

# The 18th Century Frontier (1774) - Pricketts Fort State Park and Tu-Endie-Wei State Park

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## Pricketts Fort State Park

Interpreters recreate late 18th century lifestyle through period attire, demonstrations of a variety of colonial crafts, and the fort.

### Welcome

Perched on a small rise overlooking the confluence of Prickett's Creek and the Monongahela River, this rustic log fort is a re-creation of the original Prickett's Fort of 1774, which served as a refuge from Native American war parties on the western frontier of Colonial Virginia. Built in 1976 by the Prickett's Fort Memorial Foundation, the "new" fort serves as a living history site where interpreters recreate late 18th century lifestyle through period attire and demonstrations of a variety of colonial crafts. Throughout the season, visitors may find blacksmiths, spinners, weavers and other traditional artisans at work, and a gun shop which features the only public demonstrations of 18th century firearm manufacturing in the state.



When you visit the reconstructed fort today, you will find historical interpreters dressed in 18th century frontier clothing and involved in activities which would have been found on the Virginia frontier at the time: farming, spinning, weaving, carpentry, blacksmithing, and

repairs to buildings, tools and weapons, as well as other activities. The interpreters, working as laborers and artisans in the fort, will be able to talk with you about their activities, both as they existed on the early frontier and as they developed later, when the first communities were beginning to appear.



The reconstructed fort represents the original fort as it would have been found during a period of quiet. You will probably not see any militia activity, unless you are here for a special event. You will, however, find most of the weapons and equipment used by militiamen and be able to talk to interpreters who are knowledgeable about militia functions and weaponry. You might even find a native interpreter at the fort, dressed as a Shawnee warrior, who can talk with you about military matters from the American Indian point of view, as well as Shawnee culture in general.

The Prickett family continued to live on the original Prickett homestead for just under two centuries: from the 1770's until the 1960's. About 1859, construction began on what is now referred to as the Job Prickett house, and it is this structure which still stands, a mere stone's throw from the reconstructed fort.

## The Fort



Pricketts Fort, constructed in 1774, provided a place of refuge from American Indian attack for early settlers. It was built at the confluence of Pricketts Creek and the Monongahela River within 10 miles of three major American Indian trails. The Fort, which covers a 110 by

**110 foot square, was built by the community militia and is named after Captain Jacob Prickett.**

**Two-story blockhouses are set in the four corners of the 12-foot high log walls and were used by the Fort's defenders as lookouts. Lining the weathered stockade walls are 14 tiny cabins, some with earthen floors, which served as shelter for the women and children. A meeting house and storehouse fill the common. There are two large gates: one double gate facing north and one smaller gate facing west.**

**The fort covers a 100 by 100 foot square, with 12-foot-high log walls and blockhouses at each corner. Lining the weathered stockade walls are 16 tiny cabins, some with earthen floors. A meetinghouse and a storehouse fill the common.**

**When the threat of Native American uprisings occurred, up to 80 families from the surrounding countryside would hurry to the fort. They would stay as long as the threat existed, from days to weeks. "Forting up" was simply tolerated by settlers, as life in the cramped quarters could be unpleasant. Such sacrifices were necessary for survival on the dangerous frontier of the late 1700s. Today's fort, just north of Fairmont, still portrays that life and time.**

### **Job Prickett House**



**Just south of the Fort stands the Job Prickett House built in 1859 by Captain Jacob Prickett's great-grandson, Job. This original structure has been restored to provide visitors a glimpse of the progress that took place at the Fort between the 18th and 19th centuries. Although still primitive by today's standards, the brick home illustrates the evolution of an increasingly civilized lifestyle and the availability of mass-produced furnishings.**

The simple floor plan of the home is typical of a 19th century farmhouse, however, Job Prickett incorporated several unique architectural styles to the exterior. The front of the home reflects Federal style with two doors and four windows. The Greek Revival style was used in the appearance of the flush chimneys and the four panel doors with transoms above them.

Many of the family's original furnishings, tools and handmade objects have been carefully preserved and are on display in the house. The house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

### American Indians in West Virginia .



The Virginia-Pennsylvania frontier was a place of countless dangers, but it was the presence of numerous Indian tribes, in particular the Shawnee, which Europeans especially feared. For centuries, the Shawnee, Mingo, Wyandot and Lenape/Delaware tribes lived throughout the upper Ohio Valley. Pricketts Fort was never directly attacked by Indians, and written documentation of any interactions between people living on the grounds of the fort and American Indians is sparse. Many historians believe that between the 1600's and 1800's, the area that encompasses modern-day West Virginia was a hunting ground for Eastern Woodland Indians such as the Shawnees and Delaware. As hunting and gathering were activities by which American Indians sustained their lives, they considered West Virginia



their home.

Testimonies from the earliest traders and settlers in the region make clear that there were small Indian settlements scattered throughout the region in the first half of the 18th century. It is well known that there were extensive trade relationships between the Indians of the Ohio River Valley and the European frontier settlers during the 18th and 19th centuries. Between the 1700's and 1800's the Ohio River Valley was alive with interactions between Woodland peoples and European settlers. During this time, many treaties were made and wars were fought. Often times, land ownership was at the root of these confrontations. Documented evidence suggests that some of the primary Indian inhabitants of the middle Ohio River Valley during the 1700's and 1800's were people who spoke two general languages: Macro-Siouan, particularly Iroquoian languages, and Macro-Algonquian. These people can be traced to the ancestors of modern day Shawnee, Delaware, and Iroquois people.

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## Tu-Endie-Wei State Park

### Welcome

At the junction of the Ohio and Kanawha Rivers stands this monument which commemorates the frontiersmen who fought and died at the Battle of Point Pleasant. This battle was fought with Chief Cornstalk on October 10, 1774, and is recognized as the decisive engagement in a proactive series of Indian wars. The name "Tu-Endie-Wei" is a Wyandotte word meaning "point between two waters."



The Point Pleasant Battlefield Monument was erected on October 10, 1909 as a tribute to a battle fought on the same date in 1774.

Located in the southern end of the town of Point Pleasant (#1 Main St.), the four-acre Tu-Endie-Wei State Park commemorates the 1774 engagement. The park's centerpiece is an 84-foot granite obelisk that honors the Virginia militiamen who gave their lives during the battle, while the statue of a frontiersman stands at the base. Smaller memorial tablets in the park are dedicated to Cornstalk and to "Mad" Anne Bailey whose "mad" exploits in thwarting the Indians earned her the nickname, after her first husband, Richard Trotter, was killed in the battle. Another interesting marker rests on the spot where Pierre Joseph de Celoron de Blainville, A French explorer, buried a leaden plate in 1749, claiming the land for his country.



Located on the park is the Mansion House. Erected in 1796 by Walter Newman as a tavern, it is the oldest, hewn log house in the Kanawha Valley. Preserved as a museum, it features displays of antiques and heirlooms of the era, including a large square piano believed to be one of the first brought over the Alleghenies. Two bedrooms are furnished with authentic four-poster beds that are more than 150 years old.

The Colonel Charles Lewis Chapter, N.S. Daughters of the American Revolution, maintains the Mansion House Museum and uses it for a chapter house as well.

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## The Battle of Point Pleasant

### October 10, 1774

Here at the confluence of the Kanawha and Ohio Rivers, the bloody, day-long Battle of Point Pleasant was fought. On October 10, 1774, Colonel Andrew Lewis' 1,100 Virginia militiamen decisively defeated a like number of Indians lead by the Shawnee Chieftain Cornstalk. Considered a landmark in frontier history, some believed the battle to be the first of the American Revolution. This action broke the power of the ancient Americans in the Ohio Valley and quelled a general Indian war on the frontier. Significantly, it also prevented an alliance between the British and Indians, one which could very possibly have caused the Revolution to have a different outcome, altering the entire history of the U.S. In addition, the ensuing peace with the Indians enabled western Virginians to return across the Allegheny Mountains to aid Revolutionary forces.

When Lord Dunmore (John Murray) was appointed governor of Virginia in 1771, he was ordered to discourage settlement of the lands beyond the



mountains to the west. This action was motivated in part by the British government's desire to pacify the Indians by preventing encroachment on their hunting grounds and partly to preserve a profitable fur trade with the Ohio Valley tribes.

The westward migration proved difficult to halt, however, as more and more restless settlers poured over the Alleghenies. The continued invasion aroused the native population. Their anger turned into bloody warfare early in 1774 when a group of settlers murdered the entire family of Logan, a friendly Mingo chief, opposite the mouth of Yellow Creek in Hancock County. Logan was so enraged that he led his tribe on the warpath and took 30 white scalps and prisoners in revenge.

Unfortunate clashes between the encroaching pioneers and Indians continued with increasing frequency and savagery. Both whites and red men were guilty of unthinkable atrocities including murder, kidnapping, and infanticide.

Lord Dunmore ordered the organization of the border militia. Colonel Andrew Lewis, a veteran of the French and Indian Wars, was appointed commander of the Virginia Troops. By carrying the fight to the Indians, Dunmore, a Tory, hoped to divert Virginians from the trouble brewing with England.



In September 1774, Dunmore signed peace treaties with the Delaware and Six Nations of the Iroquois at Pittsburgh. He then started down the Ohio River to give battle to the fierce Shawnee. Under Cornstalk, the Shawnee tribe had allied itself with Logan's Mingo to turn the frontier "red with Long Knives' blood." Meanwhile Lewis' army had marched from Fort Union (Lewisburg) to the point of the confluence of the Great Kanawha and Ohio Rivers. He then established camp to await Dunmore's arrival from the north.

This pincer movement was thwarted when Cornstalk abandoned his Ohio River villages north of Point Pleasant before Dunmore's forces arrived. He then attacked Lewis while the white forces were still divided, and they engaged in a bloody battle characterized by the succession of individual hand-to-hand combats. Fought on the point of land known by the Wyandotte Indian phrase "tu-endie-wie," or "the point between two waters," the battle raged all day. At times Cornstalk and his braves held the upper hand, but eventually the firepower of the backwoodsmen proved superior on the then heavily forested battlefield. At the end, 230 Indians were killed or wounded and more than 50 Virginians had lost their lives, including Colonel Charles Lewis, brother of the commanding officer.

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