

BUSHY RUN

Good day, everyone--it's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.

Bushy Run Battlefield in Western Pennsylvania is little known to those who do not live nearby Harrison City in Westmoreland County, but it is preserved as a state park and holds an important place in our history. At Bushy Run, the Indians were finally submerged in Pennsylvania. The defeat of the French and Indians which brought the conclusion of a world war in 1763 did not end the conflict with the Indians in Western Pennsylvania. Rather, the Indians were incensed over the new British domination, and the settlements in the East, and finally, an Ottawa chief named Pontiac called a council of war at Detroit and began the fierce struggle known as Pontiac's Rebellion, a misnamed war if ever there was one. It lasted less than a year and ended Indian desire in Pennsylvania, but alarm spread throughout the frontier in 1763, and the panic came as far east as Cumberland and Northampton counties. Indian raiders were attacking everywhere, killing families and destroying homes.

By the end of May, the Indians were winning one battle after another and they had cut off all communication with Fort Pitt.

Then came to the scene one Colonel Henry Bouquet, a Swiss officer attached to the British army. Bouquet set out from Carlisle with 500 regulars. The Indians, learning of his advance abandoned their constant attacks on Fort Pitt to intercept Bouquet. They met at Bushy Run and caught an advance guard of Bouquet's little force

by surprise. After nightfall, Bouquet's men erected the now-famous fort of flour sacks on a hilltop. When the fighting resumed in the morning, although they had the protection, it appeared that Bouquet and his men would be slaughtered. However, the clever Swiss pulled an old chestnut out of the military fire. By feigning retreat, a large body of his men stole through a ravine and behind a shield of trees, and as the Indians advanced whooping their expectant victory, Bouquet's little force fell on them side and rear and it was all over. Bouquet's demonstration of an unusual understanding of wilderness warfare relieved the siege on Fort Pitt and in the following year, the Swiss officer led an expedition into central Ohio to overawe the Indians with his canny fighting, and finally brought lasting peace to the Western Pennsylvania area.

One of the many good reasons for visitations to Western Pennsylvania is to enjoy many of the trails of history which are there--predating the Revolutionary War's monuments in the East. The hilltop where the flourbag fort stood is marked by a monument. The approximate site of the graves of the fifty soldiers who died there is on the next hill..and the museum will give you backgrounding into this little known, but significant battle--the Bushy Run Affair--where Pennsylvania gained peace until the Revolution broke.

This is Pete Wambach. It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.