

THE MARCH OF THE ARMY

While Post was engaged upon his dangerous mission, the van of Forbes' army was pressing forward under the hearts of August from Raystown (Bedford), toward Loyalhanna, hewing their way as they went.* Early in September the General reached Raystown, whither we had also ordered Washington, who had till then been kept inactive among his sick troops at Fort Cumberland. Meantime two officers of the First Virginia regiment had gone separately, each with his party, to reconnoiter Fort Duquesne, and had brought accounts of its condition up to the 13th of August. In being deemed desirable, however, to have fuller statements than they were able to give, a party of eight hundred men, under Major Grant, with whom went Major Andrew Lewis, of Virginia, was sent forward on the 11th of September to gain the desired information.

The third day after their march, they arrived within eleven miles of Fort Duquesne, and halted till three o'clock in the afternoon, then marched within two miles of the fort, and left their baggage there under a guard, and arrived at eleven o'clock at night, upon a hill a quarter of a mile distant from it, Major Grant sent two officers and fifty men to attack all the Indians they could find lying out of the fort; they saw none, nor were they challenged by the sentries. As they returned, they set fire to a large stone house, which was put out as soon as they left it. At break of day, Major Lewis was sent, with four hundred men, to lie in ambush, a mile and a half from the main body, on the path on which they left their baggage, imagining the French would send a force to attack the baggage guard and seize it.

* The troops from Virginia, North Carolina and Maryland, were ordered to assemble at Winchester, under Colonel Washington; and the Pennsylvania forces at Raystown, now Bedford, where Colonel Bouquet had marched the regular troops, in advance of General Forbes, who remained at Philadelphia until the combined army would be in readiness to move forward. But the ill health of General Forbes, the difficulties in procuring supplies and means of transportation, and the construction of a new road for the army, the artillery, and baggage wagons to pass over the mountains, detained the expedition until late in the season. Colonel Washington strongly recommended that the army should follow the route of Braddock, as it would take but a little time to repair the road, which was the best over the mountains, and remonstrated against cutting a new road, as it might entirely defeat the expeditions, by unnecessary delay. Colonel Bouquet strenuously advocated a new route through Pennsylvania, and prevailed upon General Forbes to adopt it; and on the first day of August, seventeen hundred men were employed west of Bedford, in constructing a road across the mountains, to the Loyalhanna. This is the first road in what is now Westmoreland County.