

## Theological Musings from Dave's Laptop

April 12, 2016

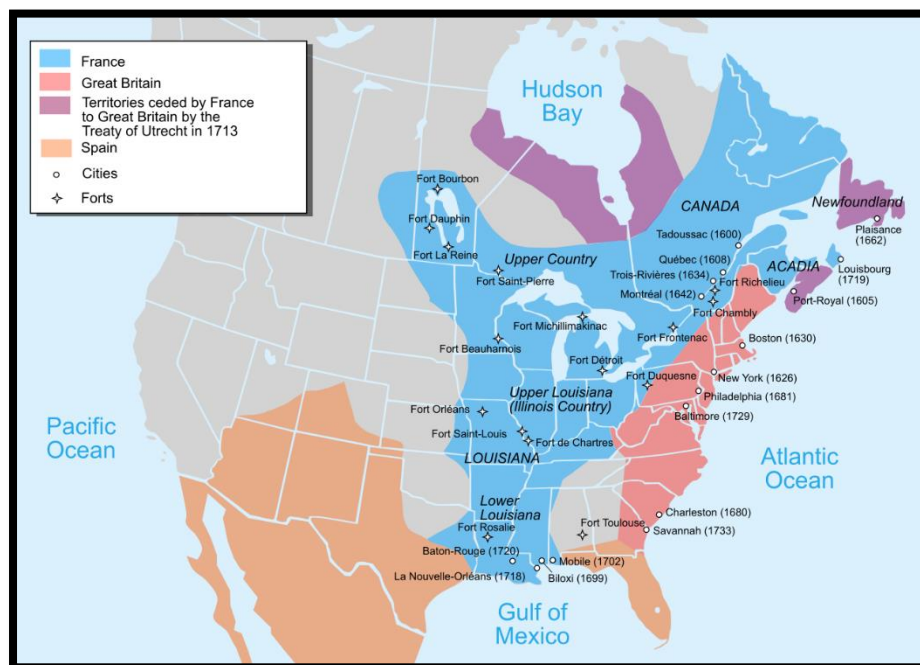
One of the things Jill and I like to do on vacation is to “meander.” I do this especially well, since I am frequently lost, and this *Laptop* grows out of both situations.

Our recent vacation was spent in Morgantown, West Virginia with Tom and Bonnie Metcalfe. Tom was the Music Director in our first pastorate in Carlisle, Kentucky, beginning in 1980. Tom and Bonnie were also our next-door neighbors, and our children are similar ages, so we've been good friends ever since.

Jill and I have been wanting to see Deep Creek Lake, in western Maryland just beyond the area covered by this map, and on one afternoon we all piled in the car to go see the lake. That's the “meander” part.

On the way back, though, I missed a turn (that's the “lost” part) and we found ourselves heading, not back to Morgantown, but northwest into Pennsylvania. Since we weren't in a hurry, we decided to drive to Uniontown, PA and then head back south.

It was on this unplanned detour that we came across the Fort Necessity National Battlefield, noted as the location of “the first battle of the French and Indian War.” I was particularly interested in this, since our daughter, Anna, has told me that my fifth-great-grandfather, one Joseph Pardue, “fought in the first blood of the French & Indian War” with twenty-two-year-old Colonel George Washington. Here's a quick summary of what I've learned in research since, subject to correction by those of you who are real historians (this has a theological point in the end).



This map shows those parts of North America claimed and counter-claimed by European powers in 1750. If you look closely, you can see that Fort Duquesne, on the site of present-day Pittsburgh, lay near the boundary between land claimed by England and France, and the English and the French were both busy about trying to keep the other out of their territory.

Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia sent young Lieutenant Colonel George

Washington to Fort LeBeouf in the disputed Ohio Territory to tell the French to “get out.”

Upon their refusal to do so, Governor Dinwiddie sent Washington back in March of 1754 with more troops to push the French out.

As Washington made his way toward Fort Duquesne, a scouting party of his men encountered a French scouting party in the Battle of Jumonville Glen. Although the accounts differ, it appears that an Indian chieftain allied with Washington executed the French Captain “in cold blood,” which Washington knew would lead to larger conflict.

Retreating to Great Meadows with about 150 men, Washington proceeded to throw together what he called “Fort Necessity,” whose reconstruction we visited. The French soon attacked with overwhelming force, and Washington’s outnumbered men were not able to effectively return fire due to being exposed in torrential rain.



Although the battle was going solidly in favor of the French, their Captain expected Washington to receive reinforcements straightaway in numbers the French could not withstand. With this in mind, the French offered Washington the opportunity to surrender, if he would agree to leave “their territory.” Washington signed the surrender document on July 4, 1754—his only career surrender—which must have made the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776 that much sweeter to him.

To greatly shorten what happened next, hostilities between France and England continued to escalate from that point, resulting in the beginning of The Seven Years’ War (known as “The French & Indian War” in the United States) two years later. The Seven Years’ War, considered by many to be the first “world war,” ended in crushing victory by the British that established Britain as the preeminent world power of the next century. And it was to avenge this crushing defeat at the hands of the British that France sided with the revolting American colonies a few years later.



As best I can tell from the documents I have, Joseph Pardue did not fight at Fort Necessity, but he was one of Washington’s soldiers in the Seventh Virginia Militia at the Battle of Fort Duquesne in 1757.<sup>1</sup>

Another interesting thing I learned in that meander is why U.S. 40 is known as “National Highway.”

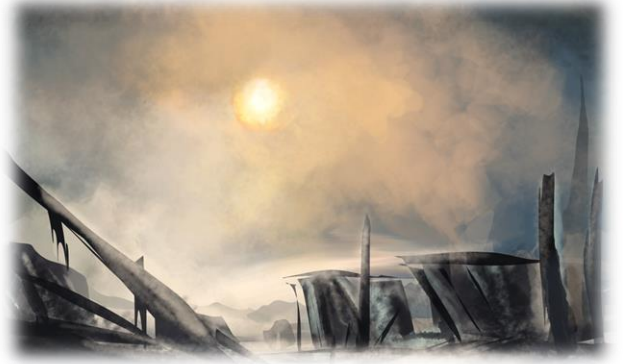
<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Fort\\_Necessity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Fort_Necessity)  
<http://theparduefamiliesofcolonialvirginia.blogspot.com/p/lower-appomattox-river-pardue-families.html>  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Fort\\_Duquesne](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Fort_Duquesne)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven\\_Years%27\\_War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Years%27_War)

The reason is that the road Washington's men cleared in 1754 eventually became the very first improved highway project of the Federal Government—the Road West.<sup>2</sup>

Okay, so where's the "theology" in this story?  
Glad you asked.

As I read through the biblical books of *Joshua* and *Judges* every spring, I'm always struck by the desolate drumbeat of destruction in one Canaanite town after another as the Israelites "left no survivors" and "destroyed every living thing." We're told that the Canaanite peoples were "exceedingly wicked," but they were still fairly peaceful people who were killed "in cold blood," having done nothing to harm the Israelites . . .

**just as we did to the Native Americans whose land we took and on which we now live.**



I think about the way in which war in general, in which we humans seem perpetually engaged, is nearly always about similar "land grabs" from someone else. And I think about what our world might look like if every one of us as individuals and every nation to which we belong took seriously the words of Scripture:

*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you?  
**To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God** (Micah 6:8).*

Maybe you and I could make a difference in the world by seeking out persons to lead our nation who live by those words. The Maryland Primary Election comes soon. Vote your Values. No, *Vote God's Values* as best you can.

Dave

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<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Road](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Road)