

The Washington Trail Cruise from Logstown to Fort Le Boeuf

This cruise is as close as possible to the driving cruise published in "Indian Paths of Pennsylvania," Paul A.W. Wallace 1995

Start **Sheetz, 100 Ohio River Blvd, Baden, PA 15005**

The historical marker for Logstown is ½ mile south on Duss Ave. across from Anthony Wayne Drive. Parking is poor at the marker so we will not be driving past it.

"30th [...] We set out about nine o'clock with the half king, Jeskakake, White Thunder and the Hunter; and travelled on the road to Venango [Franklin], where we arrived the fourth of December, without any remarkable happening but a continued series of bad weather." Major George Washington

0.0 mi Turn right (North) onto Ohio River Blvd

2.4 mi Turn right onto 11th St

Presumed to be Mingo Town [Conway] on Washington's Map

2.7 mi Turn left onto 7th Ave

2.8 mi Turn right onto 13th St

5.4 mi Turn left onto Dunlap Hill Rd

5.9 mi Enter roundabout, take second exit onto PA 989 (straight)

8.4 mi At fork, keep right on PA 989

10.5 mi Go under I-76

10.6 mi Turn left onto Glen Eden Rd then quick right

10.7 mi Turn right onto Willoughby Run Rd

12.6 mi Turn left onto Zeigler Rd

12.9 mi Turn right onto Pa-68

15.4 mi Turn left onto S Main St (Rt 19N)

15.8 mi Cross Connoquenessing Creek [**Camp Friday Nov. 30, 1753**]

"Friday 30. At night we encamped at the Murthering town [villages between Harmony and Even's City along the Connoquenessing], about fifteen miles on a branch of the Great Beaver Creek." Christopher Gist.

25.6 mi Bear right onto W Park Rd

26.6 mi Go under I-79

28.2 mi Go under Rt 422 and cross Muddy Creek (just downstream from Lake Arthur Dam)

Neither Washington nor Gist mention crossing Muddy Creek but Wallace believes this would be the best location to ford horses due to the firm bottom and the fact that the Logstown Path crossing [current entrance to Moraine State Park] and the Venango Path crossing [Pa 529] would have been flooded and impassible (Wallace, pg. 203).

28.3 mi Continue on W Park Rd

Road used to split right and meet up with Camalot Rd. This is the path Wallace thought Washington took but Moraine State Park was established in 1970 and cut off the road. We will go around.

30.2 mi Go under I-79 (road weaves back and forth under Interstate)

31.5 mi Go under I-79 W Park Rd becomes W Liberty Rd

34.9 mi Jct Rhoer Rd, continue on W Liberty Rd **(back on the Logstown Path)**

35.4 mi Turn left onto Slippery Rock Rd

36.0 mi Jct Crolls Mill Rd, Cross Slippery Rock Creek continue on Slippery Rock Rd

[Camp Saturday Dec. 1, 1753]

“Saturday 1 December. –Set out, and at night encamped at the crossing of Beaver creek from the Kaskuskies to Venango about thirty miles. The next day rain; our Indians went out a hunting; they killed two bucks. Had rain all day” Christopher Gists

This is one of the more confusing passages in Gists’s Journal. Wallace believes Washington’s map has some errors as neither man had direct knowledge of the area and that the Indian path from Kaskusky [a series of Delaware villages near New Castle] crosses Slippery Rock Creek at this spot (Wallace pg. 206).

My own personal speculation is that Washington’s map shows a Kaskuskies [Cuscusca Town] Village at the fork of G. Beaver Creek and a tributary. There is a 1925 Historical marker west of Slippery Rock marking the location of Kaskuskies Village along Wolf Creek not far where it joins Slippery Rock Creek. This would be consistent with idea that what is shown as Beaver Creek on Washington’s map is actually Slippery Rock Creek. From this point to Venango [Franklin] is about 30 miles. Either interpretation has Washington’s party crossing Slippery Rock Creek near here.

38.8 mi Merge left onto Rt 173

39.4 mi Turn right onto Franklin St (Rt. 108)

42.9 mi Turn left onto William Flynn Hwy (Rt 8) (Logstown Path Joins Venango Trail)

50.8 mi Cross I-80

51.1 mi Turn right into Sheetz for rest break

51.3 mi East Branch Wolf Creek (near the head waters) [**Camp Monday Dec. 3, 1753**]

“Monday 3. – We set out and travelled all day. Encamped at night on one of the head branches of the Great Beaver creek about twenty-two miles.” Christopher Gists

This location for Washington’s camp is consistent with Gists’s Journal according to Wallace pg. 206

52.0 mi Turn left onto Old Route 8

61.6 mi Cross Sandy Creek [*Lacomick Cr. On Washington’s Map*]

63.3 mi Turn left onto Pittsburgh Rd

64.7 mi Bear left onto Pittsburgh Rd (Pittsburgh Rd becomes 15th St)

65.8 mi Bear right onto 15th St

67.0 mi Turn right onto Liberty St

67.3 mi Turn left onto 13th St

67.5 mi Cross Bridge over French Creek

67.8 mi **Turn left onto Grant St (Rt 322)**

“Tuesday 5 [4?]. – Set out about 15 miles to the town of Venango [Franklin], where we were kindly and complaisantly received by Monsieur Joncaire, the French interpreter for the Six Nations.” Christopher Gists

“We found the French colours hoisted at the house from which they had driven Mr. John Frazier, an English subject. I immediately repaired to it, to know where the commander resided. There were three officers, one of whom, Captain Johnclaire informed me that he had the command of the Ohio; but that there was a general officer at the near fort, where he advised me to apply for an answer. He invited us to sup with them, and treated us with the greatest complaisance.” Major George Washington

Historical marker for Fort Machault (built after Washington’s journey) is on the intersection of Rt 322(8th St) and Elk Street

73.6 mi Cross Sugar Creek [**Camp Dec. 7 1753**]

“Thursday 6 - We set out late in the day accompanied by the French General and four servants or soldiers, and

Friday 7 - All encamped at Sugar creek, five miles from Venango. The creek being very high we were obliged to carry all our baggage over ton trees, and swim our horses. The Major and I went first over, with our boots on.” Christopher Gist

“7th ... At 12 o'clock we set out for the fort, and were prevented from arriving there until the eleventh by excessive rains, snows and bad travelling through many mires and swamps; these we were obliged to pass to avoid crossing the creek, which was impossible, either by fording or rafting, the water was so high and rapid.” Major George Washington

93.4 mi Cross Clark Rd in Meadville [**Camp Dec.8, 1753**]

*“Saturday 9 [8] – set out and travelled twenty-five miles to Cussewago [Meadville], an old Indian Town”
Christopher Gists*

94.4 mi Turn right onto Diamond Park Sq

94.5 mi Turn right onto N Main St (Becomes Rt 86)

99.3 mi Cross Rt 198 Stay on Rt 86

107 mi Enter the town of Cambridge Springs, Rt 86 merges with Rt 19

Cross French Creek

Washington could not cross French Creek due to high water. They turned right keeping the swamp on their left they traveled SE to what is not Rt 77 where they crossed the swamp and carried on the Ft LeBoeuf. You cannot follow the exact path of Washington's party and the roads are poor quality so we will continue on Rt 19 (the path of Washington's return journey).

Camp Dec. 9, 1753

“Sunday 9. – We set out, left one of our horses here that could travel no further. This day we travelled to the big crossing [Cambridge Springs?], about fifteen miles, and encamped, our Indians went out to look out [for] logs to make a raft; but as the water was high, and there were other creeks to cross, we concluded to keep up [to] this side the creek.” Christopher Gists

Wallace says the party turned SE and travelled around the swamp (now State Game Lands) before turning towards Ft LeBoeuf. He explains in great detail why this route is the most consistent with Washington and Gists Journals (Wallace, pg. 207).

[Camp Dec. 10, 1753]

“Monday 10. – Set out, travelled about eight miles, and encamped. Our Indians killed a bear. Here we had a creek to cross, very deep; we got over on a tree, and our goods over.” Christopher Gist

121 mi Turn right onto S Brown Hill Rd

Wallace believes Washington's party travelled across the fields on the high ground where there are no roads today, we are following the better roads roughly paralleling Washington's route. (Wallace, pg 211)

117 mi Enter Roundabout take second Exit Continue of Rt 19

118 mi **Arrive at Fort Leboeuf Museum (on right, street parking)**

"Tuesday 11. – We set out, travelled about fifteen miles to the French fort, the sun being set. Our interpreter gave the commandant notice of our being over the creek; upon which he sent several officers to conduct us to the fort, and they received us with a great deal of complaisance." Christopher Gist