

# WASHINGTON AT TURKEYFOOT

## *Seeking out the French*

George Washington camped here on May 20, 1754. He was seeking for the British a navigable water route to the Forks of the Ohio (Pittsburgh), where the French were building Fort Duquesne. The young Lieutenant Colonel from Virginia had orders to proceed to the mouth of Redstone Creek (Brownsville), wait for reinforcements, then strike the French.

After canoeing to the formidable falls at Ohiopyle, he turned back and marched his troops westward over the mountain.

Indian scouts told him of a nearby French party. Washington's men ambushed and killed Ensign Coulon de Jumonville and nine of his men. This brief skirmish on May 28, 1754, at what is now Jumonville Glen, opened the French and Indian War.

### **From Washington's Diary May, 1754**

*"The 20th,... we gained Turkey-foot, by the Beginning of the Night. We underwent several Difficulties about eight or ten Miles from thence, though of no great Consequence, finding the Waters sometimes deep enough for Canoes to pass, and at other times more shallow."*

*"The 21st, Tarried there some Time to examine the Place, which we found very convenient to build a Fort, not only because it was gravelly but also for its being at the Mouth of three Branches of small Rivers... We went down the River about ten Miles, when at last it became so rapid as to oblige us to come ashore."*



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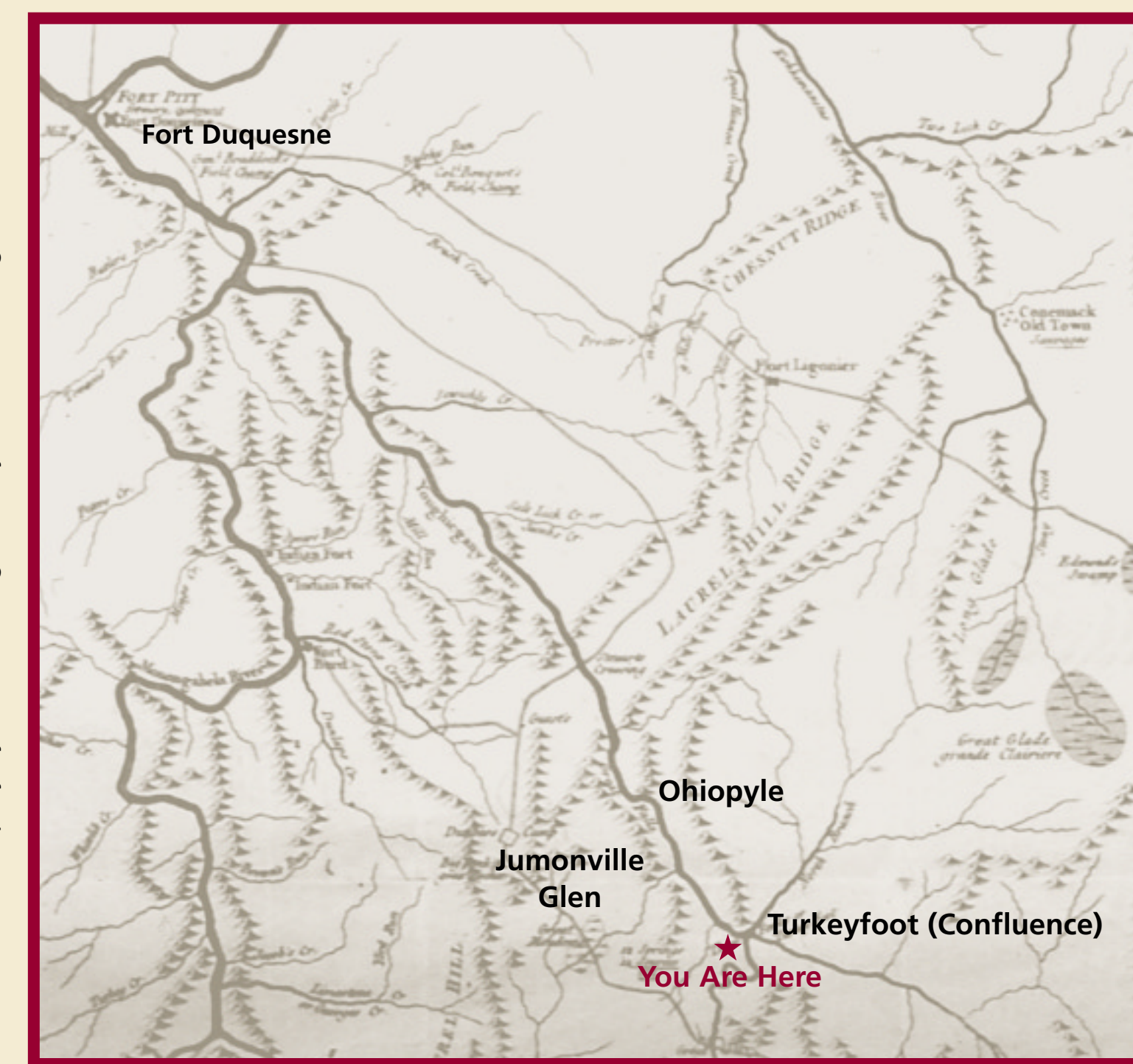


Exploring the wilderness by canoe was dangerous in the 18th-century.



*Washington as Colonel of the Virginia Regiment, 1772.*  
by Charles Willson Peale

Washington's portrait in 1772 recalls his part as a colonial officer in the war against the French fifteen years earlier. He wears the uniform of the First Virginia regiment, and the metal gorget around his neck asserts his role as a colonel. The portrait was done just before the American Revolution, but reminds us that Washington had once fought loyally for the King of England.



*I Think We Have Company, by Robert Griffing. Courtesy of Robert Griffing.*

*Map of Pennsylvania. Scull, 1770. Courtesy of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.*

*Courtesy of Washington and Lee University.*