneous records do not support such a conclusion, and in fact Darlington did not specifically reference **the** Turkey Foot Road. Instead of interpreting evidence, sometimes historians inadvertently misinterpret the statements of other historians.

¹⁶⁴ Two other books ascribe a slightly different title for the map: "*A Map of the Northern Neck in Virginia; The Territory of the Right Honourable Thomas Lord Fairfax; Situate betwixt the Rivers Potomack and Rappahanock, According to a Late Survey; Drawn in the Year 1737 by Wm Mayo.*"

Flemming's 1922 book

In regard to the Ohio Company, pages 545 and 546 of Flemming's 1922 book "**History of Pittsburgh and Environs**" ([Appendix 0013](#)) state:

The company...built a storehouse opposite the mouth of Will's creek, on the site of Cumberland,¹⁶⁵ Maryland, and by 1751 had built a road to Turkey-foot, or the three forks of the Youghiogheny.

Page 528 of Flemming's book discusses a 1768 topic, and mentions that "*Turkey Foot was the fanciful name given the union of three streams at what is now Confluence, Pennsylvania.*"¹⁶⁶, as follows:

Steel records that the commissioners sent a messenger to Cheat river and to Stewart's crossings on the Yough (now Connellsville, Pennsylvania) with several proclamations requesting them to meet the commissioners at "Giesse's place" as most central to both settlements. Giesse was Steel's misspelling of Gist. March 30th the commissioners were at Gist's, where between thirty and forty men had assembled. The commissioners proceeded as at Redstone¹⁶⁷ and endeavored to convince the people of the necessity and reasonableness of quitting the unpurchased land, but to no purpose. The people had heard what the Indians said at Redstone and reasoned in the same manner. They had no apprehension of war; they would attend the treaty and take their measures accordingly. "Many severe things," Steel said, "were said of Croghan, and one Lawrence Harrison treated the law and our government with too much disrespect."

March 31st the commissioners arrived at the Great Crossings of the Youghiogheny, now Somerfield, Pennsylvania, and were informed by a man named Speer¹⁶⁸ that eight or ten families lived at a place called Turkey Foot. "We sent some proclamations thither by said Speer," wrote Steel, "as we did to a few families nigh the crossings of the Little Yough, judging it unnecessary to go amongst them. It is our opinion that some will move off in obedience to the law; the greater part will wait the treaty, and if they find that the Indians are indeed dissatisfied, we think the whole will be persuaded to remove. The Indians coming to Redstone and delivering their speeches greatly obstructed our design."

"Turkey Foot" was the fanciful name given the union of three streams at what is now Confluence, Pennsylvania. The pioneers in the region saw a resemblance to the three toes of a bird's foot. The three streams are the Great Youghiogheny, Castleman's river or the Little Yough, and Laurel Hill

¹⁶⁵ This appears to be a misreading of Darlington's introduction to the Ohio Company. Although written in a confusing way, Darlington indicates that the mouth of Wills Creek is now Cumberland, Maryland. The storehouse was on the opposite side of the Potomac River from the mouth of Wills Creek, at Ridgeley, West Virginia.

¹⁶⁶ Internal quotation removed.

¹⁶⁷ Redstone is the place now known as Brownsville, Pennsylvania. At some point, Redstone started being used as a departure point for trips downriver by pioneers. For example, Volume 13 of the 1834 "**Hazard's register of Pennsylvania**" describes an iron tablet that had just been cast that stated "JACOB YODER, Was born in Reading, Pennsylvania, August 11th, 1738: .And was a Soldier in the Revolutionary Army in 1777 and 1778. He emigrated to the West in 1780, and in May, 1782, from Fort Redstone, on the Monongahela River, in the FIRST FLAT BOAT that ever descended the Mississippi. He landed at New Orleans with a cargo of produce. He died April 7, 1832, at his Farm in Spencer County, Kentucky, and lies here interred beneath this tablet." Thaddeus Harris' 1805 book "**Journal of a Tour...**" describes the flat boats then used by traders heading downriver on the Monongahela as follows: "*These boats are generally called 'Arks,' and are said to have been invented by Mr. Krudger, on the Juniata, about ten years ago. They are square, and flat-bottomed; about forty feet by fifteen, with sides six feet deep; covered with a roof of thin boards, and accommodated with a fire-place. They will hold from 200 to 400 barrels of flour. They require but four hands to navigate them; carry no sail, and are wafted down by the current.*"

¹⁶⁸ As shown by the 1939 W.P.A. Addison Township "survey warrant" map ([Figure 0294](#)), a man named Jacob Spears had a tract of land (Order No. 3078, April 11, 1768) where Braddock's road crossed the Youghiogheny River.

creek. Turkey Foot was a noted place in pioneer history. Steel recorded the names of only nine settlers there and thirteen at “Giesse’s.” Among them Thomas Gist, son of Christopher, who had died of smallpox in 1759¹⁶⁹. Thomas was a bachelor, as was his brother Richard, who was killed in battle during the Revolution. Christopher and his two sons were soldiers at Braddock’s battle. As Gist had taken up his location prior to 1753, when Washington was there, the place, known as Gist’s Plantation, was in 1768 an old settlement on the disputed land.

Flemming made other references to Turkeyfoot on pages 250, 354, and 524 of his book in reference to the Confluence region. Like Darlington, Flemming does not specifically reference the Turkey Foot Road by name.

Mistaken assumptions

Evidently, historians have assumed that Darlington and Flemming describe a road that went to the actual present-day location of Confluence, and as a result assume that Darlington and Flemming describe the Turkey Foot Road. In reality, the whole surrounding area was known as Turkeyfoot, because the confluence of the three rivers was an oft-referenced landmark. Even something as far away from Confluence as the Ohiopyle Falls was considered to be “*at the Turkey Foot*” by George Washington. Based on this, it would not be surprising if the second petition simply means that, at the moment it was written, the portion of the company’s road that was traversable by wagon only extended to where the route passed through the general Turkeyfoot region.

The first petition of the Ohio Company requests a land grant

The formal existence of the Ohio Company began with a royal charter that was issued May 19, 1748¹⁷⁰. There seem to be as many opinions about the motives of the Ohio Company as there are books and articles about the company. The motives are described as everything from laudatory to sinister, depending on the author’s point of view. This book leaves such judgments to others, and simply refers the reader to the Ohio Company’s first petition.

The first petition ([Appendix 0010](#)) was sent to the Lords of Trade in 1749, and requested:

a Tract of Five hundred thousand acres of land betwixt Romannettos and Buffalo’s Creek on the South side of the River Aligane otherwise the Ohio and betwixt the two Creeks and the Yellow Creek on the North side of the said River or in such parts to the West of the said Mountains as shall be adjudged most proper by your Petitioners for that purpose and that two hundred thousand acres, part of the said five hundred thousand may be granted immediately without rights on condition of your Petitioners seating at their proper expence a hundred Familys upon the land in seven years, the lands to be granted free of quitrent¹⁷¹ for ten years on condition of their erecting a Fort and maintaining a Garrison for protection of the Settlement for that time...

The petition was granted.

¹⁶⁹ This sentence refers to the 1759 death of Christopher Gist by smallpox, not Thomas.

¹⁷⁰ “**The Ohio Company a Colonial Corporation**” by Herbert T. Leyland, 1921.

¹⁷¹ According to James Buchanan’s 1757 “**New English Dictionary**”, quitrent is “*In law, a small rent of acknowledgment payable by the tenants to the lord of the manor.*”

The second petition gives background on the Ohio Company

Eventually, the company realized that it would be unable to fulfill the conditions of the grant within the allotted time. Sometime before March 28, 1754, a second petition “*To the Kings Most Excellent Majesty in Council*” was written to request modifications to the conditions of the first.

The founding and purpose of the Ohio Company are described in the petition’s introductory statements. The petition proposes an extension of time, contingent on the company seating 300 families and building two forts. One of the proposed forts was to be located at the mouth of Chartiers Creek, near the forks of the Ohio. The other was to be located near the end of **the path** on the Fry and Jefferson map, at the mouth of the Kanawha River in the vicinity of Point Pleasant, West Virginia.

The second petition reads as follows:

The Humble Petition of the Ohio Company Sheweth,

That your Petitioners upon Intimation given by several Nations of Indians residing near the Ohio and other Branches of Mississippi and near the Lakes westward of Virginia, that they were desirous of trading with your Majesty’s Subjects and quitting the ffrench; and knowing the value of those Rich Countrys which were given up and acknowledged to be your Majesty’s undoubted right by the Six Nations, who are Lawfull Lords of all these Lands by Conquest from other Indian Nations, at the treaty of Lancaster on the 2nd day of July 1744. Your petitioners being sensible of the vast consequence of securing those Countrys from the ffrench, did in the year 1748, form themselves into a Company to Trade with the Indians and to make settlements upon the Ohio or Alleghany River, by the name of the Ohio Company. That the Company in the beginning of the year 1749 Petitioned your Majesty, wherein they set forth the vast Advantage it would be to Britain and the Colonys to anticipate the French by taking possession of that Country Southward of the Lakes, to which the French had no Right, nor had then taken possession, except a small Block house Fort among the Six Nations, below the falls of Niagara, they having deserted Le Detroit fort Northward of Erie Lakes, during the War and retired to Canada.

The Reasons for securing the same being mentioned at large in their said former Petition, and in which they prayed that your Majesty would give orders or Instructions to your Governor of Virginia, to make out to your Petitioners five hundred thousand Acres betwixt Romanittoe and Buffaloe Creeks on the South side of the Allegany or Ohio River, and between the two Creeks and Yellow Creek on the North side of that River, upon the Terms and with the Allowance therein mentioned to which they beg leave to Refer.

That your Petitioners in pursuance of the said Petition, obtained an order from your Majesty to your Lieutenant Governor of Virginia dated March the 18th 1749, to make them a grant or Grants of Two hundred thousand Acres of Land between Romanetto and Buffaloe Creeks, on the south side of the Ohio, and betwixt the two creeks and Yellow Creek on the North side thereof, or in such part to the Westward of the Great Mountains as the Company should think proper for making settlements and extending their trade with the Indians, with a Promise if they did not erect a Fort in the said Land, and maintain a sufficient Garrison therein and seat at their proper Expense a hundred families therein in seven years, the said grants should be void. And as soon as these terms were accomplished, he was ordered to make out a further Grant or Grants of three hundred thousand Acres, under like conditions, Restrictions and allowances as the first 200,000 Acres, adjoining thereto and within these limits. These orders were delivered to the Honourable William Nelson on the 12th of July following (1749) and upon producing them before the Governor and

Council, they made an entry in the Council Books, that the said Company should have leave given them to take up and survey 200,000 Acres within the Place mentioned in your Majestys said Instructions and Order. That your Petitioners upon their entry in the Council Books, sent to Great Britain for a Cargo of Goods to begin their Trade, and purchased Lands upon the Potomack River, being the most convenient place to erect Store Houses, and in September following (1749) employed Gentlemen to discover the Lands beyond the Mountains, to know where to place their surveys. But they not having made any considerable progress, the Company in September 1750 agreed to give Mr. Christopher Gist £150 certain, and such further handsome allowance as his service should deserve, for searching and discovering the Lands upon the Ohio and its several Branches as low as the falls on the Ohio, with proper Instructions. He accordingly set out October 1750 and did not return until May 1751, after a tour of 1200 Miles in which he visited many towns and found them all desirous of entering into strict friendship and Trade with your Majestys Subjects.

That your Petitioners at their General Meeting in May 1751, judging it necessary for their Trade and passage to the Ohio, to have a Grant of some Land belonging to Maryland and Pennsylvania, wrote to Mr. Hanbury to apply for the same to the Proprietors, and laid out and opened a wagon road thirty feet wide from their Store house at Wills Creek, to the three branches on Ganyangaine River, computed to be near Eighty Miles; and applied to the President and Masters of William and Mary College for a Commission to a Surveyor to lay out the Lands, as they pretend they had a right to do, proposing to begin the survey after receiving Mr. Gists Report.

Your Petitioners finding by the said Gists Journal that he had only observed the Lands on the North side of the Ohio, and finding that the Indians were unwilling that they should then settle on the Miami River, or on the north side of the Ohio, and the Land lying too much exposed and at too great a distance, They employed the said Gist to go out a second time to view and examine the land between Mohongaly and the Big Conhaway, Wood or New River on the south East side of the Ohio, which employed him from the 4th of November 1751 to the March following 1752; but he could not finish his Plan and report before October 1752, at which time the Company gave in a Petition to the Governor and Council, praying leave to survey and take up their first 200,000 Acres between Romanettoes, otherwise Kiskominettos Creek, and the fork of the Ohio and the great Conhaway, otherwise New River, otherwise Woods river, on the south side of the river Ohio in several Surveys. The Governor and Council having not thought fit to comply with the prayer of the said Petition, to allow your Petitioners to survey their Lands in different Tracts as would best accomodate the settlers and secure their frontiers from attacks, the President and Masters of the College also refusing to give out a Commission to a Surveyor; and the late Governor and Council having made out large Grants to private persons Land-gobbers, to the amount of near 1,400,000 Acres. Immediately, even the same day, after your Majestys Instructions for making out your Petitioners Grant and Surveys, became publicly known where the Lands were not properly described or Limited, nor Surveyed, by which means their several Grants might have interfered with the Lands discovered and chosen by the Company, your Petitioners now laid under difficultys in surveying and letting their Lands and Erecting the fort, tho' your Petitioners have been at very great Expence and are willing to be at a much greater, to secure those valuable Countrys and the Indian Trade. That your Petitioners apprehend from these Obstructions, and the Delay and Expence attending Surveys, and from the suits that may be commenced upon account of the Grants made out to other Persons since the Instructions given by your Majesty to grant to your Petitioners the Land mentioned in the said Instructions which may occasion longer Delays. The Company may

be prevented from fulfilling their Covenant of settling the Lands and Compleating their Fort in the time specified by the said Contract. And as boundaries to large Grants are much more natural and easy to be ascertained by having Rivers for their Limits, and streight Lines or Mountains to connect them from River to River, and at much less Expence and delay in fixing them, Therefore your petitioners pray, that upon Condition your Petitioners shall enlarge their settlements and seat 300 families, instead of one hundred by their former Contract, and in consideration of their erecting two forts, one at Chartiers Creek and the other at the Fork where the great Conhaway enters the Ohio and maintain them at their own expence, That your Majesty will be graciously pleased to enlarge their Grant under the same Exemption of Rights and Quit Rents as in the former Instructions, and to fix the Bounds without any further delay or Survey, from Romanettos or Kiskomenetto Creek on the South East side of the Ohio, to the Fork at the entrance of the great Conhaway River; and from thence along the North side of the said Conhaway River to the Entrance of Green Briar River, and from thence in a streight Line or Lines along the Mountains to the South East Spring of Mohangaly River; and from thence Northward along the Mountains to the North East springs of Romanetto or Kiskominetto Creek, or till a West Line from the Mountains intersect this said Spring and along it to its entrance into the Ohio; which will prevent all Disputes or Delays about the Limitts which are necessary to be immediately determind, as the season is advancing to procure foreign Protestants and other of your Majestys subjects to go on with the settlement, and to provide materials to erect the second Fort at the mouth of the great Conhaway River, (the Fort on Chartiers Creek being now building) in order to prevent the Intrusions and incroachments of the Indians in the French aliance and secure our settlements upon the Ohio; which if not immediately put in Execution before they get permission may be highly detrimental to the Colonys and occasion a great future Expence to Britain.

And your Petitioners will ever pray etc.

1751 instructions to Christopher Gist preclude a 1751 road

The Ohio Company's July 16, 1751 instructions to Christopher Gist were:

After You have returned from Williamsburg and have executed the Commission of the President & Council, if they shall think proper to give You One, otherwise as soon as You can conveniently You are to apply to Col. Cresap for such of the Company's Horses, as You shall want for the Use of yourself and such other Person or Persons You shall think necessary to carry with You; and You are to look out & observe the nearest & most convenient Road You can find from the Company's Store at Wills's Creek to a Landing at Mohongeyela; from thence You are to proceed down the Ohio on the South Side thereof, as low as the Big Conhaway, and up the same as far as You judge proper, and find good Land—You are all the Way to keep an exact Diary & Journal & therein note every Parcel of good Land, with the Quantity as near as You can by any Means compute the same, with the Breadth, Depth, Course and Length of the several Branches falling into the Ohio, & the different Branches any of Them are forked into, laying the same as exactly down in a Plan thereof as You can; observing also the Produce, the several Kinds of Timber and Trees, observing where there is Plenty and where the Timber is scarce; and You are not to omit proper Observations on the mountainous, barren, or broken Land, that We may on your Return judge what Quantity of good Land is contained within the Compass of your Journey, for We would not have You omit taking Notice of any Quantity of good Land, tho not exceeding 4 or 500 Acres provided the same

lies upon the River Ohio & may be convenient for our building Store Houses & other Houses for the better carrying on a Trade and Correspondence down that River.

Gist begins his journey

Christopher Gist's first journal entry, written November 4, 1751, began as follows:

1751.—Pursuant to my Instructions hereunto annexed from the Committee of the Ohio Company bearing Date 16th July 1751

Monday Novr 4.—Set out from the Company's Store House in Frederick County Virginia opposite the Mouth of Wills's Creek...

Since Gist was just setting out from Wills Creek to find the “*nearest & most convenient Road...from the Company's Store at Wills's Creek to a Landing at Mohongeyela*” on November 4, 1751, the resulting road certainly did not get opened in 1751. Some may potentially argue that the Ohio Company road to the Youghiogheny had already been made, and now Gist was looking for a road to the Monongahela. The fault with such an argument is that, as far as can be determined, there is no documentary evidence for any Ohio Company **road building** west of Wills Creek prior to 1752. As this chapter later details, the Ohio Company eventually cut a single road out of Wills Creek that branched to at least two different destinations. Although it did not go directly to the confluence of the rivers at Turkeyfoot, it certainly approached closely enough to mention Turkeyfoot as a relevant landmark when describing the road. George Washington says it was cut in 1753.¹⁷²

The route not taken

On his return trip, Gist noted in his March 12, 1752 journal entry:

I set out for Mohongaly crossed it upon a Raft of Logs from whence I made the best of my Way to Potomack—I did not keep exactly my old Tract but went more to the Eastward & found a much nearer Way Home: and am of Opinion the Company may have a tolerable good Road from Wills Creek to the upper Fork of Monhongaly, from whence the River is navigable all the Way to the Ohio for large flat bottomed Boats—The Road will be a little to the Southward of West, and the Distance to the Fork of Mohongaly about 70 M...

The reference to the “*the upper Fork of Monhongaly*” is confusing. In his book on Gist, Darlington describes the upper fork of the Monongahela as being at the present-day site of Point Marion, Pennsylvania, as follows:

The upper forks of the Monongahela are formed by the junction of Cheat River, in Fayette and Green counties, near the southern boundary-line of the State.

Gist's journal entry for the period between November 30 and December 6, 1752 describes some potential farmland, and states: “*The same Body of Land holds 10 M. S. to the upper Forks of Mohongaly, and about 10 M. N, toward the mouth of Yaughyaughgaine...*” Earlier editions of this book wondered if the “*upper Fork of Monhongaly*”, might possibly be the Youghiogheny River, but the December 6, 1752 journal entry proves that it is not.¹⁷³ The subsequent Ohio Company road did however, go to the Youghiogheny River, crossing it at two points.

¹⁷² August 2, 1758 letter from George Washington to Colonel Bouquet.

¹⁷³ In the first edition of this book, the mouth of the Monongahela was mistakenly believed to be one of the possible locations of the upper fork. The location where the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers joined was then sometimes called the “*fork of Monongahela*”. That cannot be what Gist was writing about on March 12, 1752. He wrote “...*the upper Fork of*

Other traders were jealous of the Ohio Company

Volume 12 of the 1755 “**Monthly Review**” states:

The occasion of the present invasion is attributed to the grant made in 1749, to the Ohio company, without the privity, consent, or any application made to the Indians of that country, for leave to settle there, which they resented; and were induced, by certain discontented persons, whose names we are not made acquainted with, to call in the French, to drive out the English.

The August 18 to 25, 1759 issue of “**Owen’s Weekly Chronicle**” includes an article titled “*An impartial and succinct History of the Origin and Progress of the present WAR*” that states:

At this very time, Mr. Gist, employed by the Ohio Company, was upon the Ohio, surveying the lands upon that river in order to have 600,000 acres¹⁷⁴ of the best of them, and most convenient for the Indian trade, laid out and appropriated to the company; and though he concealed his business from the Indians, yet is said, that both they and the French were informed of it by our Indian traders, who were jealous of that company as their most dangerous rivals in the Indian trade. But these traders were soon made sensible, that the French would be much more dangerous neighbours...

The 1759 book “**The Continuation of Mr. Rapin’s History of England...**” states:

The Pennsylvanians ... opened the design of the Ohio company to the Indians, whom he spirited up to call the French in to their assistance.

The 1760 edition of Smollett’s “**Continuation of the Complete History of England...**” states:

...they sent one Mr. Gist to make a clandestine survey of the country, as far as the falls of the river Ohio; and... his conduct alarmed both the French and Indians. The erection of this company was equally disagreeable to the separate traders of Virginia and Pennsylvania, who saw themselves on the eve of being deprived of a valuable branch of traffic, by the exclusive charter of a monopoly; and therefore employed their emissaries to foment the jealousy of the Indians.

This quote indicates there were other Virginia traders, in addition to the Ohio Company. Anthony Robinson’s 1798 book “**A view of the causes and consequences of English wars**” states:

The company of English merchants, who called themselves the Ohio company, claimed the right by charter to a large tract of land situated on the banks of the Ohio, with the privilege of exclusive commerce with the Indians who inhabited these regions. The traders of Virginia and Pennsylvania were alarmed as well as the Indian nations, who saw, with, extreme anxiety, English surveyors measure and parcel out their lands, as if they, the occupants, had no, right or claim, to the soil which produced them.

The Ohio Company’s second petition is a source of confusion

Background information from a 1751 Ohio Company meeting

The second petition of the Ohio Company should be interpreted in light of the following May 22, 1751 passage from the “*Orders and Resolutions of the Ohio Company*”:

Monhongaly, from whence the River is navigable all the Way to the Ohio”, because the journal entry clearly indicates that there was a length of the Monongahela River between the upper fork and the beginning of the Ohio River.

¹⁷⁴ The “600,000 acres” statement is incorrect; see the first and second petitions of the Ohio Company.

Resolved that it is necessary to have a Road cleared from the mouth of Wills Creek to the three forks of the Youghogane and that Colo Cresap be empowered to agree with any person or persons willing to undertake the same so that the expense thereof does not exceed twenty-five pounds Virginia currency.

This resolution proves that the Ohio Company's westerly road out of Wills Creek did not exist on May 22, 1751. The resolution is clearly a product of the "May 1751" meeting the second petition references. Compared to the second petition's "*Ganyangaine*", the "*Youghogane*" in this 1751 passage is more clearly a reference to the Youghiogheny River. It is not clear if they meant a road to a specific location on the Youghiogheny River, or a road to a general area that "*forks of the Youghogane*" could have referenced. Nevertheless, it is crucial to note that this 1751 passage is merely a plan to build a road. It is not a record of a road that had already been built.

Darlington interprets the second petition

The Ohio Company's second petition to the "*Kings Most Excellent Majesty in Council*" begins on page 225 of Darlington's 1893 book. Quoted completely above, it includes the statement:

That your Petitioners at their General Meeting in May 1751, judging it necessary for their Trade and passage to the Ohio, to have a Grant of some Land belonging to Maryland and Pennsylvania, wrote to Mr. Hanbury to apply for the same to the Proprietors, and laid out and opened a wagon road thirty feet wide from their Store house at Wills Creek, to the three branches on Ganyangaine River computed to be near Eighty Miles...

Darlington appears to rely on this passage when he states that the Ohio Company opened a road to "*Turkey Foot, or the Three forks of the Youghiogheny*" in 1751. Although wrong about the 1751 date of the road, Darlington was technically correct that the Ohio Company road went to Turkeyfoot, because Turkeyfoot was a name for both the actual confluence of the rivers and the greater surrounding region. Turkeyfoot is still the name of two Somerset County Townships today. The original Turkeyfoot Township also included what is now Addison Township.

Both the Ohio Company road and the Turkey Foot Road passed through the Turkeyfoot region, but neither actually went to the location of Confluence. Unlike the Turkey Foot Road, the Ohio Company road actually did go to, and cross, the Youghiogheny River.

The width of the road was exaggerated in the second petition

The 1902 proceedings of the second annual meeting of the Ohio Valley Historical Association ([Appendix 0015](#)) quotes Darlington, and provides logical analysis estimating that the Ohio Company's second petition was written no earlier than January 6, 1754. The proceedings assume that "*Ganyangaine*" means "*Youghiogheny*", and are skeptical regarding the stated 30-foot width and 80-mile length of the Ohio Company road. The proceedings state:

The suspicion seems to be justified that the assertion contained in the Ohio Company's second petition that the company had "laid out and opened a wagon road thirty feet wide" from their storehouse at Wills Creek eighty miles to the three forks was an overstatement of the improvements they had made, possibly intended to influence the King in Council to grant the requests made in this petition.

The second petition was written no earlier than July 1753

The second petition was certainly written no earlier than July 1753, because it states: “*(the Fort on Chartiers Creek being now building)*”. As detailed later in this chapter, that fort was not authorized for construction until the July 25 to 27, 1753 meeting of the Ohio Company.

The second petition was received by the British government, which began action on it by March 28, 1754. It was then acted on at the Council Chamber at Whitehall on April 2, 1754. The government records state:

At the Council Chamber Whitehall

the 2^d day of April 1754

By the Right Honourable the Lords of the Committee of Council for Plantation Affairs His Majesty having been pleased, by His Order in Council of the 28th of last Month, to refer unto this Committee the humble petition of the Ohio Company, praying, that upon Condition the Petitioners enlarge their Settlements and Seat three hundred Familys instead of One hundred by their former Contract, and in Consideration of their erecting two Forts, One at Shurtees Creek, and the other at the Fork where the great Conaway¹⁷⁵ enters the Ohio, and maintain them at their own Expence, That His Majesty will be greatly pleased to enlarge their Grant under the same Exemption of Rights and Quit Rents as in the former Instructions, and to fix the Bounds without any further delay of Survey, from Romanettoe or Kiskominettoe Creek on the South East Side of the Ohio to the Fork at the entrance of the great Conhaway River, and from thence along the North Side of the said Conhaway River to the Entrance of Green Brier River, and from thence in a Streight Line or Lines to and along the Mountains to the South East Spring of Mohongaly River, and from thence Northwards along the Mountains to the North East Springs of Romanettoe or Kiskominettoe Creek or till a West Line from the Mountains intersects the said Spring and along it to its Entrance into the Ohio, which will prevent all Disputes or Delay about the Limits, which are necessary, to be immediately determined, as the Season is advancing to procure Foreign Protestants and others of His Majestys Subjects to go on with the Settlement, and to procure Materials to erect their Second Fort at the Mouth of the great Conhaway River (the Fort on Shurtees Creek being now building to prevent the Intrusion and Incroachments of the Indians in the French Alliance and secure Our Settlements upon the Ohio, which if not immediately put in Execution before they get possession, may be highly detrimental to the Colonys, and occasion a great future Expence to Britain — The Lords of the Committee this day took the said Petition into their Consideration, and are hereby pleased to refer the same (a Copy whereof is hereunto annexed) to the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, to consider thereof, and Report their Opinion thereupon to this Committee—

W. Sharpe

The second petition merely says that a meeting was held in 1751

It seems clear that the Ohio Company did not build the Turkey Foot Road in 1751, or ever, for a number of reasons. First of all, the Ohio Company’s second petition does not actually state that a **road** was built in 1751; it merely states that a **meeting** was held in 1751.

¹⁷⁵ The Kanawha River enters the Ohio River at Point Pleasant, West Virginia, which is 235 miles overland from Cumberland, Maryland.

As quoted above, and in Darlington's own book, the Ohio Company instructed Christopher Gist to search for a suitable route for the Ohio Company road on July 16, 1751, and Gist did not even **begin** his journey until November 4, 1751.

The Second Theory

Although the first theory is believed to be correct, the second theory is briefly presented, because it is more believable than the contention by some that the Ohio Company cut the Turkey Foot Road. The second theory is presented here in the middle of the chapter because it is best understood after digesting the information provided in the May 22, 1751 Ohio Company record.

Eighty miles from Cumberland on the Youghiogheny River is where?

Although the May 22, 1751 meeting record proves that Darlington correctly interprets "*Ganyangaine River*" as "*Youghiogheny River*", the distance from Cumberland to Confluence is not "*...near Eighty Miles...*". Confluence is only about 44 miles from Cumberland. If the second petition statement "*to the three branches on Ganyangaine River computed to be near Eighty Miles...*" is accepted as a reasonable mileage estimate, then it **cannot** reference the Confluence area. A location along the Youghiogheny River that is 80 miles from Cumberland would be somewhere north of Connellsville, which is about 71 miles from Cumberland using a modern route approximating the Ohio Company road.

The region known as the 'Forks of the Yough'

As documented in Chapter 13, the northern part of the region between the Monongahela and Youghiogheny rivers was once known as the "*Forks of the Yough*". Doctor Robert Wellford's 1794 travel journal, quoted in detail in Chapter 13, describes the Youghiogheny River itself as the "*forks of the Yough*", stating: "*After breakfast to the forks of Yough, 4 miles, crossed at Budds Ferry...*". Budd's Ferry was about a mile above present-day West Newton. The plural "*forks of the Yough*" reference to the Youghiogheny River is similar to the Ohio Company's "*three forks of the Youghogane*" and "*three branches on Ganyangaine River*".

The Ohio Company road also went to the navigable portion of the Youghiogheny River

According to George Mercer's December 18, 1769 legal brief (quoted below), Braddock followed the Ohio Company road. According to Lacock's study ([Figure 0476](#)), Braddock passed through the vicinity of Connellsville, Pennsylvania, which is along the navigable portion of the Youghiogheny River. The town of Connellsville¹⁷⁶ is about 71 miles from Cumberland, following a modern route that approximates the Ohio Company road – a distance that is at least somewhere close¹⁷⁷ to that stated by the second petition.

If the approximately 80-mile-long wagon road terminated on the Youghiogheny River somewhere near Connellsville, then the Ohio Company might have identified the termination point as the "*three branches on Ganyangaine River*".

¹⁷⁶ Prior to the fourth edition of this book, the second theory focused primarily on the West Newton area. This focus dissipated as it became clear that both the northern part of the region between the Monongahela and Youghiogheny rivers, and the Youghiogheny River itself, were sometimes referred to as the Forks of the Yough.

¹⁷⁷ The road length may have been estimated. In some fields of endeavor, an estimate that approaches only 10 percent error is considered quite good.

The Turkey Foot Road did not go to the Youghiogheny River

The second petition refers to a wagon road that went “*to the three branches on Ganyangaine River*”. Prior to the research presented in this book, it was not altogether clear where the route of the legendary Turkey Foot Road was located. The Turkey Foot Road that is the principal subject of this book did not go to the Youghiogheny River, **even though the antecedent path on the Fry and Jefferson map did**. This simple fact has been overlooked by those historians who say that the “*wagon road*” in the second petition is the Turkey Foot Road. As a result of the research presented in Chapter 9, it is clear that the Turkey Foot Road was cut as a supply route to Fort Pitt in 1779, and that all of the road was located on the east side of the Youghiogheny River.

It makes sense that the Ohio Company would focus on a road “*to the three branches on Ganyangaine River*”, if they intended to use the Youghiogheny River for navigation. To reach the navigable waters of the Youghiogheny River, a road to or below the vicinity of Connellsville would be required—and it is certainly understandable that someone would estimate the length of such a road as being “*near Eighty Miles*.”

A mapped route that conflicts with Braddock’s road further confuses the issue

Even though Braddock’s road is said to have followed the Ohio Company road, by both Washington and George Mercer, does that mean that it followed the entire route, or could it mean that it just followed the southern part? Two 1755 maps (Figures [0580](#) and [0581](#)) show a route between the Meadows and Fort Duquesne that has two characteristics that obviously conflict with Braddock’s road ([Figure 0476](#)). Firstly, the route crosses the Youghiogheny River near its mouth, instead of at Connellsville; and secondly, the route remains on the east side of the Monongahela River on its way to Fort Duquesne, instead of crossing the river twice. Is this merely the result of Braddock’s road being illustrated schematically, or did such a route actually exist? If it did exist, was it the Ohio Company road or some other route? History suggests that such a route did exist, because Braddock crossed the Monongahela River twice to avoid a known, potentially dangerous defile along the east side of the river. George Washington’s map ([Figure 0432](#)) that accompanied his January 17, 1754 “*Journal to the Ohio*” also shows a route that remains on the east side of the Youghiogheny River.

Since the Ohio Company was clearly interested in water carriage, the big question is why would they access the Youghiogheny River near the mouth of the Youghiogheny when the river was boatable from Connellsville on down?

The crossing location on Figures [0580](#) and [0581](#) is mentioned only because it helps to establish reasonable doubt, which is an objective of this chapter. Anyone who may still contend that the Ohio Company cut the Turkey Foot Road must address the crossing location that is illustrated on the Fry and Jefferson map and the Mitchell map, because that crossing location is a better fit with the “*near Eighty Miles*” statement in the second petition, compared to the Confluence area. Likewise, if the Ohio Company road actually crossed the Youghiogheny River at Connellsville, that is also a better fit with the “*near Eighty Miles*” statement in the second petition, compared to the Confluence area.

Bear in mind that none of this is intended to prove that the Ohio Company really had a wagon road that crossed the Youghiogheny River as far north as the Fry and Jefferson and Mitchell maps illustrate. The only reason for presenting this information is to show that the second theory makes more sense than the assumption that the Turkey Foot Road—which purposely *avoided* the Youghiogheny—is the road mentioned in the second petition. As stated previously, Connellsville is about 71 miles from Cumberland using a modern route that approximates the Ohio Company road.

The objective of this chapter is not to prove exactly where the Ohio Company road went. Rather, the objective is to demonstrate that historians who write that the Ohio Company cut the Turkey Foot Road have simply not proven their case. They make no attempt to address the “80 miles” statement in the second petition. This book at least scratches the surface of the issue by showing that the second petition could easily have been referencing the environs of present-day Confluence, or Connellsville.

A wagon road along Jennings Run would be a difficult undertaking

The Turkey Foot Road ran along the north side of Jennings Run. As explained and shown in Chapter 26, it would have been difficult for the Ohio Company to put a wagon road along the north side of Jennings Run because of a steep, rocky mountainside that extended to, or very near, the creek bed at some locations. This was still a significant issue in 1806 when the commissioners for the National Road were planning their route. The commissioners’ 1806 report ([Appendix 0061](#)) states why they decided against routing the relatively wide National Road up Wills Creek and along Jennings Run. Some of the stated reasons were the expense of hillside digging over a sloped route, and the need for a bridge over Wills Creek and several over Jennings Run.

The September 12, 1806 “**General Journal**” compiled by the commissioners describes the Jennings Run valley as follows:

Set out from Musselmans to Jenings run with a view to a critical examination of the capacity of the ground in that valley, and found from the meanders of the run frequently running close up to bold & rocky banks three crossings of the run will be unavoidable and that the best route will be to cross the run at Ben Tomlinsons old Mill near the present road¹⁷⁸ & pass up on a plat of land above the level of the valley to recross the run at the lower end of a steep rocky bluff, then in direct course thro a little orchard.

Photos from 1906 (Chapter 26) show that the road along Jennings Run between Corriganville and Barrelville was still very narrow in some locations in the early twentieth century, due to the difficulty presented by a steep rocky bluff that was immediately adjacent to Jennings Run. **If a “wagon road thirty feet wide” had been located there in 1751, the resulting cut also would have been used by the 1906 road.** No 30-foot-wide cut along Jennings Run ever existed.

No significant remedy to the cramped roadbed situation along Jennings Run occurred until the mid-twentieth century, when excavation techniques were used to physically move and straighten Jennings Run to make room for the present highway. Previous to that, the course of the road that is shown on the old maps suggests that the Jennings Run floodplain was unsuitable for a road.

The present-day engineered Jennings Run flows in more or less a straight line. The 1939 aerial photos show that in the old days, Jennings Run meandered from side-to-side down through the valley. Previous to circa 1906 improvements, the road along Jennings Run was prone to flooding, according to a 1906 magazine article ([Appendix 0019](#)) and various other bits of information.

¹⁷⁸ This reference puts Benjamin Tomlinson’s mill along Jennings Run and the Turkey Foot Road. Washington County, Maryland Deed Book E, Page 755 indicates that Joseph Tomlinson, Junior, acting as an attorney for Nathaniel Tomlinson, deeded the first lot of the Wills Town tract to Benjamin Tomlinson on March 3, 1788. The 263-acre tract was located on Wills Creek, “*Beginning On The West Branch On Jennings Run*”. The deed states that John Tomlinson’s property adjoined the north side of this property.

A road that was actually down in the valley with the run would have been all the more prone to flooding, and would have required more fording sites. This is surely why the road hugged the side of the mountain along Jennings Run, as seen in the circa 1897 to 1906 photos in Chapter 26. The natural valley of Jennings Run does not appear to be a particularly easy place to put a primitive road. This conclusion is reinforced by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company's 1828 "**Report of the Engineers, on the Reconnaissance and Surveys...**", which describes the valley of Jennings Run in the context of using it for a railroad:

The valley of Jennings' run, has a very uniform ascent from its mouth to the foot of Savage mountain; the stream alternately washes the base of the hills bordering its valley, sometimes leaving a very narrow passage, and at others, one so narrow and obstructed, as to produce the necessity of crossing the stream to avoid a rocky precipice.

Freshets in Jennings' run, sometimes rise six and seven feet, overflowing its bottoms, and excavating new channels in the gravelly soil; generally speaking, the ground is very favourable throughout the valley.

When a railroad was eventually built, it did indeed have to recross Jennings Run.

An April 1752 record indicates the company road had not yet been cleared

Not long after Gist's March 12, 1752 journal entry expressing his "*Opinion the Company may have a tolerable good Road from Wills Creek to the upper Fork of Monhongaly*", he arrived back at Wills Creek. His last journal entry states: "*Sunday 29.—We arrived at the Company's Factory at Will's Creek.*" A month later, the Ohio Company's April 28, 1752 instructions to Gist, quoted on page 236 of Darlington's book, state:

If Col Cresap has not agreed with any person to clear a Road for the Company, you are with the advice and assistance of Col. Cresap to agree with the proper Indians, who are best acquainted with the ways, immediately to cut a road from Wills Creek to the Fork of Mohongaly at the cheapest Rate you can for Goods, and this you may mention publicly to the Indians at the Loggs Town or not as you see occasion.

The above quote indicates that on April 28, 1752, the Ohio Company knew the road to the "*Fork of Mohongaly*" had not yet been cut, and did not even know if any arrangements had been made to cut it. The passage also reveals that the Ohio Company envisioned employing Indians, who were "*best acquainted with the ways*", to cut their road. According to Mr. Jacob, an acquaintance of the Cresap family, Thomas Cresap ultimately hired Nemaquin to "*lay out and mark*" the route.

The passage means the destination of the road was the Pittsburgh area

If interpreted correctly, the above quote indicates that the Ohio Company road was intended to go to the present-day location of Pittsburgh, which was then known as the "*Fork of Monongahela*". As quoted in more detail below, in early 1754, Lieutenant Governor Robert Dinwiddie, an Ohio Company member, clearly referred to the location where the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers join as the "*fork of Monongahela*", and Governor Hamilton referred to it as "*the Forks of the Monhongialo*". According to colonial records, the Indian known as Half King referred to it as the "*Fork of the Mohongalio*". Also, as detailed elsewhere in this chapter, it is manifestly clear that the Ohio Company did build a road to the present-day Pittsburgh area. For example, in 1769, George

Mercer, a member of the Ohio Company specifically said so in a legal document that is quoted later in this chapter.

Some form of the Ohio Company road was finished by February 1753

A record from the February 6, 1753¹⁷⁹ meeting of a committee of the Ohio Company at Marlborough, Stafford County, Virginia indicates that some form and portion of the Ohio Company road was finished by then. The meeting record, which addresses the inquiry of John Pagan Mercht about the treatment German Protestant settlers would receive, includes this statement:

The Companys Store house at Rock creek where they may land and have their Goods secured is sixty miles from Conocochee a fine road from whence they may go by Water in the Companys Boat to their Store house at Wills Creek about forty miles and from thence the Company have cleared a Waggon Road about sixty miles to one of the head branches of the Ohio navigable by large flat bottom boats where they proposed to build Storehouse and begin to lay off their Lands.

While some early mileage estimates are surprisingly accurate, the estimate in the above quote may not be especially accurate. A later company record, quoted below, reveals they had not yet measured the length of that new road. Regardless, the quote purports that the Ohio Company wagon road went “to one of the head branches of the Ohio navigable by large flat bottom boats”, which implies that it connected with the Monongahela River, or somewhere below the falls on the Youghiogeny River.

Nemacolin helped to lay out the Ohio Company road

Page 33 of the 1866 reprint of John J. Jacob’s 1826 book “**A biographical sketch of the life of the late Captain Michael Cresap**” ([Appendix 0017](#)) states, in reference to Michael’s father Thomas Cresap:

*It was, perhaps, about this time, or soon after, that...he entered conjointly into an association with two or three gentlemen...and formed what was called “The Ohio Company.” This Company made the first English settlement at Pittsburg before Braddock’s war; and it was through their means and efforts that the first path was traced through that vast chain of mountains called the Allegheny. Colonel Cresap, as one of that Company, and active agent thereof in this section of the country, employed an honest and friendly Indian to lay out and mark a road from Cumberland to Pittsburg. This Indian’s name was Nemacolin; and he did his work so well that General Braddock with his army pursued the same path, which thenceforward took the name of Braddock’s road...*¹⁸⁰

Mr. Jacob’s “first path” statement contradicts those who claim the Ohio Company road followed an earlier Indian Path. The statement also makes clear that Jacobs was not aware of the Turkey Foot Path that is implied by Gist’s November 4, 1751 journal entry.

Mr. Jacob explicitly states that the Ohio Company laid out a road to the present-day location of Pittsburgh. On page 13 of his book, he states that he was the “the clerk or agent of Captain Cresap”, married Michael Cresap’s widow, and came into possession of Michael Cresap’s papers, writing:

And I think it was in the Summer or Autumn of this year, 1781, that I was married to Captain Cresap’s widow, with whom I lived near forty years. Thus it will appear, from my intimate

¹⁷⁹ The date was erroneously reported as November 22, 1752 in the second edition of this book.

¹⁸⁰ Footnote 349 in Louis Mulkearn’s 1954 book “**George Mercer papers relating to the Ohio Company of Virginia**” unconvincingly attempts to refute this passage from Jacob’s 1826 book.

acquaintance with Captain Cresap from the year 1772 to his death—from my intermarriage with his widow, with whom I lived a great many years—from the circumstance of all his papers, books and memorandums falling into my hands, and, permit me to add, from that implicit and unbounded confidence he placed in me—it must be evident to every man that no part of his public life was or could have been concealed from me. Captain Cresap was naturally cheerful, full of vivacity, and very communicative; and I am certain that there was no occurrence, no interesting circumstance, especially in respect to the Indians, but what was detailed to his wife, and often in my presence. Therefore, I venture to predict that if any man shall presume to contradict what I shall advance in the following memoirs of the life of Captain Cresap, he must prove that truth is not truth, or that facts are lies.

Page 545 of an 1848 edition of the monthly publication “**The Olden Time...**” ([Appendix 0018](#)) has a footnote that indicates that Nemacolin’s son lived with Cresap’s family, stating: “*Nemacolin was a Delaware, and his son lived in the Cresap family many years*”. This is likely based primarily on Jacob’s book, which states that Nemacolin’s son’s name was George, who lived with Colonel Thomas Cresap’s family:

The reader has not forgotten, perhaps, that I have already mentioned the name of the Indian Nemacolin, employed by Colonel Cresap to lay out the road to Pittsburg. Now so strong was the affection of this Indian for Colonel Cresap and his family, that he not only spent much of his time with them, but before he finally went away, brought his son George and left him with the family to raise; and it is a fact within my own knowledge that this George lived and died in the family.

The author John Jacob’s close association with Michael Cresap¹⁸¹ and Michael’s wife makes it very easy to believe his statement that Nemacolin helped Michael’s father Thomas prepare a route to the present-day location of Pittsburgh that later became Braddock’s road. Few better sources can be imagined concerning Nemacolin’s and Thomas Cresap’s joint work on the Ohio Company road.

Correcting an error about the Cresaps

Page 4 of the 1906 book “**History of Bedford and Somerset Counties...**” states:

Nemocolin’s trail was to the south, and it takes its name from a Delaware Indian chief, who pointed it out to Colonel Michael Cresap, of Old Town, Maryland, as being the most feasible route for a packer’s trail to the junction of the headwaters of the Ohio river.

This mention of Michael Cresap suggests a careless reading of the above quoted information on page 33 of Jacob’s 1826 biography of Michael Cresap. That page 33 is actually part of a section about Captain Michael Cresap’s father Colonel Thomas Cresap, but one has to read the first page of the chapter carefully to be able figure this out. Jacob’s book does not say that Nemacolin pointed out an existing path to Cresap. Instead, it says that Cresap had Nemacolin “*lay out and mark*” a route.

Nemacolin was living on Dunlaps Creek in 1752

Franklin’s 1882 book “**History of Fayette County, Pennsylvania**” states: “*On the Monongahela, at the mouth of Dunlap’s Creek,*¹⁸² *where the town of Brownsville now stands, was the residence of old*

¹⁸¹ Michael Cresap’s stone house ([Figure 0933](#)) at Oldtown is located at Latitude 39.541859°, Longitude -78.611512°, and is property AL-II-B-002 on the Maryland Historical Trust’s Inventory of Historic Properties. [Figure 0932](#) is a photo of the Michael Cresap historical marker. John Jacob is said to have built the brick addition to the stone house. 1783 tax records show that John Jacob was the executor of Michael Cresap’s estate.

¹⁸² The mouth of Dunlaps Creek is at Latitude 40.02204°, Longitude -79.888485°, in Brownsville.

Nemacolin". This statement seems to be based on John Jacob's 1826 book about Michael Cresap, which states: "*Nemacolin, a well known Delaware Indian, who resided at the mouth of Dunlap's creek*".

Evidence of where Nemacolin lived

Christopher Gist's journal indicates that he visited the camp of the Indian "*Nemicollon*",¹⁸³ eldest son of Chickoconnecon, on December 7 and 8, 1752. The trader Charles Poke was also at the camp. In his December 9, 1752 journal entry, Gist describes a rock shelter along the Monongahela River that was "*30 Feet long & 20 Feet wide & about 7 Feet high and an even floor...and close by it is a Stream of fine Water.*" Darlington believed this rock shelter was on land patented as the "*Cave*" tract, six miles up the Monongahela River from Brownsville, on the eastern bank. The survey has not been located. To get from Nemacolin's camp to the rock shelter, Gist "*Set out S 45 I M, W 6 M to the River Mohongaly*". Endnote 197 in Mulkearn's 1954 book "**George Mercer Papers: Relating to the Ohio Company of Virginia**" notes that there is a rock shelter with a smooth floor along Wallace Run, ¼ mile from its mouth. Wallace Run enters the Monongahela River at Latitude 39.92649°, Longitude -79.925537°. Mulkearn interprets Gist's journal as putting Nemacolin's camp somewhere along Dunlaps Creek, rather than at its mouth. This apparently means that Mulkearn interprets Gist's "*S 45 I M*" as traveling southwest one mile.

A tradition relating to the name of Georges Creek

According to Horatio N. Parker's "*Historical Sketch of the Potomac Basin*" in the 1907 book "**House Documents**" from the 59th Congress, the Georges Creek area is named after Nemacolin's son. The source and accuracy of Parker's information is unknown. The article states:

Georges Creek took its name from an Indian, George, who had is hunting lodge on the present site of Lonaconing.¹⁸⁴ He was a favorite of, and lived with Col. Thomas Cresap, of Oldtown, who had employed his father, Nemacolin, to mark out the road from Cumberland to Brownsville, on the Monongahela.

Nemacolin was living in the Brownsville area in 1752, had spent a lot of time with the Thomas Cresap family at Oldtown, and Georges Creek already had its name in 1753.¹⁸⁵ If the creek naming tradition is true, it helps to explain why Nemacolin possessed knowledge enabling him to "*lay out and mark*" a route through the Georges Creek area to the Brownsville area for Thomas Cresap.

Time to eat some crow

The third edition of this book contained a footnote that stated:

We have not seen any contemporaneous documents that actually refer to "Nemocolin's path". The phrase seems to be something dreamed up long afterwards as sort of a shorthand way to credit Nemacolin for laying out and marking the Ohio Company road. The earliest and only credible documentary evidence of Nemacolin's road work that we have seen was written by John Jacob in

¹⁸³ The spelling "*Nemicollon*" is from the version of the journal entry provided in the 1769 "**Appendix. To the Case of the Ohio Company. A Journal.**" In the version provided in William M. Darlington's 1893 book "**Christopher Gist's Journals...**", the name is spelled "*Nemicotton*". Darlington's spelling, punctuation, and capitalization of the journal entry differ from the appendix to the case of the Ohio Company, and a few words are different.

¹⁸⁴ Lonaconing is located 8.2 miles south-southwest of Frostburg and Route 40. Several people who claim to be descendants of George say his Indian name was Lonacona.

¹⁸⁵ Christopher Gist's November 15, 1753 journal entry states: "*We set out, and at night encamped at George's Creek...*"

his 1826 book *“A biographical sketch of the life of the late Captain Michael Cresap”*... Mr. Jacob was in a position to know, based on his close association with the Michael Cresap family, with whom Nemacolin’s son lived. A number of other statements related to Nemacolin seem to be “stretched” from Jacob’s few brief statements about Nemacolin. James Veech appears to be the earliest published source for the term “Nemacolin’s path”. His book *“The Monongahela of old...”* was written circa 1858, but remained unfinished until his daughter completed an unfinished chapter and published the book in 1892. Nevertheless, his views on “Nemacolin’s path” were already known in 1873, because they are referenced in historical footnotes in two 1873 novels by Charles McKnight: *“Captain Jack, the scout; or, The Indian wars about old Fort Duquesne: An historical novel”*, and *“General Braddock: an historical romance of Old Fort Duquesne and the early days of Pittsburg”*. McKnight’s knowledge of Veech’s views traces to an unfinished version of Veech’s book that Veech distributed to “a few of his personal friends” several years after 1859.¹⁸⁶ Veech’s book was a continuation of Uniontown surveyor Freeman Lewis’s earlier attempt to create a history of Fayette County.

Nehemiah Collins road

A contemporaneous document has now been found that proves Veech was right. The Ohio Company road was indeed known by Nemacolin’s name before it became known as Braddock’s road. A 1753 survey ([Figure 0989](#)) of property that includes the southern part of Frostburg states:

Laid out for and in the name of him the said Ross all that Tract Called Walnutt Levill Beginning at a Bounded black oak standing on the Head of a Branch of Nill¹⁸⁷ Creek about a mile from Nehemiah Collins road and running thence West three hundred and eight p North ten Degrees West three hundred and twenty Perches South fifty Degrees East two hundred and eighty perches South Fifty Degrees East one hundred perches. Then by a straight line to the Beginning Tree Containing and now Laid out for three hundred and Ninety acres of Land to be held of Conegocheige Mannor Surveyd this twentieth Day of June–1753

The approximate location of Braddock’s road through the Frostburg area is known from several nearby property surveys that were researched by Cumberland Road historian Steve Colby. The beginning point of the Walnutt Levill tract is located about one mile south of Braddock’s road, which was based on the Ohio Company road. Since the Ohio Company road is the first known road through the Frostburg area, the name “Nehemiah Collins” is clearly an anglicized reference to the Indian Nemacolin, who located the Ohio Company road. Now that this one reference has been found, it would be fascinating to know if more documentary evidence exists.

Where did Nemacolin end up? There are a few potential clues. Lieutenant Thomas Hutchins’ circa 1766¹⁸⁸ *“A Description of part of the Country Westward of the River Ohio, with the Distances Computed from Fort Pitt to the several Indian Towns by Land & Water”* describes a place 20 miles from the Hocking River, as follows: *“15 Miles from the Canoe place is A Shelving Rock, under which Neal McCollen, a Delaware Indian, Built a Cabbin.”* General Richard Butler’s journal describes leaving the site of Marietta, Ohio on October 9, 1785 as follows: *“Sailed at six o’clock, the*

¹⁸⁶ Veech’s book is also covered extensively in Ellis’ 1882 book *“History of Fayette County, Pennsylvania”*.

¹⁸⁷ “Nill” is believed to be a misspelling of “Will”, because the tract lies on the headwaters of what later became known as Braddock Run, which empties into Wills Creek.

¹⁸⁸ Although the referenced Hutchins papers are undated, 1766 is the year Thomas Hutchins, Henry Gordon, and George Croghan began their surveying expedition down the Ohio River. Hutchins’ papers are collection 308 of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

weather very fine, wind in favor. The climate here is mild and pleasant. I am of opinion this will be found the proper month for seeding the fall grain. Passed Nimach Collins' island and two other small islands, then the mouth of Little Hockhocking, at half-past eight o'clock, A.M." Marietta once had a tradition of "Neal McCollins ghost".¹⁸⁹ The island where Nemacolin lived is believed by some to be Blennerhassett Island, at Parkersburg, West Virginia.¹⁹⁰ This happens to be where one of the trails on the Fry and Jefferson map goes.

The road to the Pittsburgh area was cleared by July 1753

The Ohio Company's July 27, 1753 instructions to Christopher Gist indicate that the road to the "Fork of Mohongaly" was finished by then. The instructions were:

Whereas you have obtained a Commission from the College for Surveying our Lands, You are to provide a measuring wheel at the Companys expense and measure the Road clear'd by the Company from their Store at Wills Creek to the Fork of Mohongaly...

This reference to the "Fork of Mohongaly..." proves that the Ohio Company road went to the present-day location of Pittsburgh by July 1753. Using this as context, the February 6, 1753 record may refer to a road that had by that date reached Stewart's Crossing at present-day Connellsville.

Funds for making the Ohio Company road

According to Lois Mulkearn's 1954 book "**George Mercer Papers: Relating to the Ohio Company of Virginia**" and Alfred Proctor James' 1959 book "**The Ohio Company: Its Inner History**", the minutes from the July 1753 Ohio Company meeting also contain an order that the company treasurer pay 44 pounds, 16 shillings to Christopher Gist for having made a road between Wills Creek and "Mohongaly". The quotes of the minutes in the two books are slightly different; Mulkearn's quote says that the 44-pound, 16-shilling payment is compensation for 56 pounds in Maryland currency that Gist expended to have the road made.

The following quote from page 237 of Darlington's book is from a November 2, 1753 meeting of the Ohio Company:

Agreed and Ordered that each member of the Company pay to Mr. George Mason their Treasurer, the sum of twenty pounds current money for building and finishing the Fort at Shurtees Creek, Grubing¹⁹¹ and clearing the road from the Company's store at Wills Creek to the Mohongaly, which are to be finished with the utmost dispatch and for such other purposes as shall be directed by the Company.

Taken by itself, this passage is not clear about the status of the road. Does it refer to removing underbrush that had grown up on "the road" that had already been cleared, or clearing "the road" that had been contemplated, but not yet cleared? Does it refer to "the road" that had been started but not yet finished, or to paying for "the road" that was already finished?

¹⁸⁹ Volume 8 of "The National Magazine" (1888) has a letter from Isaac Craig that states: "I desire to relieve 'the good denizens of Marietta' from any fright friend Butterfield may have caused them by the Neal McCollins ghost story which he has conjured up. I assure 'the good denizens of Marietta' that they have no cause for alarm—that this Neal McCollins was not a white man, but a Delaware Indian, whose name was commonly written Nemacolin; but like most Indian names, not always written the same way."

¹⁹⁰ "Blennerhassett Island", Swick, et. Al, 2005.

¹⁹¹ For an example of a hand forged grubbing hoe from southern Somerset County, see [Figure 0472](#).

The passage does not indicate the intended destination on the “*Mohongaly*”. Based on the July 27, 1753 Ohio Company record quoted above, the November 2, 1753 passage refers to an existing road to the mouth of the Monongahela River—which is just southeast of the proposed “*Shurtees*” (Chartiers) Creek fort site. Chartiers Creek enters the Ohio River at Brunots Island, just northwest of the point where the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers join to form the Ohio River ([Figure 1000](#)). The mouth of the creek is at Latitude 40.465264°, Longitude -80.052706°.

Scarrooyady declares war in response to the Pickawillany attack

According to Hanna’s 1911 book “**The Wilderness Trail**”:

Monacatoocha, or Scarrooyady (also called Scruneayattha), it will be remembered, was the Oneida chief who was delegated by the Onondaga Council to be the overlord of the Shawnees, and for that reason his residence was fixed at Logstown, their chief town.

As reprinted in Volume 5 of “**Minutes of the Provincial council of Pennsylvania**”, Scarrooyady declared war on the French, in response to the French attack on the Twightwee town and French incursions into Pennsylvania. According to a report to the Governor of Pennsylvania about a conference with the Indians, which was held in Carlisle in late September 1753, the following message from Scarrooyady was delivered to the French by Half King as a follow-up to **previous correspondence**:

You say you cannot come to our Council Fire at Log’s Town, we therefore now come to You to know what is in your Heart. You remember when You were tired with the War (meaning Queen Ann’s War) You of your own Accord sent for Us, desiring to make Peace with Us. When We came You said to Us, Children We make a Council Fire for You—We want to talk with You, but We must first eat all with one Spoon out of this Silver Bowl, and all drink out of this Silver Cup—Let Us exchange Hatchets—Let Us bury our Hatchets in this bottomless Hole—and now We will make a plain Road to all your Countries so clear that Onontio may sit here and see You all eat and drink out of the Bowl and Cup which he has provided for You. Upon this Application of yours We consented to make Peace, and when the Peace was concluded on both Sides You made a Solemn Declaration, saying, Whoever shall hereafter transgress this Peace, let the Transgressor be chastised with a Rod, even tho’ it be I your Father.

*Now, Father, notwithstanding this solemn Declaration of Yours, You have whipped several of your Children; You know best why. Of late You have chastised **the Twightwees** very severely without telling Us the Reason, and now you are come with a strong Band on our Land, and have contrary to your Engagement taken up the Hatchet without any previous Parley. These things are a Breach of the Peace; they are contrary to your own Declarations. Therefore now I come to forbid You. I will strike over all this Land with my Rod, let it hurt who it will. I tell you in plain Words You must go off this Land. You say You have (sic) a strong Body, a strong Neck, and a strong Voice, that when You speak all the Indians must hear You. It is true You are a strong Body and ours is but weak, yet We are not afraid of You. We forbid you to come any further; turn back to the Place from whence You came.*

This passage helps to explain the subsequent French attack on Logstown, which is described below. The attack was at least in part a reaction to Scarrooyady’s message—a declaration of war that was Scarrooyady’s reaction to the 1752 French attack on the Twightwee town, and the subsequent

French incursions into Pennsylvania. Clearly, the attack at Pickawillany was the beginning of the French and Indian War.

Immediately after the above passage, the report to the governor states:

Scarrooyady, who was the speaker in these Conferences, when he had finished this Relation gave his Reason for setting forth these three Messages to the French in so distinct a manner; 'because,' said he, 'the great Being who lives above, has ordered Us to send Three Messages of Peace before We make War; And as the Half King has before this Time delivered the third and last Message, We have nothing now to do but to strike the French.'

The Commissioners were likewise informed by Mr. Croghan that the Ohio Indians had received from the Virginia Government a large number of Arms in the Spring, and that at their pressing Instances a suitable Quantity of Ammunition was ordered in the Treaty at Winchester to be lodged for them in a Place of Security on this Side the Ohio, which was committed to the Care of three Persons, viz: Guest, William Trent, and Andrew Montour, who were empowered to distribute them to the Indians as their Occasion and Behaviour should require.

John Frazier's letter to Young, an Indian trader, dated "Forks, August 27, 1753", also documents the Half King's message to the French, and mentions Twightee (Pict) involvement, stating:

There is hardly any Indians now here at all, for yesterday there set off along with Captain Trent and French Andrew, the heads of the Five Nations, the Picts, the Shawanees, Owendots, and the Delawares, for Virginia; and the Half King set off to the French fort, with a strong party along with him, to warn the French off their land entirely, which, if they did not comply to, then directly the Six Nations, the Picts, Shawanees, Owendots, and Delawares were to strike them without loss of time. The Half King was to be back in twenty days from the time he went away; so were the Indians from Virginia. Captain Trent was here the night before last, and viewed the ground the fort is to be built upon, which they will begin in less than a month's time. The money has been laid out for the building of it already, and the great guns are lying at Williamsburg ready to bring up. The French are daily deserting from the new fort. One of them came here the other day whom I sent to Captain Trent; he has him along with him to Virginia.

In addition to describing coordination between various Indian tribes, Frazier's letter also shows that the Ohio Company had not yet begun construction of their fort on August 27, 1753.

Washington and Gist did not take the Turkey Foot Road in 1753

The route of Washington's October 31, 1753 to January 16, 1754 journey to Fort Leboeuf is shown on the map (Figures [0432](#), [0437](#)) that accompanied the January 17, 1754 "Journal to the Ohio" that he wrote from his trip notes.¹⁹² The purpose of the trip is described in the 1760 edition of Smollett's "Continuation of the Complete History of England..." as follows:

The French having in a manner commenced hostilities against the English, and actually built forts on the territories of the British allies at Niagara, and on the lake Erie...in the mean time the French fortified themselves at leisure, and continued to harass the traders belonging to the British settlements. Repeated complaints of these encroachments and depredations being represented to Mr. Dinwiddie, governor of Virginia, he, towards the latter end of this very year, sent major

¹⁹² Robert Dinwiddie's October 30, 1753 instructions to Washington regarding the trip are provided in Volume 1, pages 16 and 17, of the 1906 book **History of Bedford and Somerset Counties...**

Washington with a letter to the commanding officer of a fort which the French had built on the Riviere au Beuf, which falls into the Ohio, not far from the lake Erie. In this letter Mr. Dinwiddie expressed his surprize that the French should build forts and make settlements on the river Ohio, in the western part of the colony of Virginia, belonging to the crown of Great Britain. He complained of these encroachments, as well as of the injuries done to the subjects of Great Britain, in open violation of the law of nations, and of the treaties actually subsisting between the two crowns. He desired to know by whose authority and instructions his Britannic majesty's territories had been invaded; and required him to depart in peace without further prosecuting a plan, which must interrupt the harmony and good understanding which his majesty was desirous to continue and cultivate with the most Christian king.

Washington passed through the Georges Creek area

Christopher Gist accompanied Washington to Fort Leboeuf. Gist's journal makes clear that they initially went through the Georges Creek area of Maryland. This proves that they did not use the Turkey Foot Road that is the subject of this book. If the Ohio Company had indeed cut a 30-foot-wide road to the present-day location of Confluence, it would be curious that Gist did not take Washington that way on this journey. Gist's journal reads:

Wednesday 14 November, 1753.—Then Major George Washington came to my house at Will's Creek, and delivered me a letter from the council in Virginia, requesting me to attend him up to the commandant of the French fort on the Ohio River.

Thursday 15.—We set out, and at night encamped at George's Creek, about eight miles, where a messenger came with letters from my son, who was just returned from his people at the Cherokees, and lay sick at the mouth of Conococheague.¹⁹³ But as I found myself entered again on public business, and Major Washington and all the company unwilling I should return I wrote and sent medicines to my son, and so continued my journey, and encamped at a big hill in the forks of Youghiogany, about eighteen miles.

Friday 16.—The next day set out and got to the big fork of said river, about ten miles there.

Saturday 17.—We encamped and rested our horses, and then we set out early in the morning.

Sunday 18.—And at night got to my house in the new settlement, about twenty-one miles; snow about ancle deep.

For a messenger to be able to locate Gist, the Washington party must have been traveling on a road or a path. The statement "*big hill in the forks of Youghiogany*" may have possibly been near present-day Grantsville, Maryland. At 25.5 miles from Cumberland, Grantsville is a reasonable match to the 26-mile (8+18) distance stated by Gist. The phrase "*in the forks of Youghiogany*" may mean somewhere in the region between the Casselman and Youghiogheny Rivers.

The statement "*The next day set out and got to the big fork of said river, about ten miles there*" may be a reference to reaching the Somerfield area. Confluence is about 18 miles from Grantsville, so an interpretation that they went through the present-day Confluence area would likely be incorrect. Somerfield is a marginally better match at about 15 miles from Grantsville, and then it is another 26 miles to Mount Braddock, where Gist's plantation was located.

¹⁹³ This suggests travel on the "*Virginia Path*" or "*Great Trail*" that ran between the Carolinas and the mouth of Conococheague Creek, and on to the present-day location of Harrisburg.

The “*big fork*” likely refers to the “*Great Crossings*” area. In other words, Gist was most likely referring to the biggest tributary of the Youghiogheny River.

Washington mentions Gist's new settlement

Washington's journal states:

According to the best observations I could make, Mr. Gist's new settlement (which we passed by) bears about west northwest seventy miles from Wills Creek...

It is about 7.5 miles from Gist's plantation to Connellsville. Adding this distance to Washington's 70-mile estimate yields a number very close to the Ohio Company's 80-mile wagon road description.

Washington arrives at Logstown

Governor Dinwiddie's instructions to Washington included the statement:

On your arrival at Logstown you are to address yourself to the Half-King, to Monacatoocha, and other sachems of the Six Nations, acquainting them with your orders to visit and deliver my letter to the French commanding officer, and desiring the said Chiefs to appoint you a sufficient number of their warriors to be your safe-guard as near the French as you may desire, and wait your further direction.

Washington's journal describes arriving at Logstown on November 24, 1753 as follows:

As soon as I came into town, I went to Monakatoocha (as the half king was out at his hunting cabin on Little Beaver creek, about fifteen miles off) and informed him by John Davidson, my Indian interpreter, that I was sent a messenger to the French general; and was ordered to call upon the sachems of the Six Nations to acquaint them with it. I gave him a string of wampum and a twist of tobacco, and desired him to send for the half king, which he promised to do by a runner in the morning, and for other sachems.

The Half King accompanied Washington on his journey.

Washington mentions a warlike Indian message to the French

Washington's November 29, 1753 journal entry states:

The Half-King and Monocatoocha...begged me to stay one Day more...the Shanoah Chiefs had not brought the Wampum they ordered, but would certainly be in To-night...I...knew that returning of Wampum was the abolishing of Agreements...He delivered in my Hearing, the Speeches that were to be made to the French, by Jeskakake, one of their old Chiefs, which was giving up the Belt the late Comandant had asked for, and repeating near the same Speech he himself had done before. ...

He likewise gave a very large String of black and white Wampum, which was to be sent up immediately to the Six Nations, if the French refused to quit the Land at this Warning; which was to be the third and last Time...

Obviously, there is some tension between the September account at Carslile and Washington's account; nevertheless, it is clear that the Indians declared war on the French in response to the French attack on Pickawillany and incursions into Pennsylvania.

Washington's trip map proves he did not take the Turkey Foot Road

Washington's map of the trip (Figures [0432](#), [0437](#)) proves that they did not follow the Turkey Foot Road, and instead shows that they must have followed at least part of the Ohio Company road.¹⁹⁴ Based on this, the phrase "*in the forks of Youghiogany*" helps to interpret the second petition as referring to the general region surrounding present-day Confluence.

Washington used the Ohio Company road to return to Wills Creek

East of Gist's plantation, on the way back to Wills Creek on January 6, 1754, Washington and Gist encountered 17 horses "*loaded with materials and stores for a fort at the fork of the Ohio.*" This apparently was an Ohio Company activity, because Joshua Fry's military commission (quoted below) would not be signed for another 50 days (about seven weeks), and because Washington's subsequent marching orders from Lieutenant Governor Dinwiddie (quoted below) mention "*the Fort w^{ch} I expect is there already begun by the Ohio Comp^ya.*"

Washington was on the road the Ohio Company was using during the general time when the second petition was written. It was not the Turkey Foot Road, and the Ohio Company was not using wagons to transport their "*materials and stores*" to the forks. More surprisingly, they were not even using wagons for transport between Wills Creek and Gist's plantation.

Fry was charged with building a fort at the Forks of Monongahela

Joshua Fry was charged with having a fort built at the present-day site of Pittsburgh, to keep the French out of the region, using force if necessary. Fry's February 25, 1754 military commission reads as follows:

Robert Dinwiddie, Esqr.: His Majesty's Lieutenant-Governor & Commander-in-Chief of the Colony and Dominion of Virginia.

To Joshua fry, Esq.:

His Majesty having by His royal Instructions commanded me to send a proper Number of Forces to erect and maintain a Fort at the Fork of Monongahela, a Branch of the River Ohio. And having a good opinion of your Loyalty, Conduct and Ability, do hereby constitute, appoint and commission you, the said Joshua Fry, to be Colonel & Commander in-Chief of the Forces now raising and to be called the Virginia Regiment, with which, and the Cannon, Armes, Ammunition—necessary Provision & Goods, you are with all possible Dispatch to proceed to the said Forks of Monongahela and there act according to Your Instructions.— And I hereby direct and require all Officers, Soldiers, and others to obey Your Orders and Commands, for which this shall be yours and their warrant.

Given under my Hand & the Seal of the Colony at Williamsburg the 25th Day of February, in the 27th year of His Majesty's Reign, Annoque Domine 1754.

The commission makes clear that Fry was charged with constructing a fort at the present-day location of Pittsburgh. In the commission, Robert Dinwiddie used "*Fork of Monongahela*" and

¹⁹⁴ Washington's map shows a distinctive turn at Gist's plantation that Braddock's subsequent road followed. Compare the turn on Washington's map to the turn in Braddock's road that is shown by Figure 4 of [Appendix 0055](#). Washington's map may be the best available evidence of the route the Ohio Company road followed north of Gist's plantation. Unlike Braddock's route, Washington's route stayed on the east side of the Monongahela River.

“said Forks of Monongahela”, showing the phrases to be interchangeable. Whether “Fork” or “Forks” of the Monongahela, it refers to the same place. Fry’s orders were:

Sir: The Forces under Y’r Com’d are rais’d to protect our frontier Settlements from the incursions of the French and the Ind’s in F’dship with them. I therefore desire You will with all possible Expedition repair to Alexandria on the Head of the Poto. River, and there take upon You the com’d of the Forces accordingly; w’ch I Expect will be at that Town the Middle of next Mo. You are to march them to will’s Creek, above the Falls of Poto. from thence with the Great Guns, Amunit’n and Provisions. You are to proceed to Monongahela, when ariv’d there, You are to make Choice of the best Place to erect a Fort for mounting y’r Cannon and ascertain’g His M’y the King of G. B’s undoubt’d right to those Lands. My Orders to You is to be on the Defensive and if any foreign Force sh’d come to annoy You or interrupt Y’r quiet Settlem’t, and building the Fort as afores’d, You are in that Case to represent to them the Powers and Orders You have from me, and I desire they w’d imedietely retire and not to prevent You in the discharge of your Duty. If they sh’d continue to be obstinate after your desire to retire, you are then to repell Force by Force.

His orders were clear. Although the record seems murky, Fry apparently died at, or on a journey to or from the Wills Creek location of what was soon to become Fort Mount Pleasant, and would later become Fort Cumberland. Upon Fry’s death, his command and responsibilities devolved to his subordinate George Washington. Under the color of these orders, after the French expelled the British from their fort construction site at the present-day location of Pittsburgh and attacked Logstown, Washington’s attack on Jumonville was not only justified, it was in fact specifically ordered. Even the French admit that Washington was acting under orders. Page 21 of the 1757 French book “**The Conduct of the Late Ministry**”, which describes itself as “*A Summary of Facts with their Vouchers, in Answer to the Observations, sent by the English Ministry to the Courts of Europe*”, states:

Major Washington’s journal can be produced in the original; where it appears, that he acted only by virtue of the precise orders he had received. From this it is plain, that to attack the French where-ever they were to be found was a measure at that very time resolved on.

Washington’s marching orders

Washington’s March 31, 1754 orders¹⁹⁵ from Lieutenant Governor Dinwiddie commanded him as follows:

Instruct’s to be observd by Maj’r Geo. Washington, on the Expedit’n to the Ohio.

MAJ’R GEO. WASHINGTON: You are forthwith to repair to the Co’ty of Frederick and there to take under Y’r Com’d 50 Men of the Militia who will be deliver’d to You by the Comd’r of the s’d Co’ty pursuant to my Orders. You are to send Y’r Lieut, at the same Time to the Co’ty of Augusta, to receive 50 Men from the Comd’r of that Co’ty as I have order’d, and with them he is to join You at Alexandria, to which Place You are to proceed as soon as You have rec’d the Men in Frederick. Having rec’d the Detachm’t, You are to train and discipline them in the best Manner You can, and

¹⁹⁵ The orders are printed in Toner’s 1893 book “**Journal of Colonel George Washington: commanding a detachment of Virginia Troops**”. Toner provides no date. Washington’s 1754 journal does provide the date, stating: “On the 31st of March I received from his honor a Lieutenant Colonel’s commission, of the Virginia regiment, whereof Joshua Fry, Esq., was Colonel, dated the 15th, with orders to take the troops which were at that time at Alexandria, under my command, and to march with them towards the Ohio, there to help Captain Trent to build forts, and to defend the possessions of his Majesty against the attempts and hostilities of the French.”

for all Necessaries You are to apply Y'rself to Mr. Jno. Carlisle at Alex'a who has my Orders to supply You. Having all Things in readiness You are to use all Expedition in proceeding to the Fork of Ohio with the Men under Com'd and there you are to finish and compleat in the best Manner and as soon as You possibly can, the Fort w'ch I expect is there already begun by the Ohio Comp'a. You are to act on the Defensive, but in Case any Attempts are made to obstruct the Works or interrupt our Settlem'ts by any Persons whatsoever You are to restrain all such Offenders, and in Case of resistance to make Prisoners of or kill and destroy them. For the rest You are to conduct Y'rself as the Circumst's of the Service shall require and to act as You shall find best for the Furtherance of His M'y's Service and the Good of His Dom'n. Wishing You Health and Success I bid you Farewell.

William Trent's appointment

According to the March 14, 1754 issue of the “**Maryland Gazette**”, William Trent arrived at the Forks of the Ohio to begin building a British fort on February 17, 1754. William Trent's January 27, 1754 appointment reads as follows:

Rob't Dinwiddie Esq'r His Majesty's L't Gov'r Comd'r in Chief and Vice Admiral of his Colony and Don'n of Virg'a —

To WM, TRENT, ESQ'R:

Whereas certain Persons pretending to be Subjects of his most X'n Majesty of the King of France, and that they act by his Como, have in a hostile Manner invaded the Territories of our Sovereign His M'y King George the 2d, King of Great B. &c. and have comitted divers Outrages and Violence on the Persons and Goods of His M'y's Subjects, in direct violation and infract'n of the Treaties at present subsisting between the two Crowns, and Whereas these Acts of hostility and depredations have been perpetrated in that Part of His Majesty's Dom's w'ch are under my Gov't; In order therefore to the Preservation of the Peace and Good understanding between the two Crowns and the Preservation of our Sovereign's undoubted rights and the Protection of his Subjects as much as in me lies, I have thought fit to appoint and by Virtue of the Power and Authority to me given as Com'd'r in Chief of this Colony, I do hereby constitute and appoint You Wm. Trent Esq'r to be Com'd'r of such and so many of His M'y's Subjects not exceeding 100 Men as You can immediately raise and enlist, and with the s'd Comp'a and the Assistance of our good and faithful Friends and Allies the Ind's of the Six Nat's and such others as are in Amity with them and Us, to keep Possession of His M'y's Lands on the Ohio and the Waters thereof and to dislodge and drive away, and in case of refusal and resistance to kill and destroy or take Prisoners all and every Person and Persons not Subjects of the King of G. B. who now are or shall hereafter come to settle and take Possess'n of any Lands on said River Ohio, or on any of the Branches or Waters thereof. And I do hereby require the s'd Men who shall so enlist themselves and every of them to obey You as their Com'd'r and Capt'n &c. and You are to constitute such and so many Officers under You as the Service shall require, not exceeding 1 Capt. and 1 Lieut't.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the Colony at W'msburg the — Day of Jan'y in the 27 Year of His M'y's Reign, annoq Dom. 1754.

Dinwiddie's reason for sending troops

In January 1754, Governor Dinwiddie wrote a letter to Lord Fairfax that included the following:

As the French Forces on the Ohio intend down as far as Logstown early in the spring, I think it is for His M'y's Service and the Protection of the Settlem'ts of this Dom'n to do all in our Power to prevent their building any Forts or making and Settlem'ts on that river, and more particularly so nigh us as that of the Logstown. I therefore, with Advice of the Council, think proper to send immediately out 200 Men to protect those already sent by the Ohio Comp' to build a Fort, and to resist any Attempts on them. I have Commission'd Major George Washington, the Bearer hereof, to command 100 Men to be rais'd in Frederick County and Augusta...

How Dinwiddie knew the French were coming in the spring

Washington was informed by the French that they intended to come to the Logstown area and build a fort in the spring of 1754. The January 12, 1754 journal entry of George Croghan states:

I arrived at Turtle Creek about eight miles from the Forks of Mohongialo, where I was informed by John Frazier, an Indian Trader, that Mr. Washington, who was sent by the Governor of Virginia to the French Camp was returned. Mr. Washington told Mr. Frazier that he had been very well used by the French General; that after he delivered his Message the General told him his Orders were to take all the English he found on the Ohio, which orders he was determined to obey, and further told him that the English had no business to trade on the Ohio, for that all the Lands of Ohio belonged to his Master the King of France, all to Alegainay Mountain. Mr. Washington told Mr. Frazier the Fort where he was is very strong, and that they had Abundance of Provisions...there are about one hundred soldiers and fifty Workman at that Fort, and as many more at the Upper Fort, and about fifty men at Weningo with Jean Coeur; the Rest of their Army went home last Fall, but is to return as soon as possible this Spring; when they return they are to come down to Log's Town in order to build a Fort somewhere thereabouts."

The French take the British fort

In his April 20, 1754 journal entry, Washington recorded hearing about Ensign Ward's¹⁹⁶ encounter with the French as follows:

April 20th Came down to Colonel Cresap's to order the Detachment, and on my Route, had notice that the Fort was taken by the French. That news was confirmed by Mr Ward, the Ensign of Captain Trent, who had been obliged to surrender to a Body of one thousand French and upwards, under the Command of Captain Contrecoeur, who was come from Venango Presque Isle with sixty bateaux, and three hundred canoes, and who having planted eighteen pieces of Cannon agai nst the Fort, afterwards had sent him a Summons to withdraw.

The ejection of Trent's forces under threat of military force was an overt act of war, as was the attack at Logstown, which is described below. The first such overt act was the attack on Pickawillany.

According to a letter Governor Sharpe wrote to Lord Bury on November 5, 1754, Trent's forces were evicted on April 17, 1754. The letter states:

¹⁹⁶ Page 557 of Flemming's "**History of Pittsburgh and Environs**" indicates that Ensign Ward and George Croghan were half-brothers, stating: "We have seen from what has been printed in the earlier part of this chapter, and from the abstract of Croghan's will, that he was a half-brother of Major Ward, the man who surrendered the Virginia Fort to the French in 1754..."

...a Body of about 200 French Regulars had on the 17th of April come down on the small Party who had been ordered out to prepare Materials for a Fort & had obliged them to relinquish what materials they had collected for that purpose & to return again to Virginia.

Ward's 1756 deposition describes Trent's fort and the building at Redstone

In regard to Redstone, and Trent's fort building activities at the present-day site of Pittsburgh, Ward's June 30, 1756 deposition states:

Before me Samuel Smith Esq, one of his Majesties Justices, Edward Ward of the said County Gent. And upon his solemn oath did depose and declare, that he this Deponent was Ensign of a Company of Militia under the Command of Captain William Trent in the Pay of the Government of Virginia That at the Time said Captain Trent received the Governor of Virginias Orders, he was at Redstone Creek about thirty seven miles from where Fort DuQuesne¹⁹⁷ is now built and was erecting a Store House¹⁹⁸ for the Ohio Company. That when said Trent received the Governors Instructions to raise a Company he despatched Messengers to several parts of the Country where the Indian Traders lived, there being no other Inhabitants in that part of the Country except four or five Families who had lately settled there and were upwards of Sixty Miles from the inhabited Part of the Country That one of said Messengers, employed by Captain Trent came to the place where this Deponent was and informed him of said Trent having received such Instructions and upon the Half King and Monacatoochas receiving advice that said Trent had orders to raise a Company of men, they sent him a Message to come immediately and build a Fort at the Forks of the Monongahela and Ohio and that they would assist him as soon as they could gather the People. On receiving such Message said Trent got Rafts made and every other thing necessary for his march and accordingly did march with what few men he had then raised in order to meet the Indians as they requested. That the said Capt Trent had then erected but not quite finished a strong square Log house with Loop Holes sufficient to have made a good Defence with a few men and very convenient for a Store House, where stores might be lodged in order to be transported by water to the place where Fort Du Quesne now stands That the building this Store House was paid for by Captain Trent, who at that time was Factor for the Ohio Company and had orders to build said Store House to lodge Stores which were intended for the Building a Fort where Fort Du Quesne now stands for the Ohio Company, which Store House was soon after compleated by Workmen employed by said Captain Trent for that purpose. That Captain Trent marched from Redstone Creek to the mouth of the Monongahela where a number of Indians of different Nations met him, at which Time and place this Deponent was present having met Captain Trent on his march and received his commission as Ensign from him. Captain Trent on meeting with the Indians made a speech to them and delivered them a present, which was sent by the Governor of Virginia. After the Treaty was finished Captain Trent laid out the Fort and cleared the Ground and got some logs squared, upon which the Chiefs of the Six Nations then present went with us to the ground and laid the first log and said, that Fort belonged to the English and them and whoever offered to prevent the building of it they the Indians would make war against them. ... And this Deponent further saith that after Captain Trent, left the Fort in order to go to the Inhabitants, and

¹⁹⁷ A detailed description of Fort Duquesne is provided in Volume two of the 1916 book "**Report of the Commission to Locate the Site of the Frontier Forts of Pennsylvania**", beginning on page 67. The description is by John McKinney, who was taken captive to Fort Duquesne, then to Canada, where he was able to escape. Drawings of Fort Duquesne from 1754 and 1755 are included in Brown's 1959 book "**Early Maps of the Ohio Valley 1673 to 1783**".

¹⁹⁸ Many sources give this quote as "Stone House"; Bailey's 1947 book "**The Ohio company papers, 1753-1817**" quotes it as "Store House".

hurry out the Troops and Provisions and recruit his Company that Mr Gist came to the Fort and desired him to send some men with him to bring down a quantity of Provisions which were laying at Redstone Creek. That this Deponent then sent a number of men up the Monongahela for said Provisions. That he understood afterwards there were no provisions there, that before the men who were sent for them got back, the French came down and obliged this Deponent to surrender, he having no place of Defence but a few Pallisadoes which he had ordered to be put up four days before upon hearing the French were coming down and that he had no Provisions but a little Indian Corn and but forty one soldiers and Workmen and Travellers who happened to be there at the time and the French Eleven hundred in number, And this Deponent saith he saw several pieces of Cannon pointed at the Fort within musket shot but could not tell the number, but was afterwards told by the Indians there were nine pieces of Cannon.

Ward refers to Trent's fort location as the "*the Forks of the Monongahela and Ohio*". The deposition indicates that "*Captain Trent marched from Redstone Creek to the mouth of the Monongahela*" to begin his fort building activities. While Trent's men evidently rafted supplies down the river, their march helps confirm the presence of some kind of road or path to that location. North of Gist's plantation, their march may have used the "*...Road clear'd by the Company from their Store at Wills Creek to the Fork of Mohongaly...*" that is described in the Ohio Company's July 27, 1753 instructions to Gist. As previously mentioned, various books assert that the route identified by Nemaquin for the Ohio Company followed part of the Catawba path. This seems plausible, although it is not clear if any documentary evidence supports the assertion. The Fry and Jefferson map (Chapter 4) shows two parallel routes in the area south of the second crossing of the Youghiogheny.

Washington decides to make a fort at Redstone

Less than a week after Ward's April 17, 1754 ejection from the rudimentary fort at the present-day location of Pittsburgh, and immediately upon hearing the news, George Washington convened a council of war, on April 23, 1754. Fry had not arrived. Washington's journal records the council of war as follows:

It was thought a thing impracticable to march towards the Fort without sufficient strength; however, being strongly invited by the Indians, and particularly by the speeches of the Half-King, the president put the question to vote whether we should not advance, as far as Red-Stone Creek on Monongahela about thirty-seven miles on this side of the fort, and there to erect a fortification, clearing a road broad enough to pass with all our artillery and our baggage, and there to wait for fresh Orders.

The proposition aforesaid was adopted for the following reasons;

1st. That the mouth of Red-Stone is the first convenient place on the River Monongahela.

2nd. The stores are already built at that place for the provisions of the Company, wherein our Ammunition may be laid up, our great guns may be also sent by water whenever we shall think it convenient to attack the Fort.

Washington's troops repaired a 1753 Ohio Company road in 1754

Washington later states that he was repairing the Ohio Company road during this time. In an April 25, 1754 letter to Lieutenant Governor Dinwiddie, written from Wills Creek, Washington describes

why he was then repairing the Ohio Company road, and indicates that he was heading to Redstone (Brownsville):

Sir—Captain Trent's ensign, Mr. Ward, has this day arrived from the Fork of the Monongahela, and brings the disagreeable account, that the fort, on the 17th inst. was surrendered at the summons of Mons. Contrecoeur to a body of French, consisting of upwards of one thousand men, who came from Venango with eighteen pieces of canon, sixty bateaux,¹⁹⁹ and three hundred canoes. They gave him liberty to bring off all his men and working tools, which he accordingly did the same day.

Immediately upon this information, I called a council of war, to advise on proper measures to be taken in this exigency. A copy of their resolves, with the proceedings, I herewith enclose by the bearer...

Your Honor will see by the resolves in council, that I am destined to the Monongahela with all the diligent dispatch in my power. We will endeavour to make the road sufficiently good for the heaviest artillery to pass, and, when we arrive at Red-stone Creek, fortify ourselves as strongly as the short time will allow. I doubt not that we can maintain a possession there, till we are reinforced, unless the rising of the waters shall admit the enemy's cannon to be conveyed up in canoes, and then I flatter myself we shall not be so destitute of intelligence, as not to get timely notice of it, and make a good retreat.

I hope you will see the absolute necessity for our having, as soon as our forces are collected, a number of cannon, some of heavy metal, with mortars and grenadoes to attack the French, and put us on an equal footing with them.

In a May 9, 1754 letter to Lieutenant Governor Dinwiddie, sent from Little Meadows, George Washington describes his roadwork as follows:

I acquainted you by Mr. Ward with the determination, which we prosecuted four days after his departure, as soon as wagons arrived to carry our provisions. The want of proper conveyances has much retarded this expedition, and at this time it unfortunately delays the detachment I have the honor to command. Even when we came to Will's Creek, my disappointments were not less than before; for there I expected to find a sufficient number of packhorses provided by Captain Trent, conformably to his promise, and to Major Carlyle's letters and my own, that I might prosecute my first intention with light, expeditious marches; but instead of that, there was none in readiness, nor any in expectation that I could perceive, which reduced me to the necessity of waiting till wagons could be procured from the Branch, forty miles distant. However, in the mean time, I detached a party of sixty men to make and mend the road, which party since the 25th of April, and the main body since the 1st instant, have been laboriously employed, and have got no farther than these Meadows, about twenty miles from the New Store. We have been two days making a bridge across the river, and have not done yet.

The great difficulty and labor, that it requires to mend and alter the road, prevent our marching above two, three, or four miles a day; and I fear, though no diligence shall be spared, that we shall be detained some considerable time before it can be made good for the carriage of the artillery with Colonel Fry.

¹⁹⁹ According to Thaddeus Harris' 1803 journal, "A bateau is a flat-bottomed boat, widest in the middle, and tapering to a point at each end, of about 1500 weight burden; and is managed by two men with paddles and setting-poles."

When read in the context of Washington's April 25, 1754 letter, this passage makes clear that transporting artillery through the wilderness was no small undertaking. It also indicates that the general state of the Ohio Company road was poor.

Washington's journal for May 16, 1754 indicates there was no wagon road to Redstone at the time:

Met two traders, who told us they fled for fear of the French as parties of them were often seen toward Mr. Gist's. These traders are of opinion, as well as many others, that it is not possible to clear a road for loaded wagons to go from hence to Red-Stone-Creek.

In a May 18, 1754 letter to Dinwiddie, written from the Great Crossings, Washington states:

These Indians, and all the traders that I have been able to get any information from, of late, agree, that it is almost impracticable to open a road that a wagon can pass from this to Red-stone Creek. ... As the road to this place is made as good as it can be, having spent much time and great labor upon it, I believe wagons may travel now with 1500 or 1800 weight on them, by doubling teams at one or two pinches only.

The French attack Logstown

Page 226 of the 1760 edition of Smollett's "**Continuation of the Complete History of England...**" indicates the French attacked Log's Town about the same time that British forces were expelled from the "*forks of the Monangahela*", stating:

The government of England having received nothing but evasive answers from the court of France, touching the complaints that were made of the encroachments in America, dispatched orders to all the governors of that country to repel force by force, and drive the French from their settlements on the river Ohio. Accordingly, the provinces of Virginia and Pennsylvania took this important affair into their consideration; but while they deliberated, the French vigorously prosecuted their designs on the other side of the mountains. They surprised Logs Town, which the Virginians had built upon the Ohio; made themselves masters of the Block-house and Truck-house, where they found skins and other commodities to the amount of twenty thousand pounds, and destroyed all the British traders, except two who found means to escape. At the same time, M. de Contrecoeur, with a thousand men, and eighteen pieces of cannon, arrived in three hundred canoes from Venango, a fort they had raised on the banks of the Ohio, and reduced by surprise a British fort which the Virginians had built on the forks of the Monangahela, that runs into the same river.

Did the French really attack Logstown in 1754 as Smollett's 1760 book describes?

The 1839 "**North American Review**" suggests that Smollett was mistaken about the Logstown attack and was actually describing the Pickawillany attack, stating: "*The attack on Logstown, spoken of by Smollett and Russell, was doubtless this attack on the Miamis post.*"

Dr. Wills De Hass's 1851 book "**History of the early settlement and Indian wars of Western Virginia**" dismisses Smollett's account of the Logstown attack because he could find no record of the existence of a trading post at Logstown. This is now known to be an invalid argument; early records that became more widely known long after De Hass wrote his book document a trading post at Logstown.

According to Darlington's 1893 book "**Christopher Gist's journals**", Conrad Weiser's journal indicates that George Croghan had a trading post at Logstown in 1748, and Christopher Gist's November 25, 1750 journal entry includes the statement "*In the Loggs Town, I found scarce any*

Body but a Parcel of reprobate Indian Traders, the Chiefs of the Indians being out a hunting...”. According to Hanna’s 1911 book “**The Wilderness Trail**”, Croghan’s 1756 account of “losses occasioned by the French and Indians driving the English Traders off the Ohio” included “One Store House at the Logstown, twelve miles from Fort Du Quesne, on the northwest side of the Ohio”, and storehouses at various other locations. Mulkearn and Pugh’s 1953 book “**A traveler’s guide to historic western Pennsylvania**” indicates that when Conrad Weiser visited Logstown in 1748, he found in excess of 20 English traders engaged in business there.

In a chronology of the war, Volume 29 of the 1759 “**The Gentleman’s Magazine**” states that in April 1754, “*M. De Centrecoeur destroys Logg’s town.*” Some of the dates in that chronology are, however, highly questionable.

Smollett is vindicated by the July 1754 issue of “**The Universal Magazine**”, which states:

Extract of a letter from Philadelphia, dated May 24, 1754, brought by the Tryal, Captain Cuzzins, Last night came advice from the back parts of this province, that the French had taken the block-house and the truck-house, erected by the Virginians, cut off all our traders but two, and have taken goods, furs, and skins, the value of 20000 £ at least; a sad stroke to many here. This is on the river Ohio, at a place called Logstown, about 190 miles from hence due west. How they will be dislodged time will shew.

This letter proves that the French attack on Logstown took place sometime before May 24, 1754. Volume 2 of the 1826 book “**The Universal Chronologist**” gives the date of the Logstown attack as May 14, 1754, stating: “*M. De Contrecoeur destroyed Loggs Town, in North America.*”

George Washington’s attack on Jumonville’s party did not occur until May 28, 1754. If the news of the Logstown attack had already reached far away Philadelphia by May 24, 1754, perhaps Washington also received the news. Washington’s “*Journal to the Ohio*”, and Dinwiddie’s previously described instructions for Washington to meet with the Half King (Tanacharison) at Logstown, are interpreted as meaning that Half King lived at Logstown. Perhaps Washington heard about the attack on Logstown directly from Half King, because (as described below) Washington met with Half King, and they agreed to join forces and attack Jumonville together. As quoted below, in a May 27, 1754 letter to Dinwiddie, Washington reveals that he is already aware that the Half King and his people were in the process of moving away from Logstown.

Volume 24 of the 1754 “**The Gentleman’s Magazine**” includes an article titled “*Conduct of the French in America*” which states:

They took the Block-house and Truck house erected by the Virginians at Logs Town on the Ohio, cut off all the traders but two, and carried off in goods, furs, and skins, to the amount of 20,000 l. sterling, so that the skin-trade in that part is totally obstructed.

John Dobson’s 1763 book “**Chronological Annals of the War, from its Beginning to the Present Time**” also mentions the French at Logstown, stating:

To accomplish these designs, the French attack’d and took one of the small Forts belonging to the English, in the Straight of the River Monongahela, obligating Mr. Ward and his little Garrison of 44 Men to capitulate, and retire. They afterwards made themselves Masters of the fort of Logstown on the River Ohio, in the Territory of Virginia.

Logstown was located at Legionville, about 18.4 miles downriver from the Forks of the Ohio, across the river from present-day Aliquippa. Given their goals, it would have made sense for the French to disrupt trade at Logstown, in addition to disrupting Trent's fort building activities at the forks.

Washington attacks Jummonville

Washington learns that the French are coming for him

On or about May 23, 1754, Washington received a letter written on behalf of the Half King by Washington's acquaintance, the Logstown trader and interpreter John Davison. Washington recorded an exact copy of the correspondence in a May 27, 1754 letter to Robert Dinwiddie:

To the forist his Magesteis Commanden Offeverses to hom this meay concern.

An acct of a french armey to meat Miger Georg Wassiontton therfor my Brotheres I deisir you to be awar of them for deisind to strike the forist English they see tow deays since they marchd I cannot tell what nomber the hlf King and the rest of the Chiefes will be with you in five dayes to Consel—no more at present but give my serves to my Brother's the English.

*The Half King
John Davison*

Washington's May 27, 1754 letter to Dinwiddie reveals that he is already aware that the villagers of Logstown are retreating. In his introduction to the Half King's letter, Washington writes:

The 25th Ult. by an Express from Colo. Fry I receiv'd the News of your Honour's arrival at Winchester and desire of seeing the Half King and other Chiefs of the 6 Nations—I have by Sundry Speeches and messages invited him Monacatoocha &ca to meet me and have reason to expect he is on his Road as he only purposd to settle his People to planting at a place choose on Monongehele²⁰⁰ Yaughyaughgane for that purpose but fearing something might have retarded his March I imediately upon the arrival of the Express dispatch'd a Messenger with a speech he is not return yet—abt 4 Days ago I receivd a message from the Half of which the following is a copy exactly taken.

The French act aggressively at Gist's plantation

On May 27, 1754, Washington heard that the French had acted aggressively at Christopher Gist's plantation. He recorded it in his journal as follows:

May 27th Mr. Gist arrived early in the morning, who told us that Mr. la Force, with fifty men whose tracks he had seen five miles from here, had been at his plantation the day before, towards noon, and would have killed a cow, and broken every thing in the house, if two Indians, whom he had left in charge of the house, had not prevented them from carrying out their design: I immediately detached 65 men under the command of Captain Hog, Lieutenant Mercer Ensign La Peronie, three Sergeants and three corporals, with instructions.

Descriptions of Washington's attack on Jumonville

According to Volume II of the 1755 book "**Family Library**", a June 12, 1754 letter from Virginia states:

²⁰⁰ There is speculation that Washington intended to cross out "Monongehele", but in his haste, ended up underlining it instead.

The French had Intelligence of four or five Waggon's with Provisions, going to our Camp at Ohio, and immediately sent a Party of thirty-five Men to intercept them, which coming to the Ears of Capt. Washington, one of our Officers, he went himself directly with forty-five Men, and had an Engagement on the 1st Instant, in which seven of the French were killed, and all the rest taken Prisoners, except three, who made their Escape, but were afterwards met by some Indians in Alliance with us, who killed and scalped them. The Prisoners came down to Williamsburgh Yesterday, and are all confined, except the Officers; one of whom is Monsieur le Force, a Person of high Rank and Distinction.

In his journal, Washington recorded his deadly May 28, 1754 encounter with Jumonville as follows:

About eight in the evening I received an express from the Half-King, who informed me, that, as he was coming to join us, he had seen along the road, the tracks of two men, which he had followed, till he was brought thereby to a low obscure place; that he was of opinion the whole party of the French was hidden there. That very moment I sent out forty men and ordered my ammunition to be put in a place of safety, fearing it to be a stratagem of the French to attack our camp; I left a guard to defend it, and with the rest of my men, set out in a heavy rain, and in a night as dark as pitch, along a path scarce broad enough for one man; we were sometimes fifteen or twenty minutes out of the path before we could come to it again, and we would often strike against each other in the darkness: All night along we continued our route, and on the 28th about sun-rise we arrived at the Indian camp, where after having held a council with the Half-King, we concluded to attack them together; so we sent out two men to discover where they were, as also their posture and what sort of ground was thereabout, after which we prepared to surround them marching one after the other, Indian fashion; We had thus advanced pretty near to them when they discovered us; I then ordered my company to fire; my fire was supported by that of Mr. Waggoner and my company and his received the whole fire of the French, during the greater part of the action, which only lasted a quarter of an hour before the enemy was routed. We killed Mr. de Jumonville the Commander of that party, as also nine others; we wounded one and made twenty-one prisoners, among whom were M. la Force, M. Drouillon and two cadets. The Indians scalped the dead and took away the greater part of their arms...

In a May 29, 1754 letter to Governor Dinwiddie that was written from the Great Meadows, Washington described the attack as follows:

Now, Sir, as I have answered your letter, I shall beg leave to acquaint you with what has happened since I wrote by Mr. Gist. I then informed you, that I had detached a party of seventy-five men to meet fifty of the French, who, we had intelligence, were upon their march towards us. About nine o'clock the same night, I received an express from the Half-King, who was encamped with several of his people about six miles off, that he had seen the tracks of two Frenchmen crossing the road, and that, behind, the whole body were lying not far off, as he had an account of that number passing Mr. Gist's.

I set out with forty men before ten, and it was from that time till near sunrise before we reached the Indians' camp, having marched in small paths, through a heavy rain, and a night as dark as it is possible to conceive. We were frequently tumbling one over another, and often so lost, that fifteen or twenty minutes' search would not find the path again.

When we came to the Half-King, I counselled with him, and got his assent to go hand-in-hand and strike the French. Accordingly, he, Monacawacha, and a few other Indians set out with us; and

when we came to the place where the tracks were, the Half-King sent two Indians to follow their tracks, and discover their lodgement, which they did at half a mile from the road, in a very obscure place surrounded with rocks. I thereupon, in conjunction with the Half-King and Monacawacha, formed a disposition to attack them on all sides, which we accordingly did, and, after an engagement of about fifteen minutes, we killed ten, wounded one, and took twenty-one prisoners. Amongst those killed was M. de Jumonville, the commander. The principal officers taken are M. Drouillon and M. La Force, of whom your Honor has often heard me speak, as a bold enterprising man, and a person of great subtlety and cunning. With these are two cadets.

The site of the combat is known as Jumonville Glen, and is located at Latitude 39.814140°, Longitude -79.587140° ([Figure 0880](#)).

Tactical reality

A number of books characterize Washington's attack as an ambush. It was not, but ambushes (lying in wait) are legitimate in the context of war. It was a well coordinated surprise attack on a contingent of the very army that had recently pointed cannon at Trent's troops and evicted them, and brutally attacked Logstown. It is no credit to the French that they allowed themselves to be caught by surprise, after having committed the first aggressions of the war.

Long before the advent of firearms, combatants sought surprise for the obvious advantages it provides. In small unit actions that do involve firearms, even fractions of seconds count, for obvious reasons that are dictated by ballistics. The commander who loses the initiative is well behind the curve, and may already be mortally wounded before a response can be mounted.

Put yourself in Washington's situation and mortal frame, and it is unlikely that you would knowingly allow Jumonville's forces to take the first shot. In short, once the French attacked British trading posts and pointed cannon at British troops, they should have expected a military response.

Volume 1 of Neville B. Craig's 1846 "**The Olden Time**" captures the proper perspective on Washington's attack on Jumonville:

It is true, as M. de Contrecoeur wrote to Marquis Duquesne, that Washington came upon the French by surprise; but this circumstance, so far as being a matter of censure, is not only considered allowable among the stratagems of honorable warfare, but an object of praise in the commander who effects it with success.

Washington receives notice of Fry's death

Washington received notice of the death of Colonel Fry on June 6, 1754 and recorded it as follows in his journal:

June 6th Mr. Gist is returned, and acquaints me of the death of poor Colonel Fry, and of the safe arrival of the French prisoners at Winchester, which was the cause of great satisfaction to the Governor.

In his 1880 book "**Memoir of Col. Joshua Fry: sometime professor in William and Mary College, Virginia, and Washington's senior in command of Virginia forces, 1754, etc., etc., ...**", the Reverend P. Slaughter indicates that he found the following anonymous record among the Fry family's papers:

Col. Fry was buried near Fort Cumberland²⁰¹, near Will's Creek, on May 31, 1754.

Washington and the army attended the funeral; and on a large oak tree, which now stands as a tomb and a monument to his memory, Washington cut the following inscription, which can be read to this day: "Under this oak lies the body of the good, the just and the noble Fry."

Washington did not attend the May 31 burial, since he did not learn of Fry's death until June 6. If he ever really attended a funeral service for Fry, it occurred at a later date. The story of the inscription on the tree may be true. According to the 1923 book "**History of Allegany County, Maryland**" by Thomas and Williams:

The older citizens of Cumberland remember a large and very old white oak tree on which an inscription had apparently been carved, but time had too far defaced it to be distinctly discernible. This tree stood on lot 154, corner of Cumberland street and Spruce alley—Cumberland's first, and for some years its only place of public burial. It had been a cemetery before Cumberland was laid out into a town, and was probably used in connection with Fort Cumberland, and it may be the last resting place of the lamented Colonel Joshua Fry.

Back to Washington's road building activities

Washington clears a road toward Redstone

On June 21, 1754, or sometime between that date and June 25, Washington wrote in his journal about clearing a road to Redstone, and giving misleading information to Indian spies. His journal reads as follows:

As those Indians, who were spies sent by the French, were very inquisitive, and asked us many questions in order to learn by what way we proposed to go to the Fort, and at what time we expected to arrive there, I left off working any further on our road, and told them we intended to continue it through the woods as far as the Fort, felling the trees, etc. That we were waiting here for reinforcements which were coming to us, our artillery, and our wagons to accompany us there, but as soon as they were gone I set about marking out and clearing a road towards Red-Stone.

As previously noted, his actual intent was to transport the artillery by water when it became convenient to attack Fort Duquesne.

Washington's last journal entry of the campaign was on June 27, 1754. It also mentions road building:

June 27. Detached Captain Lewis, Lieutenant Waggoner and Ensign Mercer, two Sergeants, two Corporals, one drummer and sixty men, in order to endeavor to clear a road to the mouth of RedStone Creek, on Monongahela.

From all this, and especially from Washington's May 16 and May 18 letters, it seems clear that the Ohio Company wagon road did not go to Redstone Creek, near Brownsville. The presence of the "*Hangard*" (below) proves that a packhorse path did go there. M. de Contrecoear's orders to Jummonville mention either Washington's or the Ohio Company route, stating: "*..he shall keep*

²⁰¹ According to Page 83 of Lowdermilk's 1878 book "**History of Cumberland**" ([Appendix 0002](#)), Colonel Innes did not begin construction on a stockade fort at the mouth of Wills Creek until September 12, 1754, well after Fry's death. Nevertheless, the description is apt because the area became well-known as "*Fort Cumberland*".

along the river Monongahela in Periagnas, as far as the Hangard, after which he shall march along until he finds the road which heads to that said to have been cleared by the English.”

Monacatoocha intends to go to Redstone

On June 12, 1754, Washington wrote a letter to Robert Dinwiddie that included the statement:

The Indians are drawing off from the River daily, one of whom last night brought news of Monacatoocha. He went from Logstown about five nights ago with the French scalps, and four hatchets, with which he intended to visit the four tribes of Indians between this and Lake Erie, and present to each a scalp and hatchet, and at the same time acquaint them that it was expected, as the English and Six Nations had hand-in-hand struck the French, they would join our forces. This messenger likewise says, that Monacatoocha was determined not only to counsel with the chiefs of those tribes, but with their great warriors also, which is customary in these cases, and was to return as soon as possible, which he imagined would be in fifteen days; but in case he should not return in that time, he left orders for the Indians at Logstown to set off for Red-stone Creek, so that they all would meet at Red-stone to join their brothers the English. He also desired there might be no attack made against the French fort, till he should return, by which time he hoped all the forces would be gathered, and then they would make a general attack together, and gain a complete victory at once.

Logstown was abandoned by its inhabitants some time prior to June 25, 1754. Washington's June 25, 1754 journal entry mentions a blow the Half-King received that prevented the Half-King from joining Washington. The next day, Washington received notice that Logstown had been burned. Washington's June 26, 1754 journal entry, made while attempting to cut the road to Redstone, includes the following statement:

An Indian arrived bringing news that Monacatoocha had burned his village, Logstown, and was gone by water with his people to Red-Stone, and might be expected there in two days.

M. Coulon de Villiers encounters the Hangard at Redstone

M. Coulon de Villiers is the individual who was in charge of the attack on Washington's troops at Fort Necessity. On June 30, 1754, de Villiers recorded being at Redstone as follows:

June the 30th.—Came to the Hangard, which was a sort of fort built with logs, one upon another, well notched in, about thirty feet in length and twenty in breadth; and as it was late and would not do anything without consulting the Indians, I encamped about two musket-shots from that place. At night I called the sachems²⁰² together, and we consulted upon what was best to be done for the safety of our periaguas,²⁰³ and of the provisions left in reserve, as also what guard should be left to keep it.

Gist's plantation is destroyed

In a story that is well-known, Washington began fortifications at Gist's plantation, but then retreated and built Fort Necessity, where he capitulated to a superior French force. When the French arrived at Gist's plantation, they destroyed it. Gist applied for recompense for his loss, which was recorded in the House of Burgesses on October 30, 1754 as follows:

²⁰² According to the 1829 book "**The London encyclopaedia**", sachems are hereditary chiefs who descend through the maternal line.

²⁰³ Periaguas are watercraft.

A petition of Christopher Gist, was presented to the House and read, setting forth that he had for some years past used his utmost endeavours to promote the settlement of His Majesty's lands on the River Ohio, and had engaged a considerable number of families to remove there from the adjoining provinces, which was prevented after the first of them came there by a survey made by one William Russel, which included the land where the first settlement was begun. That the petitioner, having settled there with his family, upon the late incursions of the French His Majesty's forces, under the command of Colonel Washington, encamped at the petitioner's plantation, and his Horses and Carriage²⁰⁴ being employed in his Majesty's services, he was thereby prevented from removing the greatest part of his effects, to the value of nearly two hundred pounds, which the French either took away or destroyed, besides setting fire to all his houses, and fencing which had been removed and used as a palisade for the security of His Majesty's forces, to a considerable value; and praying that this House will be pleased to make him such allowance for repairing his losses as they shall think fit; as he has been, and still shall be, ready on all occasions to resign his life, and small fortune, in promoting the settlement of that part of His Majesty's Dominions, so necessary to the preservation and interest of all his American plantations.

On July 2, 1754 de Villers described Gist's plantation as:

...consisting of three houses surrounded by some pieces standing on end and by some enclosures the interior of which was found to be commanded by the neighboring heights.

Some of the buildings at Gist's plantation belonged to the Ohio Company. In a complaint to the crown, after the cessation of hostilities, the Ohio Company mentioned:

...the destruction of the fort they had begun at Pittsburg, and another fort or blockhouse which they had actually completed at the mouth of Red Stone creek on the river Monongahela, together with some store houses they had built on the communication to Red Stone creek, at a place called in the maps GISTS on the west side of the mountain...

The phrase "*communication to Red Stone creek*" documents a route to the Brownsville area. The fact that Gist's plantation was not destroyed until after Jumonville was killed proves that Washington did not attack Jumonville as an overreaction to the destruction of Gist's plantation.

A 1754 record describes the Ohio Company wagon road

Page 134 of Volume II of the 1853 edition of the "**Pennsylvania Archives**" states that there was a 52-mile-long wagon road from Wills Creek to the Great Meadows in 1754. Although the month of the 1754 route description is not given, it is presented between records from April 2, 1754 and June 3, 1754. Based on this, the route description may have been made around the time when Washington was repairing the Ohio Company road. The description reads:

FROM MOUTH OF WILLS CR. ON POTOMAC.

New Store at the Mouth of Wills Creek on Potommick, to Cresaps, 15 miles.

From Wills Creek to ye Great Meadows, a Waggon Road, 52

From ye Great Meadows to Gists, . . . 10

To the Crossin of Ohiogany, . . . 6

To the Mouth of Mehongielo, . . . 40

²⁰⁴ In Buchanan's 1757 "**New English Dictionary**", the definition for "*carriage*" is "*A cart, wagon, &c.*"

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From Rags town to ye Big Meadows, . . . 70
Indorsed—Distances to Ohio, 1754.

This is bona fide proof of a wagon road. No mental gymnastics are required to conclude that this is the wagon road described in the Ohio Company records.

Furthermore, the 1755 Fry and Jefferson map ([Figure 0009](#)) illustrates a road to Fort Necessity (the Great Meadows) using a double line representation. This provides reasonable proof of the location of the road that is described in the second petition of the Ohio Company, and the “**Pennsylvania Archives**”. The 1754 description of a wagon road to the Great Meadows, and the double line representation of a road to the Great Meadows on the 1755 Fry and Jefferson map, are convincing reasons to give the first theory herein much more weight than the second theory.

Governor Sharpe’s letters to Lord Bury and John Sharpe

In a November 5, 1754 letter to Lord Bury, Governor Sharpe of Maryland states that Washington had been opening a road “*toward*” Fort Duquesne earlier in 1754. He was right that Washington’s intended destination was Fort Duquesne. Washington intended to take the cannon (and probably other equipment and supplies) by water. If Washington’s contemplated offensive action against Fort Duquesne had actually happened, then he probably would have taken the necessary horses overland, in order to move the cannons upon reaching Fort Duquesne. Governor Sharpe wrote:

With the Force however above numbred & about 300 Men that were to be sent out from N Carolina to join them Gov^r Denwiddie hoped to be able at least to act defensively & to proceed to erect a Fort or two on Ohio till He should receive farther Instructions from home for his Conduct. while He was about to order this Scheme into Execution Intelligence was brought him that a Body of about 200 French Regulars had on the 17th of April come down on the small Party who had been ordered out to prepare Materials for a Fort & had obliged them to relinquish what materials they had collected for that purpose & to return again to Virginia. This Information was too soon confirmed to us & the Enemy immediately begun & have now compleated a Fort considerably strong & large near the Spot on which our People had begun to build & have mounted therein several swivels & some Carriage Guns. At the time that Ensign Ward & His Detachment made the Surrendry above mentioned the Rest of the Virginia Corps & the South Carolina Company under the Command of one M^r Washington were advancing to support them & fortify themselves on the River but on being acquainted with the cause of this their unexpected Return as soon as the Party met him He declined proceeding till He should be reinforced by the other Troops who were now in motion toward him & in the mean time employed himself in opening a Road from the Frontiers of this Province toward the Enemy’s Fort. while He was in this situation about Midway between the English Settlements & the Enemy a Party of His Men fell in with Monsieur Jumonville a Lieutenant & about 30 Men from the Fort (who were sent as twas supposed to intercept a Convoy of Provisions designed for our men) & having killed Jumonville & 7 or 8 of his Detachment they took the rest Prisoners & sent them under a Guard to the Governor of Virginia where they yet remain.

In an April 19, 1755 letter to John Sharpe²⁰⁵, Governor Sharpe wrote about George Washington's May 1754 road building activities. He stated that Washington was building a road "toward the Ohio", writing as follows:

The next Intelligence that I received was that while Col^o Washington was employing his Men in opening a Road from Wills-Creek toward the Ohio a party of his Command had on the 27th of May fallen in with a Detachment of about 30 Men from the French Fort on Ohio under the Command of Ensign Jumonville upon which a Skirmish ensued & Jumonville with 7 or 8 of his Detachment was killed & the rest – (excepting 2 or 3) made prisoners & sent to the Governor of Virga the first week in June Col^o Fry fell from his horse which occasioned his Death & thereupon Col^o Washington succeeded in the chief Command.

Washington reports that in 1754 he was repairing the Ohio Company road

As previously quoted, Volume 2 of Sparks' 1833 book "The Writings of George Washington" ([Appendix 0016](#)) indicates that George Washington wrote the following to Colonel Bouquet on August 2, 1758:

Several years ago the Virginians and Pennsylvanians commenced a trade with the Indians settled on the Ohio, and, to obviate the many inconveniences of a bad road, they, after reiterated and ineffectual efforts to discover where a good one might be made, employed for the purpose several of the most intelligent Indians, who, in the course of many years' hunting, had acquired a perfect knowledge of these mountains. The Indians, having taken the greatest pains to gain the rewards offered for this discovery, declared, that the path leading from Will's Creek was infinitely preferable to any, that could be made at any other place. Time and experience so clearly demonstrated this truth, that the Pennsylvania traders commonly carried out their goods by Will's Creek. Therefore, the Ohio Company, in 1753, at a considerable expense, opened the road. In 1754 the troops, whom I had the honor to command, greatly repaired it, as far as Gist's plantation;²⁰⁶ and, in 1755, it was widened and completed by General Braddock to within six miles of Fort Duquesne.

Washington's letter clearly states that he repaired the 1753 Ohio Company road as far as Gist's plantation in 1754, and Braddock widened and completed it toward Fort Duquesne. This is harmonious with other information presented in this chapter indicating that a branch of the Ohio Company road went toward the present-day location of Pittsburgh in 1753. [Middleton's 1847 map \(Appendix 0075\)](#) shows Atkinson's extensive on-the-ground study of the route of the Braddock Road. While the road passed within perhaps six miles of the present-day location of Confluence, it did not go there. In any case, Braddock's road, which generally followed the Ohio Company road, is not the Turkey Foot Road. It did, however, go close enough to Turkeyfoot that the second petition describes the Ohio Company road using Turkeyfoot as a landmark reference.

Going down a rabbit hole

In Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland" novel, Alice enters a world of confusion when she goes down a rabbit hole. This book sidetracks down a number of confusing rabbit holes in search of historical clarity. The portion of Washington's August 2, 1758 letter that is quoted above creates one

²⁰⁵ According to Matilda Edgar's 1912 book "A colonial governor in Maryland: Horatio Sharpe and his times, 1753-1773", John Sharpe was Governor Sharpe's brother.

²⁰⁶ Using the shortest present-day route, it is about 64 miles from Cumberland to Gist's.

such rabbit hole. Washington's letter should be interpreted in concert with other documentary evidence, and the conventional interpretation leaves various loose ends.

Veech's speculation morphs into a 'fact'

In his book "**The Monongahela of Old...**", James Veech interprets Washington's letter and Mr. Jacob's statements related to Nemaquin, as follows:

Nemaquin's path led from the mouth of Wills' Creek (Cumberland, Md.) to the "Forks of the Ohio" (Pittsburgh). It doubtless existed as a purely Indian trail before Nemaquin's time. For when the Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania traders with the Indians on the Ohio, began their operations, perhaps as early as 1740, they procured Indians to show them the best and easiest route, and this was the one they adopted. So says Washington. And when the "Ohio Company," hereafter to be noticed, was formed, in 1748, and preparing to go into the Ohio Indian trade on a large scale, they procured Col. Thomas Cresap, of Old Town, Md., to engage some trusty Indians to mark and clear the pathway. For this purpose, he engaged Nemaquin, a well known Delaware Indian, who resided at the mouth of Dunlap's creek, which, in early times, was called Nemaquin's creek. The commissioner and engineer, with the aid of other Indians, executed the work, in 1750,²⁰⁷ by blazing the trees, and cutting away and removing the bushes and fallen timber, so as to make it a good pack-horse path. Washington says that "the Ohio Company, in 1753, at a considerable expense, opened the road. In 1754 the troops, whom I had the honor to command, greatly repaired it, as far as Gist's plantation; and, in 1755, it was widened and completed by General Braddock to within six miles of Fort Duquesne."

Veech was using probability-based reasoning when he wrote that "*Nemaquin's path ... doubtless existed as a purely Indian trail before Nemaquin's time.*" Americans do not use words like "doubtless" or "surely" when they are stating what they believe to be provable, clear-cut facts. Instead, such words typically mean something akin to "*although I do not have proof, it would only make sense that*".

Veech's statement has been interpreted by subsequent historians as proof that the Ohio Company road followed an earlier Indian path that Nemaquin simply pointed out to Thomas Cresap. For example, the 1895 book "**Chronicles of Border Warfare**" by Withers and Draper states the following in regard to Cresap:

He employed as his guide an Indian named Nemaquin, whose camp was at the mouth of Dunlap Creek (site of the present Brownsville, Pa.), an affluent of the Monongahela. Nemaquin pointed out an old Indian trace which had its origin, doubtless, in an over-mountain buffalo trail; and this, widened a little by Cresap, was at first known as Nemaquin's Path.

"Doubtless", Withers and Draper write, Nemaquin's path originated as a buffalo trail. And so, like the childhood game of "telephone", Veech's story mutates.

Analyzing Veech's speculative statement

Veech indicates that the Ohio Company road probably followed an Indian path out of Wills Creek that the Pennsylvania traders were using before Nemaquin's time. This presumption, however

²⁰⁷ No basis for a 1750 date has been identified during the course of writing this book. The Ohio Company did not instruct Gist "to look out & observe the nearest & most convenient Road" until July 16, 1751. Gist did not return from his journey until March 29, 1752. The Ohio Company's directive to employ "the proper Indians, who are best acquainted with the ways" did not occur until April 28, 1752.

logical it may be, reaches beyond the actual text of the Washington letter and Mr. Jacob's statements.

Is it likely that there was an Indian path along the Braddock Run water gap? Yes. Indians had been in North America for thousands of years, and had extensive trading routes long before the arrival of Europeans. As with the Jennings Run water gap, the Braddock Run water gap is a useful mountain pass. It is inconceivable that Indians would have failed to take advantage of either gap.

In the overall context of Washington's letter, it is linguistically correct to interpret²⁰⁸ the phrase "*the path*" as meaning that some westerly path out of Wills Creek existed before the Ohio Company road. In Washington's letter, after the Indians "*declared, that the path leading from Will's Creek was infinitely preferable to any*", their declaration was proven to be true by "*time and experience*", and as a result "*the Pennsylvania traders commonly carried out their goods by Will's Creek.*" In 1751 Gist described a water gap "*that the Traders commonly pass thro*", but it was not the Braddock Run water gap. It seems logical to believe that Washington and Gist may have been referring to the same trading route westward out of Wills Creek—one that followed a different water gap than the one the Ohio Company road eventually followed.

Quite properly, Veech's book does not presume that the Indians referenced by Washington located a path for the Ohio Company, per se. In Washington's statement "*...they...employed...several of the most intelligent Indians*", the word "*they*" refers specifically to "*the Virginians and Pennsylvanians*", rather than to the Ohio Company. The Ohio Company, which Washington does reference later in his letter, was composed of Virginians and British,²⁰⁹ and included two of Washington's brothers and several of his acquaintances. Because of the composition of the Ohio Company membership, and Washington's separate reference to the Ohio Company, Washington's phrase "*the Virginians and Pennsylvanians*" cannot be interpreted as referring to the Ohio Company, and the phrase "*the most intelligent Indians*" cannot be interpreted as a reference to Nemacolin. Logically, the Ohio Company—which was not formed until 1748—would have had nothing to do with a route Veech says was identified by Indians "*perhaps as early as 1740*".

Washington's letter does not indicate that the Indians were asked to find the best westerly route out of Wills Creek. Instead, when the Virginia and Pennsylvania traders asked where a good road might be made, the Indians advised them to use a path out of Wills Creek. After this, "*the Pennsylvania traders commonly carried out their goods by Will's Creek.*" It seems reasonable to assume that some of these traders "*commonly carried out their goods*" using the water gap described in 1751 by Gist "*that the Traders commonly pass thro*"—which was **not** the Braddock Run water gap. As described by Chapter 4, an annotation on the Library of Congress copy of the Mayo map ([Figure 0988](#)) shows a "*Road to Ohio*" passing through the Jennings Run water gap, and then turning southwest. The Fry and Jefferson map illustrates a branch of this route passing through the Salisbury and Confluence regions before passing Gist's plantation at Mount Braddock, and continuing deep into the Ohio valley.

Washington's letter does not indicate that the Ohio Company built their road because of the path-related declaration he describes, and he does not indicate that the Ohio Company road followed the

²⁰⁸ For example, "*the right to keep and bear arms*" has been interpreted several times by the Supreme Court to mean that the Second Amendment protects a pre-existing right, rather than granting a newly applicable right. In the case of the Second Amendment, however, the historical record abounds with evidence documenting the pre-existing right.

²⁰⁹ See Herbert T. Leyland's 1921 book "**The Ohio Company a Colonial Corporation**".

existing path. Instead, Washington indicates that the Ohio Company built their road out of Wills Creek because “*the Pennsylvania traders commonly carried out their goods by Will’s Creek.*”

The Ohio Company storehouse at Wills Creek was already in place before Gist explored the Braddock Run water gap as a possible transportation route for the Ohio Company. In 1750, Gist traveled to Muskingum with “*Barny Curran a Trader for the Ohio Company*”. The Ohio Company’s July 16, 1751 instructions to Christopher Gist state “*You are to look out & observe the nearest & most convenient Road You can find from the Company’s Store at Wills’s Creek...*” On November 4, 1751, Gist was exploring the Braddock Run water gap because he was looking for a good place to put the Ohio Company road, and the Braddock Run water gap had been “*accounted one of the best*”, although it was not the water gap “*the Traders commonly pass thro*”. This suggests that the path out of Wills Creek that “*the most intelligent Indians*” identified for the “*the Virginians and Pennsylvanians*” may have followed the route through the Jennings Run water gap **that is shown on the Mayo map and the Fry and Jefferson map.**

Gist fails to mention the presence of an existing trader’s path along the water gap he took, which later became the route of the Ohio Company road. If he was following an existing commonly used path, then such an omission would be surprising, considering he was asked to “*look out & observe the nearest & most convenient Road You can find*”. The terms “*road*” and “*path*” were often used interchangeably. Instead of mentioning a trader’s path through the Braddock Run water gap, Gist indicates that traders commonly followed a *different* water gap.

Washington states: “*...the Pennsylvania traders commonly carried out their goods by Will’s Creek. Therefore, the Ohio Company, in 1753...opened the road. ... it was widened and completed by General Braddock...*” As quoted above, Michael Cresap’s friend John J. Jacob states, in reference to the Ohio Company “*Colonel Cresap, as one of that Company... employed an..Indian to lay out and mark a road from Cumberland to Pittsburg. ...General Braddock with his army pursued the same path, which thenceforward took the name of Braddock’s road*”. If Braddock followed a path on which “*...the Pennsylvania traders commonly carried out their goods by Will’s Creek*”, then why was it necessary for Cresap to hire an Indian to “*lay out and mark*” an existing, commonly used, and presumably well-known and well trodden packhorse path? If an existing path required hiring someone to identify and mark it, then perhaps it was not the same path that was being commonly used by the heavily laden packhorse trains of “*the Pennsylvania traders*”.

Lightly used footpaths were sometimes difficult to follow

Moravian missionary David Zeisburger’s journal entries from early October 1767 relate to the Indian footpath known as the Forbidden Path, which whites were forbidden to travel. Even though the journal entries do not relate to a path out of Wills Creek, they may provide insight as to why the Ohio Company needed to hire Nemacolin to lay out and mark an existing, but perhaps lightly used combination of footpaths. One journal entry refers to October 4, 1767:

It rained on the 4th, yet we continued our journey, finding it difficult to keep to the trail, because often it could not be distinguished. In the evening we had lost it altogether, so that we did not know how to proceed, for Anton and John did not know this region. We, therefore, pitched camp. John walked, the same evening, some distance into the woods, toward the north, to look for the trail. During the night, he returned with the good news that he had found it again.

John McMillan's September 1775 journal entry tells a similar story of a losing a faint path in Brothersvalley.²¹⁰

There may have been a bewildering array of paths to choose from

In addition to the possibility that an antecedent to the Ohio Company road was faint, there is a high probability that there were too many confusing paths to choose from, and Nemacolin's help was needed to identify and mark the best combination of paths. Zeisberger's October 8, 1767 journal entry provides an example, stating:

The two Indians with me...had much trouble today in keeping the trail because in places there is for several miles no visible trace of its having been followed by man. Occasionally, we came upon elk tracks (this is a kind of deer that is found in Europe also) which have the appearance of a trail. We were misled by them into a terrible wilderness, so that it was necessary to retrace our steps and stop until John had had an opportunity to go through the woods and find the right trail.

Mr. Dietle has walked along deer trails in Pennsylvania woods that were worn as deep as cow paths from long use.²¹¹ Elk would have left a maze of paths that were even more heavily trodden. Aside from the confusion caused by animal paths, there could also have been a problem of too many Indian paths to choose. In his book "**Indian Paths of Pennsylvania**", Wallace gives the example of the bewildering array of route choices Bouquet faced during Forbes' campaign. Bouquet had to select one among several routes at Fort Loudon and Fort Ligonier, and had to choose again at the parting of the roads west of Fort Ligonier.

Whether the existing path system was faint, complex, or both, an Indian who was "*best acquainted with the ways*" was needed to "*lay out and mark*" the "*nearest & most convenient Road*" westward from the Ohio Company storehouse.

Conclusion

Considering the various bits of documentary evidence, and Washington's possible political motivation, it seems an overreach to interpret Washington's letter as proof that the Ohio Company road followed the commonly used path out of Wills Creek that Washington describes. Nor does Washington's letter prove that traders were commonly using a path that became the Ohio Company road before the road was blazed by Nemacolin and cut by Gist. Instead, the documentary evidence suggests that in the time before Gist, Nemacolin and Cresap were affiliated with the Ohio Company road, traders were commonly using a path through the Jennings Run water gap that is shown on **the Fry and Jefferson map and** the Mayo map. Was anyone using the Braddock Run water gap before the Ohio Company road? Yes, most definitely. Gist says it was "*accounted one of the best*", even though it was not the gap "*the Traders commonly pass thro*".

While it is certainly safe to assume that the Ohio Company road followed portions of various Indian paths, Washington's letter, Jacob's book, and the Ohio Company records do not *prove* the conventional wisdom that Nemacolin simply pointed out an existing Indian path that headed westward out of Wills Creek. It is more likely that Nemacolin's expertise enabled him to identify and mark a suitable route selected from portions of a bewildering maze of paths.

²¹⁰ See page 206 of Guthrie's 1952 book "**John Mcmillan The Apostle of Presbyterianism in the West, 1752-1833**".

²¹¹ At least one of the deeply worn deer trails of Mr. Dietle's youth has probably been in use for many centuries by both humans and animals, owing to its location along the rim of a steep ravine.

And so, we exit the rabbit hole with slightly more information than when we entered. The water gaps of Braddock Run and Jennings Run would have provided logical routes for Indian paths long before the gaps were discovered by white men. Even without further proof, this means the Ohio Company road and **the Turkey Foot Road** had Indian path antecedents. Although Indian paths varied in location over time, such routes through water gaps were indeed the precursors to the subsequent packhorse and wagon roads of white men. Nemacolin and Cresap would have “doubtless” followed portions of various existing paths when blazing the Ohio Company road. Nevertheless, based on Gist’s journal and the referenced **maps**, it does not seem reasonable to believe that the Ohio Company road followed the path that traders most commonly did, with their packhorse trains in 1751.

Was **Dunlap’s path the antecedent to the Ohio Company/Braddock’s road?**

Veech’s influential circa 1858 book seems to be the earliest of several that state, without supporting evidence, that Nemacolin’s path followed an earlier path called Dunlap’s path:

Dunlap’s path, or road, was a very early one. It came through Winchester, by way of Wills’ creek, to the mouth of Dunlap’s creek. Dunlap was a trader, and as Braddock did with the road, so he succeeded in wresting from Nemacolin the name of the creek, which now bears his name. From Will’s creek to the top of Laurel hill, near the Great Rock, the route of Dunlap’s road was identical with that of Nemacolin or Braddock. (e). From that point Nemacolin’s path bore north-east, along the crest of the mountain; while Dunlap’s bore north-east, descending the mountain...

Rather than providing evidence that Braddock’s road followed Dunlap’s path, Veech’s footnote (e) references a 1759 journal, stating:

(e) Col. Burd, in the journal of his expedition to Redstone, in 1759, says: “At the foot of the hill [meaning the eastern base of Laurel Hill] we found the path that went to Dunlap’s place, that Col. Shippen and Capt. Gordon traveled last winter; and about a quarter of a mile from this we saw the Big Rock, so called.” Dunlap’s place, we believe, was where Wm. Stone now resides, on the Burnt Cabin fork of Dunlap’s creek.²¹²

Burd’s September 30, 1759 letter concerning a road from Christopher Gist’s to the Brownsville area still refers to Dunlap’s Creek as Nemoraling’s Creek. The letter, which begins with “*I have cut the road from Guest’s, and came to this ground the twenty-third inst.*” is dated “*Camp at the mouth of Nemoraling’s Creek, on the Monongahela, about one mile above the mouth or Redstone Creek, Sept. 30th, 1759.*” Volume XII, page 347, of the “**Pennsylvania Archives**” (1856) mentions this letter, then states: “*Nemoralling’s Creek above mentioned or Nemocalling’s Creek as it is called in the Pioneer,²¹³ is now Dunlap’s Creek, and empties into the Red Stone.*”

According to Volume 2 of the 1896 book “**The frontier forts of western Pennsylvania**”, Burd’s September 22, 1759 journal entry states:

This morning I went the River Monongahela, reconnoitered Redstone, &c, and concluded upon the place for the post, being a hill in the fork of the River Monongahela and Nemocollin’s Creek, the best situation I could find, and returned in the evening to the camp.

²¹² This is from Burd’s September 11, 1759 journal entry.

²¹³ Volume 2, page 60, “**The American Pioneer: A Monthly Periodical...**”, 1843.

From these early documents, it appears that Dunlap's creek was still being called Nemacolin's creek in 1759, although a path to "*Dunlap's place*" already existed in 1758. No earlier references to Dunlap's creek or Dunlap's path have been found during the course of writing this book, but perhaps such evidence may exist somewhere. Likewise, no documentary evidence has been found that indicates the Ohio Company's road followed an earlier path called Dunlap's path.

No one seems to know who Dunlap's path and Dunlap's creek are named for, but Hanna's 1911 book "**The Wilderness Trail**" does mention two traders from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania named Dunlap. Robert Dunlap is mentioned as an unlicensed trader in 1748, and William Dunlap²¹⁴ is mentioned as "*an old Trader*" who applied for a license in 1730²¹⁵ and was "*at Allegheny in 1734.*" Regarding William Dunlap, Hanna wonders "*Could this have been the Trader for whom Dunlap's Creek, in Fayette County, was named?*" Hanna's query, while certainly not unreasonable, is difficult to reconcile with Veech's statement that Dunlap's path came "*through Winchester, by way of Wills' creek, to the mouth of Dunlap's creek.*"

The first Westmoreland County road petition, in April 1773, seems to indicate that Dunlap's path forked from Braddock's road, stating: "*...thence the nearest and best way to the Forks of Dunlap's path, and Gen. Braddock's road on the top of Laurel Hill.*" The quote is from Veech's book. If this happens to be Veech's basis for stating that Braddock's road followed Dunlap's path, it seems exceedingly thin. Further muddying the waters, Volume I of Shepard's 1900 book "**Nelson's Biographical Dictionary and Historical Reference Book of Fayette County**" states that "*Dunlap, the trader*" settled in Fayette County in 1753, the same year as Christopher Gist. It is beyond the scope of this book to determine whether Dunlap's path was an antecedent to the Ohio Company road. Such an antecedent seems to be difficult to reconcile with the Ohio Company road records. Nevertheless, Dunlap's path appears to be a fitting topic for additional research. One possible avenue for such research would be a study of early property records in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.

Braddock had to cut his own wagon road out of Wills Creek in 1755

According to Hanna's 1911 book "**The Wilderness Trail**", Engineer Harry Gordon's Journal states that General Braddock arrived at the camp at Will's Creek (Fort Cumberland) May 10th, and there found 100 Indian men, women, and children.

Many books, such as Parkman's 1884 book "**Montcalm and Wolfe**",²¹⁶ state that in 1755, Braddock's troops, using 300 axmen, had to cut their own 12-foot-wide wagon road out of Fort

²¹⁴ Volume 1 of the 1898 book "**Commemorative Biographical Record of Central Pennsylvania**" states: "*William Dunlap (II) we find as early as 1730 petitioned the Court of Lancaster county to recommend him to the Governor for appointment as an Indian trader. He moved from Donegal to a farm adjoining the town of Shippensburg, where he died. (his granddaughter, Elizabeth Simpson, said at the age of 115).*" His wife's name is reported as Deborah. In a section about Lancaster County, Egle's 1883 book "**History of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**" states: "*At the first court held at John Postlewaite's...William Dunlap...and John Harris, all of Donegal, were licensed by the court to trade with the Indians.*"

²¹⁵ See page 27 of Ellis' 1883 book "**History of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania**"

²¹⁶ Parkman's 1884 book states: "*It was the tenth of June before the army was well on its march. Three hundred axemen led the way, to cut and clear the road; and the long train of pack-horses, wagons, and cannon toiled on behind, over the stumps, roots, and stones of the narrow track... The road was but twelve feet wide, and the line of march often extended four miles. It was like a thin, long party colored snake, red, blue, and brown... It was the eighteenth of June before the army reached a place called the Little Meadows, less than thirty miles from Fort Cumberland.*"

Cumberland during the campaign against Fort Duquesne. These various accounts are based on Robert Orme's journal, which states:

The General acquainted the Council he had formed a plan of March and encampment... He said he should be very much encumbered with a vast number of carriages and horses, which it was absolutely necessary to secure from the insults of the Indians from whom he apprehended frequent annoyance. It would be therefore necessary to divide the troops into small parties to cover as much as possible the baggage, which would be obliged to march in one line through a road about twelve foot wide... A field officer was to march with a van, and another with a rear guard. Sr Peter Halket was to lead the column, and Colonel Dunbar to bring up the Rear. The field officer of the Picket had no fixed posts. There was also an advanced party of three hundred men to precede the line to cut and make the roads...

This account means the existing 1753 Ohio Company road, repaired to Gist's plantation by Washington in 1754, may not have amounted to much. It certainly was not the 30-foot-wide road that the Ohio Company described in their second petition.

In a letter to his brother, Washington confirms that Braddock was engaged in road improvements, complaining:

I found that instead of pushing on with vigor, without regarding a little rough road, they were halting to level every mole-hill, and to erect bridges over every brook, by which means we were four days in getting twelve miles.

The Road forked to Redstone and Shannopin's Town

While we do not pretend to be students of the Ohio Company, we recognize that some of the Ohio Company records quoted herein reference preparing a road to the Fork of the Monongahela, and also know that the Ohio Company had a presence at Redstone (present-day Brownsville) on the Monongahela. "*Monongahela*" was also a general term that was sometimes used to describe the region between the Monongahela and the Youghiogheny²¹⁷. This section further proves that a branch of the Ohio Company road went to the present-day location of Pittsburgh.

Hulbert's description

In his 1906 book "**The Ohio River: a course of empire**", in a discussion of Washington's trip to carry a British protest to the French at Fort Leboeuf in the fall of 1753, Archer Butler Hulbert describes the Ohio Company road as follows:

The Ohio Company had, in the year before, through the agency of the trained woodsman Colonel Thomas Cresap, engaged a Delaware Indian, Nemacolin, to blaze the pathway from the Potomac at Will's Creek to the Monongahela tributary of the Ohio, at the point where Brownsville, Pennsylvania, stands. The main trail traversed Laurel Hill and went to Shannopin's Town²¹⁸ (Pittsburg); a branch left the main trail at what is now Mount Braddock and ran to Brownsville or

²¹⁷ For example, Washington's "*Journal to the Ohio*" describes reaching Gist's plantation on January 2, 1754 as follows: "Today, the 1st of January, we left Mr. Frazier's house, and arrived at Mr. Gist's, at Monongahela, the 2d, where I bought a horse and saddle."

²¹⁸ A passage in the 1876 book "**Centenary Memorial of the Planting and Growth of Presbyterianism in Western Pennsylvania...**" describes Shannopin's Town as follows: "The latter was situated on the bank of the Allegheny river, now in the Twelfth Ward of the City of Pittsburgh, between Penn Avenue, Thirtieth Street, and the Two Mile Run. It was small, had about twenty families of Delawares, and was much frequented by the traders. By it ran the main Indian path from the east to the west."

Redstone Old Fort as the point was known in pioneer days; the Ohio Company soon erected another storehouse, or “fort,” here at the mouth of Redstone Creek; this was the first building erected by Englishmen in the Ohio Basin²¹⁹. Washington and Gist passed over the main trail to Shannopin’s Town, not traversing the branch trail from Mount Braddock to the storehouse at the mouth of Redstone Creek.

Hulbert’s description is compatible with George Washington’s statement

Hulbert’s statement about “*the main trail to Shannopin’s Town*” is compatible with the previously quoted statement of George Washington:

Therefore, the Ohio Company, in 1753, at a considerable expense, opened the road. In 1754 the troops, whom I had the honor to command, greatly repaired it, as far as Gist’s plantation; and, in 1755, it was widened and completed by General Braddock to within six miles of Fort Duquesne.

The second petition references authorizing a road to the Ohio River

The Ohio Company’s second petition states:

They then agreed with H. Parker for the carriage of all their goods from the falls of Potomack to their general factory on the River Ohio, and authorized Col. Cresap to have a road opened to those places.

This definitively states that the Ohio Company intended to have a road opened between the present-day location of Cumberland, Maryland and the Ohio River.

Wallace indicates that the route forked

Wallace indicates that the path split at the Half King’s Rock²²⁰, with one branch going to Redstone and the other going to Gist’s. Wallace then describes the path as again splitting at Gist’s, with one branch going to the present-day location of Pittsburgh, and the other going to Redstone, near where Nemacolin lived. Wallace indicates that the latter route was also known as the Redstone Path, and was improved by James Burd in 1759, and subsequently was known as Burd’s Road.²²¹ Wallace indicates that locally the path from Gist’s to Redstone was called the “*True Nemacolin’s Path*”. The route from Gist’s to Redstone is shown on John Shippen, Junior’s 1759 map ([Figure 0829](#)), which also depicts the northward turn of Braddock’s road just west of Gist’s. The route is also illustrated on the 1775 Sayer and Bennett “**Map of Pennsylvania**” ([Figure 0434](#)).

Mitchell’s 1755 map ([Figure 0580](#)) shows a road from Wills Creek to the Monongahela River at Red Stone Creek via the Great Meadows, but puts it on the north side of Redstone Creek. The map also shows a path heading north from the Great Meadows to “*Ft. du Quesne*” and “*Log’s T.*”, and on to Pickawillany via “*Hockhocken or Margret’s T.*”

²¹⁹ Hulbert’s “*first building...in the Ohio Basin*” statement is wrong. Edward Ward’s June 30, 1756 deposition indicates that William Trent was still in the process of building the storehouse at Redstone Creek when Trent received the Governor’s orders to raise a company. Governor Dinwiddie wrote those orders on January 27, 1754. Logstown and Pickawillany existed well before then, and Gist’s new settlement also preceded that date.

²²⁰ The historical marker for Half King’s Rock ([Figure 0916](#)) is located at Latitude 39.86043333°, Longitude -79.64431667°, 1.1 miles north of Route 40 on Jumonville Road (SR 2021). It is located next to the historical marker for Washington’s spring ([Figure 0917](#)). In reference to Half King’s Rock, Ellis’ 1882 book “**History of Fayette County...**” states: “*a quarry being worked in it some years ago has greatly changed its appearance.*” For a 1908 photo of Half-King’s Rock, see [Figure 1001](#).

²²¹ Burd’s journal states: “*Ordered in August, 1759, to march with two hundred men of my battalion to the mouth of Redstone Creek, where it empties itself into the river Monongahela, to cut a road somewhere from Gen. Braddock’s road to that place...*” His October 23, 1759 journal entry states: “*Continued working on the road.*”

In regard to the portion of the path west of Chestnut ridge toward Pittsburgh, Wallace indicates that the parts of Indian paths Braddock used, such as the Catawba path, eventually came to be called Nemacolin's path.

Washington's and Half King's 1754 correspondence indicates the road forked

An April 25, 1754 letter Washington wrote to Dinwiddie from Wills Creek, quoted in part above, describes the commencement of roadwork. In another part of the letter, Washington quotes a letter that he sent to the Half King, which includes the statement:

The young man will inform you where he met a small part of our army advancing towards you, clearing the road for a great number of our warriors, who are immediately to follow with our great guns, our ammunition, and our provisions. ... I cannot be easy without seeing you before our forces meet at the fork of the road, and therefore I have the greatest desire that you and Escuniate, or one of you, should meet me on the road as soon as possible, to assist us in council.

This may be a response to the April 18, 1754 letter the Half King sent to the Governors of Virginia and Pennsylvania that also mentions the fork in the road:

We have sent these two young men to see when you are ready to come, and then they are to come to us, and let us know where you are that we may come and meet you, and would desire if you could, that the men from both provinces would meet at the forks of the road.

Orme's journal locates the fork at Half King's rock

Robert Orme's June 25, 1755 journal entry describes a recently abandoned Indian camp encountered at Half King's rock: "*This Indian camp was in a strong situation, being upon a high rock with a very narrow and steep ascent to the top; it had a spring in the middle, and stood at the termination of the Indian path to the Monongehela, at the confluence of Red-stone creek. ... By their tracks, they seemed to have divided here, the one part going straight forward to fort du Quesne, and the other returning by Red-stone Creek to the Monongohela.*" Half King's rock is identified as the "Big Rock" on Shippen's 1759 map ([Figure 0829](#)).

The condition of the Ohio Company road north of the Meadows

On May 24, 1754 at the Great Meadows, Washington writes that he "*placed troops behind two natural entrenchments, and had our wagons put there also.*" Washington was still at the Great Meadows on May 27. His May 27, 1754 letter to Robert Dinwiddie states:

This acct²²² was seconded in the Evening by another that the French were at the xing of Yaughyaughgane abt 18 Miles—I hereupon hurried to this place as a convenient spott. We have with Natures assistance made a good Intrenchment and by clearing the Bushes out of these Meadows prepar'd a charming field for an Encounter—I detach'd immediately upon my arrival here small light partys of Horse (Wagn Horses) to reconnoitre the Enemy and discover their strength...

Washington's previously quoted journal indicates that he received a message from the Half King on the evening of May 27, marched during the night, and met with the Half King at Sunrise on May 28.

²²² The referenced account is the previously quoted letter Washington received from the Half King and John Davison on or about May 23, 1754.

Various books claim that Washington parleyed with the Half King at the latter's encampment at Half King's rock²²³ on May 28, 1754, before making the joint attack on Jummonville that morning. Washington's May 29, 1754 letter, written from the Great Meadows and quoted above, indicates that Half King's camp was six miles away from Washington's May 27, 1754 location. On modern roads, it is 6.5 miles from the Great Meadows to Half King's rock.

Washington's statement about marching along "*a path scarce broad enough for one man*" to reach Half King's encampment appears to be a description of the existing state of the Ohio Company packhorse road between the Great Meadows and Half King's rock.

As quoted in more detail above, Gist's application for compensation, which was recorded in the House of Burgesses on October 30, 1754, stated:

His Majesty's forces, under the command of Colonel Washington, encamped at the petitioner's plantation, and his Horses and Carriage being employed in his Majesty's services, he was thereby prevented from removing the greatest part of his effects...

When viewed in the context of Washington's "*a path scarce broad enough for one man*" statement, one is left wondering how Gist's carriage was brought to his plantation. In regard to the Ohio Company road, Washington states that his troops "*greatly repaired it, as far as Gist's plantation*". Since the carriage was "*employed in his Majesty's services*" it appears that it may have accompanied Washington's road building forces from Wills Creek, where Gist also had a house. It seems unlikely that it was brought along "*a path scarce broad enough for one man*" before Washington's road cutting activities.

There may be other explanations for how Gist's carriage came to be at his plantation in the summer of 1754. It could have been a primitive cart, built on the spot using transverse slices of tree trunks for wheels, as was sometimes done. Alternately, Washington's "*path scarce broad enough for one man*" may not have been the Ohio Company road. Nevertheless, based on the *available* evidence, it is not unreasonable to believe that, north of the Meadows, the Ohio Company road was simply a path that was marked and cleared well enough for packhorse trains to follow in daylight conditions. After all, it was not the least bit unusual, in those days, to refer to an Indian path or a packhorse path as a road.

As further evidence that the Ohio Company's road north of the Great Meadows was only a narrow path before Washington's 1754 road making activities, the 1754 wagon road described in the "**Pennsylvania Archives**" and shown on the 1755 Fry and Jefferson map only goes as far as the Great Meadows.

Mercer's 1769 brief asserts that the Ohio Company built a road to Pittsburgh

George Mercer's December 18, 1769 legal brief in the case of the Ohio Company asserts that the company had cleared a road to the present-day location of Pittsburgh. In a section about a February 1753 conflict with William Russell, the brief mentions "*...the road from their storehouse on Will's Creek, to the Ohio (and which they had been at the expense of clearing)...*". This indicates the Ohio Company road went to the Ohio River. Later on in the brief, the same assertion is stated more clearly.

The brief quotes a letter to the governor, in which a member of the Ohio Company wrote:

²²³ Since Half King had invited the English to meet him at the forks of the road, this is harmonious with the path forking at Half King's rock.

I think I may venture to say, that the company had not only a prior claim, by virtue of his majesty's instruction, but that the considerations therein mentioned, were public and valuable ones; and they first, at their own expense, made such discoveries of those parts as could be depended on, cleared the public roads, took possession, and were about to build fort, and warehouses for carrying on their trade, where Pittsburg now stands, are facts not to be controverted.

Speaking from his own knowledge, George Mercer asserted that the Ohio Company traced out and completed the road to the Ohio River that Washington used in 1754 and Braddock used in 1755. He states it as follows:

Your memorialist presumes to inform your majesty, that the first actual survey of that country, was made at the company's expense, and that the road from Will's Creek to the Ohio, the route of your majesty's troops in 1754, and 1755, was not only traced out, but compleated entirely at the company's charge; that the company has built strong houses to secure the communications, from the river Potomack to the Ohio, which were used as magazines for your majesty's stores, and some of them, afterwards destroyed by the regular forces, to erect stronger fortifications.

Why did Mercer fail to take credit for cutting the Turkey Foot Road, which Wallace says the Ohio Company made? The answer is simple: The Ohio Company did not cut the Turkey Foot Road.

The Ohio Company road forked to today's Brownsville and Pittsburgh locations

Based on Washington's statement, the Ohio Company's records, and Mercer's 1769 legal brief, Hulbert's description seems correct. The Ohio Company had routes connecting to the present-day locations of Brownsville and Pittsburgh.

Back to Wallace's belief about the origin of the Turkey Foot Road

A map attributed to John Mercer influenced Wallace's conclusion

As stated above, Wallace believed that the Turkey Foot Road to the present-day Confluence area was cut by the Ohio Company in 1751. One item that influenced Wallace's conclusion was a mid-eighteenth century map. Wallace states:

"The Waggon Road leading from the Company's Store House on Wills Creek on Potomack River" to the three forks of "Yauyagaine" is indicated on "John Mercer's map of Ohio Company lands made before November 6, 1752."

The phrase *"The Waggon Road leading from the Company's Store House on Wills Creek on Potomack River"* is from the map itself. The map is quite simplistically drawn ([Figure 0097](#)), and the road representation is nothing more than a laterally oriented straight line. The "road" on the map looks like nothing more than a notation to capture the fact that the Ohio Company cut a road to somewhere.²²⁴ For example, it might have been drawn by the recipient of the second petition, who might have drawn it as a straight line and pointed it generally at the north side of the present-day location of Confluence out of ignorance.

²²⁴ Although the road notation is written in the same handwriting as *"Romanetto"*, and *"Kiskomenetta Creek"*, this is not an indication that the road notation is original to the map. It is simply the handwriting of Burt, who prepared Darlington's 1882 copy of the map.

Wallace's phrase "*John Mercer's map of Ohio Company lands made before November 6, 1752.*" is quoted from Louis Mulkearn's 1954 book²²⁵ "**George Mercer papers relating to the Ohio Company of Virginia**". Mulkearn's title to the map goes on to indicate that the map was from the London Public Records Office, and was a copy made in 1882 for William M. Darlington. The lower left-hand corner of the map states: "*Copied by me, from the Public Record Office London [Board of Trade Maps. Vol. 12, No. 6.] for W.M. Darlington J.A. Burt April 1882*".

The title Mulkearn gave the map was based on **inference**. Mulkearn believed that the map seems to match Mercer's description of the map Mercer loaned to Lieutenant Governor Dinwiddie on November 6, 1752; however, Mulkearn was not completely certain. Page 472 of Mulkearn's book admits that the London map also could have been the map that was attached to a March 28, 1754 petition (the second petition). Mulkearn indicates that the 1754 petition map might have been Mercer's original 1752 map, or a copy based on Mercer's 1752 map, or even a different map altogether. Even if the road had actually been cut before the supposed November 1752 date of the map, this would not prove that it was cut in 1751.

Although [Figure 0097](#) only shows a fragment of the map, the overall map illustrates the Ohio River and its various tributaries all the way to the Great Falls. Irrespective of the title and origin Mulkearn assigns to the map, it obviously has its genesis in Christopher Gist's journeys in the Ohio River valley. One of the titles the Darlington Library²²⁶ assigns to the map is simply "*Map of Christopher Gist's tours of western Pennsylvania.*"

The fort reference helps to date the road illustration on the map

The map shows a proposed Ohio Company fort at Shurtee's (Chartiers) Creek that was authorized for construction at the July 25 to 27, 1753 Stratford, Westmoreland County meeting of the Ohio Company. The meeting records, as published in Darlington's book, state:

Resolved that it is absolutely necessary that the Company should immediately erect a Fort for the security and protection of their Settlement on a hill just below Shurtees Creek upon the south east side of the river Ohio; that the walls of the said Fort shall be twelve feet high, to be built of sawed or hewen logs, and to enclose a piece of ground ninety feet square, besides the four Bastions at the corners of sixteen feet square each, with houses in the middle for stores, Magazines &c. according to a plan entered in the Company's Books. That Col. Cresap, Capt. Trent, and M^r Gist, be appointed and authorized on behalf of the Company to agree with labourers, Carpenters and other workmen, to build and complete the same as soon as possible and employ hunters to supply them with Provisions, and agree with some honest industrious man to overlook the workmen and labourers as Overseer, and that they be supplied with flour, salt and all other necessities at the Companys expence. That all the Land upon the hill on which the said Fort is to be built be appropriated to the use of the said Fort, and that two hundred acres of land exclusive of streets be layed off for a town convenient and adjoining to the said Fort lands, in squares of two acres each, every square to be divided into four lots so that every Lot may front two streets, if the ground will so admit, and that all the streets be of convenient width, that twenty of the best and most convenient squares be reserved and set apart for the Company's own use, and one square to build

²²⁵ Mulkearn's book also includes a map by George Mercer ([Figure 0006](#)) that is also from the London Public Record Office. It does not show a road from Wills Creek to Turkeyfoot. It does show the proposed Shurtees Creek fort site, and describes the site in detail. The dashed line on the map seems to be a property survey, rather than a road.

²²⁶ Darlington Digital Library identification number DARMAP0610.

a School on for the education of Indian children and such other uses as the Company shall think proper and that all the rest of the lots be disposed of.

The presence of the fort on the map seems to indicate that the map was made, or altered, on or after July 25, 1753. When examined closely ([Figure 0097](#)), words on the map say, “*Fort erecting by the Comp.*” As quoted more extensively herein, the notes from the November 2, 1753 meeting of the Ohio Company mention a levy for “...*money for building and finishing the Fort at Shurtees Creek...to be finished with the utmost dispatch...*”. Since the map identifies the location of the fort, it very likely was prepared to support the “*Fort on Chartiers Creek being now building*” statement in the second petition.

George Washington’s November 22, 1753 diary entry indicates that he had just examined “...*the place where the Company intended to erect a fort*”, and also indicates why a fort at the Forks of the Ohio would be better. One factor was that “...*a fort at the Fork would be equally well situated on the Ohio, and have the entire command of the Monongahela, which runs up our settlement...*”

Several secondary sources indicate that the Chartier’s Creek fort was never built. According to Darlington’s book, in a March 13, 1754 letter to Lieutenant Governor Dinwiddie, Governor Hamilton wrote:

In January I commissioned William Trent to raise one Hundred men; he had got Seventy and had begun a Fort at the Forks of the Monhongialo. His Majesty sent me out Thirty Pieces of Cannon, Four-Pounders²²⁷, with Carriages and all necessary Impliments, with Eighty Barrells of Gun Powder.

The story from the French perspective

The 1757 book “**The Conduct of the Late Ministry**” provides the French perspective on events:

The English had also passed already the Apalachian Mountains, and were marching in a body with artillery, when in the spring of the year 1754, the sieur de Contre-Coeur, who had taken upon himself the command of the detachment, before under the orders of the sieur de St. Pierre, drew near the Ohio, with five or six hundred men. He found the English already intrenched at a small fort, which they had just thrown up between this river and the river Aux-Boeufs, or Beefs-River.²²⁸ They were to the number of fifty men, under the command of captain Trent; they were summoned to withdraw from the French territories. The summons was complied with, the fort was quietly evacuated, and they even prayed the sieur de Contre-Coeur, to let them have some provisions, which they wanted: He caused them to be provided abundantly, and destroyed the fort.

As he continued his rout along the river from this place, he met on the banks with the traces of a fort, the construction of which was projected by the English, but was abandoned by them undoubtedly upon receiving intimation of his approach. He remained in this place himself, and fortified it.

²²⁷ Using the median weight of cast iron, a four-pound cannon ball would be three-and-one-sixteenth inches in diameter. [Figure 0404](#) shows a four-pound cannon ball that Mr. Dietle keeps on his office desk as a conversation piece. A carriage mounted cannon of approximately four pound size is shown in [Figure 0749](#).

²²⁸ The “*river Aux-Boeufs*” is also known as French Creek and the Venango River. The 1890 book “**History of Venango County, Pennsylvania**” states: “*It has had various names. The French called it Riviere aux Boeufs. This was the name Céloron gave it in 1749. In Coffin’s narrative in 1754 it is called Le Boeuff, meaning Buffalo or Beef river. It was also called Venango river. But Washington, in his practical way, called it French creek, the name it still continues to bear.*”

The entrenchments of this fortification, to which was given the name of fort du Quesne, were not yet finished, when the sieur de Contre-Coeur received advices of a considerable body of troops being on their march towards him. Upon which he charged the sieur de Jumonville with a summons in writing, by way of letter, addressed to the first English commander he would meet. This letter was wrote the 23d. of May 1754, and was nearly to the same purpose with the summons formerly sent to captain Trent. It carried assurances to the English, that no violence should be offered them...

The French account of traces of a projected English fort at the site where Fort Duquesne was erected seems to match Edward Ward's deposition, which states: "*Captain Trent laid out the Fort and cleared the Ground and got some logs squared, upon which the Chiefs of the Six Nations then present went with us to the ground and laid the first log.*" Whether accurate or not, the French account indicates that Trent's forces were not at the site of Fort Duquesne when they surrendered, and instead were at a small fort that had just been thrown up somewhere between the Ohio and Venango rivers. In his deposition, Ward states that he had "*no place of Defence but a few Pallisadoes which he had ordered to be put up four days before upon hearing the French were coming down...*", and then subsequently describes the site of surrender as a fort. Captain Snow's 1754 sketch ([Figure 0814](#)) and colored 1754 map ([Figure 0005](#)) of the Ohio country show a fort located midway between French Creek and the forks of the Ohio, and also shows a fort at the forks, described as "*120 Sq.^{FT} Trent, Drove out by y French, 1754*". Whether the fort between the forks and French Creek is where Trent's forces actually surrendered is unknown.

Pittsburgh is at the fork of Monongahela

Those who attempt to interpret the old records should be informed by the fact that Governor Hamilton referred to the present-day location of Pittsburgh as "*the Forks of the Monhongialo*", rather than the "*Forks of the Ohio*". The names for places beyond the frontier had clearly not yet attained any definitive, universally used status during the French and Indian War. One has to be careful not to jump too quickly to conclusions. Here, the only way to understand Dinwiddie's meaning is to know, from the study of other contemporaneous records, where Trent attempted to build a fort.

Lieutenant Governor Robert Dinwiddie also referred to the present-day location of Pittsburgh as the "*fork of Monongahela*". His February 19, 1754 proclamation states:

Whereas it is determined that a fort be immediately built on the river Ohio, at the fork of Monongahela, to oppose any further encroachments or hostile attempts of the French and Indians in their interest...

The Indians also called the present-day location of Pittsburgh the Fork of the Monongahela. According to Charles Augustus Hanna's 1911 book "**The Wilderness Trail...**", at a June 11, 1752 meeting at Logstown, the Indian Half King said:

Brother, the Governor of Virginia. ... We are sure the French design nothing else but mischief, for they have struck our friends, the Twightwees. We therefore desire our brethren of Virginia may build a strong house at the Fork of the Mohongalio, to keep such goods, powder, lead, and necessities as shall be wanting; and as soon as you please.

Here, from the mouth of Half King, is additional evidence that various French actions against the Twightwee Indians were a key precipitator of the French and Indian War. The Half King's June 11, 1752 speech preceded the decisive June 21, 1752 attack on Pickawillany.

A second look at Mercer's map reveals that the road is pointed at Chartiers Creek

If one assumes that the road on the Mercer map ([Figure 0097](#)) did go to the general area of present-day Confluence, then that road indeed may represent the known route of the Ohio Company road that Braddock later followed. The journal Washington kept during his trip with Gist to Fort Leboeuf tells of a January 6, 1754 encounter with men headed toward the present-day Pittsburgh area:

We arrived at Mr. Gist's, at Monongahela, the 2d of January, where I bought a horse and saddle. The 6th, we met seventeen horses, loaded with materials and stores for a fort at the fork of the Ohio, and the day after, some families going out to settle. This day, we arrived at Will's Creek...

The packers and their horses were presumably on an Ohio Company fort building mission, because Joshua Fry's February 25, 1754 military commission, which charges him with building a fort, had not yet been issued. (On January 6, the government had not yet received Washington's trip report concerning the French response to the message Washington had delivered.) The 17 horses indicate that Washington and Gist were on a road or packer's path of some sort. Washington's map (Figures [0432](#), [0437](#)) from the journey indicates that he and Gist traveled the Ohio Company road between Gist's plantation and Wills Creek. Therefore, Washington's journal shows that men involved in what was an Ohio Company fort building attempt traveled to the construction site via the Ohio Company road. Since the road on Mercer's map is subtly angled to point directly at the proposed Chartiers Creek Fort near the Forks of the Ohio, what basis is there to assume that it is not the well-documented Ohio Company road that went to that very locale?

Upon his return to Virginia, Washington received his orders, quoted in their entirety above, from Lieutenant Governor Dinwiddie. An excerpt from those orders confirms that the 17 horse loads of fort supplies were for an Ohio Company fort:

Having all Things in readiness You are to use all Expedition in proceeding to the Fork of Ohio with the Men under Com'd and there you are to finish and compleat in the best Manner and as soon as You possibly can, the Fort w'ch I expect is there already begun by the Ohio Comp'a.

Many secondary sources state that William Trent began building a British fort at the Forks of the Ohio on February 17, 1754. The Ohio Company was working on the project in advance of Trent.

As Edward Ward's deposition reveals, the Ohio Company ultimately decided against the Chartier's Creek site, and instead decided to build their fort at the forks. The deposition indicates that the Ohio Company storehouse that Trent erected at Redstone Creek was built "*to lodge Stores which were intended for the Building a Fort where Fort Du Quesne now stands for the Ohio Company*".

An Ohio Company resolution influenced Wallace's conclusion

A second item that influenced Wallace's conclusion is found in Mulkearn's 1954 book "**George Mercer papers relating to the Ohio Company of Virginia**". It is a previously quoted 1751 passage from the "*Orders and Resolutions of the Ohio Company*" that Wallace himself quotes:

Resolved that it is necessary to have a Road cleared from the mouth of Wills Creek to the three forks of the Youghogane and that Colo Cresap be empowered to agree with any person or persons

willing to undertake the same so that the expense thereof does not exceed twenty-five pounds Virginia currency.

Regardless of what might have led Wallace to conclude that the Ohio Company made the Turkey Foot Road, he only cites the Mercer map and this Ohio Company resolution. Nevertheless, one glance through his Indian paths book proves that he was a scholarly individual who had immersed himself in the subject of early American history. There were probably other, unstated influences that led him to believe that the Ohio Company cut the Turkey Foot Road in 1751, and Darlington's book was likely one of them. If Darlington's book did not influence Wallace directly, then perhaps Wallace believed the opinions of others influenced by Darlington.

Wallace's stated logic regarding the Turkey Foot Road

Wallace states that it would be impossible to scout out and clear a road for only 25 pounds Virginia currency, and therefore the road had to follow an Indian path. In regard to the above quoted passage from the *"Orders and Resolutions of the Ohio Company"*, Wallace states:

Such a contract presupposes the existence of an Indian path. It is hardly possible that a forty mile road could have been "cleared" through virgin forest over Big Savage Mountain, Allegheny Mountain, Negro Mountain, and Winding Ridge for "twenty five pounds Virginia currency" if, that is, it involved the prospecting and hewing out of a totally new way. All that can have been called for was the clearing of brush and the removal of dead trees to permit the passage of pack trains and wagons over an Indian path.

Wallace's statement does not stand up well to scrutiny because:

- The passage Wallace quotes from the *"Orders and Resolutions of the Ohio Company"* does not indicate that the roadwork actually was performed—only that the roadwork was considered necessary and was authorized. The passage gives no indication that any work of any kind whatsoever actually was performed at a cost of only 25 pounds Virginia currency.
- Contrary to Wallace's statement, the quoted passage does not indicate that a contract for the work was let.
- In April 28, 1752 instructions (quoted above), the Ohio Company directed Christopher Gist to employ Indians who were already acquainted with the "ways" to cut the contemplated Ohio Company road.
- As related above, John J. Jacob—a man who was in a position to know—clearly states that the Ohio Company road followed a route that was in some fashion identified by the Indian Nemacolin.
- As related in the previous chapter, the Ohio Company instructed Christopher Gist to search for a suitable route for a company road on July 16, 1751, and Gist did not even **begin** his journey until November 4, 1751. This precludes 1751 road clearing activities. No Ohio Company references to 1751 road clearing activities have been found in the course of writing this book.
- The trading route along Jennings Run already existed in 1751. On November 4, 1751, when Gist wrote about the commonly used trading route to "Mohongaly", he must have been writing about the westerly path shown on the Fry and Jefferson map or the southwesterly path added to the Mayo map.
- The route of the Turkey Foot Road along Winding Ridge does not appear on any pre-Revolutionary War map that has been encountered during this study.

- It is extremely clear from documentary evidence (related above), including the words of George Washington, that the Ohio Company actually cut a different road – the forerunner to the road used by Washington and Braddock – and Washington says they cut it in 1753.
- No legitimate documentary evidence has surfaced that indicates the Ohio Company cut two essentially parallel roads westward from Fort Cumberland, nor would it make sense.
- The present-day Confluence area was an illogical wagon road destination because it was not usable for boat transportation to the Ohio River, which was the Ohio Company's ambition. The falls and various rapids blocked the way.
- Washington and Gist did not follow the Turkey Foot Road on their 1753 journey.
- From Washington's journal and accompanying map, the Ohio Company is known to have used the well-known Ohio Company road to support their fort building activities.
- It is not difficult to imagine that the second petition of the Ohio Company exaggerated both the length and width of their road, which ran near enough to the present-day location of Confluence for them to have referenced the "*Three Forks of the Yohiogain*" as a landmark; nor is it difficult to imagine the road to Pittsburgh (or a branch of it) going to the navigable portion of the Youghiogeny River, which Doctor Wellford described as "*the forks of Yough*" in 1794.

Fort Duquesne blocked the trading routes during 1754-1758

The **Turkey Foot Path** and the Ohio Company road were used to facilitate trade between the English in the east and the Indians in the Ohio valley. The Ohio Company wagon road went as far as the Meadows, and continued from there as a packer's path to the forks, at the location of present-day Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. **As shown by the Fry and Jefferson map (Figure 0010), a variation of the Turkey Foot Path swung north of Gist's plantation**, and merged with the path that the Ohio Company road followed. Another route came to the forks from eastern Pennsylvania. From the forks, a path continued west, penetrating deep into the Ohio valley.

Although the English tried to establish a fort at the forks, the French drove them off and built Fort Duquesne there in 1754. Today people may tend to think of Fort Duquesne as having been built primarily to command and control the Forks of the Ohio. That is true, but another important consequence of Fort Duquesne was that its location allowed the French to dominate the area and effectively block the English trade on the trading routes from Wills Creek and Harris' Ferry.

In the French and Indian war that ensued, the English drove the French away in November 1758 and captured the ruins of Fort Duquesne, which had been burned by the retreating French. The English then constructed Fort Pitt, which is memorialized at the present-day Point State Park.

As Hilaire Belloc states in "**The Road**", in 1924:

It is the Road which determines the sites of many cities and the growth and nourishment of all. It is the Road which controls the development of strategies and fixes the sites of battles. It is the Road which gives its framework to all economic development. It is the Road which is the channel of all trade and, what is more important, of all ideas. In its most humble function it is a necessary guide without which progress from place to place would be a ceaseless experiment. It is a sustenance without which organized society would be impossible; thus ... the Road moves and controls all history.

Clearly, both the Turkey Foot path and the Ohio Company road, as trading routes, along with the one from Harris' Ferry, influenced events in America's early history; and as routes for passage of people and stores through the contested territory of the Ohio, they helped to precipitate the French and Indian War.

Conclusions after an in-depth look at the historical record

There is no reason to believe that the Ohio Company cut two different and essentially parallel roads over difficult and dangerous virgin terrain, only two years apart. The records of the Ohio Company that have been encountered during this study certainly do not indicate that they cut two such roads. Publications that claim the Ohio Company built the Turkey Foot Road have not attempted to substantiate the claim in any meaningful way. Instead of building the Turkey Foot Road, the Ohio Company built the antecedent to Washington's 1754 road and Braddock's 1755 road. The second petition should not be interpreted to mean the Ohio Company built the Turkey Foot Road. As proven by Chapter 9, the Turkey Foot Road was actually cut as a military supply route to Fort Pitt during the Revolutionary War. Gist's journal implies that an antecedent path followed the Jennings run water gap. Maps, Indian villages, and traditions along the route also support such an antecedent path.