

Cover Sheet

Overview

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

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

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

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7. Why the Ohio Company and Braddock did not use the Turkey Foot Path

This chapter's question

A seemingly perplexing question is why the Ohio Company, George Washington, and Edward Braddock did not simply follow the path to Turkeyfoot that is shown on the Fry and Jefferson map. Presumably, the reasons were:

- Christopher Gist reconnoitered the Braddock Run water gap for the Ohio Company, and reported on it favorably, as being *“accounted one of the best”* and *“several Miles nearer than that the Traders commonly pass thro”*.
- Nemacolin may have been more familiar with the terrain between the Brownsville area and the Georges Creek area, because his son George lived in the Georges Creek area.
- From circa 1906 Legislative Road photos ([Appendix 0019](#)), one can see that the rocky mountain slope came very close to Jennings Run. It appears that nothing more than a bridle path would have been possible until a certain amount of rock and earth were moved, unless one more or less took to the creek bed in some areas. This notion is supported by an 1806 report by commissioners for the National Road ([Appendix 0061](#)) that mentions hillside digging as a reason for not placing the National Road along Jennings Run. The Ohio Company would have needed to fund a significant amount of labor to put a wagon road there.
- Washington had repaired part of the Ohio Company road in 1754, and that portion would not have been terribly grown up by June 10 of 1755, when Braddock's expedition left Fort Cumberland on its way toward Fort Duquesne.
- On April 24, 1756, Washington wrote a letter to John Robinson that stated, in regard to Fort Cumberland: *“it lying directly on the road to Fort Duquesne ... as I before observed, if we are ever attacked by a large body, it must be here, as they have no other road to our frontiers, either to transport men or necessaries.”*
- A “Council of War” was held at Fort Cumberland on October 30, 1756, *“To consult whether it is most for the advantage of His Majesty's Service, to keep or demolish Fort Cumberland.”* The minutes state *“...there is no other road for carriages of any kind, leading thro' any pass of the Alleghany Mountains. ... It appears to us the most imprudent step, to leave the only road fit for wheel-carriages, in the power of the enemy. ... It is to be observed, that it is only about 70 miles land-carriage, from the river of Monongahela to this place...”* When combined with the Ohio Company road building activities described in the previous chapter, this statement further dispels any thought that the Turkey Foot Road was a wagon road cut by the Ohio Company.
- In a June 20, 1757 letter to Colonel Stanwix, written from Fort Loudon, George Washington wrote *“To any person, in the least degree acquainted with the mountainous country about our settlements, it is clear, that the French can bring artillery along no other road, than that from Fort Duquesne to Fort Cumberland, without spending immense time in mending one.”*

- To facilitate Braddock's expedition, Lieutenant Spendelow had to scout out a feasible route, and construct a last minute road up the east side of Wills Creek through the Narrows. This means there was no existing wagon road up along either side of Wills Creek at the time. No evidence has surfaced to suggest that the route along Wills Creek and Jennings Run was anything more than a packer's path during the French and Indian War.