

OUTSTANDING GEOLOGIC FEATURE OF PENNSYLVANIA

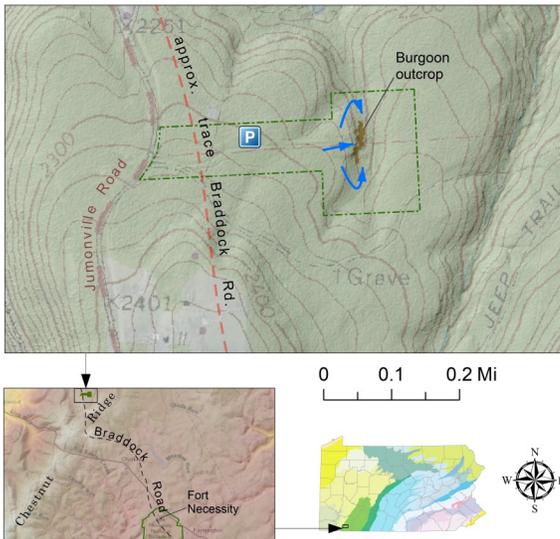
JUMONVILLE GLEN ROCKS, FAYETTE COUNTY



James Shaulis and Stuart O. Reese, 2020

Location

National Park Service, Park District Jumonville Glen of the Fort Necessity Battlefield, Fayette Co., North Union Twp., lat: 39.87998, lon: -79.64294 (parking); Uniontown 7.5-minute quadrangle



Geology

With a backdrop of Mississippian Burgoon Sandstone, the first skirmish of the French and Indian War occurred at this location on May 28, 1754. Jumonville Glen is a wooded, rugged, and isolated spot off the Nemaquin Trail on Chestnut Ridge. French forces, either spying or performing nonthreatening surveillance, were camped along the base of the outcrop. British troops were camped nearby at Great Meadows. Upon hearing of the French presence, 22-year-old George Washington led 40 soldiers on a 7-mile, all-night march, reaching Jumonville Glen at dawn. A dozen Mingo Indians, including Chief Tanacharison, accompanied them. A brief but controversial battle followed in which Washington's troops killed 13 Frenchmen (including the leader Ensign Jumonville) and captured 21. Crucially, one Frenchman escaped to Fort Duquesne.

The rocky setting helped Washington win his first military battle. The Burgoon Sandstone is a prominent bedrock formation along Chestnut Ridge. It ranges from 200 to 300 feet thick, is very resistant, and commonly forms ledges of medium-grained sandstone in the upper half of the formation. At Jumonville Glen, the French had a good place to hide, but it was not a good place to be found. Perched above, some of Washington's men pinned down the enemy while right and left flanks halted retreats at the ends of the small hollow. Nevertheless, Washington would soon be forced to surrender to a larger French army at hastily built Fort Necessity, the Nemaquin Trail would become Braddock Road, and the French and Indian War would explode into a widespread struggle in North America.

Recommended Reading

[Fort Necessity National Battlefield, Jumonville Glen](#) web page of the National Park Service.

[The French and Indian War in Pennsylvania](#) web page from ExplorePAHistory.

McElroy, T. A., 1988, Groundwater resources of Fayette County, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania Geological Survey, 4th ser., [Water Resource Report 60](#), 57 p.



View to the west of the Burgoon Sandstone with its prominent trough crossbeds and joint fractures. Directions of crossbedding indicate a southeastern source of sediments, which were carried by braided streams. This is the approximate location of the French campsite. Photograph by Shaulis.