



South Georgia
History Project

The Wiregrass Telegraph

Promoting Educational Excellence in U. S. History!

**Treeless
Edition**
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Pittsburgh Report

The annual National Council of History Educators conference is now history. SGHP had 15 of your colleagues in attendance at the forks of the Ohio River. Here's your report on what happened with some absolutely fabulous history thrown in to improve the mix.



Pittsburgh

is not grimy and dirty like many of us thought before we saw it. It probably was at one time when there was still a steel industry in America, but now the air is clean and the rivers are once again clear and green. The city is set upon absolutely stunning real estate where the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers flow together bordered by very high bluffs and mountains all the way around. Our first sight of the city was coming out of a tunnel on the southern bank of the Monongahela and immediately crossing a bridge. The effect was stunning and an appropriate start to our experiences for the next few days.

History

is alive and well here. The forks of the Ohio is some of the most strategic and fought-over land in North America because he who controls the headwaters of the Ohio has access to the entire region from there to the

Mississippi River.....a fort there also protects everything to the East from western invasion. There was no other decent way to travel to the West from the Northeast US except through Pittsburgh. So the French first established Fort Duquesne on the point in 1754 and were soon defeated by the English, who renamed the structure Ft William Pitt. Ft Pitt would become a key point in the French and Indian War, the Revolution and in the settlement of the Northwest Territories.

George Washington

If one is skeptical about Washington being the "Father of our Country", a trip to Pittsburgh will change your mind. As a 22 year old Major, a small force commanded by Washington



ambushed a group of Frenchmen a few miles south of Pittsburgh and killed a French diplomat named duJumonville. Although there was certain to be a clash between the English and French over territory in the New World eventually, Washington had the misfortune to provide the spark. The history of the entire region and the settlement of the Ohio Valley are then centered on George Washington through the Revolution and his Presidency - recall that the Whiskey Rebellion took place here in his first term. Even after he left the Presidency, he had extensive land holdings in



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the area and was deeply involved in the affairs of the region for over 50 years. But he remains possibly the only man in history to spark a clash of empires.

on the history of conscription which was very well received. Presenting at a national conference is certainly a feather in Jim's cap and quite an attractive line in anyone's vita, so to Jim - congratulations for a job well done! You put SGHP on the map!!

The 7 Years War, called the French and Indian War in North America, was the first true world war. It inflamed the entire Atlantic world and totally re-ordered the balance of power in the known world. The British emerged as the ascendant power in the world and forced change in each of the nations in continental Europe. This change set in motion changes in the New World such as our Revolution...in continental Europe those changes would lead to the French Revolution. And all because a wet-behind-the-ears inexperienced 22 year old Major totally botched the mission he had been given!!

The Conference

highlighted all the history you've just read. David McCullough was superb but the surprise of the conference was Dr Fred Anderson of UC Boulder. Dr Anderson is probably today's pre-eminent 7 Year's War scholar and he proved it through an engaging lecture and a presentation of a 4 part miniseries on the War to be aired on PBS in JAN 2006. And of course our own Jim Hall presented his class



Next Month -our new grant, the Wiregrass History Consortium (WHC). What will it look like?