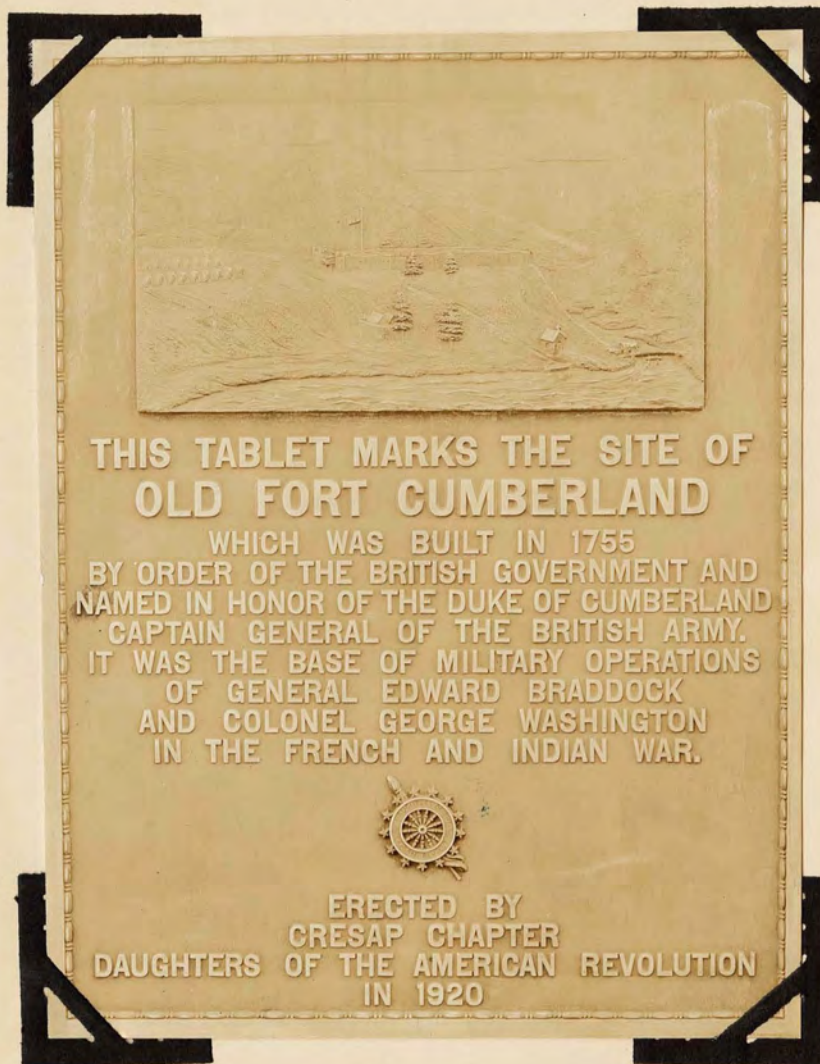


THE HISTORY AND CONSTRUCTION OF FORT CUMBERLAND
AT CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND



A Thesis For Initiation Into The
MARYLAND BETA CHAPTER, TAU BETA PI

by

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This thesis is developed in four parts, as numbered above.

The first part includes the history of the locality around the junction of Will's Creek and the North Branch of the Potomac river, in Maryland; from 1728, at which time the written history of this particular region begins, to 1774, during which year the construction of Fort Mount Pleasant, later called Fort Cumberland, was begun.

Under the second heading the actual construction and conformation is discussed, while the third portion tells of the history of the Fort from the time of its construction to its abandonment.

The thesis is concluded with a description of the site of the Fort as it is today.

THE HISTORY AND CONSTRUCTION OF FORT CUMBERLAND AT CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND

THE SITE OF THE FORT

The earliest recorded history of the territory around the Caiuctucuc, now Will's Creek, and the Cohongaronta, now the North Branch of the Potomac river, tells of an Indian village which was in existence in 1728, located at the junction of these two streams. At what time the village of Caiuctucuc was deserted is left to conjecture, as the earliest map of this region, made in 1751 and is now to be seen in the Congressional Library at Washington, simply marks the designated territory as "abandoned Shawanese lands".

As the white settlements in America expanded from the East to the West, this region at the mouth of Will's creek became of great importance as a fur trading center. In 1748, a number of energetic Pennsylvanians had succeeded in establishing extensive trade with the Indians throughout the valleys along the Alleghenys and the headwaters of the Ohio. Traders employed backwoodsmen and bartered blankets, rum, guns, trinkets, etc., for furs. The trade became so profitable it attracted others. In the year 1749, in order to participate in the fur trade and gain a foothold in the desirable Ohio region, enterprising men of Virginia and Maryland procured a grant of land beyond the Alleghenys for the purpose of settlement. This group of men was chartered by the King as the Ohio Company, and numbered among its members such men as Thomas Lee of the Virginia

Council, Laurence Washington, and Col. Thomas Cresap. Included in the charter was a grant of land of 5000 acres to be located between the Monogelela and Kanawha rivers, West of the Alleghenys. The Company issued originally 20 shares of stock, some of which changed hands, Gov. Dinwiddie of Virginia and George Mason becoming purchasers. One of the requirements of the charger was that the Company must select a large porportion of their lands at once, some two hundred thousand acres, settle upon them 100 families in seven years, erect a fort and maintain a garrison against the Indians. When these terms were Complied with the land was to be held free of quit rent for ten years. They accordingly set about exploring the country without delay, employing an experienced woodsman, Christopher Gist, for this purpose.

The first white settlement at Will's Creek was a small storehouse built by the Ohio Co. in 1750, stocked with goods to the value of £4000 from London. This storehouse was located on the West side of the Creek, North of the River. In 1752 the Co. concluded to make Will's Creek a permanent trading post and with that object in view they erected another storehouse and magazine, which came to be known throughout the country as "the New Storehouse". This building was located on the Virginia side of the river, near the point occupied now by the abutment of the Potomac bridge, at the foot of the bluff. The location at Will's Creek was regarded as a very favorable one and extensive trading was carried on from the two storehouses of the Ohio Co. The ground was surveyed on both sides of the Creek, and laid out into a town, with streets, lanes, etc., the

squares being subdivided into lots. This town was named Charlottsburg, in honor of Charlott^e Sophia who became the wife of George Third and the last Queen of America, but seemed to exist in name only.

The charter of the Ohio Co. gave the members thereof important advantages in trading with the Indians, and as this was a grant which must drive out of the market many other traders, the latter, of course, felt greatly aggrieved thereby, and undertook to get rid of this monopoly by inciting the Indians to hostility against the Co, and fomenting troubles of such a character as to make it unsafe for the Co. to send goods further West than Will's Creek.

The lands granted the Ohio ^{company} were claimed by both the British and the French Governments. The operations of the Ohio Company and the English rulers aroused the jealousy of the French, and they forthwith undertook to establish their claims in the Ohio Valley. The troubles between the French and English put a stop to the activities of the Ohio Co., but Will's Creek bustled even more than before, as an English Headquarters in the resulting struggle between the French and English Kings for this apparently boundless land West of the Alleghenys.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FORT

Washington, during the first part of 1753, had gone West from Will's Creek on an expedition against the French. On the 3rd of July, 1753, he was besieged by the French in a Fort he had built, called Fort Nessesity. Washington capitulated on the night of the third of July and returned to Will's

Creek, going to Williamsburg from there. Rutherrford's and Clark's Independent Companies from New York, which had been sent to join Washington but had not gotten to Will's Creek until after his capitulation, remained encamped at the Creek. Colonel James Innes, a scotchman by birth and at the time he was commissioned a resident of North Carolina, was sent to take command of these two companies on September 1, 1754. On his arrival at Will's Creek he set about building a fortification, and choose for that purpose a hill lying between the Potomac river and the Creek, near the mouth of the latter. Mackaye's Independent Company of South Carolinians, about ninety men, who had been left at the Creek by Washington on his return from Fort Nessesity, assisted in building the fortifications, which were commenced on the 12th of September and completed about the middle of October. Colonel Innes named this Fort, which was built of stoccadoes, "Fort Mount Pleasant". Upon finishing that work he set his men building barracks for themselves, which were greatly needed, as the weather was already quite cold, and there were indications of a severe winter.

By Christmas they had succeeded in constructing a sufficient number of log houses to accommodate the entire force, and that day was celebrated by such festivities as were possible under the circumstances.

Governor Sharpe, of Maryland, had been commissioned in July of 1754 as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Army. About the 1st of December he visited Will's Creek and inspected the forces there. On his return to Annapolis he wrote to Governor Dinwiddie advising that the "Independents were pre-

paring for themselves barracks, having already completed the small stocade fort, about which you were advised they had been employed, but as the fort they have finished is exceedingly small, its exterior side not exceeding 120 feet, I conceived it requisite or rather absolutely nessessary to have another much larger raised on an adjacent and more elevated peice of ground, which I have already ordered the Maryland Co. to proseed on, and I hope they will be able to finish it this winter. The eminence on which it will be situated gives it an entire command of that already completed and will defend a face of the small fort to which an enemy might at present approach without being much annoyed, or hardly seen from within. However, that on which the troops have been employed may be useful at present, and will serve to enclose storehouses or magazines after the other is completed, which, I think, by an advanced outwork or two will be easily defended against a considerable number of troops that may presume to attack it with only a light train - - -".

Governor Shappe exerted himself to make everything at the Fort satisfactory. He secured a number of teams for transporting supplies from the East and for service in hauling logs for the new fort and buildings he had ordered constructed. These teams were paid for at the rate of £35 for a wagon, harness, and four horses, though the farmers who furnished them asked orginally £20 each for their teams. Governor Dinwiddie was asked to send a few ship carpenters to the Fort, as their services were needed in the work of build-

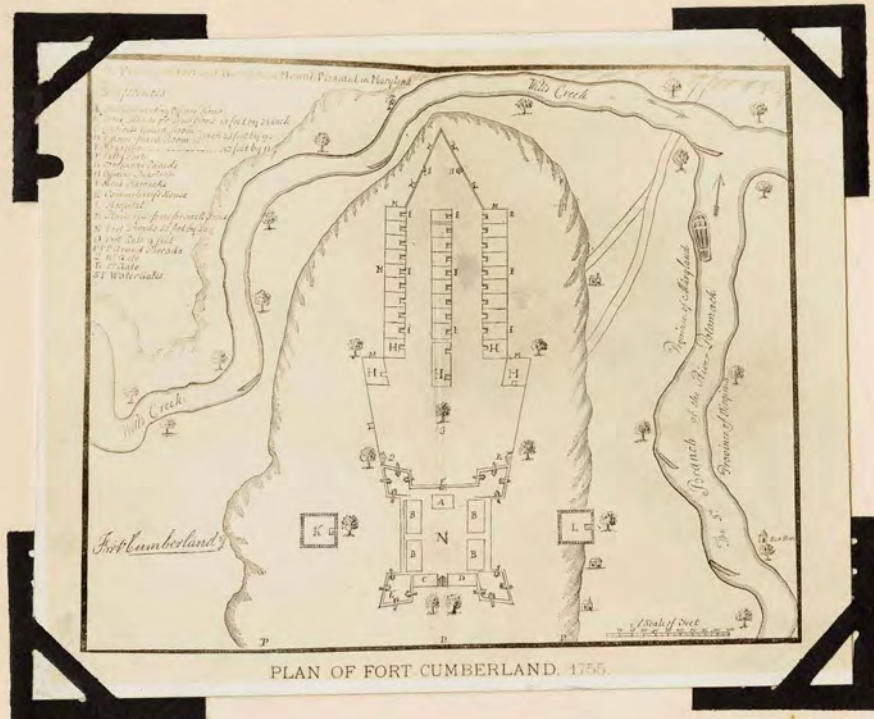
ing; also some cartridge paper, moulds for musket and swan shot, wire for screws, and pricklers, flints, and some wampum, the supply of the latter having been almost exhausted.

There were at this time at Fort Mount Pleasant three Captains, eight Lieutenants, one Ensign, twelve Sergeants, thirteen Corporals, seven Drummers, and two hundred and ninety five soldiers, all under the command of Colonel Innes. The supply of artillery was limited to a few small guns of 3 7/10 inch bore.

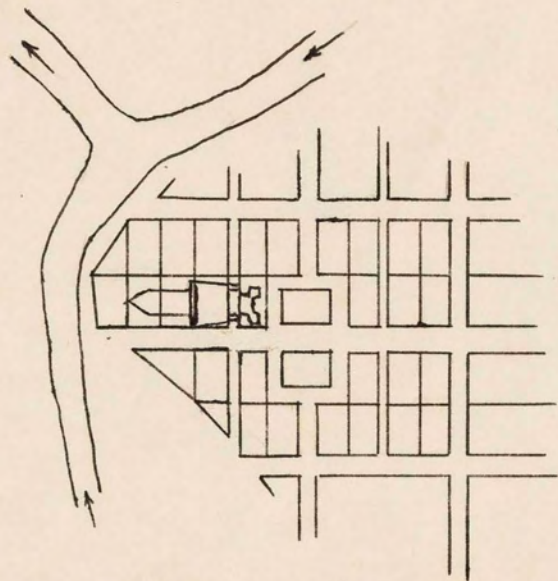
Shortly after Governor Sharpe's visit to Fort Mt. Pleasant, Governor Dinwiddie received from the King instructions to proceed at once to the erection of a fort at Will's Creek, which should be of such dimensions and character of construction as the importance of the position seemed to require, in view of the more extensive military operations in the direction of Fort Duquesne, at Pittsburg,; Governor Dinwiddie at once transmitted these instructions to Colonel Innes, who was directed to comply with the orders without delay. General Braddock, who had been designated by the Duke of Cumberland as the Commander-in-Chief of the expedition the British were planning for 1755, and who had been privately instructed by the Duke as to his wishes, also requested the Governor to have the Fort put in condition to accommodate 200 men and announced that it should be named "FORT CUMBERLAND" in honor of the Captain General of the British Army, who had honored him with so important a mission.

The orders of the King were obeyed with alacrity by Colonel Innes, and under his supervision Fort Cumberland was

erected and garrisoned, during the winter of 1754-1755.



The above sketch of Fort Cumberland was found by Will Lowdermilk, author of "The History of Cumberland", amongst the King's manuscripts in the Library of the British museum, in London. It was drawn by one of the officers in the Fort, at the time of General Braddock's arrival at the Fort during the campaign of 1755, or Braddock's Expedition. The fortifications are drawn to a scale, but the proportions were not observed in mapping out the river, creek, and surrounding grounds. This fact made it difficult to establish the exact lines of the work, but Lowdermilk, in his History of Cumberland says of a resident of Cumberland at that time, "Mr. Jesse Korn's has a distinct recollection of climbing over the remaining earthworks when a boy, and he fixes the easterly line of the Fort, that portion of it which runs to a point nearest Will's Creek, at some forty feet east of



2

1st St.

4 point?

SCALE APPROX. 600' / IN.

Emmanuel Church" Emmanuel Church is still located on the site of the Fort. The confirmation of the ground at that spot is strongly confirmatory of that opinion, as well as other circumstances, which fix the western line of the Fort near Prospect street.

The sketch shown on the adjacent page shows the Fort located on the present plat of Cumberland, as from the knowledge and computations of Earnest Brackett, at present a Civil and Mining engineer of Cumberland, a man who is thoroughly familiar with the history of Fort Cumberland.

The greater portion of Fort Cumberland was a pallisado work, all of it in fact, except the small crib work, bastioned structure on the Western end. The pallisades were logs cut to a length of 18 feet, and planted in the earth to a depth of 6 feet, forming a close wooden wall 12 feet in height. These logs were spiked together, with strips and pins on the inner side, and the wall was pierced with openings for musketry along its entire face. There were two water gates, and from each of these a trench was excavated leading to the Creek, so that the men might secure a supply of water without being exposed to the fire of the enemy. In 1756, after Braddock's defeat, the Indians became so numerous and bold as to approach near enough to fire upon those who ventured to the water's edge, and in consequence thereof a well was sunk inside the pallisado near the main gate on the South side. About the year 1799, after the abandonment of the fort, the well was cleaned out and several gun carriages, etc., were removed. The remains of the well may still be seen on the property of Dr. Johnson.

Inside the stockade were built barracks sufficient to furnish quarters for 200 men and the company of officers. There was also a parade or drill ground for the companies, located about where the present Academy and Court House stand. At the West end of the stockade was built a fort, with bastions, parapets, and ditches, where 16 guns were mounted, which commanded all the ground North, West, and South, as well as the North and South lines of the stockade. These guns were of different calibre, 4 of them being 12 pounders and 12 of them 4 pounders. Besides these, there were several swivels. A part of this armament was ship's guns, brought from Admiral Keppel's fleet. On the West face was a sally port, and inside the fort were the houses used as quarters for the commanding officer, for storing provisions, and for the guard details while on duty. The entire work was 400 feet in length, and 160 feet in width, extending from the point indicated below Emmanuel Church to within a short distance of Prospect street, the northerly line extending along nearly the center of Washington street. The Fort proper occupied the position on which now stands the Jewish Synagogue.

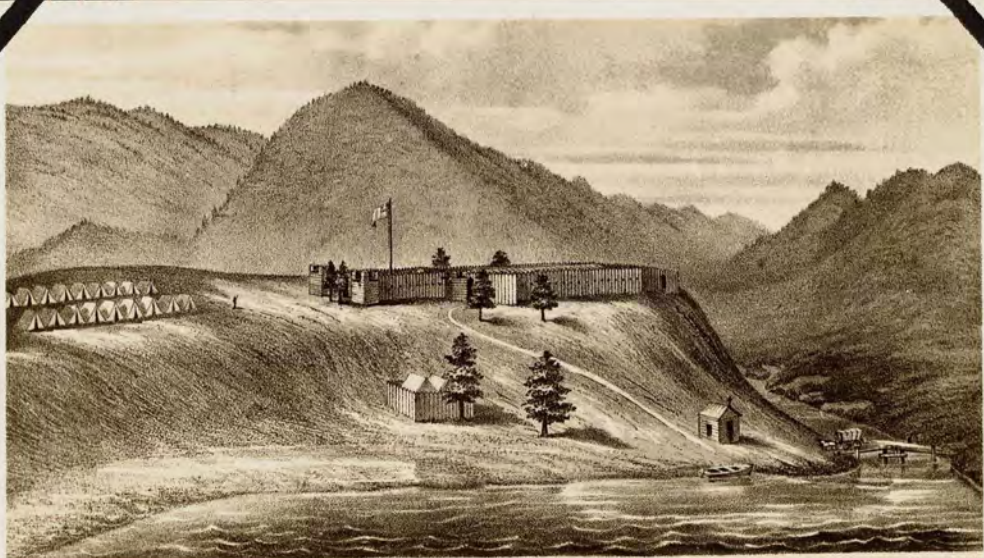
This fortification was of considerable strength, and commanded the approaches from the North, East, and South. The ground to the North-West was somewhat higher, but a small earth work of a temporary character was constructed on the crest. The ground on the South side of the river, opposite the Fort, was high enough to overlook the work, and somewhat interfered with its efficiency. Quite a number of log houses

for barracks were built on the crest, as far back as Small-wood stree, but these were made use of only when there was a greater force present than could be accommodated in the Fort and the barracks immediately adjoining.

THE FORT

The campaign, led by Washington, which had terminated so unfortunately at Fort nessesity, had been watched closely by the English authorities, but they did not receive intelligence of the disaster until August, 1754. The news created much excitement in the cabinet. It became apparent that in-as-much as the colonies seemed to be fatally slow in providing the nessesary means of defense, the Crown must furnish both troops and supplies.

In the resulting campaign of 1755, generally known as "Braddock's Expedition", Fort Cumberland was the most prominent point occupied on the line of march, and was the scene of important military operations. It had been chosen as the



FORT CUMBERLAND 1755.
From fort of Nobley.

rallying point for all the troops participating in the movement against the French on the Ohio river, its location being naturally advantageous for this purpose, although as a post of defence for the frontier settlers further East it was practically of little value. Situated, as it was, upon the very outskirts of civilization, surrounded by only a few hardy pioneers and trappers, it was a favorite place of resort for those friendly Indians who had peltries to barter at the Fort. At the same time it was well adapted as a place of rendezvous for such forces as might be designed for operations further West. It was located in the very heart of the wilderness, with virgin forests all around it, and roads of the most inferior character reaching back to the settlements, nearly eighty miles away, while the single road leading to the West could scarcely be called such. In the organization of Braddock's forces, the supplying of men and animals, and the events that followed until the close of the contest with the French, the scenes that transpired here rendered historic every foot of ground about the place. Throughout the pages of History frequent reference is made to Fort Cumberland, in connection with the progress of plans and operations to which so much importance was at that time attached.

On the 20th of January, 1755, Governor Sharpe again visited Fort Cumberland, and on the 26th Sir John St. Clair arrived. They made an examination of the works, the supplies and the arms; and two days were spent in inspection and consultation as to the additions that were necessary to the

stores, and the best method of getting them to camp. Governor Shappe found military affairs in a very unsatisfactory condition; the Virginia Companies were unruly, discontented and mutinous, while the Maryland Co. was of little value, because of their limited numbers and lack of discipline. The officers of the colonial companies and those holding King's commissions were at dagger's points because of a dispute as to rank. Sir John St Clair inspected the soldiers at the Fort, and discharged no less than twenty from Captain Rutherrord's Co. because of their unfitness for service.

General Braddock left Alexandria on his march to Fort Duquesne on the 20th of April, 1755. He arrived at Fort Cumberland, after a stop at Fredericktown, Md., on the 10th of May, in his chariot, one of the cumbersome carriages of that day, which he had purchased of Governor Sharpe before leaving Alexandria.



General Braddock's Arrival

The forces then at Fort Cumberland, besides the garrison, were the 44th and 48th British regiments, two New York Independent Companies, five Virginia Companies of rangers and two of carpenters, one Maryland Company of rangers, two North and South Carolina Companies of rangers, and thirty seamen, in all 2190 men.

The encampment at Fort Cumberland, and everything in connection with it, was in every detail in accordance with the most approved English military methods and councils of war-and it afforded Colonel Washington, who had been invited by General Braddock to join him as an Aide de Camp, his first opportunity to study military tactics and minutiae of war in their strictest form, a study which was to be invaluable both to himself and to his country.

Braddock's Army remained at the Fort until June, 1755, when they marched in three divisions, on the 7th, 8th, and 10th, Colonel Innes being appointed Governor of the Fort by Braddock on his departure, with instructions to hold it and protect the country around it with the remnants of the colonial forces.

After Braddock's disastrous defeat at Monongahela, his shattered army, under Colonel Dunbar, found its way back to Fort Cumberland, after a short while continuing the march to Philadelphia, despite the entreaties of the Governors of Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania that they remain at the Fort and protect the frontier. Dunbar's ignominious retreat excited the indignation of the whole countryside and created great alarm. Governor Sharpe visited the Fort and gave the inhabitants around such assurances as he could, but he did not remove their

rear of the tomanawk and scalping knife, and many of them abandoned everything and fled for their lives.

Washington returned to Mount Vernon after the defeat and was shortly appointed by Governor Dinwiddie Commander-in-Chief of all the Virginia forces.

In November Colonel Innes was called to his home in North Carolina, and he left the Fort in charge of Colonel Stephens, Lieutenant Colonel of the Virginia forces. Captain Dagworthy was also at Fort Cumberland in command of a small detachment of Maryland troops, and almost immediately after Innes departure, issued an order assuming command of the Fort, in spite of the fact that Colonel Innes was its Governor and Colonel Stephens his representative. However, Washington took the matter up with Governor Shirley of Massachusetts, Braddock's successor as Major-General of his Majesty's forces in the colonies, and Captain Dagworthy was ordered from the Fort.

In the May following Colonel Innes was again called to North Carolina, this time leaving Major James Livingston in charge of the Fort. Early in the spring, shortly after the departure of Colonel Innes, the Indians began to give trouble by firing into the Fort from the surrounding hills. This was stopped by Major Livingston when he marched to the foot of what is known as McKaig's hill with seventy five men on a cloudy night, and surprised and killed most of the malcontents.

In January, 1757, Washington again took up his quarters at Fort Cumberland, and remained there until March, but nothing of special moment transpired, and it was not until the entry of William Pitt in the British Ministry that definite

plans were settled upon for a vigorous effort to retrieve the misfortunes of the Braddock campaign, and when Fort Cumberland again became the center of marked military activity.

The expedition against Fort Duquesne was this time entrusted to General John Forbes, who had under him, including the colonial forces, about 6000 men.

Washington reached Fort Cumberland, with the Virginia forces, some 2000 strong, on the 2nd of July, 1758, to form a juncture with the British Army. While there he procured the services of several hundred Indians and also put his men in Indian dress, to have them as he said "proceed as light as any Indian in the woods" --probably a lesson he had learned from the misfortunes of General Braddock. Leaving Fort Cumberland in charge of Governor Sharpe and his Maryland troops, he joined General Forbes at Raystown on September 20th, from whence the start to Fort Duquesne was made on the 14th of October, and where the final struggle for North American supremacy was triumphantly won by the British and American forces. The Treaty of Paris and the end of the French and Indian war immediately followed.

Troubles between the Indians and whites having practically ceased, and the garrison at Fort Cumberland being no longer necessary, it was formally turned over to Maryland authorities of the British Government May 12, 1765, the troops forming the garrison leaving for the South sixty days later.

Fort Cumberland was never again used as a military post, except in 1794, when it was brought into requisition

once more in the suppression of what is known as the Whiskey Rebellion. It was then that Washington paid his last visit to Fort Cumberland and revived his association with the scenes so filled with memories for him.



It was fitting that here he should don for the last time, officially, his continental uniform--to review the troops he had ordered there--on the spot where he had obtained his first real lesson in the art of war..... an art of which he became the master, distinguishing himself as the pre-eminently great American Soldier.

THE SITE OF THE FORT AS IT IS TODAY

In 1816 subscriptions were solicited by the members of the Episcopal and Presbyterians congregations of Cumberland for the erection of a church on the site of Fort Cumberland. The church was finally built and used by the Episcopalians, but

was torn down and replaced by a much finer edifice, which was consecrated on October 16, 1851¹⁸⁴⁹.

The present church is one of the most famous and beautiful in the country. It is built of native yellow sandstone, is of Gothic architecture, and was designed by John Notman, the noted Philadelphia Architect of that time.

Underneath the Church may be seen a series of three tunnels, which, it is claimed by several people prominent in historical matters in Cumberland, are a remnant of the old Fort. However, there are many differences of opinion among Cumberland residents familiar with the history of the Fort, and the matter will probably never be settled; the only reference which might point to their existence as a part of the Fort being Will Lowdermilk's mention of ditches dug from the Fort to the Creek, in his History of Cumberland. Personally, judging from the conformation and location of these short tunnels, they are limited to the confines of the Church, the Author believes they were dug at the time of building of one of the two churches which have existed on that spot.



UNION TEMPLE, EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, CUMBERLAND, MD.



CUMBERLAND FROM THE SOUTHEAST. - 1900

The Ink Bar Shows The Relative Position Of The Fort



WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS.
FT. CUMBERLAND, MD. 1783.



In the above picture, taken from the Northwest, the building with the spire in the center is the Court House, while the Emmanuel Church is directly below on the same side of the street. The Jewish Synagogue, where the main stockade was located, is the square building with pillars between the Court House and the Church. The Easterly line of the Fort was 40 feet to the left and back of the spire of the Church.

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Personal

Earnest Brackett, Civil and Mining Engineer
Cumberland, Md.

Miss Mary Robbins, Cumberland, Md.

J. C. Wolverton, direct descendant of Col. Cresap
Cumberland, Md.

Also

A Paper on George Washington Written for the
Cumberland Chapter of the D.A.R. by
Miss Fan Lloyd, Cumberland, Md.

Pictures of paintings are from works by
Gertrude DuBrau, Cumberland, Md.