



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HISTORIC BATTLEFIELD, TAVERN NAMED FEBRUARY ‘PLACE’

Uniontown, PA – Every elementary school child in Fayette County learns about George Washington’s leadership during the French and Indian War and the American Revolution. They learn about the battle at Fort Necessity and how much time Washington spent in the area.

The first U.S. president has had several southwestern Pennsylvania locations named in his honor, including the tract of land that encompasses the historic fort and nearby Mount Washington Tavern. In honor of President’s Day and Washington’s influence throughout the region, the Fort Necessity Battlefield, and the tavern that is now part of it, have earned the Faces and Places designation for February.

The battle for land in the Ohio River Valley raged in the mid-18th century, with English and French forces fighting fiercely for control. Washington was sent as a British emissary to warn the French forces to leave, but they refused. Washington made his way with his troops to the area known as the Great Meadows in late May 1754 and set up base camp there. Following a skirmish in what is now Jumonville Glen, Washington’s troops emerged victorious. Still, he feared a larger attack and sought to fortify his position in the Great Meadows, building the circular palisade he named Fort Necessity in the final days of May and the first days of June.

Washington was promoted to colonel later that month, and on July 3, an army of about 600 French soldiers and 100 Native Americans attacked. The French won control of Fort Necessity, but even so, Washington’s reputation grew as he joined the command of Gen. Edward Braddock and eventually ascended to that rank himself before leading Americans in their quest to break from English rule.

Meanwhile, Washington purchased the Great Meadows Tract in the early 1770s, and the region eventually came to be known as Mount Washington, said National Park Service Ranger James Tomasek.

At that time, Mount Washington Tavern did not yet exist.

“Washington will make reference to the tract and the location being good for a publican – a public house or tavern,” Tomasek said. “But there is no evidence that he had done any kind of development like that.”

Rather, Tomasek said, Mount Washington Tavern took its name from the area surrounding it when it was built in the 1830s.

Tomasek said by 1818, the National Road stretched all the way to Wheeling, W.Va. “So, the demand for taverns will increase,” he said. “Sort of the unique thing about Mount Washington Tavern is that it served as a stage house.”

The tavern was a stopping point for the Uniontown-based Good Intent stagecoach line and would have offered meals to travelers, as well as horse exchanges and other services.

Tomasek said there may even have been a post office in the tavern. He said the 1850 census documented 13 people living in the building, most likely stagecoach drivers, housekeepers and other staff members.

“After 1852, the Pennsylvania Railroad would be completed to Pittsburgh,” Tomasek said. “That’s going to begin the demise of the National Road and cause many taverns, including Mount Washington Tavern, to cease operation.” In 1856, the tavern was purchased by the Fazenbaker family as a private home.

In 1931, the Fort Necessity Battlefield became a U.S. War Department site, and that same year, the commonwealth of Pennsylvania acquired the farm which included the tavern building, Tomasek said.

“The tavern doesn’t come into the battlefield until the early 1960s,” Tomasek said. “Prior to that time, it was actually state-owned and operated as sort of a general history museum.”

Due to its location along the National Road, Mount Washington Tavern has become a point of contact for the battlefield, he said. It also has been restored to the way it may have looked during its heyday, and visitors to the battlefield can take a tour of the historic tavern as well.

The Fort Necessity Battlefield and Mount Washington Tavern, as well as Jumonville Glen and Gen. Braddock’s Grave, are part of the National Park Service and, as such, are open to the public. The visitor’s center is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Mount Washington Tavern and Jumonville Glen are open from May through October.

For more information, visit <https://www.nps.gov/fone/index.htm>.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.fayettecountypa.org.

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For more information, contact Kristi Kassimer Harper, Public Relations Specialist, at 724-437-4571, kkassimer@fayettecountypa.info or Jamie Rankin, Journalist, at 724-437-4571, jamierankin13@gmail.com.