It was developed to replace hemp rope nine inches in diameter as used on the Pennsylvania Canal's inclines over the mountains.—The old furnace at Ross Mountain Park suggests an unusual use of water to induce draft.—There is a story that the town of Amity once carried a prefix "Cal" because a wagon train broke down there in pioneer days.—The Clinton Furnace, first to produce iron in quantity and first to use coke within the city limits was more correctly located opposite old Short or Redoubt Street on the south bank of the Monongahela, rather than opposite Wood Street.—Western Penitentiary was originally located in North Park, Allegheny, opposite the present Allegheny High School, where it once housed jail-birds. Today as Phipps Conservatory the site has become an aviary and a show place where an unusual experiment gives birds their freedom in natural and semitropical vegetation.—The picturesque name of a stop on the National Pike, "Coon Island," is mentioned in connection with St. James Catholic Chapel, but two miles beyond there was a tavern which in 1830 was owned and operated by Jacob Jones, father of B. F. Jones, steel master and founder of Jones and Laughlin.—Shadyside Academy would seem to be worthy of mention. After more than seventy years of vigorous activity, its position in the county today is unique.

Such are the random thoughts of your reviewer, who in spite of these suggestions gives wholehearted support to what this book offers in its present form.


The motive for publication of this pamphlet is the bicentennial of the movement of French forces into the Upper Ohio Valley in mid-eighteenth century. Pennsylvania has had three invasions: French, British, and Confederate—but only the first was a threat by a foreign power to the Anglo-Saxon way of life.

Since the writings of Francis Parkman, the story of the struggle for the continent at the Forks of the Ohio has been fairly well known, chiefly through English eyes and interpretation. This account by a member of the historical staff of the Commonwealth is a new look at the Forks from the North with a re-statement of the impact and effect of invasion.

One has to linger over the title— invasion. Is the use of this term
a pre-judgment of French aggression? When one hears the author expound this topic, as this reviewer has, it is apparent that invasion, by design, was used to attract attention. The coming of the French was a threat to Pennsylvania's security when contrasted to previous colonial wars. It was a violation of Penn's Charter and boundaries.

Certainly the invasion lifted the "wilderness curtain," particularly after Washington's visit to Le Boeuf in 1753 and the subsequent alarm of Governor Dinwiddie when the young Virginian's diary was publicized. The invasion expelled British traders, set loose Indian ravages, forced Pennsylvania to arm, and ultimately overthrew Philadelphia's pacifist Quaker oligarchy. The invasion was a challenge. It upset peace and neutrality in Pennsylvania. It was a turning point.

Ironically, French leaders of thought had admired "The Holy Experiment." Now in 1753 French forces were upsetting the earthly paradise of Pennsylvania.

When Mr. Kent was assigned to compile a chronology of the French invasion, he found difficulty in citing precise dates. Coincident with his task, the Contrecoeur Papers became accessible at Laval University in Quebec. The entire body of these and other related papers (Saint Pierre and Marin) have been microfilmed by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Now in Harrisburg is documentary material relating to the French invasion in Pennsylvania. A large number of persons have received grateful acknowledgment for valuable suggestions, translations, and use of illustrations and maps.

The narrative begins with the concern about "the forgotten corner," the Ohio country. First there is Céloron de Blainville and La Belle Revière; then trading at Chiningué (Logstown); and the arrival of the new Governor, Duquesne, in 1752. Duquesne and his Intendant, Francois Bigot, planned an expensive expedition, with flour and corn purchased in New England as supplies to be used in Western Pennsylvania! The chief officers are described in detail, as well as changes in routes, orders, and plans.

The movement of men, building of forts in the Upper Allegheny Valley, Indian relations, dry seasons, disease, labor problems, lack of shelter—all are set forth with documentary footnotes. One winter day, young George Washington comes out of the woods to deliver his writ of eviction at the Fort of the Revière au Boeuf. Soon after, the cold war begins with the taking of the Forks without gunpowder.

Mr. Kent reveals the French design to build Fort Duquesne at Logstown. But curiously, there were no logs at Logstown! So the
Washington location at Pittsburgh was used for the fleur-de-lis ensign. The pamphlet concludes quickly with the Jumonville incident, the battles of Great Meadows and of the Monongahela, and the march of the “Head of Iron” (General Forbes).

There is not a great deal of new information in this pamphlet. But it is good to look at the scene from a French vantage point and from French documents. It is a welcome and fascinating addition to military beginnings of Pittsburgh history on the eve of bicentennial ceremonies.

There may be little vestige of the French invasion in Western Pennsylvania today save a few place names. But even Presque Isle, Le Boeuf, and Jumonville are reminders that once this was French country. Certainly the invasion set off a chain of events which lifted the “wilderness curtain” for all time.

*Pittsburgh*  

STANTON BELFOUR