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THE VENANGO PATH AS THOMAS HUTCHINS KNEW IT

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INTRODUCTION

CONSIDER what those roads have known," we may well recite with a worthy Virginia historian.¹ Visions of our pioneering forebears who trod those roads rise before us and link us with a train of past historic events.

The Venango² Trail was just such a link with an almost legendary age, but it was also the lifeline to the Forks of the Ohio for the masters of the Upper Allegheny, French Creek³ and Lake Erie regions, successively Indian, French and British. It might well be called the forgotten road, for the limelight of history and romance has been focused upon other roads that carried larger marching armies that fought great battles and captured great forts. Yet, the Venango Path shared military importance with the Braddock and Forbes roads during the French and Indian War period; and its military significance continued through the early Federal years of the fledgling United States to establish our hold upon the Erie Triangle and to protect northwestern Pennsylvania from the British-incited Indian menace. Through the War of 1812, this road was of the greatest strategical consequence to our military and naval dominance in the Great Lakes theatre.

Although never one of the channels through which flowed the

Mr. Anderson and Mr. Williams, two of our valued contributors, have spent nearly three years of careful investigation of the topography, court records, maps, documents and source materials of all descriptions to establish the Venango Path

tide of westward civilized movement, the Venango Trail established the locus of points which supported military movements in the direction of Detroit and, later, the settlement of northern Ohio, Indiana and Illinois by New Englanders and New Yorkers.

It can be said of this path that it is today possible to follow more of its original course by motor car than that of any other of the pioneer trails west of the Susquehanna River. Its course runs northward from Pittsburgh to Warrendale, Evans City, Franklin, Meadville, Cambridge Springs, Waterford and Erie. The ancient aphorism that "roads follow roads" has again been proven generally true as modern roads have retraced the old path. There are places where the path pursued its own heady way irrespective of the gentler grades and firmer ground later sought by the civilized wheel. Nevertheless, the old trail's line of march can be visually retraced for nearly all of its length from the vantage point of an existing concrete highway or a traveled country road.

An explanation should be made of the curious fact that, in contemporary writings and maps relating to the area north of Pittsburgh and south of Lake Erie, several traces have been called the Venango Path. That approaching Venango from the east at a junction with the Kittanning (Frankstown) Path, also one from the west, from Kuskus-kies and the Salt Lick towns on the Shenango, were each denominated the Venango Path.⁴ When Colonel Daniel Brodhead, returning from his 1779 expedition against the Indians of the Upper Allegheny, preferred to march the Venango Trail from the mouth of Brokenstraw Creek to French Creek, he trod the path the French Daniel Joncaire de Chabert had grubbed with mattocks (*avec des pioches*),⁵ in 1753. Herein lies the interpretation of one of the anomalies of the lore of early American travel. Today one may drive his car from Pittsburgh to Mercer on the Perry Highway, and he may return from Mercer to Pittsburgh via the same highway. Indian and pioneer roads, however, never had a name attached to them in the modern sense. All roads being two-directional, formerly one was said to travel the Venango Path, if he were going northward toward Venango; but, if he returned southward on the same path, he was said to direct his way on the Fort Pitt Path. In other words, a path was distinguished by the name of its ultimate destination.⁶ Because the thoroughfare connecting the Forks of the Ohio with Venango (Franklin, Pennsylvania) and its continuation to Presqu' Isle (Erie, Pennsylvania) are most frequently and importantly mentioned in historical literature as the Venango Path, the name has clung to that path to the exclusion of all others. In

this manner, then, we shall use the collective term, Venango Path, for the purposes of this article, although we shall also use the designation of the local segments, as the Presqu' Isle Portage road, when writing of that part without relation to the whole.

Originally, the Venango Path was an Indian trail that led from Shannopin's Town (two miles above the Point, at about 30th Street in Pittsburgh) across the Allegheny at the ford that touched the lower end of Herr's Island, and up Girty's Run Valley (through present Millvale).⁷ After the building of Fort Duquesne, in 1754, the trail changed to cross about 6th Street (formerly St. Clair Street), most of the year by ferry.⁸ This was the path known by Captain Claude-Pierre Pecaudy, Sieur de Contrecoeur of the French and by Colonel Henry Bouquet of the British Royal Americans. The presence and importance of the Venango Path first came to the attention of the literate world of the mid-eighteenth century from reports of the 1753 journey of youthful Major George Washington and Christopher Gist to warn the French from British Crown-claimed lands. Their reports and journals, however, are of dubious value in location of the trail, since nearly all of their references to it were devoted to explanations of their avoidance of it, due to high water, marshy ground or the intentional misdirection on the part of Indian guides.⁹

For the better part of six years, the Venango Path served as the main supply and communication route of the French at Fort Duquesne, although most heavy supplies were brought by the much longer water route via French Creek and the Allegheny River, when the water level permitted or when the river was free from ice. This could have been for only about four months of the year. From Le Boeuf to Presqu' Isle, the way was a portage road. The path connected Fort Presqu' Isle (constructed 1753 at present Erie), Fort Le Boeuf (constructed 1753 at present Waterford), Fort Machault (called by the English Venango, constructed 1754-1757), and Fort Duquesne (constructed 1754 at present Pittsburgh). For express travel and for troop and limited supply movement, the path was faster and shorter.

Unlike the French, the British used pack horses for supply and developed the overland route as a major communication line, and the accent on use of the path was northbound rather than southbound. Not until 1760, after the British had become well established at the new Fort Pitt, did they send occupation forces to build forts to replace those burned and abandoned by the retreating French.

General Robert Monckton, who had succeeded to the command at Pittsburgh, ordered Colonel Henry Bouquet of the Royal American

Regiment to proceed to Presqu' Isle with a detachment to rebuild the fort and rendezvous with Major Henry Gladwin on his way from Niagara to take possession of Detroit for British arms. Accordingly, on July 7, 1760, Bouquet marched up the Venango Path with his detachment of 400 Royal Americans and 100 Virginians. Two days later, Colonel Hugh Mercer (later the Revolutionary general mortally wounded at Princeton) marched with 150 of the Pennsylvania Regiment.¹⁰

Burned by the Indians and most of their defenders massacred during Pontiac's uprising, in 1763,¹¹ the British never rebuilt these outposts; and the beaten forest path that had been their lifeline reverted to an overgrown but not forgotten trail until near the close of the century. During the years following Crawford's terrible defeat by the Indians in 1782, a vigorous effort became necessary to hold back the savage hordes. Repeated failure of Crawford's, Harmar's and St. Clair's expeditions brought the terror of Indian warfare anew to the frontiers clear back to Pittsburgh. The resistance of the Iroquois nations against the survey of the Erie Triangle and the rebuilding of Fort Presqu' Isle combined to call forth military efforts on the parts of Pennsylvania and Federal governments. In 1787, Captain Jonathan Heart of the U. S. Army was sent to build Fort Franklin on French Creek within a mile of the ruins of Fort Venango and upon identical plans of the British work.¹² This served to contain the Six Nations for the time. Major Ebenezer Denny of the Pennsylvania militia, in 1794, rebuilt Fort Le Boeuf to protect the surveyors of the Erie Triangle, "The situation one of the best in this State, being at the head of navigation of French Creek, and where the carrying place to Presqu' Isle must commence."¹³ General Anthony Wayne's overwhelming victory over the Indians at Fallen Timbers on the Maumee in Ohio, August 20, 1794, and subsequent Treaty of Greenville brought the threat under control.¹⁴ During this time the Venango Path had become again the lifeline of our front line of defenses. Over it again sped expresses with dispatches, letters and reports. Companies of troops marched again and herds of cattle for meat rations were driven over the path as far as Le Boeuf. Finally, in July 1795, a stockade was built at Presqu' Isle,¹⁵ and the town of Erie began to appear in the clearing in the wilderness.

The final chapter in the military history of the Venango Path came during the War of 1812 when industrial Pittsburgh became the chief supply point for cordage, metal fittings and ordnance for the Lake Erie fleet of Commodore Oliver Perry.¹⁶ By that time it had become

the Franklin Road, and certain modifications had taken place for better accommodation of wheeled vehicles, including deviations to gain more solid ground, side-hill shelving for more gradual grades, and abandonment of hill tops for valleys in order to avoid steep descents to stream crossings.

Of the several accounts of the road to Venango and Presqu' Isle¹⁷, the following description by Hutchins gives the most detailed information regarding the location of the path and what is obviously the most practicable of two or three alternative parts of the route.

It should be noted that Hutchins' account here transcribed is but one of several written during his long career as geographer and engineer. Suffice it to say that his keeping of these descriptions of topographical features, distances, stream crossings, their widths and direction, character of soil, kinds of trees found, and sometimes minerals, all led up to later important works.¹⁸ Doctor William Smith, Provost of the College of Philadelphia (University of Pennsylvania), very early appreciated the importance of Hutchins' observations when he based his *An Historical Account of the Expedition Against the Ohio Indians, Commanded by Colonel Henry Bouquet, in the Year 1764* almost entirely upon Hutchins' field work. Eventually all of these meticulous records culminated in that comprehensive work and map entitled *A Topographical Description of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland and North Carolina*, published in 1778. One wonders whether he had this project in mind all of the time, or whether, having accumulated this voluminous data, he later determined upon it.

The authors have attempted, by annotation, to relate the Venango Path to present day roads, place names and landmarks. It is a matter of grave concern to those people who are interested in preserving the memorials of our heritage that those landmarks are fast disappearing, the victims of the twentieth century juggernaut of industrial development. One significant sector of this historic path will soon disappear by becoming inundated through the creation of an artificial lake by damming Muddy Creek and the formation of the new Moraine State Park.

Unlike other thoroughfares of travel of that early era, the Venango Path has few diaries and accounts of travelers other than military journals; yet data and information contained in these journals, in conjunction with many maps of the western country make it possible to pinpoint the path in many places and to make reasonable surmises in others. To illustrate: all early maps and military accounts indicate a series of crossings of the "branches of Beaver" and are in agreement

on intervening distances. Since stream beds have changed but little in the time span, there can be but one route that will fit the cited distances and courses between the series of crossings. Thus, with reasonable certainty, we can locate where the path crossed Breakneck Creek, Connoquenessing Creek, Muddy Creek and Slippery Rock Creek.

The accompanying manuscript, here transcribed and printed for the first time, is a road description written by Lieutenant Thomas Hutchins of the path from Fort Pitt to Venango and Presqu' Isle. It is found among the Hutchins Papers in the Manuscript Department of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia, through whose courtesy we are herewith enabled to print it. It contains more historical information regarding the hard fate of the forts on the Venango Path than any of the other accounts. It is also more specific about some of the route itself and identification of landmarks. Since some of the earlier accounts vary in regard to parts of the path, it has seemed to the authors that, if a prototype route might be established, this described by Hutchins more nearly approaches the more practicable traveled road. This has been arrived at after nearly three years of intensive study of all of the available source materials and untiring study of topography and present conditions upon the ground over the whole route. An array of published and manuscript maps will be cited as we progress up the trail. A search for manuscript maps relating to this study has taken us to the William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan, the New York Public Library, the Library of Congress, the Darlington Memorial Library, Pittsburgh, and the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.

In transcribing Hutchins' manuscript, the spelling, capitalization and expression have been retained. The only changes have been in paragraphing, for the original had no paragraph breaks at all, and the insertion of a minimum of punctuation where clarity required it. The sub-headings did not appear in the original but indicate natural geographical divisions. The authors sincerely hope that the results of this study of the Venango Path may help to dispel some of the misunderstandings that have shrouded its location and have entangled the traditions of the path with those of the Franklin Road.

[THE HUTCHINS MANUSCRIPT]

The Rout by Land from Fort Pitt to Venango — and from thence to
LeBeauf and Presqu' Isle

by THOMAS HUTCHINS*

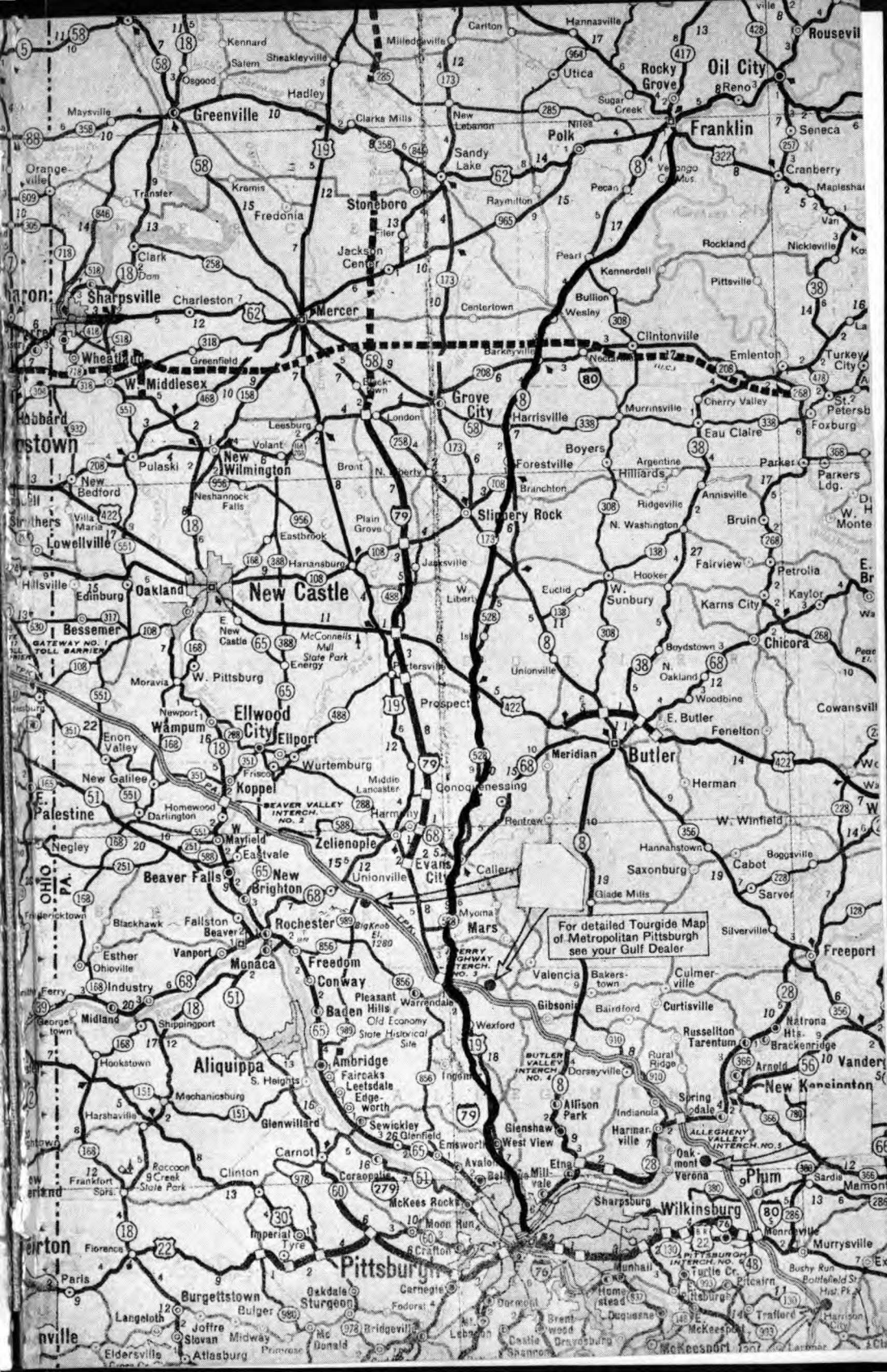
FORT PITT TO CROSSING OF CONNOQUENESSING CREEK

At 4½ Miles from Fort Pitt on the Path leading to Venango are several Springs of good water, the first half of the way through a rich fertile bottom, and the other through a dry Gully between two Hills,¹⁹ well Timbered. From these Springs to a small branch of Pine

*Thomas Hutchins, author of the above manuscript, heretofore unpublished, led a most active life. Born in Monmouth County, New Jersey, in 1730, he was commissioned Ensign in the 2nd Pennsylvania Regiment, Nov. 1, 1756, *PA* (5), I, 63; Lieutenant, Dec. 18, 1757, *Ibid.*, 90; Quartermaster, June 7, 1758, *Ibid.*, 184; Staff Supply Officer, Bouquet to Forbes, June 21, 1758, *Bouquet Papers*, II, 122; entered regular British army service as Ensign in the 60th (Royal American) Regiment, 1762, British Army Lists in The Library of Congress. From late in 1760 to 1762, Hutchins was assistant to George Croghan, Deputy Indian Agent. Nicholas B. Wainwright, *George Croghan, Wilderness Diplomat* (Chapel Hill, 1959), 176, 184.

He published a map of actual survey of the Braddock Road entitled "A Tour from Fort Cumberland North Westward round part of the Lakes Erie, Huron and Michigan . . . from thence by the Shawanoe Town to Fort Pitt, 1762." Original in the Huntington Library, copy in The Library of Congress. The activities herein narrated were in 1759-1760. In 1764, Hutchins was an engineer in the army of Colonel Henry Bouquet that marched into Ohio. Dr. William Smith, *An Historical Account of the Expedition Against the Ohio Indians in the Year 1764*. His road description was the basis of the journal of the expedition which, with his very accurate map, were published in the *Historical Account*. He accompanied George Croghan and Capt. Harry Gordon, in 1766, on the mapping tour of the territory newly acquired from the French, drew his fine map and tabulated *The Courses of the Ohio River*, as well as the lower Mississippi. See reprint, same title, Beverly W. Bond, Jr., ed. (Cincinnati, 1942). The British Army Lists, in The Library of Congress, give his promotions as Lieutenant, Aug. 7, 1771; Captain-Lieutenant, Sept. 24, 1775; Captain, Nov. 13, 1776. He resigned Feb. 11, 1780. In 1778, he published, in London, his *Topographical Description of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland and North Carolina* with his fine map of those provinces to the Mississippi River. Having been imprisoned in England for six weeks, upon his release he made his way to France and thence to South Carolina, where he joined General Greene's army as geographer. He was appointed Geographer to the United States in 1781, and as such, had supervision of many huge survey projects, one of which was the laying out of the original Seven Ranges of Townships in Ohio, which was the institution of the American Land System employed in all of the Western lands and other parts of the world. He died in Pittsburgh, in 1789. For fuller biographical accounts, see Frederick C. Hicks, ed. (reprint) *A Topographical Description of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland and North Carolina* (Cleveland, 1904), 7-51. Ann M. Quattrocchi, "Thomas Hutchins, Provincial Soldier and Indian Agent in the Ohio Valley," *WPHM*, XLV, 193-207. E. G. Williams, ed., "The Orderly Book of Colonel Henry Bouquet's Expedition Against the Ohio Indians, 1764," *WPHM*, XLII, 29, n11.

The course of the Venango Path from Fort Pitt
(Pittsburgh) to Venango (Franklin) c. 1760, as
described by Thomas Hutchins.



Creek the descent to which is pretty steep, it is $5\frac{1}{2}$ Miles further.²⁰ At the distance of two & a half Miles from the Spring there are two or three very small Brooks: and about a Mile before Path reaches the above branch, it Forks, that on the left goes to Cuscuske [Kuskusky]²¹ and other Indian Towns on big Beaver Creek and its branches. From [*words stricken out*] it is $20\frac{1}{2}$ Miles to the first Branch of Beaver Creek about 12 yards over.²² After crossing the aforesaid Branch of Pine Creek, the Path between them leads through a small Meadow 300 yards in width, when it takes up a Hill the ascent of which is not difficult: There is a very extensive prospect over many hundred Acres of Land; thinly wooded the Soil of which is light excepting the Meadows.

The Path continues for 6 or 7 Miles upon high Ridges with very small Intermissions, over a Soil something better than that just described, and indifferently Timbered with small black and white Oaks, very little water, but a Redundance of Pea Vine and other Food, the woods are open and free from underwood. From this which is about 12 or 13 Miles from the first Branch of Beaver Creek the Path leads over some small Meadows and low grounds near 5 Miles; it then cross[es] two deep and dry Gully's and ascends an high and extensive Ridge of a light Soil a Mile and a half in length. Here the path descends into a small bottom, and from this place alternately crosses little open bottoms and small Hills composed of a light Soil to the top of a very high and difficult Ridge leading down to the above mentioned Branch of Beaver Creek.

In a word, it may be generally said, the country between the Branch of Pine Creek and the first crossing of Beaver Creek, is very scarce of water, has a thin Soil, indifferently Timber and a good deal of underwood and a great plenty of Food. From the first to the second Branch of Beaver Creek it is $3\frac{1}{2}$ Miles. The Path after leading through a very thick Bottom goes up a hill²³ of easy ascent and continues along the top of the Hill or Ridge near two Miles, when it gradually descends into a small infertile Flatt a mile and a half from the second crossing of Branch of Beaver Creek which is 30 yards wide.²⁴

CONNOQUENESSING CREEK TO SLIPPERY ROCK CREEK

From this Branch the Path ascends a very steep and high Hill on the Ridge of which it continues for a Mile then takes down a pretty steep descent to the third Branch of Beaver Creek about 6 yards wide.²⁵ From the third to the fourth Branch of Beaver Creek it is 10

Miles.²⁶ Immediately after crossing the third Branch the Path passes through 300 or 400 yards of low thick Bottom to the foot of a pretty high sidling Hill which looses itself in fine level open Woods and these continues to the fourth Branch of Beaver Creek which is about 5 yards wide. —

After crossing this Branch the Path goes through a thick Swampy Bottom 400 yards over and then continues along the same kind of Land and Woods as that last described for five Miles to a small stream of water called the Fifth Branch²⁷ of Beaver Creek. A mile from the Fifth is the Sixth Branch²⁸ which is a pretty little Brook with fine rich open Meadows gently descending to it on each side. These Meadows are perfectly clear about two miles in length, and nearly half a mile over.

After ascending the rising ground on the North side of this Brook, the Path enters a very narrow rich Meadow, which leads to flat, level open Woods that continues two Miles to the 7th Branch of Beaver Creek,²⁹ a shallow, rapid rocky Stream 60 yards wide. There is a Cascade just below the crossing on the left about 12 or 15 feet in height over which falls a most beautiful Sheet of Water the whole width of the Stream. The Distance from this crossing to Lacomie or Sandy Creek is 24 Miles.

SLIPPERY ROCK CREEK TO VENANGO

The Path from the Seventh and last crossing of Beaver Creek passes through a thick Shrubby Bottom and continues along the same kind of open flat Woods as that above mentioned, interrupted every two or three Miles by a small Brook and thick Bottom for about 12 Miles. The Path still continues through flat open woods watered as above 7 Miles further. About four miles from the beginning to the end of this distance the Path is so full of fallen Trees, occasioned by a Hurricane, that it is very difficult to pass along it.

From hence the Path takes up a Ridge mostly Timbered with Chesnut and continues upon it 5 Miles to Lacomick,³⁰ the descent to which is extremely steep and difficult. Lacomie is a Branch of the Allegheny River with which it communicates about a half a Mile to the right of the Path, and is 50 or 60 yards over. After the Path crosses this Creek a few hundred yards, it ascends another Chesnut Ridge three miles in length whose descent to Venango, which is four miles and half from Lacomie, is likewise steep and difficult.

In the Year 1754 the French built a Fort at this place³¹ which not only enabled them to keep up the Communication from Lake Erie

to Fort Duquesne, now Fort Pitt, but to send Parties of Indians to distress the Frontier Settlements and to Attack the Convoys on their March from Bedford to Ligonier and from thence to Fort Pitt which they frequently did with very great Success.³²

This Post was abandoned in the year 1759 and near to which a Blockhouse was Erected by the British in the year after, generally Garrisoned by an Subaltern's command. But soon after the Commencement of the Indian War in 1763, this Post was destroyed and the whole Garrison put to death by a party of the Six Nation Indians.³³ This place is 81 Computed M[ile]s by Land and nearly 150 by Water from Fort Pitt.

[To be continued]

EXPLANATORY NOTES

- 1 Fairfax Harrison, *Landmarks of Old Prince William* (Richmond, 1924), II, Ch. 27, "The Old Roads and the Ordinaries," 441.
- 2 George Henry Loskiel, in his *History of the Missions of the United Brethren Among the Indians of North America* (London, 1794), Part III, 35, uses the expression, "Onenge or Venango river . . ." This, George P. Donehoo translates as "a mink;" *Indian Villages and Place Names in Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1928), 243; hereinafter cited as Donehoo, *Place Names*. Venango was the Indian town at the location of present Franklin, Pa. William A. Hunter, *Forts on the Pennsylvania Frontier, 1753-1754* (Harrisburg, 1960), 162. Cited hereinafter as Hunter, *Forts*. The name appears as early as Lewis Evans' Map of the Middle British Colonies, 1755, at the mouth of French Creek. The Muncy Delawares who lived there called it Ganagarahare. Charles A. Hanna, *The Wilderness Trail* (New York, 1911), I, 270; hereinafter cited Hanna, *Wilderness Trail*. Washington called it an old Indian town, in 1753. John C. Fitzpatrick, *The Diaries of George Washington* (New York, 1925), I, 54; hereinafter cited as Washington, *Diaries*.
- 3 French Creek, it has been said, was first called by that name by Washington, in his 1753 Journal. William Trent, however, used the name in his Journal several months earlier. Mary C. Darlington, ed., *The History of Colonel Henry Bouquet and the Western Frontiers of Pennsylvania, 1747-1764* (1920), 25, under date of August 7, 1753. Cited hereinafter as *History of Bouquet*. It was called Riviere aux Boeufs by Jacques Charles Sabervois de Bluery in his *Memoir on the Indians of Canada in 1718*. Cited in Hanna, *Wilderness Trail*, II, 123.
- 4 Hanna, *Wilderness Trail*, I, 262 n2, 264, for branching of the path to Venango from the Frankstown Path. Donehoo, *Place Names*, 245, identifies this fork at present Cookport, Indiana County. Another "partings of the Venango Road" is described by Hutchins near the Shenango River, near Sharon, Pa. *Wilderness Trail*, II, 201. Brodhead's mention of another Venango Path appears in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 1st ser., XII; hereinafter cited *PA* (1), 156.
- 5 Joncaire to Marin, October 1, 1753. Fernand Grenier, ed., *Papiers Contrecoeur et autre documents concernant le conflit Anglo-Francais sur l'Ohio de 1754 a 1756* (Quebec, 1952), 52. Cited hereinafter as *Papiers Contrecoeur*. He said he grubbed the road "avec des pioches" in five days. This is the road that Brodhead designated the Venango Path. See note 4 above.

- 6 See Paul A. W. Wallace, *Historical Indian Paths of Pennsylvania* (Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, 1952), 20-21. Cited hereinafter as Wallace, *Indian Paths*. Here a more complicated but more comprehensive explanation is given relative to names applied to Indian paths.
- 7 Hanna, *Wilderness Trail*, I, 271.
- 8 *Warrantee Atlas of Allegheny County*, Pennsylvania Dept. of Internal Affairs (Harrisburg, 1914), City of Pittsburgh Plat. Cited hereinafter as *Warrantee Atlas of Allegheny Co.*
- 9 Washington and Gist started from Logstown (at Legionville, below Economy and 2.5 miles below, i.e., north of, Ambridge, Beaver County). Washington, *Diaries*, I, 45-54. Washington's map of the journey is too general for most purposes, but it is very specific about their route's keeping south of Slippery Rock Creek, crossing the various branches of Connoquenessing (which were called "branches of Beaver Creek") until the main crossing of Slippery Rock, soon after which they met the Cusckies-Venango Trail. See *Christopher Gist's Journals*, William M. Darlington, ed. (Pittsburgh, 1893), 81. Cited hereinafter as *Gist's Journals*. Washington's map of the entire trip appears in *Ibid.*, facing page 80; *The George Washington Atlas*, Lawrence Martin, ed. (Washington, D.C., 1932), Plate 11, from the British Public Record Office, gives a much clearer impression. From Venango north, they followed the main path through present Meadville, but failed to negotiate a crossing near present Cambridge Springs, on account of the high water. Thus they kept to the eastern side of the French Creek to near the mouth of LeBoeuf Creek, less than three miles from Fort LeBoeuf. Hence, we shall see that, from the point of the intended crossing, they were not on the main trail. See the journals as cited above. A full discussion of their difficulties is detailed in Paul A. W. Wallace, "George Washington and the Wisconsin Glacier," *Pennsylvania Archaeologist* (December, 1954), also same author, "George Washington's Route from Venango to Fort LeBoeuf, 1753," *Pennsylvania History*, XXVIII, 325-334. On the return trip, they traveled by water to Venango, thence by the main trail (presumably), but left it after passing Murthuring Town and traveled down Pine Creek, rather than pursuing the trail. See the *Diaries*.
- 10 The details of this historic march over the Venango Path are covered in the journals discussed in note 18 below, also in the letter, Monckton to Bouquet, July 6, 1760. B. M., Add. MSS., 21638, f. 101, printed in S. K. Stevens and Donald H. Kent, eds., *Wilderness Chronicles of Western Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1941), 173-175. Cited hereinafter as *Wilderness Chronicles*. Also in Donald H. Kent and L. J. Roland, eds., *The Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet*, 19 vols. (mimeograph edition, Harrisburg, 1940-1943), Ser. 21638. Cited hereinafter as *Bouquet Papers*, mimeo ed. Letter Bouquet to Gen. John Stanwix, Oct. 9, 1760, *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society Collections*, XIX, 37-38. Hereinafter cited as *Mich. PHS Colls.* Journal of Col. James Burd, PA (2), VII, 421.
- 11 A full discussion of the destruction of the British forts on the frontiers and the deterioration of the British power and prestige in North America is set forth in Niles Anderson, "Bushy Run: Decisive Battle in the Wilderness," *WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL MAGAZINE*, XLVI, 211-245. Cited hereinafter as *WPHM*. Also see Howard H. Peckham, *Pontiac and the Indian Uprising* (Princeton, 1947), 156-179.
- 12 *Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny*, *Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania*, VII, 319.
- 13 Report of Andrew Ellicott (Ellicott to Governor Thomas Mifflin, December 30, 1794), *PA* (2), VI, 846.
- 14 Details of the battle are contained in letter from General Wayne to Secretary

- of War Knox, Aug. 28, 1794, from American State Papers, printed in Charles J. Stille, *Major General Anthony Wayne and the Pennsylvania Line* (Philadelphia, 1893), 331-334. Treaty of Greenville, Ohio, August, 1795, reported in *Ibid.*, 338.
- 15 An eye-witness account of the building, in July, 1795, of this stockade fort at Erie by Captain Martin Strong, written by Isaac Moorehead, author of Erie County Section of *The History of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, W. H. Egle, ed. (Harrisburg, 1876), 702, and transcribed in every history of Western Pennsylvania since. See also *Frontier Forts of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1896), II, 558-559.
 - 16 Pittsburgh was the supply base for construction of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry's Lake Erie fleet, 1812-1813. High water in the Allegheny River permitted considerable use of keel boats for supply transport as far as Franklin. From there the land route via Meadville, Waterford and Erie was used. Max Rosenberg, *The Building of Perry's Fleet on Lake Erie, 1812-1813* (Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, 1950).
 - 17 Other reports recording information on the Venango Path are: Capt. Patterson and Lieut. Hutchins: Journal [1759], in British Museum Additional MSS., 21644, f. 451, D. Printed in *The Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet* (mimeograph edition, Harrisburg, 1941), Ser. 21644, pp. 166-168. Thomas Hutchins, "Journal of a March from Fort Pitt to Venango, and from Thence to Presqu' Isle" [1760], printed in *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, II, 149-153. Cited hereinafter as *PMHB*. A version of the same journal with slight variations and an added table of distances was printed in *Wilderness Chronicles of Northwestern Pennsylvania*, S. K. Stevens and Donald H. Kent, eds. (Harrisburg, 1941), 175-179. Both versions were taken from B.M. Add. MSS 21638, f. 103. George Croghan's Journal, 1759-1763, was printed as entire volume LXXI of *PMHB*, edited by Nicholas B. Wainwright, that part, pp. 374-379, covering July 7-25, 1760. A version of this portion was published in *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections* in 1871. See below. Jehu Eyre's Journal [1760], *PMHB*, III, 296-307. Other journals, letters and reports relating to sections of the road will be cited as they apply to our notation. A careful reading of the George Croghan Journal, printed in *PMHB*, LXXI, also in *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, 4th ser., IX (Aspinwall Papers), 283-289, makes it evident that the map printed with each does not fit the description set forth in the journal. These maps further attracted our interest because the lines plotted therein are identical but the lettering different, although the notations and explanation are exactly alike in content. There are only a few nonessential differences in the two journals as published. Justin Winsor, *Narrative and Critical History of America*, V, 608, gives information that this map was sent by Bouquet to Monckton. Upon searching further, we found that Col. Thomas Aspinwall had (1843) purchased the collection of the Scottish historian, George Chalmers (1742-1825), who had obtained some of General Monckton's papers. Aspinwall's collection was sold to S. M. L. Barlow (1864) and eventually purchased by the Lenox Library (1890), thence consolidated with the New York Public Library. They now repose in the Lenox MS collection under their original name of Chalmers Papers. *New York Public Library Bulletin*, XXXVII, 262-264. The map accompanying the Croghan Journal (*PMHB*, LXXI, 374, contains a cartouche bearing the legend: "The Fort Pitt-Presqu' Isle Trail — From a map in 1760. Attributed to Thomas Hutchins or Thomas Bassett. Courtesy of The New York Public Library." This cartouche was applied at the time of publication and does not appear upon the original. This explains the fact that the maps are identical and makes clear that the *MHSCols.* facsimile map simply was relettered for easier

reading. The original is annotated in script, which, upon comparison with documents written and with maps lettered by Thomas Hutchins, bears evidence of his authorship.

Returning to the Patterson-Hutchins Journal, it occurred to us to plot the bearings and to scale the distances expressed therein. The result was a perfect replica of the above published map; and all lines coincide, when drawn to the same scale that appears on the printed map. *Ergo*, the Patterson-Hutchins reconnaissance map does, indeed, exist, as anyone equipped with good drawing board instruments can demonstrate. It is found in the George Chalmers Collection, Papers Relating to Philadelphia, I, p. 3, in the New York Public Library, New York, N. Y.

- 18 Other road reports written by Thomas Hutchins, detailing the features of the country through which historic Indian paths led, are: "A Description of part of the Country Westward of the Ohio River, with the Distances Computed from Fort Pitt to the several Indian Towns by Land and Water." Printed in Hanna, *Wilderness Trail*, II, 192-202. "The Route from Fort Pitt to Sandusky, and thence to Detroit." Printed *Ibid.*, 202-207. Manuscripts of both are in the Pennsylvania Historical Society. An earlier description Hutchins wrote under the heading of "Remarks" on his very fine map entitled: "A Tour from Fort Cumberland North Westward round part of the Lakes Erie, Huron and Michigan, including part of the Rivers St. Joseph, the Wabash and Miamis, with a Sketch of the Road from thence by the Lower Shawanoe Town to Fort Pitt, 1762." Original in the Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif., photocopy in the Library of Congress. It has been printed in Beverly Bond, Jr., ed., *The Sources of the Ohio River taken by Lt. T. Hutchins, Anno 1766* (Cincinnati, 1942), three-quarter size fold-in, fine reproduction.

- 19 The description by Hutchins best fits the flats of the lower North Side of Pittsburgh and the East Street Valley. At some later time the valley approach to the Venango Path was dropped in favor of quickly gaining the Perrysville Avenue ridge. The path, and subsequently the Franklin Road, crossed the Allegheny River at the foot of St. Clair (now Sixth Street). See Survey of the Reserved Tract, April, 1785, *Warrantee Atlas of Ally. Co.*, Plat of City of Pittsburgh (North Side), where the ferry is indicated as landing at this point normally, or lower down the river bank in time of low water.

Most of Hutchins' maps are on such a small scale that they at first seem to convey little detail. Close study, however, reveals that short tangents drawn do change direction, if only three or four degrees. His early maps do show a deflection of the path to the right, curving to the left, crossing a stream at least twice. See his "Map of the Country on the Ohio and Muskingum Rivers," in his *An Historical Account of the Expedition Against the Ohio Indians, 1764* . . . This all changed in his 1778 map appended to his *Topographical Description* . . . , where the path has moved appreciably to the west of the stream and straight north from the Point. See reprint of map and *Topographical Description*, Frederick C. Hicks, ed. (Cleveland, 1904); a clearer, full size photostat of the original, in the Library of Congress, was obtained by the authors for study. The path, and subsequently the Franklin Road ran directly up the hill, later Franklin Street (now Federal Street and its Extension) to gain and follow the top of the long ridge now Perrysville Avenue. The Four Mile House, built 1819, and the Five Mile House, c.1830, marked the line of the old road. (The Four Mile House was demolished, in 1964, to be replaced by a modern service station.) Charles W. Dahlinger, "Old Allegheny," *WPHM*, I, 162; John S. Ritenour, "Over Old Roads to Pittsburgh," *Ibid.*, IV, 76. The reminiscences of John Reynolds of Meadville, in 1867, recalled that, in 1797, "Immediately after crossing the Allegheny River we were in unbroken forest . . . Ascending the hill from the river, we met several persons on foot, each with a rifle and tomahawk" Reprinted from the *Meadville Daily Republican*, 1867, in *Pen*

Pictures of Western Pennsylvania, John W. Harpster, ed. (Pittsburgh, 1938), 221-222.

- 20 The old path descended from the top of the ridge half a mile before reaching the notorious "Horseshoe Curve" entering West View Borough. A narrow track, now North Park Road, takes down a steep grade to the left, passing by West View Amusement Park. Here, in West View were the three small brooks noticed by Hutchins and mentioned retrospectively below. The path then crossed Route 19 and ran parallel and a little east of the highway through the village of Perrysville, passing on the east side of the very high point of land just north of Perrysville (the old Plank Road skirted its western slope). Omitting for the moment the intervening road, Hutchins reached Pine Creek at nearly the present crossing of Route 19, near the junction of that highway with McKnight Road, formerly known as Keown Post Office. Here was the point of intersection of the Venango Path with the trail connecting Logstown and Chartier's Old Town that joined with the Kittanning-Frankstown Indian Path. See Hanna, *Wilderness Trail*, I, 271-272. The survey, recorded April 2, 1794, significantly designated the spot "Indian Incamping Ground." *Warrantee Atlas of Ally. Co.*, McCandless Township Plat.
- 21 In retrospect, Hutchins refers back to "three very small brooks," which were in the valley where West View Borough now is situated. The path then crossed the present Route 19 and ran parallel and a little east of it through Perrysville, passing east of the high point of land seen at the north end of the village (the old Plank Road later skirted the western slope). Arriving at Highland Road, the path veered westward to the bottom of Lowrie's Run branch, where appeared the rather celebrated Fork of the Path. The left hand branch of the path ran to Kuskusky, which had been the most important Indian town in Western Pennsylvania, really a group of Indian towns on the branches of the Big Beaver, near present New Castle. From the fork, the path directed its course through Ingomar descending to the Pine Creek crossing described in note 20 above.
- 22 To Wexford, to Warrendale we follow, thence via Mount Pleasant Road we must travel up to Old Franklin Road on the top of the long ridge. The Venango Path actually ran up the next hollow between the hills, over the saddle that led the path down through the current Venango Trail Golf Course. Across the Butler County line the Warrantee Survey line ends at a small run south of Mars Road, which it crosses .8 mile east from the present Route 19. Across the rolling hills and fields the path ran to join the later Franklin Road at the curve .8 mile south of the Plains Church and generally by that course to the crossing of Breakneck Creek at Evans City.
- The road, just previous to this has become Route 528, and this we follow to the crossing of Breakneck Creek at Evans City. This is very nearly the original point of crossing of the path. The course of the creek has been changed just above the crossing, due to the fill of the B.&O. Railroad. The early Boggs mill stood on the ground now occupied by bowling alleys. Original plat of survey in the Bureau of Land surveys, Pennsylvania Department of Internal Affairs, Harrisburg, Pa., Survey Book C-13, p. 164. Cited hereinafter as Land Office, Bk. 13. The stricken-out words should have read "From the three small brooks." From the point where the *Warrantee Atlas* surveys ended, .75 mile north of the Butler County line, the old path has been traced across the eleven large tracts of Depreciation Land to the crossing of Breakneck Creek (first branch of Beaver Creek). The path ran on the tops of the long ridges, generally parallel to modern Route 528, which hugs sidehill grades or valleys.
- 23 Crossing diagonally across the town blocks of Evans City, the path ran up the extension of North Jackson Street, now a narrow dirt road, meeting Route 528 halfway to the top of the hill. Hutchins' retrospection becomes a bit confusing.

- 24 The "second crossing" was the main Connoquenessing Creek. After passing through one of the finest farms in this part of the state, completely encircled by the range of hills and in the great bend of the Connoquenessing, still in possession of the original settlers' family of Knauf, the path crossed just where the bridge now spans the creek.
- 25 Leaving the Connoquenessing crossing, the path must have climbed the steep hill on the right, since it is said to have continued on the top for nearly a mile. See U.S. Topographical (15') Map, Zelenople Quadrangle. The old Franklin Road ran directly up the hollow and over the saddle of the hill, while the present road runs in a circuitous sidehill course around the hill. The crossing of the "third branch," "Little Connoquenessing," was probably a few rods west of the present bridge.
- 26 Continuing through present Prospect Borough, the path continued almost directly north. At 2.5 miles from Prospect the path continued straight where Route 528 bears easterly, to meet directly Gallagher Road at its intersection with Whippoorwill Road (driving, one must continue on Route 528 to the intersection of Whippoorwill Road at the boundary of Moraine State Park, then turn sharply left 2 mile to meet Gallagher Road). A narrow dirt township road, Gallagher Road, descends into the depths of what appears as a primeval forest, to the Muddy Creek crossing. Visible still are the remains, stone breastwork of the old Gallagher (Gallaher) mill, a vertical whip-saw mill, according to testimony of Mr. C. O. McCandless of Prospect, Butler County, 92 years of age, who could remember the mill, old and unused, in his early youth.
- 27 Across the marshy bottom and up the opposite hill, the single lane, woodsy, dirt road still runs north till it emerges in the valley of Hogue Run, a very small run.
- 28 The course of the path skirted West Liberty Borough to the east, passing through the saddle of a hill, part of its way obliterated by coal stripping operations. It is nearly a mile and a quarter between these two branches, still on the lines laid down by Hutchins' maps. The distances noted in his description can match these three crossings only at the points here indicated.
- 29 Of all the journal descriptions, this crossing of Slippery Rock, which Hutchins called the seventh crossing of Beaver Creek, is the most identifiable today. It is located a few yards above the present highway Route 173 bridge $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of Slippery Rock town, where the solid ledge of rock crosses, possibly 40 yards above the falls, or cascade, described by Hutchins and contiguous to Rock Falls Park. This was then, and continued for many years, the principal ford over Slippery Rock Creek. The cascade is still as evident as when viewed by Hutchins and Bouquet and when described by General William Irvine in 1785, when he wrote: "... at the usual crossing place on the last named Creek [Flat Rock Creek] there is a beautiful fall over a Rock ten or twelve feet high, at the fording immediately above the fall, the bottom is one entire rock." *PA* (1), II, 515; *Ibid.* (3), III, 585.
Just $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles east of this crossing at the intersection of State Routes 173, 528 and 8, is the restored "Old Stone House," now kept by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. It was an early hostelry on the Franklin Road at its junction with the Butler Road. See Map of Butler County, April 1817, known as the Whiteside Maps, Bureau of Land Surveys, Harrisburg. A quarter of a mile south on Route 528 is the nature study showplace of the Pennsylvania Conservancy, known as the Jennings Blazing Star Prairie.
- 30 Lacomie was the Indian (Delaware) name for Sandy Creek. Other creeks were named the same, as Sandy Creek in Ohio. See Hutchins' "A Description . . . from Fort Pitt to the several Indian Towns by Land and Water," in *Wilderness Trail*, II, 197. An effort to reproduce the same

sounds as *Leckgahomeca* is found in the examination of John Walker, trader and Bouquet's guide. See Hunter, *Forts on the Frontier*, 152. There also was an early path that crossed Sandy Creek near the present Route 8 highway bridge at Pecan. Prior to 1796, Samuel Patterson, on the Pittsburgh Road transferred his rights to John Dewoody. *History of Venango County* (Chicago, 1896), 89. The Pittsburgh Road from Dewoody's crossing to the White Oak Spring adjoining the Butler County line was petitioned for building at the June session, reported at December session of the County Court, 1806. Venango County Road and Session Docket, I, 15, 34-35. See also Irwin and Heydrick Survey Map of Venango County, 1857. J. Dewoody's plat of property lay on both sides of the creek at the crossing.

The original descent into Venango was via the hollow debouching into present 7th Street, Franklin. See Hutchins' map of "Venango Fort," from the Public Archives of Canada, published in Hunter, *Forts on the Frontier*, following page 276. This map also in *Wilderness Chronicles*, 166.

- 31 After crossing Slippery Rock Creek, the path swung across country to the vicinity of Adams Corners, on Route 8, on a course a little east of north, thence through present Harrisville, which later sprang up on the Franklin Road. All of the journals and General Irvine's report mention springs a few miles farther. These would have been the famous White Oak Spring, near the Venango County line, and the Maple Spring $\frac{3}{4}$ mile farther. The area from the vicinity of Barkeyville to near the Hickory Grove Church is described by all of our informants as having been strewn with trees blown down by a severe storm. The path described by Hutchins veered right (eastward) probably in the vicinity of a presently imperceptible place designated as Pearl, threading its way through a tableland of woods to the very steep descent to Sandy Creek crossing, which he specifically mentions as half a mile from the creek's entrance into the Allegheny River. A bridge there is now in ruins.
- 32 Best known incident occurred in May 1793 when a supply train of 15 wagons loaded with 15,000 pounds of pork and bacon and escorted by 100 Virginia Provincial soldiers under Captain Thomas Bullitt (or Bullet) was attacked and routed by the Indians within four miles of Fort Ligonier. Col. Thomas Lloyd to General John Stanwix, BP 21644, f.171. Fort Pitt commissary of provisions John Ormsby reported, "All the horses except five that were shot were taken to Winango loaded with Bacon and pork." Walter T. Kamprod, "John Ormsby," *WPHM*, Vol. 23, 207.
- 33 As mentioned in the introduction, an old Indian town called Venango had formerly existed at the mouth of French Creek. John Fraser, a Pennsylvania trader, had established a trading post and gun shop there prior to 1741. *Wilderness Trail*, I, 179; D. S. Freeman, *George Washington* (7 vols., New York, 1948-1957), I, 276. He was driven out, however, by the French in 1753. The French started to fortify the place, which Washington reported to Gov. Dinwiddie might be finished early in the spring. Jared Sparks, *The Writings of George Washington* (12 vols., Boston, 1858), I, Appendix, 431. Excuses were detailed by French commandants explaining why the fort could not be finished according to the plan of Fort Presqu' Isle. *Papiers Contrecocur*, 410-13, 426-427. Apparently Fraser's cabins were stockaded and a fortified camp maintained. The fort was finally finished early in 1757. See Hunter, *Forts on the Frontier*, 136-154, for a full discussion of the French troubles and translation of parts of the letters. They burned and abandoned the post in 1759, and later that year Patterson and Hutchins reconnoitred the remains. The British took possession in 1760, built a blockhouse, which Hutchins here disparages. Nevertheless, Capt. Harry Gordon, in December, 1760, described the blockhouse as 40 feet square and 16 feet high, with a ditch 20 feet wide around it with "Pallisades and bastions." This was taken by stratagem, in 1763, burned and the garrison massacred by the Indians. *Wilderness Chronicles*,

202. This blockhouse was about 40 rods north of the French fort, and consequently nearer to the mouth of French Creek. *Frontier Forts of Pennsylvania*, II, 591. When, in 1787, Major Jonathan Heart of the U.S. Army built a blockhouse at Venango, he selected a location over half a mile above the others, just above the 13th Street crossing, to guard that crossing of French Creek. He constructed it on identical plans of the British fort, according to Major Ebenezer Denny, *Journal*, 319. Markers have been erected to fix the location of the forts: French Fort Machault, at 618 Elk Street; British Fort Venango, at 744 Elk Street; and U.S. Fort Franklin, at 1318 Franklin Street, in Franklin, Pa.