



Historic Highways of America: The Old Glade (Forbes's) Road (Pennsylvania State Road)

Archer Butler Hulbert

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When General Edward Braddock landed in Virginia in 1755, one of his first acts in his campaign upon the Ohio was to urge Governor Morris to have a road opened westward through Pennsylvania. His reason for wishing another road, parallel to the one his own army was to cut, was that there might be a shorter route than his own to the northern colonies, over which his expresses might pass speedily, and over which wagons might come more quickly from Pennsylvania—then the “granary of America.” It was inevitable that the shortest route from the center of the colonies to the Ohio would become the most important. The road Braddock asked Morris to open was completed only three miles beyond the present town of Bedford, Pennsylvania, when the road choppers hurried home on receipt of the news of Braddock’s defeat. Braddock made a death-bed prophecy; it was that the British would do better next time. In 1758 Pitt placed Braddock’s unfulfilled task on the shoulders of Brigadier-general John Forbes, who marched to Bedford on the new road opened by Morris; thence he opened, along the general alignment of the prehistoric “Trading Path,” a new road to the Ohio. It was a desperate undertaking; but Forbes completed his campaign in November, 1758 triumphantly—at the price of his life. This road, fortified at Carlisle, Shippensburg, Chambersburg, Loudon, Littleton, Bedford, Ligonier, and Pittsburg became the great military route from the Atlantic seaboard to the trans-Allegheny empire. By it Fort Pitt was relieved during Pontiac’s rebellion and the Ohio Indians were brought to terms. Throughout the Revolutionary War this road was the main thoroughfare over which the western forts received ammunition and supplies. In the dark days of the last decade of the eighteenth century, when the Kentucky and Ohio pioneers were fighting for the foothold they had obtained in the West, this road played a vital part

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