

# What was he really up to?

## An Inquiry into the Revolutionary War activities of John Rodgers of Rodger's Tavern

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## Abstract

This report provides detailed research into the Revolutionary War activities of John Rodgers (1728-1794) as an officer in the Harford County Militia, the intermittent landlord of the taverns on either side of the Susquehanna, and as the operator of the Lower Susquehanna Ferry across the river from Perryville to Havre de Grace during the years 1774-1783. It is about the history of Cecil and Harford Counties from roughly 1774 to 1783, about the political changes going on during those tumultuous years, i.e., the American Revolution, about military activities during those nine years, i.e., the American War of Independence, the British invasion of the late summer of 1777, the Yorktown Campaign of 1781, and the role of John Rodgers in all of this, i.e., his public life as a militia officer, and his private life as a tavern keeper and ferry operator.

It is not designed to provide a full biography of Rodgers' activities prior to 1774 or after the conclusion of the war, of his family life, his acquisition of property, or legal dealings and troubles. It is also not a history of the building in Cecil County known today as "Rodgers Tavern" after John Rodgers had taken over the tavern from William Stevenson on 18 August 1779. Information on those aspects of Rodgers' life, on his family and on the building bearing his name has been collected in great detail in the meticulous research conducted by Jennifer Pitts, Consultant to the Town of Perryville for the Rodgers Tavern Museum, and to be consulted in cooperation with the Rodgers Tavern Museum.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Here is the [link to the research](#).

## Acknowledgements

Many colleagues and acquaintances assisted in the research and writing of this report. I would like first to thank Ms. Dianna M. Battaglia, Director, Planning and Zoning of the Town of Perryville, and Ms. Jennifer Pitts, Consultant to the Rodgers Tavern Museum, for interviews with me and for offering me the contract. A big Thank You is also due to Ms. Brigitte Carty, Executive Director of the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway, and Ms. Ellen von Karajan, Executive Director, The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail Inc., which funded part of the project.

Prior to the start of this project Ms. Pitts had already conducted extensive research into the owners and operators of the Lower Susquehanna Ferry and on the tavern on the left/east bank of the Susquehanna during the eighteenth century. Her research and information provided during this project greatly helped to set the historical context and economic activities for the years in which John Rodgers lived in Cecil and Harford Counties.

Many libraries and archives provided support for this project. Via email and during a visit to Baltimore, Mr. Micah Connor, Library Associate & Student Research Coordinator at the Maryland Center for History and Culture and his colleague Ms. Mallory Harwerth, Special Collections Archivist, provided access to the treasures in their collection. Mr. Owen Lourie, historian on the staff of the Research Department at the Maryland State Archives in Annapolis had all my requested materials waiting for me when I arrived there. Ms. Carol Donache of Historical Society of Cecil County was very helpful during an unannounced visit. Mr. Richard Sherrill, Archives Department Chair of the Historical Society of Harford County, went through his collections looking for information on John Rodgers.

I would also like to thank the Connecticut Historical Society for use of materials from the Wadsworth Papers, the Huntington Library for permission to reproduce maps from a ms journal in their collections, the Firestone Library at Princeton University for permission to use maps drawn by Louis Alexandre Berthier, and the Clements Library at the University of Michigan for use of maps from the Sir Henry Clinton Papers in their collections.

Lastly, Ms. Michelle Yost from the Interlibrary Loan Desk at Hope College ordered numerous articles and books for me. Thank you all.

Holland, MI  
February 2023

Robert A. Selig, PhD

## 1. Goals and Purposes of the study

No detailed biography of John Rodgers or History of Rodgers Tavern exists, and the few short biographical sources often contain errors. That is particularly glaring in the information concerning Rodgers' activities during the American War of Independence, which consistently confer upon Rodgers the rank of Colonel. Wikipedia reads: "In 1775, Colonel John Rodger is known for leaving his post operating the ferry and tavern in order to assemble and lead the 5th Company of the Maryland militia, which later became associated with the Flying Corps, an integral part of the early Revolution." In 1962, the *Society of Daughters of Colonial Wars In the State of Maryland* affixed a plaque to Rodgers Tavern "In memory of Colonel John Rodgers 1726-1791. Patriot-Innkeeper and friend of Washington — Organized and Commanded 5th Co. MD. Militia, 1776". Even the National Historic Register Nomination calls him "Colonel John Rodgers" without providing any supporting primary-source evidence.<sup>2</sup> Only a very few publications express doubt about this rank, viz. *Rodgers Record* points out that "In later life he was always referred to as Colonel Rodgers, although what was the date of his later promotion we do not know."<sup>3</sup> In a talk given at the unveiling of the historical marker at Rodgers Tavern in October 1932, J. Alexis Shriver spoke of "Capt. Rodgers, or as he seems to have been generally known, Colonel John Rodgers." References to Rodgers as owner of the tavern are as just as frequent in those documents, but are they true?

The report seeks to provide primary source-based answers to these questions. It sets itself two goals. In 1786, John Rodgers first began to call himself, or people started calling him, "Colonel John Rodgers", and today he is still widely known as Colonel Rodgers. The first goal is to research the historical basis for this nomenclature by conducting intensive research into the militia system of Revolutionary Maryland and the organization of the militia in Harford and Cecil Counties during the early years of the War of Independence as it relates to John Rodgers, and the role he played in it. Perryville and Rodgers Tavern lay on the Post Road, the most important north-south route of Colonial and Revolutionary America. The second goal is to show the important role the Lower Susquehanna Ferry, run by John Rodgers during the early days of the American Revolution, and beginning on 25 June 1782 by Alexander McCaskey, from Havre de Grace to Perryville played during the War of Independence in assisting American and French forces across the river as they traveled to and from Yorktown in 1781 and 1782. It is not a full biography of John Rodgers and his family, his land purchases, and similar activities, nor does it cover his and his family's life prior to 1775/76 or after the conclusion of the war. Neither is it a history of the building known since the late eighteenth century as Rodgers Tavern or of the opinions on the quality of the accommodations by the famous, and not so famous, visitors who stayed there before, during, and after the war.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/NR\\_PDFs/NR-88.pdf](https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/NR_PDFs/NR-88.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Vol. 1, No. 1 (12 May 1963) in the collections of the Cecil County Historical Society.

## 2. Methodology and Sources

The findings of this report are based almost exclusively on American and French primary sources. As much as possible they are arranged chronologically and encompass the years from roughly the middle of 1774 until the end of the War of Independence. Following extensive on-line research and email correspondence, research in the Maryland State Archives in Annapolis, the Maryland Center for History and Culture in Baltimore, and the Historical Society of Cecil County in Elkton, was conducted in person in December 2022. Following an email from Mr. Richard Sherril, Archives Chair, Historical Society of Harford County, I decided against in-person research in Bel Air. In an email of 30 October 2022, Mr. Sherril informed me that “We have no archival material on him [John Rodgers] and the only references were in secondary sources.”<sup>4</sup>

This research showed a very uneven distribution of sources for the two primary goals of the report. In the summer of 1774, pro-Independence colonists organized in Committees of Observation across Maryland. Committees of Observation were extra-legal institutions which initially ran parallel to the royal government and administration but quickly replaced them even before Governor Sir Robert Eden had departed for England.<sup>5</sup> In Maryland only the records of the meetings of the Committees of Observation in Frederick County and, fortunately, for Harford County survived.<sup>6</sup> It is in the Minutes of these meetings that John Rogers appears a few times, but once he moves to Cecil County the record falls silent.<sup>7</sup> The reasons for this are manifold. Few records were kept in the early days of the rebellion against the Crown of King George III, sometimes intentionally, while the outcome of the movement remained in doubt and identities needed to be protected. Some were lost or discarded, and wartime destruction, especially during Sir William Howe’s invasion of the state, added its share of destruction as well.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The email ended: “Although we would like to meet with you I really don’t see a reason for your coming to the Society because these two sources [Preston’s History of Harford County and Muster Rolls of Maryland Troops in the American Revolution] are available elsewhere. Best of luck on your endeavor. Richard Sherrill, Archives Chair, Historical Society of Harford County”

<sup>5</sup> Agnes Hunt, *The Provincial Committees of Safety of the American Revolution* (Cleveland: Winn & Judson, 1904), pp. 99-109: Maryland.

<sup>6</sup> The “Journal of the Committee of Observation of the Middle District of Frederick County, Maryland. September 12, 1775-October 24, 1776” is printed in numerous installments in the *Maryland Historical Magazine* between vol. 10 No. 4 (December 1915) and vol. 12 No. 4 (December 1917). The “Proceedings of the Committee of Observation for Elizabeth Town District [Washington County]” are printed in vol. 12 and vol. 13. They end on 24 April 1777.

<sup>7</sup> A search of “Cecil County” on the website of the Maryland Hall of Records in Annapolis yields 292 hits but none in connection with “Militia”, “Revolutionary War”, “Committee of Observation”, or “John Rodgers/Rogers”.

<sup>8</sup> See Morris L. Radoff, “The Maryland Records in the Revolutionary War” *The American Archivist* vol. 37, No. 2 (April 1974), pp. 277-285.

Considerably more damage to the historical record, however, occurred during the fire in the Department of War in Washington, DC, on 8 November 1800. The location of the new nation's capital was the result of a compromise between northern states which wanted the new federal government to assume Revolutionary War debts, and southern states, which wanted the capital in a location friendly to their slave-holding agricultural interests. Even before the Residence Act of 16 July 1790 gave the president power to choose a site for the capital city on the east bank of the Potomac River, Congress on 7 May, one week before the first meeting of the Constitutional Convention on 14 May 1787, instructed individual states to send in requests for re-imbusement for debts incurred during the war. Maryland almost immediately began collecting promissory notes handed out by Continental authorities during the war in lieu of currency, and tabulated them for submission to the Federal Government. Some states kept the promissory notes, others such as Maryland sent them to Washington and only kept the tabulations. The fire of November 1800 destroyed the Revolutionary War records stored in the Department of War. During the War of 1812, British troops on 24 August 1814 set fire to the U.S. Capitol where the manuscript collection of the Library of Congress was housed. When William B. Bond, an Attorney at Law from Bel Air, sought verification of the Revolutionary War service of Aaron Mc Comas, who had served in John Rodgers' Militia Company, in support of Mc Comas' pension application, the Land Office in Annapolis replied on 25 July 1840 that "there is no muster roll of pay roll of Cap<sup>tn</sup> Rodgers' Company of the Regiment to be found. – The rolls of the revolution are very imperfect – Most of the rolls of the Militia I have understood, were sent on to the City of Washington some years ago, for the purpose of enabling the Government to adjust the claims of the State, and they were destroyed when the War Office was burnt. There being no muster or pay roll to be found of Cap<sup>tn</sup> Roger's Company, I can furnish no information to the service of Mr McComas."<sup>9</sup>

A few military records for both Harford County as well as Cecil County nevertheless survive in the Maryland State Archives. Most of the records relating to the War of Independence have been published in the multi-volume *Archives of Maryland* and available on-line. Among the unpublished mss used in the preparation of this report are the compilations or summary lists of expenses for which the state sought compensation, viz. "A List of Accounts paid by the State of Maryland to Militia in Service of the United States" or "The United States to the State of Maryland for Pay of Militia in Continental Service". They are part of the "Commissioner of Army Accounts, Receipt Book 1145-1" in the Maryland Hall of Records (State Archives) in Annapolis. A note at the end reads: "Received 20th September 1787 of the State of Maryland sundry accounts agreeable to the foregoing list for Monies paid to Militia in service of the United States amounting in Cont[inenta]l Dollars ... which accounts

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<sup>9</sup> Pension Application Aaron Mc Comas R6638. M804 Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application Files, Record Group 15. National Archives and Records Administration, (NARA) Washington, D.C. All pension applications were accessed via Fold3.



and Vouchers I am to forward to the Commissioners of Army Accounts agreeably to an Ordinance of Congress of the 7th of May last". These receipt books/compilation of expenses are NOT arranged by individual counties but rather chronologically and thus state-wide.

The collections of the H. Furlong Baldwin Library at the Maryland Center for History and Culture (MCHC) in Baltimore yielded no results for the activities of John Rodgers in Cecil County. Up until the summer of 1778, Rodgers was still living in Harford County, but once he moved to Cecil County his commission in Harford County became dormant and the now 50-year-old Rodgers never seems to have applied for a militia command in Cecil County. "Cecil County Papers (MS 0231) Series XI: Miscellaneous, Box 8: Invoices concerning the Revolutionary Militia 1778-1779", does not contain any mention of Rodgers, neither does "Box 8: Certification of Military Service 1787" in Record Group MS 0231. "Series V: Court Material Box 4: list of tavern licenses granted, 1783-1786", is too late for this report though it does contain lists of persons who had been granted ordinary licenses, 1759-1782.

Similarly, "MS 1146, Box 1, Folder 5: Rosters, Cecil County Militia, circa 1776", and "MS 1146, Box 1 Folder 19: Rosters, Cecil County Militia, circa 1778", are either too early or Rodgers is no longer in the militia. "MS 1146 Series VI: Miscellaneous Items. Accounts of Militia Payments, 1776-1787", and "Box F3, Folder: 10 (1 item, 8 pages)" hold no information on Rodgers either, neither does "Series VIII, Appendix B: Maryland Militia, Discharge and Pay Data, 1781". "Subseries A and B: Oaths of Allegiance only, incl. Cecil County", does not apply since Rodgers took his Oath of Allegiance in Harford County in March 1778.<sup>10</sup>

Research in manuscript sources relative to Harford County in MCHC were much more rewarding. MS 1616 contains information on Revolutionary War Militia Officers in Maryland, including John Rodgers, who is mentioned twice, once as a captain in the 23rd Regiment of Militia commissioned on 9 April 1778, and once under the date of 10 June 1778. "MS 1675, Joseph Hughes Harford County Collection, Box 2" refers specifically to Harford County, and though undated contains original militia rolls from 1778. Also consulted was "Box 5, Harford County local patriots and their interpreters, 1774-1777", and a typed ms by William H. Love, *Harford County in the Revolution*, dated 1904. MS 1146, Box 5, held one of the most valuable mss for this project: "Harford County Committee of Observation (Proceedings), 2 January 1775-11 June 1777."<sup>11</sup> "MS 1146, Series IV: Pay Accounts 1776", does not mention John Rodgers but he is mentioned once in "MS 1146, Series VI: Miscellaneous Items, Folder 3.10: Accounts of Militia Payments, under the date of 10 June 1778: Capt. John Rodgers Co<sup>y</sup> £ 11

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<sup>10</sup> All mss containing information of men who took the Oath of Allegiance have been digitized by the Maryland Center for History and Culture as MS 3088.

<sup>11</sup> There is a reference to an earlier meeting on 11 June 1774 following a mass meeting at Bush but no records between 11 June and 2 December 1774 survived. The ms in MCHC is a photocopy of the original in the Historical Society of Harford County.

6/ 5d.” The undated ms begins before September 1776, the last payment recoded in the volume is dated 26 June 1787.<sup>12</sup>

For the second goal of this report, military activities in connection with the marches of the allied armies to and from Yorktown in 1781 and 1782, American pension applications, filed primarily following the passage of the pension law of 1832, turned out not to be a plentiful or even reliable source of information.<sup>13</sup> Only a few pension applications filed by veterans from Harford and Cecil County mention service in the Harford County Militia under John Rodgers between 1776 and 1778. Yet they provide valuable glimpses into the activities of the militia guarding the coastline against Royal Navy vessels and Loyalist privateers alike. Pension applications by soldiers who had served in the Continental Army, however, are silent for the crossing of the Susquehanna in 1781, largely because more than two thirds of Washington’s Army embarked at Plum Point and sailed to Virginia. Only the 1st and 2d New York Regiments crossed the Susquehanna River on the Lower Ferry in September 1781 on their way to Yorktown, but no pension application has been found that mentions the crossing. The wagon train crossed the river at Bald Friar’s Ford.

The same lack on information applies to Regimental Orderly Books for the Continental Army, which record daily orders for the unit. A single Orderly Book for a regiment that marched to Yorktown has survived. It is the Orderly Book of Colonel John Lamb's 2d Continental Artillery, of which there are two versions (6/20 - 10/21/1781 and 8/4 - 10/27/1781) in the New-York Historical Society.<sup>14</sup> Since the artillery traveled to Virginia on water, it provides no information for this report. Of the five infantry regiments that deployed to Yorktown in 1781 – the 1st New Jersey, 2d New Jersey, the Canadian (Congress' Own), the Rhode Island, 1st New York, and 2d New York Regiments - only one copy of the Orderly Book of the 2d New York Regiment, covering the days from 24 September to 10 October 1781, is housed in the New York State Library in Albany.<sup>15</sup> Another copy covering the days from 26 September to 30 October 1781 is held by the at New-York Historical Society.<sup>16</sup> Both, however, begin too late for our study.

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<sup>12</sup> The payment to Rodgers was authorized on 17 June 1778. *Journal and Correspondence of the Council of Maryland, April 1, 1778, through October 26, 1779*. Archives of Maryland Vol. 21, (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1901) p. 138: “That the said Treasurer Pay to William Jones one hundred and ten Pounds six shillings and five Pence for the use of John Rodgers & his Company”.

<sup>13</sup> In at least one case the application was downright fraudulent. See the report by US District Attorney Washington G. Singleton, who investigated hundreds of pension applications, to the application of Andrew Wilson, R11653.

<sup>14</sup> It is available on N-YHS microfilm #143, reel 14, and N-YHS microfilm #118.1, reel 12.

<sup>15</sup> Catalogue No. 10464, vol. 10, part 1.

<sup>16</sup> Microfilm #149, Reel 15.

The papers and correspondence of General Washington only instruct subordinate officers in general terms on the route their units were to take; Washington himself did not get involved in the day-to-day operations of the march. That was the task of Quartermaster General Timothy Pickering,<sup>17</sup> who in turn delegated the detailed responsibilities to officers such as Donaldson Yeates, Deputy Quartermaster General for Maryland and Delaware since August 1780.<sup>18</sup> The Pickering Papers contain no information on the organization of the crossing, primarily again, because most of the Continental Army embarked at Plum Point and only the New York Regiments crossed on the Lower Susquehanna Ferry.

Of the units that had participated in the siege of Yorktown, the 1st New Jersey, 2d New Jersey, 1st New York, 2d New York, Rhode Island, and Brigadier General Moses Hazen's Canadian Regiment all returned to New Jersey or New York in November and December 1781. Some of them, however, i.e., Lamb's Artillery, the Light Infantry, Joseph Plumb Martin's Corps of Sappers and Miners, and the Corps of Artificers, traveled north on water and disembarked at Plum Point. Of the units that traveled on land across the Susquehanna only a copy of the Orderly Book of the 2d New York has survived, but it contains a gap from 10 October 1781 to 19 August 1782.<sup>19</sup> That leaves the diary of Samuel Tallmadge of the Second New York Regiment as the single primary source by a participant for the return march.<sup>20</sup>

For the deployment of French forces to Yorktown, both the number and quality of primary sources is considerably better. As is the case with the Continental Army, no Regimental Orderly Book is known to exist; Rochambeau's Orderly Book for his whole army begins upon arrival in Newport on 14 July 1780 and ends on 17 August 1781, the eve of departure for Virginia.<sup>21</sup> More 3,500 officers and soldiers, however, crossed the Susquehanna on their way to Annapolis and the sea journey to Virginia. Though they do not describe the details of the crossing itself, accounts by more than a dozen officers and three enlisted men provide descriptions of nature and people along the Susquehanna in 1781 and 1782. Artillery,

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<sup>17</sup> The largest collection of Pickering Papers is held by the Massachusetts Historical Society (MAHS) in Boston, but there are also papers held by the New York Public Library and at Harvard University. MAHS Roll 26, Target 3, Vol. 82: "Letters sent by Timothy Pickering, Quartermaster General, June 29, 1781-Jan. 2, 1782", contain no letter sent by Pickering between 26 August, the completion of the crossing of the Hudson at King's Ferry, and 10 September, his arrival in Baltimore. In his *Revolutionary War Journals* Dearborn covers the march to Yorktown in just a few sentences.

<sup>18</sup> Erna Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army* (Washington, D.C., 1981), p. 60.

<sup>19</sup> New York State Library, catalogue No. 10464, vol. 10, part 1. Another copy is at New-York Historical Society, microfilm #149, reel 15.

<sup>20</sup> Almon W. Lauber, *Orderly Books of the Fourth New York Regiment, 1778-1780. The Second New York Regiment, 1780-1783 by Samuel Tallmadge and Others with Diaries of Samuel Tallmadge, 1780-1782 and John Barr, 1779-1782* (Albany, 1932), pp. 759-760.

<sup>21</sup> *Armée de Rochambeau. Livre d'ordres contenant les ordres donnés depuis le débarquement des troupes à Newport en Amérique septentrionale 1780.* Archives Départementales de Meurthe-et-Moselle, 1r de la Monnaie in Nancy, France, call number E 235.

wagons, and the hussars of Lauzun's Legion crossed at Bald Friars Ford and Ferry, but there are other primary sources that allow us to reconstruct a more detailed picture of the crossing of Rochambeau's forces in 1781.

No detailed road description exists for the Continental Army, but Washington had tasked his map-maker Simeon DeWitt in August 1781 with surveying the road from City Hall in Philadelphia to Yorktown.<sup>22</sup> His roadmap provides the earliest visual information on the location of Rodgers Tavern, but there is no known map for even a single campsite of the Continental Army on the road to Yorktown or back. For French forces, however, one detailed road description and three separate campsite drawings both for the march south in 1781 as well as for the march north in 1782 exist and have been used in the preparation of this report.<sup>23</sup> More importantly, a unique and never-before used manuscript in the Firestone Library at Princeton University provides in minute detail the administrative context and planning in which the crossing of 1782 took place.<sup>24</sup>

Primary-source material collected and provided by Ms. Pitts from in the Maryland State Archives, the Harford and Cecil County archives, and other repositories made available in her OneNote site Rodgers@ Work is identified as such.

Unless otherwise indicated all translations from published and unpublished French- and German-language manuscripts are mine.

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<sup>22</sup> These maps are located in the New-York Historical Society.

<sup>23</sup> 1) Louis-Alexandre Berthier Collection, C0022, Manuscripts Division, Department of Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

<https://findingaids.princeton.edu/catalog/C0022>

2) Rochambeau Map Collection. Library of Congress. (for the return march only)

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3701sm.gar00001/?st=gallery>

3) *Journals and records of the campaigns of Rochambeau's army, 1781-1782* mssHM 621, Huntington Digital Library, Huntington, California.

<https://hdl.huntington.org/digital/collection/p15150coll7/id/29692>

<sup>24</sup> "Suite du Journal des Campagnes 1780, 1781, 1782, dans l'Amérique septentrionale" Manuscript Collections C0938 no. 469, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ. This manuscript is not digitized.

### 3. The Harford County Committee of Observation and the Maryland Militia

#### 3.1 What is a “Militia”?

The revolutionary guard created in Maryland in 1775/76 fulfilled military as well as political functions. The term *militia* comes from Latin *milit-*, *miles*, meaning soldier, from where it entered Old English as *milite*, i.e., soldiers, and has been used in the plural ever since. By 1590 at the latest, the term *militia* had come to mean the body of soldiers in the service of a sovereign or a state. By the middle of the seventeenth century, it had been narrowed down to describe a military force raised from the **civilian population** of a country or region, especially to **supplement a regular army** in an **emergency**. The qualifiers “raised from the civilian population” and “supplement a regular army” are of the utmost importance as they

- 1) distinguish a militiaman from a professional soldier and
- 2) define the role of the militia within a country’s military establishment.

*Militia* as a force “raised from the civilian population” most importantly means that the militia is “the people in arms”, a definition used by Samuel Johnson’s famous dictionary of 1766.<sup>25</sup> Under the specific political and social conditions of the New World, i.e. the attempt of thirteen colonies trying to unite into a single nation, this meant that in 1776 there were 13 “nations” and 12 different militia laws, since Pennsylvania did not have a militia.<sup>26</sup>

Prior to the National Militia Law of 1792, the states’ definition of “the people” would determine their personnel contributions in the War of Independence, and by implication the

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<sup>25</sup> Samuel Johnson, *A dictionary of the English language in which the words are deduced from their originals, explained in their different meanings and authorized by the names of the writers in whose works they are found*. 3rd ed., corr. 2 vols., (London, 1766), vol. 2, p. 123.

<sup>26</sup> This overview only lists regular militia bills, not emergency legislation establishing Minuteman Companies, Flying Camps or similar ad-hoc organizations created between April 1775 and the creation of the Continental Army on 14 June 1776. Throughout the war states passed temporary emergency legislation to raise troops to fill their regiments in the Continental Army. Eligibility requirements as defined in those laws stood separate from the concurrent militia law. The best-known emergency legislation was passed in Rhode Island of February 1778 enlisting Black soldiers.

The fear of and aversion to a standing army and conversely the preference for militia is apparent in many discussions and debates of the time, e.g., in the resolves of the CONVENTION of the DELEGATES of Maryland, which stated on 3 November 1776:

“ 25. That a well regulated militia is the proper and natural defence of a free government.

26. That standing armies are dangerous to liberty, and ought not to be raised or kept up without consent of the legislature.” Quoted from <http://aomol.net/000001/000203/html/am203--135.html>

composition and structure of the armed forces, be that the Continental Army or the Militia forces, fighting Great Britain.<sup>27</sup>

The legal and societal parameters within which the nascent United States raised its armed forces were delineated by the fact that

1) None of the colonies (other than Pennsylvania which did not have a militia before 17 March 1777) ever questioned the right of state authorities to compulsion: one can join the Continental Army, but one does not “join” a militia. Membership in a militia of any of the colonies, and after 4 July 1776 of the states, was not voluntary: it was a duty and obligation required of all who fell within the parameters of the law establishing the militia. These parameters could be any of the following:

a) gender b) color, c) age, d) occupation, e) legal status, f) religion.<sup>28</sup>

2) There is the Continental Army as a “national” organization, and militias as “state” organizations. After 14 June 1775 here is a “national army” but no “national militia”. On 16 September 1776, Congress assigned each state a number of regiments to be raised there for the Continental Army based on the state’s population; Maryland was assigned eight regiments. Providing pay, food, shelter, clothing, arms to these regiments was the responsibility of each state.

3) Enlistment terms in the Continental Army are clearly defined – “nine months”, “three years”, “for the war” &c - just as in the militia: “from age 16 to 50” etc.

4) There is no enlistment bonus for service for militiamen on militia duty.

5) There are no substitutes for registration on the militia list, though once called up for service men could in some states send substitutes in their stead.

6) Militiamen on militia duty do not wear uniforms.

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<sup>27</sup> Charles, Patrick J., “The 1792 National Militia Act, the Second Amendment, and Individual Militia Rights: A Legal and Historical Perspective”. *Georgetown Journal of Law & Public Policy*, Vol. 9, No. 2, (2011), Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1705564>. The 1792 law restricted enrollment to free white males.

<sup>28</sup> As the war progressed most states excluded prisoners and deserters from their militias; Maryland in “An ACT relating to prisoners and deserters from the British army and navy” of 23 June 1778: “Deserters to be exempt from all militia duty, during the war; and they, as well as prisoners, are disqualified from acting as substitutes; and every contract they may enter into, to oblige themselves to act as such, shall be void.” See <http://aomol.net/000001/000203/html/am203--197.html>

- 7) As a rule, militiamen serve only within their own state.<sup>29</sup>
- 8) Militiamen are required to provide their own weapons, though most colonies/states provided subsidies and/or the equipment for those who could not afford them.
- 9) Militia usually does not get paid unless they were called to actual service or responding to alarm lasting more than a pre-set number of days.
- 10) Militia companies usually elect their company-grade officers, i.e., lieutenants and captains, who in turn elect field grade officers, i.e., Major, and up.
- 11) Especially in New England the militia is often divided into a “training-band” and an “alarm-list”.<sup>30</sup>
- 12) Occasionally even groups exempt from service were required to have the weapons specified in the militia laws.<sup>31</sup>
- 13) Militia laws apply to the militia only and are independent of other legislation passed to raise troops for the Continental Establishment or specific purposes during the war. In those cases, eligibility for service was often different from that laid out in the militia laws. The men drafted or recruited often came from those segments of the population who were exempt from, or barred from, militia duty such as African-Americans, Native Americans or slaves or both.
- 14) Service in the Continental Army could mean freedom for slaves either at the beginning of service or after the service was completed but only if it was so stipulated in the law passed by the state in whose regiment the man served.
- 15) Men entered onto the Militia rolls could be excused from serving, e.g., ministers or ferrymen, or refuse to serve, e.g., pacifist groups such as Quakers and Mennonites, but they still were part of “the people in arms”. In most states African-Americans and Native Americans, either free or enslaved, were not on the militia rolls and thus by definition not part of “the people in arms”.

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<sup>29</sup> “AN ACT for regulating the Militia of the State of New-York” of 3 April 1778 gave the commander-in-chief authority to order up to one third of the militia to serve out of state for up to three months. The act is published in *Backgrounds of Selective Service* Vol. II, Part 9, p. 285.

<sup>30</sup> The “Training-Band” usually consisted of younger men called up regularly for militia training, everyone else was on the “Alarm List”.

<sup>31</sup> E.g., in the Delaware law of 5 November 1757, where only “minister of the Gospel and Quaker Preachers” were exempt from this requirement. Vol. II Part 3, p. 23.

The existence of, and need for, state militias, was explicitly confirmed in Article VI of the Articles of Confederation of 15 November 1777. It squarely placed the responsibility for militia with the states:

“every State shall always keep up a well-regulated and disciplined militia, sufficiently armed and accoutered, and shall provide and constantly have ready for use, in public stores, a due number of field pieces and tents, and a proper quantity of arms, ammunition and camp equipage.”<sup>32</sup>

Since Article VI circumvented the issue of free as well as enslaved Blacks and Native Americans, the individual states had to address that question in their militia laws. The overarching issue, however, is that men who were either not allowed to, or refused to, serve in the militia, were not part of “the people”. Beginning in the Spring of 1775, the Council of Safety as the executive organ of the Provincial Congress of Maryland in cooperation with the local Committees of Observation forced free white men to chose sides: join the newly created militia and become one of “the people”, or stand aside, become by implication an enemy of the revolutionary movement, and suffer the consequences.

### 3.2 John Rodgers and the Harford County Militia

On 25 March 1774, the House of Commons in London passed the Boston Port Act, which became law on 31 March 1774. It closed the port and ordered the inhabitants of Boston to pay a huge fine for the tea they had thrown into the harbor on 16 December 1773. As news spread along the Eastern seashore, extra-legal organizations called alternately Committees of Safety, Committees of Correspondence, or Committees of Observation, spontaneously organized themselves in support of the City of Boston. A note in the (incomplete) minutes of the Committee of Observation of Harford County suggests that the first meeting of like-minded colonists in the county took place on 11 June 1774, though no record of the meeting has survived.<sup>33</sup> The Harford County Committee possibly continued its meetings at infrequent

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<sup>32</sup> Quoted from <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/articles-of-confederation> .

<sup>33</sup> The *Minutes* of the meetings of the Committee of Observation of Harford County are printed in Walter W. Preston, *History of Harford County, Maryland. From 1608 (the Year of Smith's Expedition) to the Close of the War of 1812* (Press of Sun Book Office: Harford, 1901) as an appendix on pp. 278-352 See also William H. Love, *Harford County in the Revolution*. 21 pages typescript. A photostat is in MS 1146, Box 5, Maryland Center for History and Culture, Baltimore.

The Committee of Observation quickly assumed the role of a parallel civil administration. By February 1777 the first cases of lawsuits/legal action appear in the Minutes. They end with a meeting on 11 June 1777, when a functioning central Govt seems to have been established. Similarly, the proceedings of the Committee of Observation for Elizabeth Town District in Washington County end on 24 April 1777. The original *Minutes* are held by the Historical Society of Harford County in Bel Air.



intervals throughout the year as suggested by an entry that it be “adjourned to Thursday the 2 Dec.”, indicating that there must have been meetings earlier in November 1774. Initially the goal of the committee was to collect funds for the support of the poor of Boston, to enforce non-importation decisions especially regarding tea, but also to suppress dissent voiced by loyalist subjects of the crown of King George III.<sup>34</sup> Concurrently, however, pro-independence Marylanders realized very early on the need to arm themselves in case King George might opt for a violent suppression of their movement.

On the colony-wide level, revolutionaries organized in Annapolis in what in July 1775 became the *Assembly of Freeman*, better known as the Annapolis Convention, an assembly of representatives of the sixteen counties of Maryland. The Convention functioned as the colony's provincial government from its first meeting from 22 to 25 June 1774 to the ninth and last, the so-called Constitutional Convention that ended on 11 November 1776. It drafted a constitution for the State of Maryland which in turn created a state government. On Thursday, 22 December 1774, months before the shots that were “heard around the world” were fired at Lexington and Concord on 19 April 1775, the assembly “resolved that the freeholders and others and freemen from fifteen to sixty years of age should form themselves into companies of sixty eight men, to choose a captain, two lieutenants, an ensign, four sergeants, four corporals and a drummer for each company.”<sup>35</sup> The revolutionaries’ decision to arm themselves and form a military organization parallel to the established colonial militia was a truly revolutionary step that carried far-reaching implications. In an open challenge to the Crown and Governor Robert Eden, opponents to the Coercive Acts of the Spring and early Summer of 1774 had decided to arm and organize themselves into a military force that stood outside the framework of colonial militia law in force in 1774.<sup>36</sup> There was no need to call for “some general plan of Forming themselves into Companies.” Maryland had

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Preston, *Harford*, p. 222, writes that on 11 June 1774, Aquilla Hall “presided over a meeting at Bush, at which resolutions were passed expressing sympathy with Boston in her tax troubles, and at which a committee was appointed to meet the committees of other counties in this province to consult and agree on the most effectual means to preserve our constitutional rights and liberties.”

<sup>34</sup> The funds that were collected never reached Boston. On 3 March 1777, “The Committee appointed Messrs. Aquila Hall & Amos Garret to adjust the Donations of the Poor of Boston and to return the money to the Subscribers in proportion to their Donations.” A few days later the committee changed its mind and on 18 March 1776 “Ordered that Mr. Richard Dallam lay out the money transmitted to Philadelphia for the Poor of Boston in good arms for the use of this Committee.”

<sup>35</sup> The text is quoted from Preston, *Harford*, p. 106. The best study of the Maryland Militia is Barry Windsor Fowle, *The Maryland Militia during the Revolutionary War: A Revolutionary Organization*. PhD Diss. University of Maryland, 1982. The quotes text from the Annapolis Convention is here: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annapolis\\_Convention\\_\(1774%E2%80%931776\)#Note\\_by\\_Maryland\\_Historical\\_Society](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annapolis_Convention_(1774%E2%80%931776)#Note_by_Maryland_Historical_Society)

<sup>36</sup> Governor Robert Eden’s authority ended *de facto* when the first extralegal Maryland convention assembled in June 1774. In May 1776, Maryland's sixth convention asked Eden to leave the state and on 26 June he sailed for England on HMS *Fowey*.

had a militia law since 1733; the law in force in 1774 dated to 22 May 1756, the eve of the French and Indian War. Entitled *An Act for regulating the Militia of the Province of Maryland*, the militia consisted of “every Male Inhabitant of this Province (Papists, the Persons commonly called Neutralls, Servants, and Slaves excepted) who shall be from the Age of Sixteen Years to the Age of Sixty years and able to bear Arms”.<sup>37</sup>

The committee in Harford immediately adopted the resolve and in turn resolved “That Notice be given to the Freeholders & Freemen of Harford County who are the lovers of Liberty & they are hereby requested to give their attendance at Harford Town the 3rd day of Jan'y next [1775] to consider of some general plan of Forming themselves into Companies agreeable to a Resolve of the Provincial Congress & also to choose Gentlemen to attend as Deputies for this County at the said Congress to meet at Annapolis on Monday 24th of April [1775] or sooner if required by the committee of Correspondence.”<sup>38</sup> No decision was taken on 3 January 1775 as the Harford County Committee of Observation adjourned to Monday the (10 – torn) Jan'y 1775. At that meeting it “Resolved, that Mr. Garret, Doctr. Archer, Aquila Hall, Aquila Hall, Junr., Robert Lemmon, Richard Dallam, Doctr. Jo. C. Hall, Abram Whitaker, Jacob Bond, Samuel Ashmead, William Webb, Jeremiah Sheredine and Wm. Morgan be appointed to draw up an association for embodiing the Militia of this County agreeable to the Resolve of the Convention and to bring in a draft thereof on the 23rd Inst. Resolved, that an advertisement be set up Acquainting the People that such an association is on the said 23rd Inst. to be Laid before them and that they be desired to give their attendance thereon as also to elect as a Committee to be joined to the present some More from Parts of the County where it may be thought they were wanted.”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Selective Service System, *Backgrounds of Selective Service: Military Obligation, the American Tradition, Compilation of Enactments of Compulsion from Earliest Settlements of the Original Settlements on 1607 Through the Articles of Confederation 1789*. Special Monograph No. 1, Volume II, 14 Parts in four volumes. (Washington, DC 1947). Part 1: General Information; Part 2: Connecticut Enactments; Part 3: Delaware Enactments; Part 4: Georgia Enactments; Part 5: Maryland Enactments; Part 6: Massachusetts Enactments; Part 7: New Hampshire Enactments; Part 8: New Jersey Enactments; Part 9: New York Enactments; Part 10: North Carolina Enactments; Part 11: Pennsylvania Enactments; Part 12: Rhode Island Enactments; Part 13: South Carolina Enactments; Part 14: Virginia Enactments.

See also Louis Dow Scisco, “Evolution of Colonial Militia in Maryland,” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 35 (1940), pp. 166-177, S. Eugene Clements and F. Edward Wright, *Maryland Militia in the Revolutionary War*. (Silver Spring, 1987).

<sup>38</sup> The meeting was attended by “Capt. John Matthews, Capt. John Paca, Amos Garret, Aquila Hall, Benjamin Rumsey, William Smith, Bayside, Jeremiah Sheredine, Freeborn Browne, Robert Lemon, Francis Holland, Aquila Paca, Jacob Giles Senr., James Harris, Edmund Bull, Isaac Webster, Richard Dallam, John Beale Howard, Thomas Johnson, Thomas Bond, son Thos., Benedict Edward Hall, John Taylor, William Smithson, Jacob Giles, Senr.” John Matthews acted as chair. Preston, *Harford*, p. 280.

<sup>39</sup> Preston, *Harford*, p. 282. The Committee did not meet on 23 January 1775, or at least there are no minutes of a meeting on that date.

As the sub-committee wrote the legal framework for the revolutionary militia, the whole committee resolved that a number of citizens “Be appointed to collect Contributions for the Relief of the Poor of Boston and also to collect money for the purchase of arms and Ammunition for the defence of our Lives, Liberties & Properties.” John Rodgers was not among the men appointed on 23 January 1775 to make the rounds of the county. Collection funds offered an opportunity to test the political leanings of the people living in the state as well. As they went from house to house, the collectors were “also to make a return of such men (if any) who dead to every feeling of humanity and to all sense of their own Danger refuse to give anything to either of the above purposes.” The Committee of Observation was taking notes of potential enemies. While the committee created an organizational structure and wrote rules for itself and its future meetings, it flexed its political muscle as well.<sup>40</sup> At its meeting on 23 February 1775 it resolved that together with the funds collected for Boston the collectors “are also requested to return a list of those men who have not paid their Subscriptions, who will be deemed as Non-Subscribers and consequently as unfriendly to the General Cause of America.”<sup>41</sup>

Some revolutionaries did not even wait for the county committee to act. On 22 December 1774, the Annapolis Convention had “resolved that the freeholders and others and freemen from fifteen to sixty years of age should form themselves into companies.” Four days later, Captain John Archer had already begun to organize as he informed the Committee of Observation at the official establishment of the militia in the county on 16 September 1775:

“At a meeting of the deputies appointed by the several counties of the province of Maryland at the city of Annapolis, by adjournment on the 8th day of December, 1774, and continuing till the 12th day of the same month, it was resolved that the freeholders and others and freemen from fifteen to sixty years of age should form themselves into companies of sixty eight men, to choose a captain, two lieutenants, an ensign, four sergeants, four corporals and a drummer for each company. In compliance therewith and agree able thereunto, a sufficient number being inhabitants of Maryland, in Harford county, adjacent to the Lower Cross Roads, having enrolled themselves, and on the 26th day of December, 1774, met and made choice of their several officers, in which position said company continued mustering once a week until the 16th day of September, 1775, at which time said company having met, subscribed their names to the following enrollment”.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> At the next meeting of the committee on 23 January 1775. On 10 February 1775, each of the eight Hundreds of the county elected 10 men for the Committee of Observation; Susquehanna elected John Rumsey, Doctor Thomas Andrews, Benjamin Bayles, Charles Anderson, Jacob Giles, Jr., Edward Prali, Doctor Robert Lemmon, George Patterson, Charles Gilbert, and James Horner.

<sup>41</sup> Preston, *Harford*, p. 289.

<sup>42</sup> Preston, *Harford*, pp. 106-107. See also *Archives of Maryland* vol. 18, pp. 4-28: Early and Independent Companies, and Fowle, *Maryland Militia*, pp. 14/15.

Archer was not alone in raising militia companies in Harford County. At the meeting on 23 February 1775, six weeks only after the Committee had voted on establishing an “association for embodying the Militia of this County”, the Committee of Observation resolved that

“To obviate the inconveniency of having a number of officers throughout this County who are unable to form Complete Companies.

Resolved — That each hundred where there are more Officers than there are private men to fill up each Officers Company then throughout the whole Hundred every such Company shall be disbanded.

Resolved— That no Company shall consist of less than 68 or more than 135, officers incld.

Resolved, that where a Company Consists of more than 135 that then there shall be a division of such Company after the following manner Viz. 57 men to be draughted from the last subscribers of the said Company those 57 to proceed to an election of their officers from the whole Company, former officers excepted.

Such officers when elected to be joined to the fifty seven, and if there should not then be a Sufficiency, the Complement to be taken as afore directed from the last of the general List who are not already draughted.

Resolved, That no Company shall meet where Liquor is to be sold, or permit any Liquor to be brought to the field or place of said Companies Meeting.

Resolved, That where the Company exceeds 135, 57 another Company may be formed in the following manner. Vizt. they are to be chosen out of the whole Company as it late stood if by their officers being taken out of the draughted thereof.”

As the military arm of the revolutionary movement took shape, the political component, carried to a large degree by the same people, kept defining and asserting itself as well. On 22 March 1775, 34 citizens of Harford County signed the so-called “Bush Declaration”: “We the Committee of Harford County having most seriously and maturely considered the Resolves & Association of the Continental Congress and the Resolves of the Provential Convention, do most heartily approve of the same, and as we esteem ourselves in a more particular manner, intrusted by our Constituents to see them Carried into Execution we do most Solemnly pledge ourselves to Each Other and to Our Country and engage ourselves by every tie held sacred among Mankind. To perform the Same at the Risque of our Lives and Fortunes.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> The text and the 34 signatures are part of the minutes of the Harford Committee. A scan of the original is available here:

<https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/coagser/c900/c946/000001/pdf/i004336a.pdf>

These activities did not take place in a political vacuum. The First Continental Congress had met at Carpenters Hall in Philadelphia from 5 September 1774 to 26 October 1774 and ended with a compact among the colonies to boycott British goods beginning 1 December 1774. Committees of Observation and Inspection were to be formed in each Colony to enforce the boycott. Unless parliament rescinded the Intolerable Acts, the delegates voted to meet again in what became known as the Second Continental Congress. By the time it held its first meeting in Philadelphia on 10 May 1775, the Battle of Lexington and Concord on 19 April 1775 had rung in the military confrontation with King George III. On 14 June 1775, Congress voted to create the Continental Army out of the militia units around Boston, and appointed George Washington the Commander in Chief of the new military establishment. In Harford County the purchase of arms and ammunition as well as the confiscation of weapons from citizens suspected of loyalist leanings appear from now with increasing frequency in the committee minutes. Maryland and Harford County were preparing both politically as well as militarily for the break with the Mother Country.

With recruitment of Minutemen for the revolutionary militia well on its way in Harford County, the committee on 5 April 1775 thought it "highly expedient that there be a general review of the Militia of this County & to the end that such meeting be as large as may be" and

Resolved, That the Captains of the different Companies in the County be requested to consult their Companies when and where it will be most convenient for them to meet & lay their determinations before this Committee."<sup>44</sup>

There is no mention in the Minutes to indicate when, where, or whether this General Review was ever conducted over the next few weeks. Events in Massachusetts had swept away all carefully laid plans. Eight days later, on Thursday, 27 April 1775, John Rodgers first appears in the historical record at the Lower Susquehanna Ferry.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> For a detailed analysis of the historical context in Maryland for the creation of Minutemen up to the Militia Act of 1776 see Fowle, *Maryland Militia*, pp. 20-28. The Minutemen were dissolved on 1 March 1776 since the Maryland Convention on 1 January 1776 created a new force of 1,444 men called "Maryland State Regulars."

<sup>45</sup> Elizabeth Merritt, "The Lexington Alarm, April 19, 1775: Messages sent to the southward [sic] after the battle." *Maryland Historical Magazine* Vol. 41 No. 2 (June 1946), pp. 89-114, p. 107.

The dispatch forwarded by Rodgers was the first of by many more. A system of express riders was needed and on 1 May the committee "Resolved that Three Horses be purchased to forward the Expresses, &c. Two of which to stand at Harford Town and one at Susquehanna and M. John Love, Edwd. Prall & Samuel Ashmead are appointed to purchase the afore mentioned Horses." Preston, *Harford*, p. 295. That messenger service was maintained throughout the war. On 11 August 1776, the Maryland Council of Safety "Ordered That those Persons who keep Potapsco and Susquehanna Ferries be desired from time to time by night or day, to put the Postmaster General's Rider over those Rivers, during the Continuance of the War."

Rec<sup>d</sup> at 11 oClock and Sent of in five Minuits  
susq. . . [torn] anah ferry . . . John Rodgers

To John Thompson Esq<sup>r</sup> & others  
the Committee at

New Castle

(11)

Gentlemen 27<sup>th</sup> april 1775

I Rec<sup>d</sup> the inclosed paper from the Norward and am Desired to  
forward them with all Speed imaginable to Baltimore Town

your Hbl Serv<sup>t</sup>  
John Rodgers

To  
the Gentlemen of the Comitte of harford Town or M<sup>r</sup> Joseph Stiles

The "paper from the Norward" carried the news of the Battle of Lexington and Concord. Though the entry reproduced above does not specifically state it, Rogers may have been in charge of ferry operations across the Susquehanna; if he was not, he was certainly the trusted Point of Contact there since it was he who acknowledged receipt of the dispatches and through his signature accepted responsibility for the further conveyance of the papers. Functioning as an unofficial relay station for mail may however already have been a function of his position as the keeper of tavern he ran on the right/west bank of the river.

In August 1774, "John Rodgers" had received a tavern license in Harford County with Aquila Hall and Jeremiah Sheredine as sureties.<sup>46</sup> A year later, on 23 August 1775, the county renewed his license to keep the tavern for another year, i.e., until August 1776. This time Amos Garrett and Aquila Hall acted as securities.<sup>47</sup> That license was also renewed, for on 15 April 1777, "John Rodgers, Innkeeper" purchased 165 acres "on the West Side of Broad Creek" in Harford County.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Preston, *Harford*, p. 74. Harford County Courts (Minutes) 1774-1789, CM1367-1, p.16.  
[https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/coagserm/cm1300/cm1367/000000/000001/pdf/mdsa\\_cm1367\\_1.pdf](https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/coagserm/cm1300/cm1367/000000/000001/pdf/mdsa_cm1367_1.pdf) . See also Harford County Court (Minutes) 1774-1789, CM1367-1, p. 38, with a date of 22 December 1774. Research courtesy of Ms. Jennifer Pitts.

<sup>47</sup> Harford County Court (Minutes) 1774-1789 CM1367-2. p. 22. Courtesy of Ms Jennifer Pitts.  
[https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/coagserm/cm1300/cm1367/000000/000002/pdf/mdsa\\_cm1367\\_2.pdf](https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/coagserm/cm1300/cm1367/000000/000002/pdf/mdsa_cm1367_2.pdf)

<sup>48</sup> Harford County Court, Land Records, JLG A, p. 360. MSA

6	By Ferriage at Petapoco	6.6
7	By Exp. at Baltimore	3.7.6
	By Servants	6.
	By Charity	3.4
	By Exp. at Rogers	15.0
	By D. at Chevy	3.6
8	By D. at Stevenson	1.8.2
	By D. at Charles Town	5.9
	By D. at Christiana Bridge	4.

Traveling to Philadelphia George Washington on 7 May 1775, "Dind at Rogers's & lodged at Stevensons this side Susqueha[nna]." <sup>49</sup> His expenses at Rodgers ran to 15 shillings. <sup>50</sup>

The location of the tavern run by Rodgers in Havre de Grace is not known, it may have been on the site of the Abraham Jarrett Thomas House aka Lafayette Hotel on 501 St. John Street. There was at least one more tavern in Havre de Grace, viz. the tavern run by Daniel Durbin. Traveling to Baltimore, Ebenezer Hazard on 16 May 1777 observed that "Susquehannah Ferry is a wild, bleak Place within about a Mile of Chesopeak Bay; it is about a Mile & a quarter wide; the Depth at low Water about 5 Fathoms. Met a Company of Virginians going to Phila. — they have been inoculated lately. Lodged at Rodger's at Susquehannah Ferry. A very good House." <sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> George Washington Diaries, quoted from Founders Online

<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/01-03-02-0005-0010>.

<sup>50</sup> Image 4 of George Washington Papers, Series 5, Financial Papers: Pocket Book of Cash Expenses, May, 1775 - January, 1776; September, 1783 - December, 1784.

[https://www.loc.gov/resource/mgw5.116\\_1205\\_1270/?sp=4](https://www.loc.gov/resource/mgw5.116_1205_1270/?sp=4)

<sup>51</sup> Fred Shelley, ed. "Ebenezer Hazard's Travels through Maryland in 1777." *Maryland Historical Magazine* 46 (1951): 44-54, p. 47. On the way back he wrote on 6 July: "Left Baltimore & rode to Rodger's at Susquehannah lower Ferry where we lodged. This House, and Stephenson's on the East Side of the River are in my opinion the two best Houses (public) between Phila. & Edenton." p. 53.

Nicholas Creswell traveled across Maryland in 1776 and wrote: "Bushtown, Maryland - Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 1776. Breakfasted at the head of Elk. The River falls into Chesapeake Bay and is only 12 miles from Christiania Bridge. Fed our horses at Charlestown, a small place at head of the Bay and seems to be on the decline. Crossed Susquehannah River at the Lower ferry. Dined at the Ferry house. Lodged at Bushtown or Hartford, which you please, this is a small and poor town. Land poor in general all along the road. My companions rank Paddys. The Captn. Talks as if he was able to take General Howe in two days with his company." *The Journal of Nicholas Creswell, 1774-1777* (New York, 1924), p. 160.

On 14 June 1775, the Second Continental Congress appointed George Washington Commander in Chief of the Continental Army outside Boston. Fighting had begun in earnest, and the Provincial Assembly of Maryland on 26 July 1775 called for the creation of a state-wide Revolutionary Militia. A good two weeks later, on 14 August 1775, the Maryland Council of Safety as the executive organ of the Annapolis Convention ordered all able-bodied free men between 16 and 50 who were not Minutemen to enroll in the militia:

“That every able bodied effective Freeman within this Province between sixteen and fifty years of age, (clergymen of all denominations, practising physicians, the Household of His Excellency the Governor, Minute and Artillery men, and such persons who from their religious principles cannot bear arms in any case, excepted) as soon as may be, and at farthest before the fifteenth day of September next, shall enrol himself in some Company of Militia”.<sup>52</sup>

All across Maryland pro-Independence Americans had by now organized in local militias and were ready for the order of 14 August. On 12 September 1775, Harford County held a meeting in accordance with the order of the Provincial Assembly of Maryland to enroll the militia. Enrollment was not voluntary but restricted to service within Maryland.

“We whose names are subscribed do hereby enroll ourselves into a company of militia, agreeable to the resolutions of the Provincial Convention held at Annapolis the 26th day of July, 1775, and we do promise and engage that we will respectively march to such places within this province, and at such times, as we shall be commanded by the convention or council of safety, of the province, or by our officers, in pursuance of the orders of the said convention or council, and there, with our whole power, fight against whomsoever we shall be commanded by such authority aforesaid.”<sup>53</sup>

It is unknown at which point during the Spring and Summer of 1775 John Rodgers had begun to recruit a company of militia, but on 15 September 1775, Militia Company No. 5, four sergeants, four Corporals, a drummer, a fifer, and men under “John RODGERS, Captain. Wm. Godsgrace, 1st Lieut. James Giles, 2d Lieut and Adj. Matthew Alexander, Ensign” became part

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François-Alexandre-Frédéric duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, *Travels Through the United States of North America: The Country of the Iroquois, and Upper Canada, in the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797; with an authentic Account of Lower Canada* 2 vols (London, 1800) vol. 2, pp. 339-355, contains a lengthy account of his journey from Washington, DC, to Elkton.

<sup>52</sup> *American archives: consisting of a collection ... ser.5 v.2 1776.* (M.St. Clair Clarke and Peter Force: Washington, DC, 1851), Vol. II Part 5, p. 83.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Love, *Harford*, p. 10. Then follows a break-down of the companies, with the company commanded by John Rodgers as Company No. 5.



of the Revolutionary Militia of Maryland.<sup>54</sup> It is unknown why Rodgers' company received the designation "No. 5"; chronologically only Acquila Hall's company, No. 4, was reviewed before Rodgers on 9 September, No. 1, 2 and 3 were reviewed on 12, 16 and 23 resp. Josias CARVIL Hall's company received the NO. 1, Captain John Archer received No. 2, Charles Anderson No. 3 and Acquila Hall No. 4.

The list of names of Rodgers' company ends with the statement that

"The above are a true copy of the names of every person, officers, subalterns and privates belonging to the above company who separately and severally desiring the clerk of the said company to write their names for them professing at the same time in form as their own actual signing.

Daniel McPhail, Clk.

Attested:

John RODGERS, Capt.

WM. GODSGRACE, Lieut."

The entry ends with this note:

"To the Committee of Harford County:

GENTLEMEN — Further it's desired you in your wisdom will be pleas'd to fall upon some method to furnish the above with a few arms and we the officers thereof bind ourselves answerable to the committee, convention or whom else soever it doth concern to return the said arms or the full value thereof when this unhappy contest shall subside.

JOHN RODGERS,

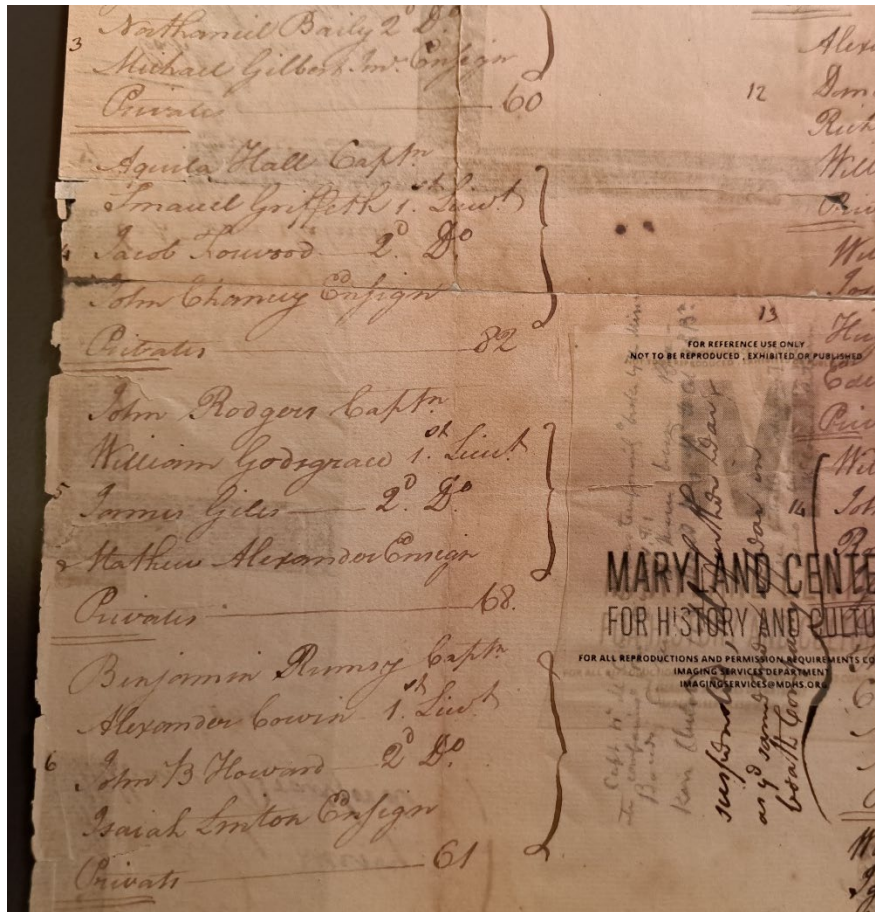
WM. GODSGRACE.

N. B.—The company is young but enrolling daily."

This postscript suggests that enrollment may have begun only after the decisions made in Annapolis on 26 July or 14 August 1775, but the historical record is quiet. What is important, however, is that the men who enrolled, possibly during a meeting at his tavern in Harford County, had enough confidence in John Rodgers to elect him their captain and commanding officer.

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<sup>54</sup> Ebenezer Hazard wrote that "A good Tavern is kept on the Road to Baltimore by a man who has the singular Name of Godsgrace." Hazard, *Travels*, p.47.



Maryland Center for History and Culture

A statement on the reverse of the list reads: “The Committee is of Opinion that the following Companies will form the most convenient Battalion”. The listed companies are 1,2,3,4,5,8,9, and 10. Since Company No. 8, Captain Greenberry Dorsey, was enrolled on 31 October 1775.<sup>55</sup>

A handwritten note added later by GAW reads:

“The above proceedings were at a meeting of Com. Of Obs Jan 1<sup>st</sup> ’76.  
 Oct 9 ’75 the Com. sent a list of the Coys enrolled to date  
 Oct 17 ’75     “     “     “     “     “     “

On 6 January 1776, Maryland established 38 numbered and 16 un-numbered militia battalions. Captain John Rodgers’ Company No. 5 became part of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Battalion (Upper or Hall’s Battalion) of Militia with Aquila Hall, still listed as captain of Company No. 4 in the

<sup>55</sup> On Dorsey the Pension Application by Andrew McAdow quoted below.

September 1775 list, as Colonel, and John Love as Lieutenant Colonel. In 1776, Benjamin Rumsey was Colonel in the 8<sup>th</sup> or Lower Battalion, and Thomas Bond his Lieutenant Colonel. The Deer Creek Battalion was not numbered.<sup>56</sup> A few days later the Harford County Committee of Observation on 29 January 1776 “resolved that each Captain of every Company of Militia examine every Musquet in his Company and such as are out of order said Captain make report of the same to this committee.”<sup>57</sup> The task fell to Captain John Rodgers.

A few days after the review of his company, John Rodgers on 21 September 1775 appears for the first time also in the record of the Committee of Observation when the Committee “proceeded to Nominate and appoint the following persons in the following hundreds to offer and carry the association framed and resolved upon by the last Convention to all freemen resident in the said County of Harford, and require their subscription to the same, and to return the same to the Committee, and also to return the names of those that do not on Application or within 10 days after sign the same, to the said Committee to be by them transmitted to the next Convention.” The men appointed for Susquehanna Hundred were James Horner, John Rogers, John Rumsey, and Samuel Howell.

The “association” referred to was the “Association of the Freemen of Maryland” of 26 July 1775. It read in part that “We, therefore, inhabitants of the Province of Maryland, firmly persuaded that it is necessary and justifiable to repel force by force, do approve of the opposition by arms to the British Troops employed to enforce obedience to the late acts and statutes of the British Parliament, for raising a revenue in America, ... And we do unite and associate as one band, and firmly and solemnly engage and pledge ourselves to each other, and to America, that we will, to the utmost of our power, promote and support the present opposition carrying on, as well by arms, as by the Continental Association, restraining our commerce. ... and to defend with our utmost power all persons from every species of outrage to themselves or their property, and to prevent any punishment from being inflicted on any

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<sup>56</sup> [https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Space:Maryland\\_Militia\\_in\\_the\\_Revolutionary\\_War](https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Space:Maryland_Militia_in_the_Revolutionary_War).

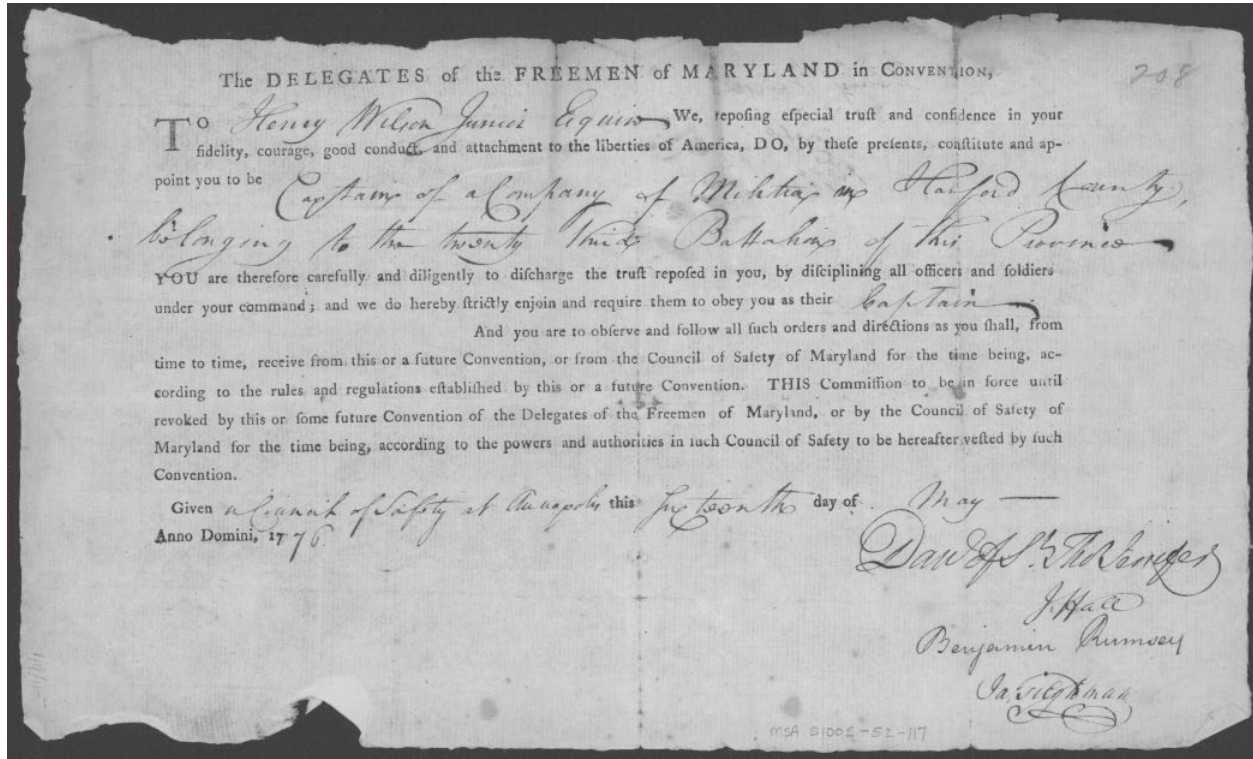
On 4 October 1776, the Maryland Council of Safety appointed Francis Holland the captain of a company of volunteers from the 23<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, part of the Flying Camp from Maryland, to march to the assistance of Washington’s main army north of Philadelphia. When Hall became County Lieutenant in 1777, Francis Holland became Colonel of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Battalion. The appointment was confirmed on 9 April 1778, and Aquila Paca became Lieutenant Colonel. In April 1778, Alexander Cowan became Colonel and James McComas Lieutenant Colonel of the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

Across the river in Cecil County at a meeting on 6 January 1776 the staff officers elected Charles Rumsey Colonel and Henry Hollingsworth Lieutenant Colonel of the Elk Ridge (2d) Battalion, John Veazey became Colonel of the Bohemia (18th) Battalion, John D. Thompson, Lieutenant Colonel. George Johnson became Colonel and Thomas Hughs, Lieutenant Colonel of the Susquehanna (or 30th) Battalion. The Sassafras Battalion was not numbered. George Johnston, *History of Cecil County, Maryland* (Elkton: By the Author, 1881), p. 323. Official appointments were issued on 6 June 1776.

<sup>57</sup> Preston, *Harford*, p. 318.

offenders, other than such as shall be adjudged by the Civil Magistrate, the Continental Congress, our Convention, Council of Safety, or Committees of Observation."<sup>58</sup>

Rodgers, however, was unable to comply. Called upon twice to fill his responsibilities under the appointment of 21 September, Rodgers replied on 15 October 1775: "Sir: I am sorry I can't attend you. My wife's relations are very ill. She is obliged to go to them and I am left to keep house for a few days."<sup>59</sup>



Maryland State Papers (Scharf Collection) 1650-1909, S1005. Maryland State Archives, Annapolis.

Commission for Henry Willson as a captain of a company of militia in the 23rd Battalion in Harford County dated 16 May 1776. Rodgers would have received a similar commission, but none has been found so far.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Quoted from <https://digital.lib.niu.edu/islandora/object/niu-amarch%3A84689>

<sup>59</sup> From a reprint in the *Aegis & Intelligencer* (Bel Air) dated 30 December 1870 under the title "Historical Records of Harford Co. - During the Revolution".  
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83016107/1870-12-30/ed-1/seq-2/>

Thomas Reynolds, Rodgers' father-in-law, had died 74 years old, on 9 July 1775.

<sup>60</sup> Maryland State Papers (Scharf Collection) 1650-1909, S1005. Maryland State Archives, Annapolis.

### 3.3. The year 1776

Throughout 1775 and 1776, Non-Associators, i.e., men who refused to declare for the revolution, were visited and pressed to openly join the opposition to the Crown of King George. The political obligations of Rodgers increased during the Spring of 1776 as the revolutionary militia became more active in the suppression of internal dissent and the disarming of real or potential loyalists. On 4 March 1776, the Minutes of the Committee of Observation record that “The following persons are appointed to carry the Association about for signing Viz. [...] For Susquehanna, Captain John Rodgers, James Horner, Samuel Howell, William Bonar, Hugh Smith, Samuel Bailey.”<sup>61</sup> One of the more obstinate Non-Associators was James Oliver, who appeared before the Committee on 25 March 1776, and admitted that “Whereas it has been proved upon Oath before the Committee of Harford County that I have been so miscrueable to the Justice of the American Cause as to speak in Terms highly reflecting on the glorious opposition carried on against the tyrannical and despotic doings and Proceedings of the Ministry and Parliament of great Brittain – A Conduct I am exceedingly sorry I have been guilty of, and am fully convinced that I have justly in so doing offended my Patriotic Countrymen who are and have been engaged in so noble and glorious a struggle I do therefore (being fully convinced of the Iniquity of my Conduct) humbly beg Pardon of my Offended Country men, promising in future by my Conduct to regain their favour by a ready obedience to the Rules and Orders of the Congress and Convention and to the Officers by them put in authority over me.”<sup>62</sup> Ministers were forced into obedience as well. On 6 May 1776, “On Motion in Committee it is Resolved that the Rev<sup>d</sup> Wm West be requested during the Time the present unhappy dispute Between Great Brittain and the Colony subsist to omit in the Morning and Evening Service such part of the Prayers, where the King and Royal family of England are Particularly named, and that Francis Holland and George Patterson wait on Wm West with a copy of this Resolve, and get his Answer.”<sup>63</sup>

Concurrently the Committee continued to use its unlimited powers to disarm real or potential enemies to the Revolution. On 8 April 1776, “Gabriel Vanhorn for the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion and William Whiteford for the North side of Deer Creek, including Captain [Robert] Glens Company” were “ordered to disarm the Non associators (agreeable to the Resolves of the late Convention) in their respective Districts.”<sup>64</sup> On 29 April “On Motion, ordered that Gabriel Vanhorn, bring Joseph Presbury Senr before this Committee, on Monday the 6<sup>th</sup> of May, to shew cause why he does not give up his fire arms.” When he did not appear “Capt. Alexander Cowen is Ordered to seize all the Fire Arms of Joseph Presbury.” John Rodgers played his role

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<sup>61</sup> Preston, *Harford*, p. 322.

<sup>62</sup> Preston, *Harford*, p. 323.

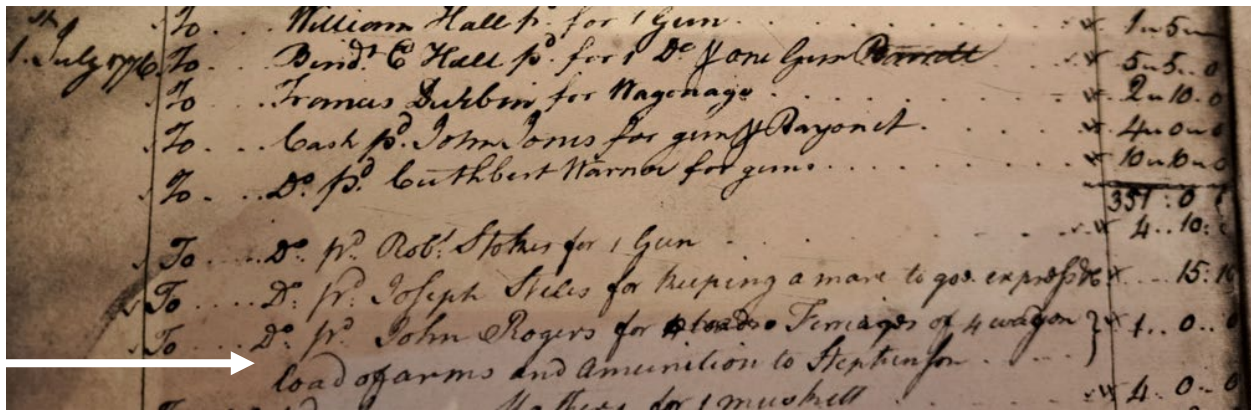
<sup>63</sup> West, an Episcopal minister, served as Rector of St. George's Parish in Hartford County, between 1772 and 1778. On 13 May 1776, Holland and Patterson presented West's apologetic answers.

<sup>64</sup> Gabriel Van became a Captain in the Deer Creek Battalion on 9 April 1778.

as well. On 10 June 1776, the Committee “Resolved, that John Rodgers, Samuel Howell, Thos. Hope, Samuel Bailey, James Little, John Taylor & Samuel Caldwell to take in Associations be required to make their returns immediately to this Committee.”<sup>65</sup> Three weeks later, Congress declared the United States an independent nation.

Military developments of General George Washington’s main army outside New York City impacted the revolutionary government and militia in Maryland as well. On 17 March 1776, British forces evacuated Boston, but the elation at the success did not last long. In early July, British forces under Sir William Howe landed unopposed on Staten Island; on 15 August the first Hessians arrived from Germany as well. On 22 August 1776, British forces landed unopposed on Long Island. After losing the Battle of Long Island on 27 August, Washington’s main army, about to be surrounded, sounded a hasty retreat during the night of 29-30 August. On 15 September, Howe’s forces landed on Manhattan. The war was not going well, and its reverberations were felt in Maryland and Harford County as calls for help went out from Philadelphia. Throughout the summer of 1776, Maryland sent supplies to Washington, and it is in that context that on we find this entry in the Minutes of the Committee:

1 July 1776: To ... Do Pd John Rogers for Ferriage of 4 wagon load of arms and Amunition to Stephenson ... 1 ... 0 ... 0<sup>66</sup>



<sup>65</sup> Preston, *Harford*, p. 328.

<sup>66</sup> William Stephenson like Rodgers was a Scottish emigrant who together with his wife, Rachel Barnes Stephenson, intermittently kept a tavern on the left/east bank of the Susquehanna River. That tavern is today known as Rodgers Tavern.

British currency was based on the Pound Sterling (silver) valued at 20 Shillings. Each shilling was worth 12 pennies, which made 240 Pennies to the Pound (or 480 Halfpennies or 960 Farthings). The largest silver coins minted in the eighteenth century were the Crown at 5 shillings, usually written as: 5/ and the Half-Crown at 2 shillings 6 pence, written as 2/6 d.

The d stands for *denarius*, a small silver coin first minted in Rome around 211 BC. Its continuing legacy is evident in words such as the Spanish dinero, the Italian denaro or the Serbian dinar. See Robert A. Selig, “Eighteenth-century Currencies” *The Brigade Dispatch. Journal Of The Brigade Of The American Revolution* vol. 43, no. 3 (Autumn 2013), pp. 16-32.

A few days later 5 August 1776 the Minutes of the Committee of Observation read:

“Capt John Rodgers Presents his Acct for Ferriage of four waggon load of Arms and Ammunition for which this Committee to allow him 20/. payable to Mr Amos Garrett.”<sup>67</sup>

These entries indicate that Rodgers probably held the license from Harford County for the ferry, since it is he who is paid for the ferriage.<sup>68</sup> The ferriage receipt, which he submitted to the Committee of Observation on 5 August 1776, needs to be seen in the context of military activities around New York City. Maryland’s response to the dire situation was the creation of a “Flying Camp” to support the Continental Army. On 25 June 1776, the Maryland Convention “Resolved unanimously, That this province will furnish 3,405 of its militia, to form a flying camp, and to act with the militia of Pennsylvania and the Delaware government in the middle department; that is to say, from this province to New York inclusive, according to the request of the Congress in their resolutions of the 3d day of this instant June.” These

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<sup>67</sup> Preston, *Harford*, p. 332. No ledger for the ferry across the Susquehanna has survived, the only known ledger for our time period is for London Town Ferry for the years 1778/1779 in the Maryland Center for History and Culture in Baltimore.

The rates for ferries in Cecil County are recorded in Cecil County Court Minutes, 1777-1784, MSA 635-2, Maryland State Archives, Baltimore. See page 109 dated 11 June 1782 for the rates set on 11 June 1782 and page 139 for the 1783 rates.

Rates of Ferrage

A Loaded Waggon & 4 Horses £ 0..15.. –

Empty do 10

A two horse Waggon 10

Empty do with two do 8 4

Cecil County Minute Book 1777-84 Annapolis

Rate of Ferrage for 1783

1 Loaded Wagon & 4 Horses 7/6

1 Empty do & do 5/6

A two horse Wagon loaded 6/

Empty do 4/

For comparison: Diary by William Caswell concerning his trip to Philadelphia to the Continental Congress, 03 September 1774 – 08 November 1774: “14th (Sept 1774)—Set out after breakfast, crossed Susquehannah at the lower Ferry, went through Charles Town, Dined at the Head of Elk at the Sign of the Elk at Mr Hollingsworths, went through Ogles Town in Pennsylvania, Lodged at a Town at the Head of Christeen Creek, paid the Head of Elk 5s. 6d., Susquehannah Ferry 8s. 6d., at Christeen 16s. 9d”. Colonial and State Records of North Carolina. Volume 09, Pages 1064-1070; the quote is from p. 1066 at <https://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.php/document/csr09-0308>

When he crossed the Susquehanna on 21 October 1773, Philip Vickers Fithian breakfasted at North East, “Thence to Sesquehannah 10 Miles. Ferriage 1s/: Oats 9d.” *Journal & Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian 1773-1774: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion*. Edited, with an introduction, by Hunter Dickinson Farish; illustrated by Fritz Kredel (The University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1957), p. 60.

<sup>68</sup> Circumstantial information strongly suggests that Stephenson held the license for the Cecil County side of the Lower Susquehanna Ferry.

companies were to serve within said limits until 1 December 1776, unless sooner discharged by Congress. None were to be compelled to serve out of said limits or beyond 1 December. They were to be arranged in 4 battalions and 1 company, each battalion consisting of 9 companies.”<sup>69</sup>

The first unit raised for the “Flying Camp” in Harford County under Captain Aquila Paca consisted of eight officers and 38 non-commissioned officers and enlisted men.<sup>70</sup> These men were NOT part of the Maryland militia: they were part of the Continental Army.<sup>71</sup> Enrollment in the militia was compulsory – the men in the “Flying Camp” were volunteers. Militia only served within the state, but all who enrolled in the “Flying Camp” were required to pledge that “We the subscribers, do hereby enroll ourselves to serve as militia of Maryland in the middle department, that is to say, from this province to New York inclusive, until the first day of December next, unless sooner discharged by the honourable Congress according to the resolutions of the Convention of Maryland, held at Annapolis the 21st day of June, 1776.” Paca’s company was reviewed on 24 July 1776 and marched off to New York.<sup>72</sup> The list of volunteers is who signed up for service in New York State has survived in the Maryland Center for History and Culture. Captain John Rodgers was not among them.

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<sup>69</sup> On the personnel in the Flying Companies see *Muster Rolls and other Records of Service of Maryland Troops in the American Revolution 1775-1783* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society: 1900), p. 59: [Flying Camp:] Harford County. The volume only lists regular troops, not militia.

<sup>70</sup> *Muster Rolls and other Records of Service of Maryland Troops in the American Revolution 1775-1783* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society: 1900), p. 59.

<sup>71</sup> The best explanation of the difference between the Flying Camp and regular militia can be found in "Understanding Maryland Records Militia in the Revolution," Maryland State Archives Guide to Government Records, (<http://guide.msa.maryland.gov/pages/viewer.aspx?page=militia>

<sup>72</sup> [https://www.emmitsburg.net/archive\\_list/articles/history/rev\\_war/flying\\_camp\\_battalion.htm](https://www.emmitsburg.net/archive_list/articles/history/rev_war/flying_camp_battalion.htm)

Harford County also recruited two rifle companies under Alexander Lawson Smith and Gabriel Long which served with Washington’s Main Army during the retreat across New Jersey from late November into early 1777, including the battles of Trenton and Princeton. See Tucker F. Hentz, *Unit History of the Maryland and Virginia Rifle Regiment (1776–1781): Insights from the Service Record of Capt. Adamson Tannehill* (Virginia Historical Society: Richmond, 2007). Just like the Minutemen and Flying Camp, these men served in the Continental Army rather than the militia and are thus outside the scope of this study.



WE the SUBSCRIBERS do hereby enroll ourselves to serve as Militia of Maryland, in the middle department, that is to say, from this province to New-York inclusive, until the first day of December next, unless sooner discharged by the honourable Congress, according to the resolutions of the Convention of Maryland, held at Annapolis the 21st day of June, 1776.

Richard Pichette his	Each paid £2	Richard Jones
Letting H. Robbins	Do paid £2	William Nichols
Mark Robert Davis	Do paid £2	Thomas W. Brown
Thomas Lusk		Leviah Chenoweth
William H. H. H. H.		Benj. Phelps
John H. H. H.		David Barry
John H. H. H.		Saib Barry
John H. H. H.		Samuel Watts
John H. H. H.		Chasey Williams
John H. H. H.		Joseph Williams Jr
Yasany Williams		
John Watkins		
Thomas Latten		
John Thomas		
John Halls		
Snow Ben		
Saylor		
Richard Robinson		
William Williams		
Isaac Jones		
Benjamin Jones		
Richard James		
William Muldrew		
Mark		

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During the fall of 1776 the military situation continued to deteriorate. On 3 September 1776, John Hancock pleaded with the Convention of Maryland for additional troops. "The enemy has collected its whole force for a powerful attack on New York and it is incumbent on the United States to take every measure to defeat them; Congress has just learned from Gen. Washington of the superior strength of the enemy and only the most vigorous exertions will remedy the situation; all possible aid must be sent to the army in New York; "the state

of our affairs is so extremely critical that Delay may be attended with fatal Consequences."<sup>73</sup> On 10 September 1776, the Annapolis Convention passed a resolution requesting "the commanding officers of the militia in Prince George's, Frederick, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford, Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne's and Caroline counties to call their battalions together as soon as possible and select from one to three volunteer companies to be composed as prescribed and armed; a bounty of three pounds and one month's pay is to be advanced to each soldier; the field officers or the committees of observation of the counties are to recommend the commissioned officers to the Convention or Council of Safety, who are to form the companies of volunteers into battalions and appoint field officers for them; the Council of Safety is to furnish carriages and provisions and take every possible measure to expedite their march; companies volunteering as a unit may serve under their present officers; a warrant is to be issued to Capt. Andrew Hines of Frederick County to enroll a company for the flying camp; the committees of observation, committees of correspondence, and committees for licensing suits are to continue to act until December 1."<sup>74</sup>

Harford County raised two companies. On 13 October 1776, Aquila Hall informed Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, President of the Council of Safety in Annapolis, that "Agreeable to the resolve of Convention of the 10th September last, to select *a company of volunteers out of the Twenty-Third Battalion* in Harford County, I now make a return of the officers' names which are appointed to that company, and am of opinion a completer company has not gone from Maryland. The officers are: Francis Holland, Captain; John Carlisle, First Lieutenant; William Young, Second Lieutenant; and Robert Morgan, Ensign."<sup>75</sup> On 31 October 1776 Amos Garrett informed the Council of Safety from Swan Creek that "Captain *Robert Harris*, being on his march, and at *Susquehanna*, but in want of blankets, tents, and money, applied to me, and out of the stores in my hands I supplied him with forty blankets and ninety-one yards of linen, and for his ferriages and expenses paid his order to Captain *John Rodgers* for four pounds four shillings and ninepence."<sup>76</sup>

Following the disastrous defeat in the Battle of White Plains outside New York City on 28 October 1776, British forces relentlessly drove the remnants of the Continental Army across New Jersey. By late December Hessian troops lay quartered in Trenton. Philadelphia, capital of the nascent United States, seemed within reach of Sir William Howe and British forces stood within 80 miles of Elkton and Maryland. On 9 December 1776, the Continental Congress passed a resolution requesting the committees of Observation of Cecil, Baltimore,

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<sup>73</sup> *Calendar of Maryland State Papers No. 4 Part 1. The Red Books.* (Hall of Records Commission of the State of Maryland: Annapolis, 1950) Repr. 1972, p. 48.

<sup>74</sup> *Red Books*, p. 279.

<sup>75</sup> Force, *American archives* ser.5 v.2 1776, column 1021.

<sup>76</sup> Force, *American archives* ser.5 v.2 1776, column 1307. The two companies became known as the Harford Greens. Though they were present they did not fight in the Battle of Fort Washington.

Harford, and Frederick counties to send militia as fast as possible for the defense of Philadelphia and to reinforce Washington's army which was hastily retreating across New Jersey.<sup>77</sup> Ten days later, on 19 December, Maryland Governor Thomas Johnson officially asked the Council of Safety to dispatch militia from Baltimore, Frederick, and Harford counties to Pennsylvania where they were to join Washington's army. On 21 January 1777, the Continental Congress repeated its request for militia from Harford, Baltimore, and Cecil counties.<sup>78</sup>

Throughout the summer and fall of 1776, Washington had been pleading with Congress to put the Continental Army on a sound footing. First, Washington needed a larger force under his command. On 16 September 1776, Congress assigned each state a number of regiments to be raised there for the Continental Army based on the state's population; Maryland was assigned eight regiments though only seven were actually raised for service. In lieu of the 8<sup>th</sup> regiment Maryland contributed half of the so-called German regiment. Second, short-term enlistments such as the five-month term of the Maryland Flying Camp, which ended on 1 December 1776, made the creation of a professional Continental Army virtually impossible. Washington wanted and needed long enlistment terms, but some states balked at the idea of indefinite enlistment terms. On 12 November 1776, Congress allowed individuals to enlist for a fixed period of three years or for the duration of the war.

The subsequent reorganization of the armed forces of the nascent United States brought an end to *ad hoc* entities such as Minutemen and Flying Camps and resulted in a clear distinction between long-serving Continental forces that could be deployed anywhere and state militias called out whenever needed for service within their state. The Maryland Battalion, authorized on 14 January 1776, became the 1st Regiment of the Maryland Line in the Continental Army in January 1777, the seven Independent Companies, also authorized on 14 January 1776, became the 2d Maryland Regiment, the remaining five regiments were all authorized on 16 September 1776 but were not assigned to the Main Army under Washington until 27 December 1776.<sup>79</sup>

By late December 1776, the Continental Army had been driven across New Jersey and was about to enter Pennsylvania. Fortunately, the victories in the battles of Trenton on 25 December 1776, and Princeton, 3 January 1777, had stopped the British advance and spared Maryland and Harford County the devastation of war. But not for long.

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<sup>77</sup> *Red Books* p. 60.

<sup>78</sup> *Red Books* p. 66.

<sup>79</sup> See Rieman Steuart, *A History of the Maryland Line in the Revolutionary War, 1775-1783*. (Towson, 1969).

### 3.4 Sir William Howe and the Campaign of 1777

The battles of Trenton and Princeton dashed British hopes for a quick end to the war. Her campaign plans for 1777 saw General Sir John Burgoyne march toward Albany with the goal of separating New England from the rest of the colonies, and Sir William Howe cooperating with him by marching his forces north along the Hudson River and eventually meeting up with Burgoyne in Albany. Sir William however formulated his own plan incorporating both military and political goals: 1) militarily a defeat, but not annihilation of the Continental Army and 2) politically ending the war by occupying the rebel capital of Philadelphia. In July and August 1777, some 245 Royal Navy and hired vessels transported Howe's army of some 15,000 men up the Chesapeake Bay and landed at the Head of Elk on 24 August.

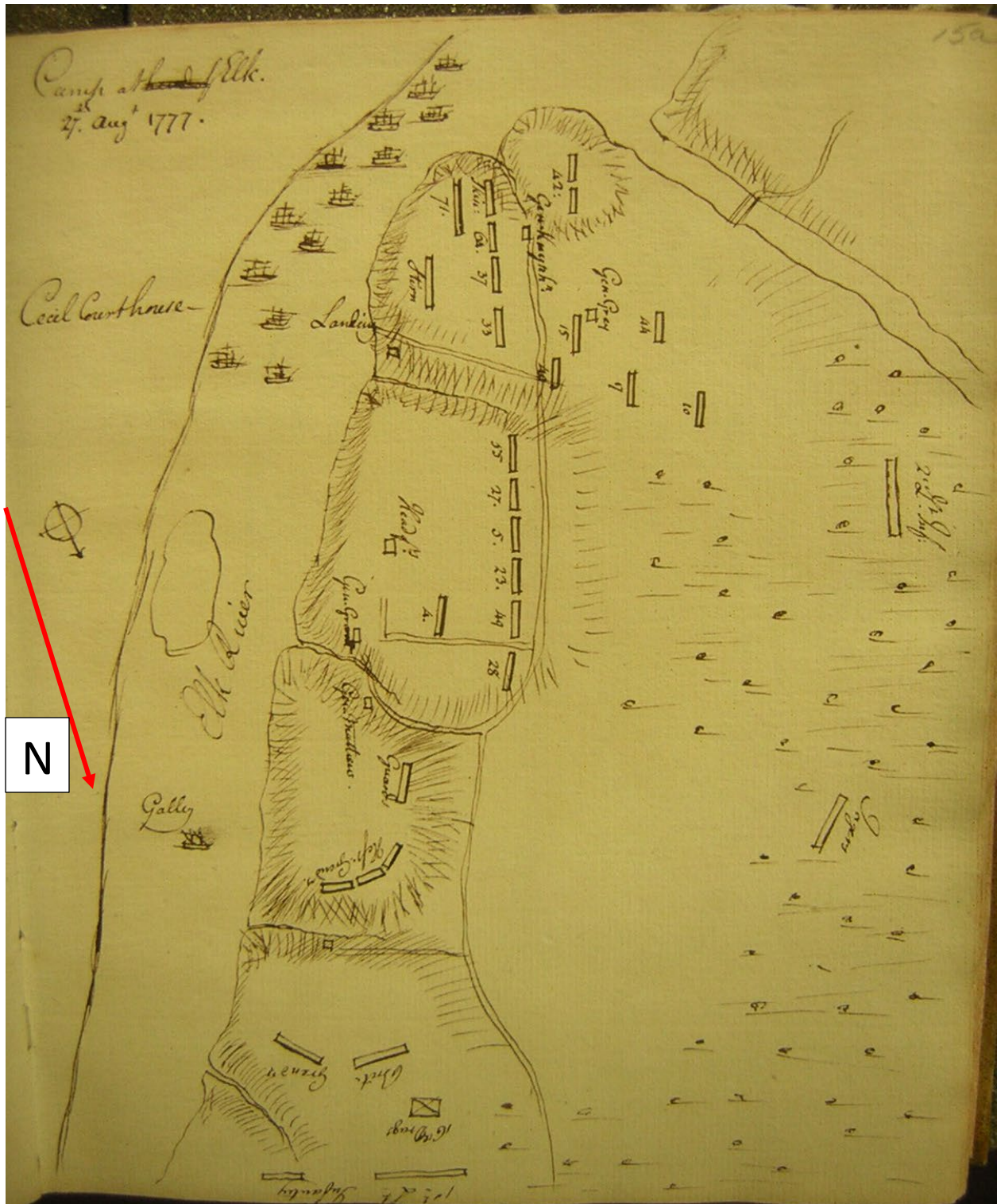
Hessian Jäger Captain Johann Ewald wrote in his diary: "The 23d. [August 1777] The fleet arrived at noon today at the mouth of the Susquehanna, where it anchored. Admiral Howe and General Howe went on board the boat again to reconnoiter the mouths of the Susquehanna, the North East, and the Elk rivers, taking along two row galleys for their protection. Captain Wreden and thirty jägers were loaded on one galley, and I with the same number of men on the other one. In the vicinity of Turkey Point we discovered a number of armed men, on foot and on horse. The galleys approached within gunshot range, whereupon the Americans withdrew and we sent several rifle shots after them. We returned to our ships during the night." Early next morning, 24 August 1777, "The first disembarkation, under Lord Cornwallis and Colonel Donop, consisted of the foot jägers, the light infantry, the English grenadiers, and the Guards. Should the enemy oppose the landing, Lord Cornwallis would order the disposition for further attack."<sup>80</sup>

One week after landing in Maryland, Howe's advance guard clashed with American Light Infantry at the Battle of Cooch's Bridge on 3 September 1777 just across the state line in Delaware in a short, but sharp, engagement that was a British tactical victory. The Royal Army encamped in the Cooch's Bridge area for five days while Washington's army fortified positions along the Red Clay Creek and in Wilmington in Delaware. Cooch's Bridge was the first in a series of engagements culminating in the Battle of Brandywine on 11 September 1777 as the Royal Army moved to capture Philadelphia, which was taken on 26 September.<sup>81</sup>

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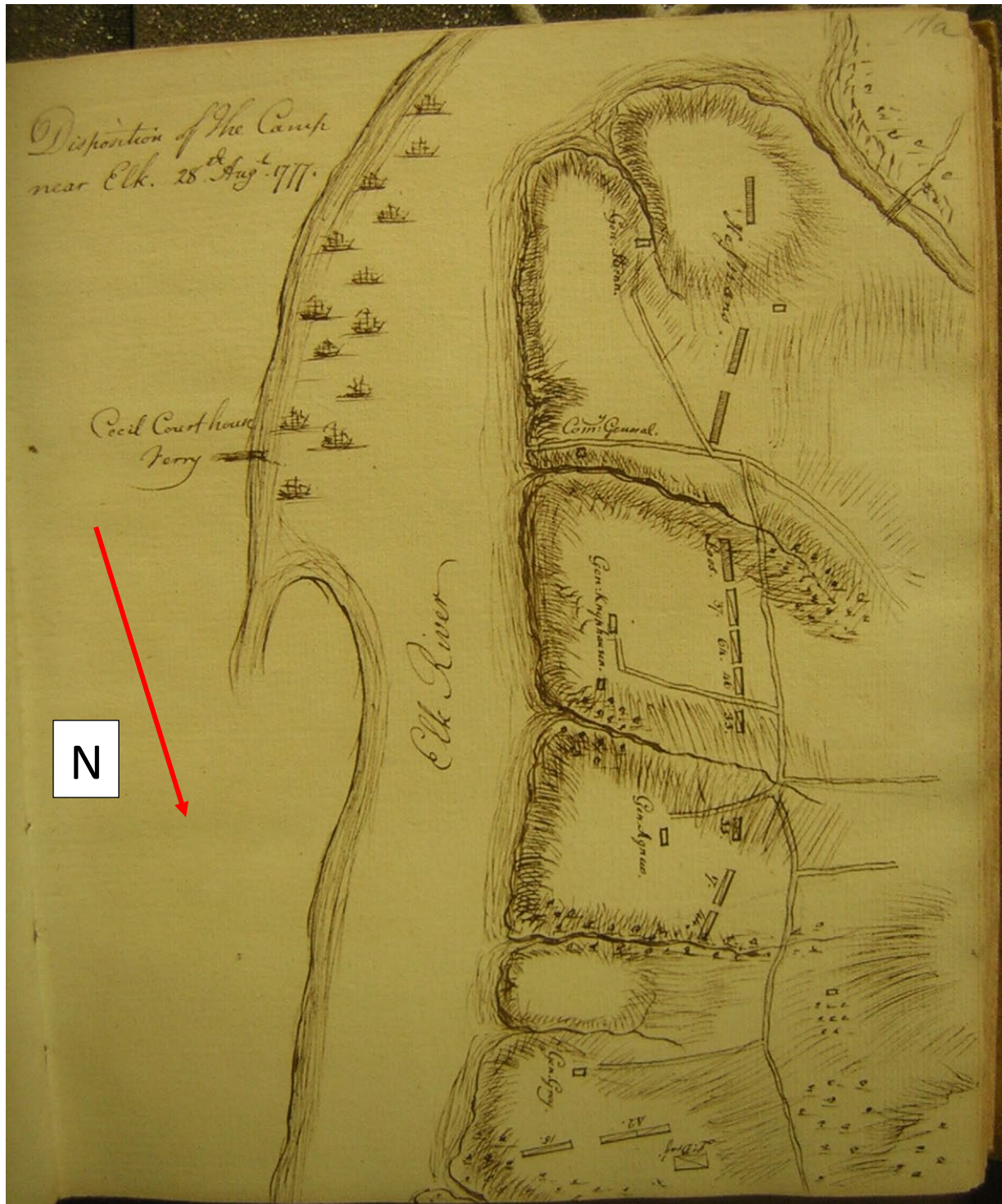
<sup>80</sup> Johann Ewald, *Diary of the American War. A Hessian Journal* Tustin, transl. and ed., (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 73-74

<sup>81</sup> For an older account of British forces see Johnston, *Cecil County*, pp. 327-334.



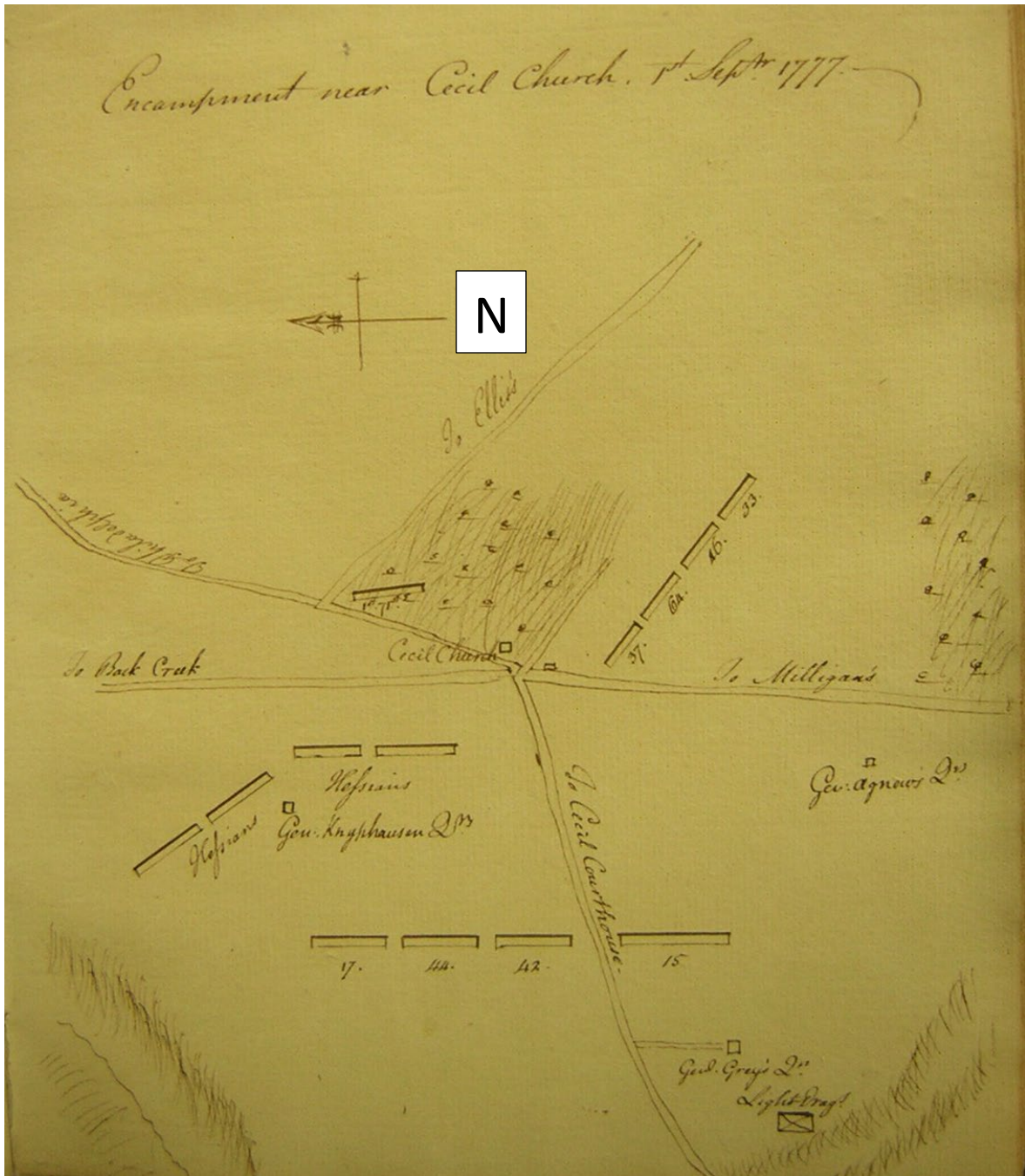
"Camp at Elk, 27<sup>th</sup> Aug<sup>t</sup> 1777"

Sir Henry Clinton Papers, Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor



"Disposition of the Camp near Elk. 28<sup>th</sup> Aug<sup>t</sup> 1777

Sir Henry Clinton Papers, Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor



“Encampment near Cecil Church 1<sup>st</sup> Sep<sup>tr</sup> 1777”

Sir Henry Clinton Papers, Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

British forces stayed barely a week in Cecil County, but for a few short days, Harford County too as far south as the mouth of the Susquehanna had to prepare to defend itself against British raiders looking for foodstuffs, horses, draft animals, and slaves. The Committees of Observation also had to anticipate being called upon to mobilize their militias

to join other militia, and potentially Continental Army forces, against the British enemy not only in Maryland but in Delaware and Pennsylvania as well. In September 1777, Captain John Rodgers and the ferry had become part of the war zone. On 26 August, William Paca wrote to Samuel Chase in Philadelphia that he had information that “Susquehannah Ferry has been taken by the British; companies are to go to Harford and Cecil Counties to wait further orders”.<sup>82</sup> The militia dispatched to prevent the landing arrived too late. Barachias Cope, born on 5 January 1760, deposed in his pension application that “he thinks in 1777 it was reported that the British were going to attempt a landing at the mouth of the Susquehanna river, and he volunteered to go and prevent them – he states that he was enrolled and marched under his same captain [Robert Harris of the 8<sup>th</sup> or Lower Battalion under Colonel Benjamin Rumsey] to the mouth of the Susquehanna but before applicant arrived there the British had landed there and supplied themselves with provisions and had reembarked again and applicant thinks their shipping lay in sight when he arrived – applicant remained there until the British went off to the head of Elk when he was dismissed and returned home.”<sup>83</sup>

The freedom of movement of Maryland troops was however also impacted by the need to keep watch on the enslaved population. On 25 August Benjamin Rumsey had warned Governor Johnson from North East that he had heard reports that the British were enlisting “all Negroes & Serv.” by the promise of fine clothes.<sup>84</sup> On 8 September, Smallwood told Governor Johnson that Colonel Edward Cowan’s regiment had to remain behind “to prevent the Negroes and stock being swept away.”<sup>85</sup> There were of course African-American enslaved persons who did run away with the British. One of them was Anthony Griffith (or Griffin). He ran away from Luke Griffith in August 1777 and made it all the way to Rhode Island where he enlisted on 28 February 1778 in Captain Thomas Hughes’ company of the 2d Rhode Island Regiment. When his regiment lay encamped at head of Elk waiting to embark for Yorktown, his owner recognized him and demanded that he be returned to him. Even years of service in the uniform of a Continental Army soldier did not protect Anthony. On 9 September he was discharged and returned to slavery.<sup>86</sup>

On 8 September 1777, General William Smallwood informed Governor Thomas Johnson from Swan Creek that he planned “to cross the Susquehannah River September 10; two field pieces are yet to be received.”<sup>87</sup> They were following General Howe’s army into Pennsylvania

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<sup>82</sup> *Red Books* p. 378.

<sup>83</sup> Pension Application of Barachias Cope S21139, NARA.

<sup>84</sup> *Red Books* p. 378.

<sup>85</sup> Thomas, *Brown Books*, p. 16.

<sup>86</sup> Daniel M. Popek, *They “... fought bravely but were unfortunate:” The true story of Rhode Island’s “Black Regiment” and the failure of segregation in Rhode Island’s Continental Line, 1777-1783* (Bloomington, IN: Authorhouse, 2015), p. 174.

<sup>87</sup> Roger Thomas, *Calendar of Maryland State Papers, No. 3 The Brown Books* (Publications of the Hall of Records Commission No. 6 (State of Maryland: Annapolis, 1948) repr. 1973,p. 16.

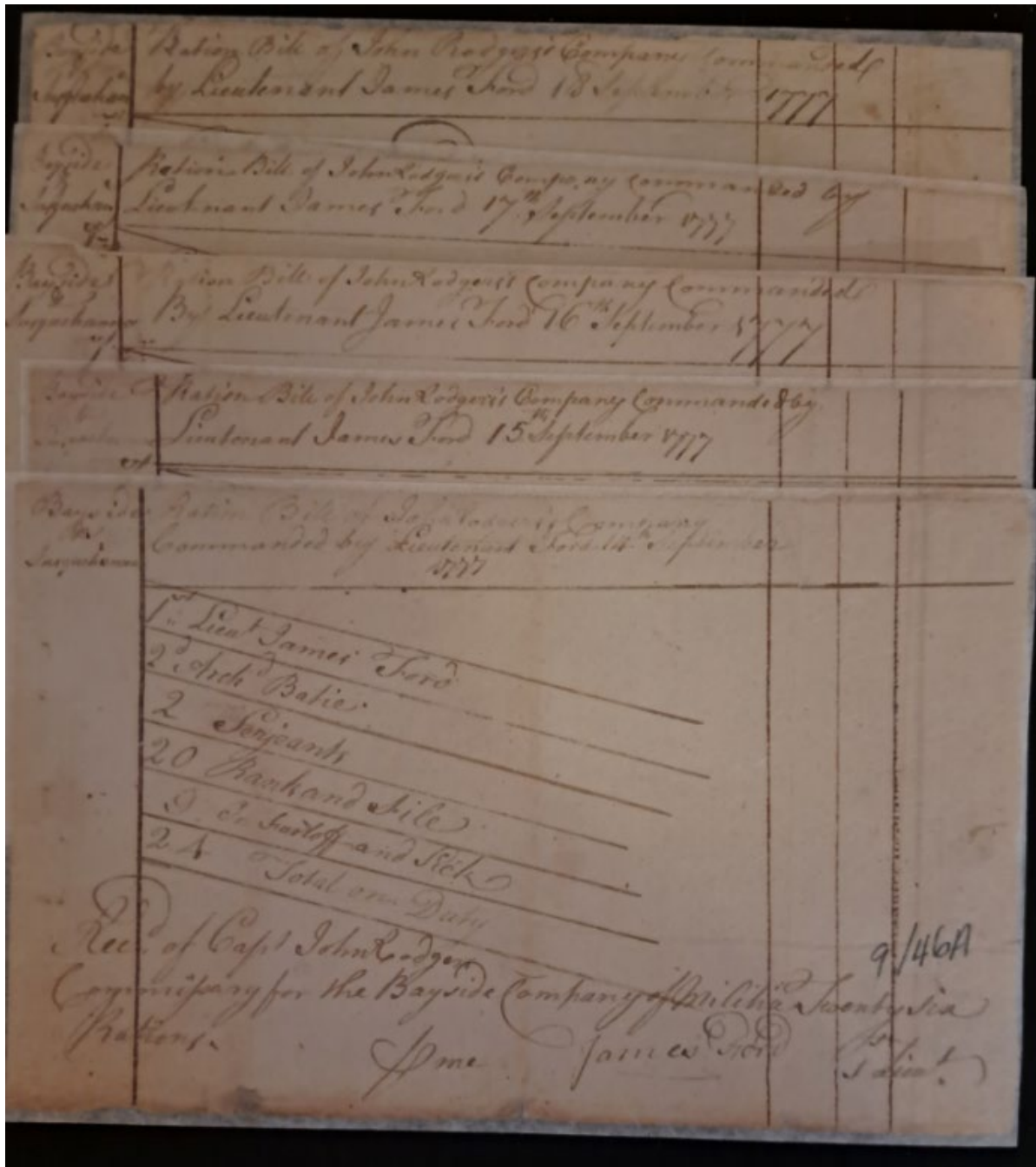


but arrived too late to participate in the Battle of Brandywine. In an affidavit to his brother Henry Shipley's pension application, Adam Shipley of Anne Arundel County deposed that "In July or August 1777 the said Henry and this deponent both joined Capt. Charles Hammond Company and Lieutenant Woodward. They were united in the Elkridge [22<sup>nd</sup>] Battalion – commanded by Col. Dawsey [Thomas Dorsey] – who also commanded the Montgomery Battalion. They marched then to meet General Washington and crossed the Susquehannah at Havre de Grass but did not participate in the Battle of Brandywine [11 September 1777]. From there they were ordered to join General [Anthony] Wayne at Peola [Paoli Massacre, 20 September 1777]. From Peola we marched and joined General Washington and remained with him in winter Quarters [at Valley Forge]. This deponent was a musician. Soon after the Battle of Brandywine Henry joined Capt. Woodward's Company – Capt. Hammond being gone home. Capt. Hammond's Company was called a Draughted Company. Before going to winter Quarters in the fall of 1777 the said Henry was in the engagement of Germantown. After Winter Quarters were broken up in the Spring of 1778 Henry went home and this deponent accompanied him."<sup>88</sup>

With Sir William Howe literally at his doorsteps, Captain John Rodgers and his company were called out to assist in the defense against British forces as well.

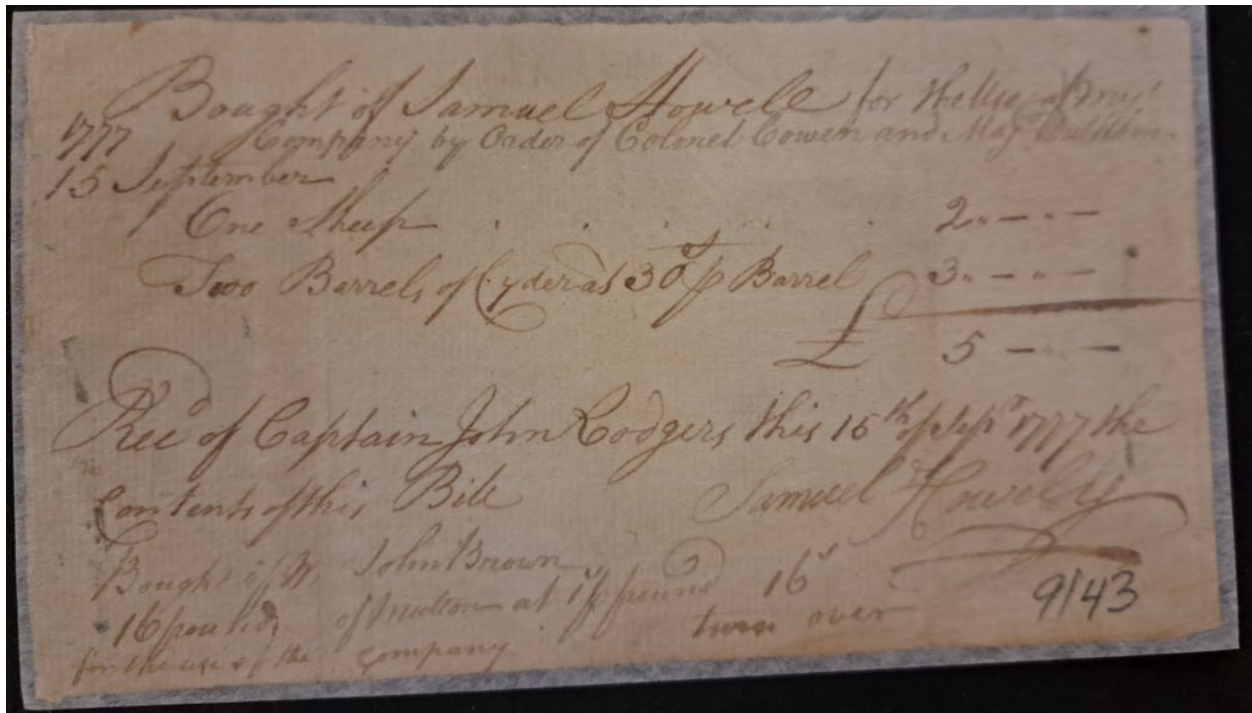
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<sup>88</sup> Pension Application Henry Shipley W6046, NARA.



Maryland State Archives

Five ration bills from 14 through 18 September 1777 showing the strength “of John Rodgers Company Commanded by Lieutenant James Ford” during mid-September 1777. The company is two officers, two sergeants and 20 men strong. Captain Rodgers features as “Commissary for the Bayside Company of Militia.” No other mss concerning Rodgers’ company have been located.



Maryland State Archives

On 15 September 1777, John Rodgers purchased from Samuel Howell one sheep for L2 and two barrels of cider for £ 3 for the use of his company. From John Brown be purchased “16 pounds of Mutton at 1<sup>s</sup> p pound for the use of the company”. This is the only such receipts located during research for this report.

In mid-September 1777, Rodgers and his company were deployed in Harford County. Andrew McAdow (or McAdew) deposed that “In the year 1777, in the summer or fall of that year, when the British fleet were in the Chesapeake Bay, he, then just arrived to 16 years of age and Subject to Militia duty was called with the rest of the Regiment to which he was attached called out en Masse to guard the Western Shore of the Chesapeake Bay, and that he marched from his residence in Harford County as private in the company of Militia commanded by Captain Wm Bradford,<sup>89</sup> Edward McComas first Lieutenant, Joseph Rose Second Lieutenant, and George Cunningham Ensign to a place called Sidney Park<sup>90</sup> on said Bay & during the time he was stationed there 3 or 400 of the Virginia Troops commanded by Small, or Smallwood, came, and continued there 3 or 4 days, during which time Capt. Greenberry Dondey who commanded a company of Militia on the Bay Shore came there with

<sup>89</sup> William Bradford had raised company No. 13 in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Battalion and was appointed its Captain on 30 September 1775. He was confirmed as its Captain on 9 April 1778 and 17 November 1779.

<sup>90</sup> Sydney Park is today in Aberdeen Proving Ground. Stony Point is just north of Delph Creek also in Aberdeen Proving Ground.

an express that the British had landed on Stony Points,<sup>91</sup> and proposed to go and carry the express to the Commander in chief (Richard Dullam) but he was requested to return to his men, instead of, which he put his whip to his horse and rode on to Dullam, and on his return which happened in 2 or 3 days he laid down his commission.<sup>92</sup> We were at this time called to arms to march to Stony Point and being at a short distance from it & it dark, we were ordered to rest upon our arms till daylight, we then marched on to the place, a company called the Harford Greens<sup>93</sup> were on the lookout in advance, and discovering no British commenced firing by platoons, he the declarant with his regiment had orders to march to the spot and marched up the Shore within half a mile of the British fleet & then returned to the place of rendezvous, that he continued in the said service about two months, and when the British fleet left the Bay, he, together with a number of others drafted to continue and guard the shores .“<sup>94</sup>

Seventeen-year-old Aaron Mc Comas deposed in his pension application “That he entered the service of the United States in the month of October in the year 1777 as a private in the company commanded by Captain John Rodgers which company was attached or belonged to the Battallion or Regiment commanded by Col<sup>o</sup> Francis Holland [23<sup>rd</sup> or Upper Battalion] and that he left the said service ... was verbally discharged from first tour by Captain John Rogers ... in the latter part of the month of May in the year 1778.” His First Lieutenant was “a man by the name of Ford.” Mc Comas belonged to Company No. 13, Captain William Bradford, but his pension application he explains why he listed John Rodgers as his commanding officer.

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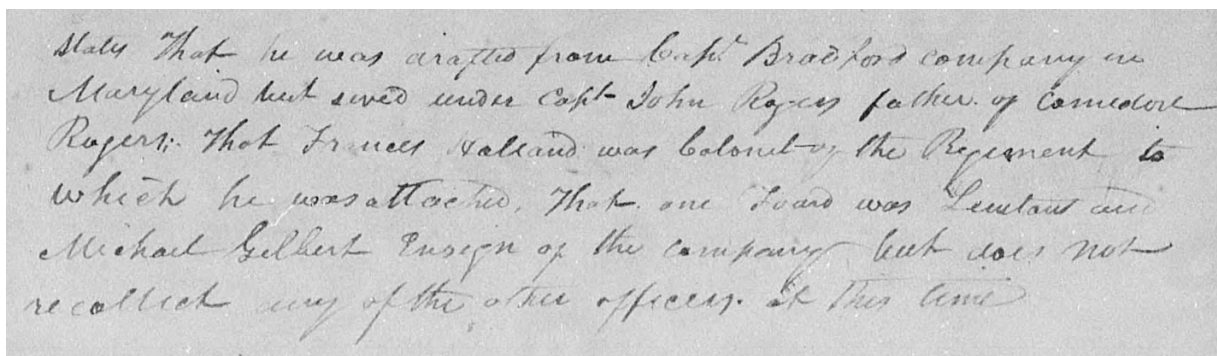
<sup>91</sup> Stony Point is east of the mouth of Delph Creek in Aberdeen Proving Ground.

<sup>92</sup> Richard Dallah became Quartermaster of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Battalion on 6 January 1776 and was named Deputy Paymaster General of the Flying Camp by the Continental Congress on 17 July 1776 and served until about June 1777. From November 1777 to the end of the war, he was County Lieutenant of Harford County. In the Annapolis Convention of 22 June 1774, Dallah, John Love, Thomas Bond, John Paca, Edward Hall, and Jacob Bond represented Harford County. He also signed the Bush declaration of 22 March 1775.

Greenberry Dorsey was Captain of Company No. 8 in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, which entered the rolls on 31 October 1775.

<sup>93</sup> The company commanded by Francis Holland (warrant issued 23 September, commissioned 4 October 1776) was known as the Harford Greens as was the company of Captain Robert Harris, who on 19 October 1776 had received a commission as captain of a company of volunteers he had raised for the Flying Camp.

<sup>94</sup> Pension application Andrew McAdow/McAdew S9020. He also provided an affidavit for the application of Aaron Mc Comas.



states that he was drafted from Capt Bradford company in Maryland but served under Capt John Rogers father of Commodore Rogers; that Francis Holland was Colonel of the Regiment to which he was attached, that one Foard was Lieutenant and Michael Gilbert Ensign of the company but does not recollect any of the other officers. At this time

McComas "states That he was drafted from Capt Bradford company in Maryland but served under Captn John Rodgers father of Commodore Rogers; that Francis Holland was Colonel of the Regiment to which he was attached That one Foard was Lieutenant and Michael Gilbert Ensign of the company but does not recollect any of the other officers at this time."

The need to protect the people living along the shores of the Chesapeake and their property from British and Tory raiders continued throughout the war long after British ground forces had marched out of Maryland and evacuated Philadelphia as well. The dangers that could be involved in militia duty are described in an exceedingly rare letter which Aaron Mc Comas wrote to his father from New Castle County in 1778. The family kept the letter for more than 50 years and Mc Comas included it in his application more than 50 years.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Pension Application of Aaron Mc Comas R6638, NARA. On Fold3 search under "Mc Comas" as "McComas" yields no results. The original letter is here: <https://www.fold3.com/image/25341852>

Trap in New Castle County April 26<sup>th</sup> 1778

Dr father/ I embrace this Opportunity to let you know that I am well, hoping these may find you and all the rest the Same I have Nothing Material to write we lay here two or three Miles from the Enemys Shipping but how long I know not, nor when we shall get home. the Enemy land often and Sometimes Carry of Stock and a few days ago Carried off four Men of the Inhabitants. I see in Middletown<sup>96</sup> about 40 Tories Taken by the lower Militia with Cloudy Slow their Leader, they mostly all enlisted in the Regular Service with 20 Men I should be glad if you Could Send me a pair of Shoes, and a pair of Trowsers I add no more at present but Remain  
 Your Ever Dutiful Son  
 Aaron McComas

Trap in New Castle County April 26<sup>th</sup> 1778

Dr father/ I embrace this Opportunity to let you know that I am well, hoping these may find you and all the rest the Same I have Nothing Material to write we lay here two or three Miles from the Enemys Shipping but how long I know not, nor when we shall get home. the Enemy land often and Sometimes Carry of Stock and a few days ago Carried off four Men of the Inhabitants. I see in Middletown<sup>96</sup> about 40 Tories Taken by the lower Militia with Cloudy Slow their Leader, they mostly all enlisted in the Regular Service with (20?) Men I should be glad if you Could Send me a pair of Shoes, and a pair of Trowsers I add no more at present but Remain

Your Ever Dutiful Son

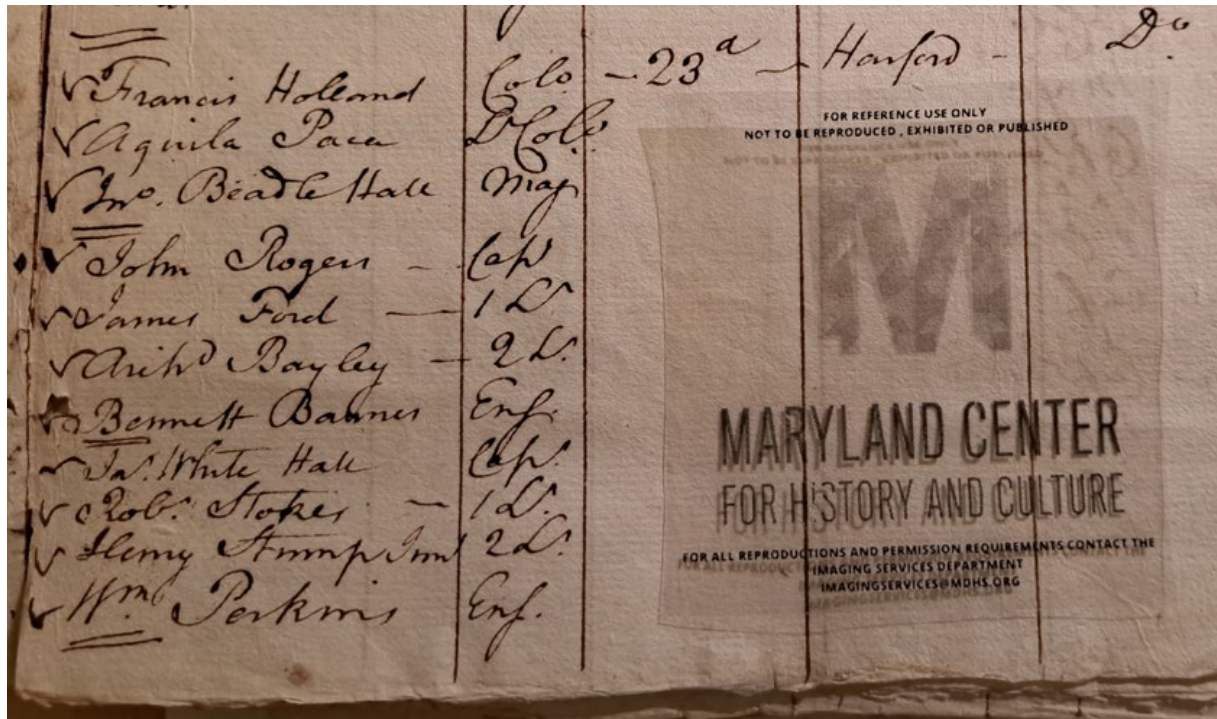
Aaron McComas

<sup>96</sup> Middletown is just east of Odessa in Delaware.

McComas was serving under Captain John Rodgers out of state in Delaware, which was contrary to the law. He and his company were relieved shortly thereafter in May 1778 and verbally discharged by John Rodgers. But where? Did Rodgers spend months with his company in Delaware or did he leave the command to Lieutenant Ford, as some of the receipts suggest, and discharged the unit upon their return to Harford County? The question will have to remain unanswered until new evidence comes to light.

### 3.5 The Move into Cecil County and the End of John Rodgers' Military Career

On 9 April 1778, the militia of Maryland was once again reorganized. John Rodgers company remained in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Battalion with Francis Holland as colonel and Aquila Paca as Lieutenant Colonel. Rodgers is listed as captain of his company with James Ford as 1st Lieutenant, Archibald Bayley as 2d Lieutenant, and Bennett Banner as Ensign.<sup>97</sup>



<sup>97</sup> The visuals show details of

William Goodgrace (or Godgrace) had resigned his commission to move out of state in April or early May 1776. On 13 May 1776, the Committee of Observation had received a request to issue a commission of First Lieutenant to Ford Garrett, Amos, [Harford County]. "To [Aqui]la Hall and Other [Delegates of Harford County [in Convention." Requests commissions for a company officered by Capt. William Morgan, 1st Lt. John Farmer, 2nd Lt. Daniel Root, Jr. and William Prigg, Jr.; also wants a commission for 1st Lt. James Ford in Capt. John Rodgers' Company to replace William Godsgrace, who is moving out of the County. Calendar of Maryland State Papers No. 5 Executive Miscellanea The Hall of Records Commission No. 11 (Annapolis: State of Maryland, 1958), p. 46.

34 Harford County continued

Name	Rank when Capt?	Remarks
James [unclear] Ba 4		
Francis Holland	Col. 9 Apr 78	
Aquila Pava	1st Lt.	
Sam Rogers	Capt.	
James Hall	1st Lt.	
Robert Stokes	1st Lt.	

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MARYLAND CENTER  
FOR HISTORY AND CULTURE

THE STATE OF MARYLAND, 237

To John Wood Esquires Greeting.

BE it known, that reposing especial trust and confidence in your fidelity, courage, good conduct, and attachment to the liberties and independence of America, you are by these presents constituted and appointed *Captain of a Company in the twenty third Battalion of Militia in Harford County*

You are therefore carefully and diligently to discharge the trust reposed in you, by disciplining all officers and foldiers under your command; and they are hereby strictly enjoined and required to obey you as their *Captains*

And you are to observe and follow all such orders and directions as you shall from time to time receive, according to the laws and constitution of this state, and the rules and regulations, which, under the authority thereof, are or may be established. This commission to be in force until lawfully revoked.

GIVEN at ANNAPOLIS this *ninth* day of *April* Anno domini, 1778

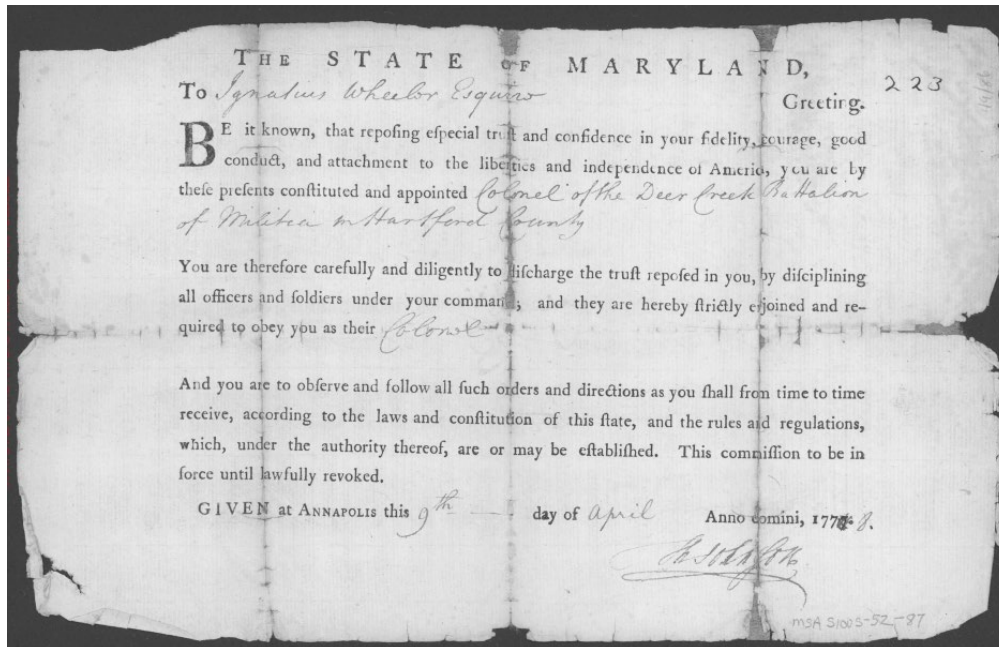
*W. Scharff*

MSA S1005-52-111

Commission of John Wood as Captain of a Company of Militia in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Battalion.

The Scharff Collection in the Maryland State Archives preserves a few commissions issued to Militia officers in Harford County in April 1778. Rodgers presumably received a new commission in April of 1778 as well but if it survived it has not been located.





Ignatius Wheeler became Colonel of the Deer Creek Battalion on 9 April 1778.

Stephen Hyland became Colonel in 1778, and Elihu Hall Lieutenant Colonel in the Susquehanna Battalion (30<sup>th</sup> Battalion) in Cecil County, where John Rodgers lived after late 1778/early 1779. Baruch Williams succeeded Hall in 1781.

Just like Barachias Cope, Aaron McComas deposed in his pension application that he “entered the said service at Havre de grace in Harford County Maryland and marched from thence to the head of Elk thence to Middletown thence to Appoquiniminc Bridge thence to ‘the trap’ in New Castle County in the State of Delaware thence again to Appoquiniminc Bridge where in the month of May 1778 aforesaid he was discharged as aforesaid.”<sup>98</sup> He was discharged by Captain John Rodgers. This is the last time that Rodgers appears in the military records of Harford County. The reasons for this a two-fold. First, the war had moved away from Maryland. After almost nine months of occupation, British troops under Sir Henry Clinton marched out of Philadelphia on 18 June 1778. The Chesapeake remained quiet until

<sup>98</sup> Pension Application Aaron McComas R6638. The “Trap” is located in St. George's Hundred, along the Old King's Highway (today's Route 13) in southern New Castle County. It's a tavern intersection and was the home of Thomas McDonough, who served as a Commodore in the War of 1812. J. Thomas Scharf's *History of Delaware* (L.J Richards & Co., Philadelphia, 1888) vol. II, page 993. For an example of the long-term impact of war in that area see Wade P. Catts, “To Drain the Country’: Historical Archaeology and the Effects of the War of Independence in the Route 301 Corridor.” In: *The Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Delaware* 57 (New Series) 2020, pp. 21-43.

In 1731, permission was granted to Edmund Cantwell's son, Richard, to erect a toll bridge over the Appoquinimink Creek at Appoquinimink Landing. The modern bridge is part of DE Route 9 just east of Odessa on the Delaware River and about 35 miles from Perryville.

the Spring of 1781, when American forces under the marquis de Lafayette marched through the state on their way to Virginia. More importantly, John Rodgers no longer lived in Harford County. Sometime after the summer of 1778 Rodgers moved across the Susquehanna into Cecil County. With the move his commission as a captain in the 23rd Battalion of the Harford County Militia, renewed on 9 April 1778 only, became mute. He had no company to command anymore. In June 1778 the last debts owed to Rodgers were paid off: "A List of Accounts paid by the State of Maryland to Militia in Service of the United States" which runs from 27 August 1776 to September 1787 lists a payment £ 11 6/ 5d for Captain John Rodgers on 17 June 1778.<sup>99</sup> The extremely detailed "List of Accounts" which lists muskets, cartridge boxes, and flints among a plethora of items runs into 1787, but after 17 June 1778 the name of John Rodgers appears neither in Harford or Cecil County records nor in the statewide compilations created for submission to the Federal government.

By the summer of 1779 at the latest, Rodgers was living in "Rodgers Tavern" in Cecil County. On 8 August 1779, the county issued John Rogers a one-year license to keep a tavern at the Susquehanna Lower Ferry. That same summer French consul Chevalier d'Annemours, Consul General of France to the United States as well as to the State of Maryland from 1779-1793, asked Maryland Governor Thomas Sim Lee to add another task to the obligations of ferrymen such as Rodgers. In a letter 8 June 1779, he asked Lee to instruct the ferrymen at the "two lower ferries on Susquehanna and Elkridge's, Haman's and Dorsey's on the Patapsco" to intercept deserters from French vessels. Those were often men from a variety of countries who either had signed up as sailors on French vessels to get a free passage to the United States. Once in the United States they deserted at the earliest opportunity because they wanted to settle here or, more often, were looking to join the crews of American privateers in anticipation of prize money. There is no record that Rodgers ever caught a French deserter.<sup>100</sup>

On 6 October 1780, the county renewed John Rogers' one-year license to keep a tavern at the Susquehanna Lower Ferry at least until the end of September 1781. In an award of 4 June 1781, he is referred to as "now in Cecil County Susquehanna Ferry". When allied forces on their way to Yorktown reached the Susquehanna three months, John Rodgers' tavern and ferry experienced their busiest days ever.

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<sup>99</sup> Accounts of Militia Payments. On 10 June 1778: Capt. John Rodgers Coy £ 11 6/ 5d (same amount as on 17 June 1778) Commissioner of Army Accounts, Receipt Book 1145-1, Maryland Hall of Records, Annapolis.

<sup>100</sup> Roger THOMAS, Calendar of Maryland State Papers, No. 3 The Brown Books (Publications of the Hall of Records Commission No. 6 (State of Maryland: Annapolis, 1948) repr. 1973, pp. 43/53.

#### 4. Allied Forces to Yorktown, August-September 1781

##### 4.1 The marquis de Lafayette and the Spring Campaign of 1781

Following the departure of Virginia Governor Lord Dunmore for New York City, Virginia was more or less spared the ravages of war. All of this changed in 1781. On 31 December 1780, Benedict Arnold, now a Brigadier-General in the British Army, disembarked some 1,200 British officers and men in Portsmouth and quickly captured Richmond on 5 January 1781. The few Continental Army forces and militiamen under the command of Baron Steuben, who had arrived in the Commonwealth on 20 November 1780 in the company of Major General Nathanael Greene, were unable to prevent the destruction wreaked by Arnold's forces. Responding to Virginia's pleas for help, General George Washington on 20 February 1781 ordered the marquis de Lafayette with the newly established corps of Light Infantry to Virginia. Here the Frenchman was to co-operate with a naval force under Admiral Charles René Dominique Sochet, *chevalier* des Touches and an infantry force of some 1,100 French grenadiers and chasseurs under Antoine Charles du Houx, *baron* de Vioménil, sent from Rhode Island by the comte de Rochambeau with the goal of capturing Arnold.

Once the New Jersey Light Infantry companies had joined the New England contingent on 26 February, Lafayette's corps made its way south in three detachments of about 400 officers and men each. Having crossed Pennsylvania and Delaware, Lafayette' reached the northernmost tip of the Chesapeake Bay two weeks later and in the early afternoon of 3 March lay encamped at Head of Elk.<sup>101</sup> On 7 March 1781, Assistant Deputy Quartermaster Donaldson Yeates informed Quarter-Master General Colonel Timothy Pickering that Lafayette was still at Head of Elk, unable to move due to bad weather. It was only in the morning of 8 March that two of Lafayette's three battalions could embark at Plum Point, "being 7 miles from the head of Elk." Lieutenant Ebenezer Wild continues: "Col. Vose's Regt. marched five miles further, & took quarters in houses near Cissel ferry," i.e., the Lower Susquehanna Ferry run by Captain John Rodgers.<sup>102</sup> By 11 a.m. the next morning Wild had embarked at the ferry but due to contrary winds had to drop anchor for the night at Turkey Point. It was only in the evening of 13 March, that Lafayette's forces were all safely anchored in the harbor of Annapolis. As they prepared to sail out of the harbor the next morning, 14 March, they found two British vessels blocking their route. The vessels were still off Annapolis when Lafayette returned to the city from Virginia on 2 April.

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<sup>101</sup> Henry Hollingsworth to the governor and Council, 3 March 1781. Quoted in J. Alexis Shriver, *Lafayette in Harford County* (Privately printed: Bel Air, 1931), p. 50. On Lafayette see also Preston, *Harford*, pp. 138-143. Preston gives his source as an "address before Maryland Historical Society by Mr. E. M. Allen." Ibid. p. 143.

<sup>102</sup> Ebenezer Wild, "Journal of Ebenezer Wild", *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 2nd series, vol. VI (Boston, Ma., 1891), pp. 79-160, p. 132.

Anxious to reach Virginia, Lafayette had ridden ahead of his forces and reached Yorktown on 14 March. Two days later on 16 March, des Touches fought an indecisive naval battle with Admiral Mariot Arbuthnot known as the "First Battle of the Capes". Unable to break through the British fleet, a disappointed French naval squadron sailed back to Newport. The plan to capture Arnold in his works around Portsmouth had depended on the French troops that never arrived. A relieved Lafayette made his way back to Annapolis. Like most Americans, Lafayette assumed that the campaign of 1781 would focus on New York City, the center of British military and political power in America. Lafayette wanted to be with Washington rather than somewhere in Virginia. Upon arrival in Annapolis, he embarked his forces on 4 April, determined to force his way through the British blockade. The next day the British were gone, and the Light Infantry was on its way back to Head of Elk, where they arrived on 7 and 8 April.<sup>103</sup> But as Lafayette was making his way north to rejoin the main army, a British fleet sailed into the Chesapeake on 20 March. It carried British Major-General William Phillips and more than 3,000 regular troops. Upon arrival at Head of Elk, Lafayette received Washington's dispatch of 6 April from New Windsor ordering him to "turn your detachment to the southward" to reinforce Major General Nathanael Greene's forces in North Carolina."<sup>104</sup> That decision to march to the Carolinas for an extended tour of service caused discipline problems and numerous desertions as described by Lafayette in a letter written on 17 April 1781 from Baltimore to Nathanael Greene: "The officers did not like it More than the Men, and the Men Whose discipline does not Give them the Idea of Complaining Began to Desert in Great Numbers ... The New England troops Have taken An idea that Southern Climates Are Very Unwholesome and that of Carolina Mortal to them ... My first object Was to Get the troops on this Side of the Susquehana and Request the Militia officers to pick up Deserters and send them to me Immediately."<sup>105</sup>

It took a few days to calm the men down, complete equipment, and prepare for the march, but on 12 April the Light Infantry set out for Lower Ferry, about 12 miles south of Head of

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<sup>103</sup> Wild, "Journal", p. 135. The wagons carrying equipment for the Light Infantry returned on land. It is unknown when or where they crossed the Susquehanna.

<sup>104</sup> When he wrote that letter, the Commander in Chief was unaware of Phillips' arrival in Virginia. Stanley J. Idzerda, ed., *Lafayette in the Age of the American Revolution*, vol. IV (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 30.

<sup>105</sup> Lafayette to Nathanael Greene, from Baltimore, 17 April 1781. Idzerda, *Lafayette*, IV, pp. 37–38.

Lieutenant Benjamin Gilbert of the 5<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiment wrote to his father on 11 April from Elkton about his doubts that he would "servive the Campaign in this unhealthy country." About the local population he wrote that "the People in this part of the Continent are not given to acts of Hospitallity." John Shy, ed., *Winding Down. The Revolutionary War letters of Lieutenant Benjamin Gilbert of Massachusetts, 1780-1783* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1989), p. 41.

On 14 April Lafayette informed Washington that "Many Men Have Already Deserted. Many More will I am afraid take the Same Course." Wild recorded seven desertions for 10 April and another eight for the 11<sup>th</sup>. Wild, "Journal", p. 135.

Elk. Here the regiment “encamped in a wood one mile N. of Susquehannah river.”<sup>106</sup> That same day Lafayette informed Washington from Head of Elk that his troops “left this morning. We shall encamp on a Ground Near the Ferry and be as Expeditious as possible in Crossing the River.”<sup>107</sup> The crossing, however, would not be expeditious. It took four days for Lafayette’s forces get across, in part because of the weather and in part because John Rodgers and his ferry lacked the transport capacities to quickly ferry the 1,200 men of Lafayette’s Light Infantry and their wagons across the river. On 13 April, Lafayette wrote his first letter to Washington from “Susquehana Ferry” followed by another letter on 14 April from the same location. In it he informed Washington “that I am Still at the ferry where the troops have Crossed the River, But the Wind Blows so High that it Has Been Impossible to take the Waggons over, and I am obliged to Have others Impressed on the Southern Side of the Susquehana.”<sup>108</sup> Lieutenant Ebenezer Wild confirmed Lafayette’s information when he recorded in his diary on 14 April “The troops having finished crossing the Sisquehaner river, at 1 o’clk I crossed with my guard, and took post in the center of the Brigade, which was encamped half a mile below the ferry. At five o’clk one of my prisoners was hanged, having received his sentence from the C. Martial.”<sup>109</sup> Wild does not provide the name of the person hanged in Havre de Grace, but it was most likely a local Tory. On 13 April he entered into his diary: “Had three prisoners, two of which were tories detected in supplying the enemy with provision.” The trial took place later that day at “Mr. Thomas’s”. Since Wild did not cross the Susquehanna until the next day, the trial most likely took place in Cecil County.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Wild, "Journal", p. 135. “One mile N.” suggests a location near the intersection of Route 7 and Coudon Boulevard.

<sup>107</sup> Lafayette to Washington, “Susquehana Ferry April the 13h. 1781,” Idzerda, *Lafayette*, IV, p. 29.

<sup>108</sup> Lafayette to Washington, “Susquehana Ferry April the 14h. 1781,” Idzerda, *Lafayette*, IV, p. 30. In a letter to Nathanael Greene of 17 April Lafayette mentioned that his late arrival in Baltimore was “owing to the High Wind that Blew at our Crossing the Susquehana. Idzerda, *Lafayette*, IV, pp. 37–38.

On 15 April he also wrote a letter to Alexander Hamilton. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>109</sup> Wild, "Journal", p. 135.

<sup>110</sup> See the correspondence concerning this affair in Shriver, *Lafayette*, pp. 77-82, where the person who was hanged is identified as Walter Pigot. Without proof or primary sources, Shriver, *Lafayette*, pp. 25-29, has Lafayette travel from Head of Elk via Rising Sun and on 11/12 April camp at the intersection of Conowingo Road and Spready Oak Road. It is around 3.5 miles from that camp to the Susquehanna River. From there they crossed the Susquehanna with the wagons at Bald Friar Ford and Ferry. (p. 26)

Next Lafayette supposedly spent the night of 13/14 April at the home of Colonel James Rigby, where the trial of Pigot took place. (p. 28) Unless this is a second trial, Shriver’s account contradicts Wild who states that the trial took place at “Mr. Thomas’s.” There is no indication in Lafayette’s letters that he was anywhere but at the Lower Susquehanna Ferry or that the wagons took a detour via Bald Friar Ferry. Lastly, in a letter to Governor Thomas Sim Lee of 17 April from Baltimore Lafayette confirms Wild’s account when he writes: “Pigot Being Convinced of coming within the description of a Spy was Hanged at Susquehana ferry.” *Ibid.*, p. 83.



Detail of *Journals and records of the campaigns of Rochambeau's army, 1781-1782*. Call Number mssHM 621, Huntington Digital Library, Huntington, California. The map has been rotated to match the flow of the Susquehanna.

<https://hdl.huntington.org/digital/collection/p15150coll7/id/29760>

Wild does not provide the first name of “Mr. Thomas”, or the location, but it probably was not in the building known as Rodgers Tavern. Rodgers, like all ferry operators during the eighteenth century, were leasing the ferry and the tavern from the Thomas family. Though there is no documented proof in the form of a lease agreement between Rodgers and a member of the Thomas family, no tavern operator ever purchased the tavern or the land it stood on. The property remained in the hands of the Thomas family from 1729 until 1804. In his will of 29 November 1760, Philip Thomas of Anne Arundel divided Perry Point between his sons Samuel, Richard, and John Thomas. Richard Thomas inherited 270 acres of Perry Point, Samuel inherited the remainder.<sup>111</sup> When Wild referred to “Mr. Thomas’s” he referred to the owner of the building, and the site of Rodgers Tavern was part of Richard Thomas’ property. But Richard Thomas, the owner of the tavern (died in 1782) did not live in the tavern, but rather owned a home not far from it where the trial was most likely held. Wild’s entry also points to the private home, but wherever it was held, it was not at the home of Colonel James Rigby.



*Detail of Detail of Dennis Griffith, “Map of the State of Maryland laid down from an actual survey of all the principal waters, public roads, and divisions of the counties therein; describing the situation of the cities, towns, villages, houses of worship and other public buildings, furnaces, forges, mills, and other remarkable places; and of the Federal Territory; as also a sketch of the State of Delaware shewing the probable connexion of the Chesapeake and Delaware Bays (Philadelphia: J. Vallance, 1794)*

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<sup>111</sup> Prerogative Court Wills, 1762-1764. Liber 31 Pg.1007. MSA Citation: S538-47. Research Courtesy of Jennifer Pitts. No buildings are mentioned in the will of 29 November 1760. Philip Thomas stipulated “Thirdly I give and bequeath unto my Son John Thomas and his heirs forever the plantation whereon I now live and Lands adjoining being composed of several parcels,” but Philip lived in Anne Arundel County.

Lafayette may not have had to abandon his wagon train at Rodgers Tavern and impress new vehicles in Havre de Grace since in the morning of 15 April Wild recorded "The baggage having all got over the river, the troops marched at 10 o'clk A.M., and proceeded as far as Bush Town, and encamped in a wood west of the Town." That same day Lafayette wrote his last letter to Washington from "Susquehana Ferry." In none of his letters does Lafayette tell us which side of the Susquehanna he is on, which tavern he is writing his letter from, but for four days in mid-April 1781, John Rodgers and his tavern lay at the center of a sizeable military encampment, surrounded by hundreds of soldiers, horses for the officers and about 30 horses pulling maybe 15 wagons waiting to ferry across the Susquehanna.

Lafayette and the Continental Army forces under his command were on their way to Virginia. Having crossed the Susquehanna, Lafayette reached Baltimore on 16 April, one day ahead of his troops. On 19 April 1781, the detachment left Baltimore and re-crossed the Potomac into Virginia, camping in Alexandria on 24 April and in Fredericksburg on 25 April; on 29 April the troops reached Richmond, remaining in the area until late May. There, after learning that the British forces of Earl Cornwallis and Major General William Phillips had united at Petersburg, Lafayette received orders from Greene to harass Crown forces there to keep them from joining Lord Cornwallis in the Carolinas. Now began a deadly cat-and-mouse game between Lafayette and Cornwallis that ended five months later at Yorktown in October.

The encampment of Lafayette's forces at Rodgers Tavern turned out to be but the first of a series of encampments until the end of the year. As re-enforcements were sent to Lafayette, soldiers such as Josiah Atkins, a private in the Light Infantry Company of the 5th Connecticut Regiment, crossed the Susquehanna at Rodgers Tavern and ferry as well. Atkins entered into his diary on "May the 15<sup>th</sup>. I set out (which was very unexpected) to join the [light] Infantry down at the Southward." On 1 June 1781, he wrote "The next place of note is the Susquehannah river, 7 miles from Charlestown; which took us all night to cross with our men & waggons, our party being only a guard to take on cloathing, money & arms to the [light] infantry. (Susquehannah river is near 2 miles wide at the ferry) Early next morning (after our fatiguing night) we set forward on our march. 3 June, Reached Baltimore."<sup>112</sup> Three months later, much of the allied armies and their wagon trains would arrive at the Susquehanna on their way to Yorktown.

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<sup>112</sup> *The Diary of Josiah Atkins*, Steven E. Kagle, ed. (New York: New York Times & Arno Press, 1975).



## 4.2 The Military Situation the Summer of 1781

When France entered into her alliance with the Americans in February 1778 she had hoped for a short war, but Sir Henry Clinton's successful forays into Georgia and South Carolina, combined with the failed sieges of Newport, Rhode Island and Savannah, Georgia in 1778 and 1779, had dashed all hopes of a quick victory for the Franco-American alliance. The failure of these short-term, joint sea-land operations had severely strained the alliance and by the fall of 1779 it had become obvious that the alliance needed a new strategy. The possibility of sending ground forces across the Atlantic for stationing on the American mainland had been discussed and rejected before: both sides were too well aware of the historical and cultural obstacles that had grown up during decades of hostilities to assume an unqualified welcoming of French forces in the United States. In the fall of 1779, France and America needed a new strategy and the decision in January 1780 to dispatch ground forces formed the core of the new strategy.

Why now? Britain's success had worked against her. On 16 September 1779, French minister Anne-César, *chevalier* de la Luzerne met with General George Washington at West Point, NY to discuss strategy for 1780. With an eye toward the deteriorating military situation in the South he wondered "whether in case The Court of France should find it convenient to send directly from France a Squadron and a few Regiments attached to it, to act in conjunction with us in this quarter, it would be agreeable to The United States." Washington's reply as recorded by Alexander Hamilton indicated that "The General thought it would be very advancive of the common Cause." Washington repeated his views in a letter to Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier de La Fayette, *marquis* de La Fayette of 30 September 1779. In it he informed the marquis of his hopes that Lafayette would soon return to America either in his capacity of Major General in the Continental Army or as "an Officer at the head of a Corps of gallant French (if circumstances should require this)". Based on Luzerne's report of the 16 September 1779 meeting, and an excerpt of Washington's letter Lafayette had sent him on 25 January 1780, foreign minister the *comte* de Vergennes decided that the time had come to send ground forces to the New World.

Vergennes wasted no time. On 29 January 1780, he informed his ambassador in Madrid that France would be sending a few ships of the line and 3,000 to 4,000 troops to America, five days before King Louis XVI on 2 February approved the plan code-named *expédition particulière*, the transportation across the ocean of a force large enough to decide the outcome of the rebellion in America. A few days later the king appointed Charles Louis d'Arsac *chevalier* de Ternay, a *chef d'escadre* with 40 years of experience, to command the naval forces. For the land forces the choice fell on 55-year-old Jean Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, comte de Rochambeau, a professional soldier with 37 years of experience who had already been selected to command the advance guard in the cancelled invasion of Britain.

On 1 March 1780, Louis XVI promoted Rochambeau to lieutenant general and placed him at the head of the expedition.

By 6 April, the troops were embarked; Rochambeau boarded the *Duc de Bourgogne*, one of only five 80-gun vessels in the French navy, on 17 April. Everything was ready, but for days the fleet had to wait in the rain for the wind to change. The first attempt to clear the coast failed, but on 2 May the convoy of 32 transports and cargo ships protected by seven ships of the line, four frigates, four flutes, a cutter and a schooner finally left Brest. Besides their crews of about 7,000 sailors, his ships carried the troops of the *expédition particulière*, about 450 officers and 5,300 men commanded by Rochambeau. On 11 July, the fleet dropped anchor in Narragansett Bay off Newport, Rhode Island, but with many of the troops suffering from scurvy and transportation-related diseases and with not enough time left to embark on a campaign French infantry forces entered winter quarters in and around Newport in November while the hussars of Lauzun's Legion moved to quarters in Lebanon in Connecticut.<sup>113</sup> At Wethersfield in May 1781, Washington and Rochambeau decided to join the forces on the North River, possibly for an attack on New York City, the political and military center of British power in the New World. On 10 June 1781, Rochambeau's forces began to embark in Newport for the journey to Providence. The *comte* de Clermont-Crèvecœur recorded that since "several of them ran aground most of the troops spent the night aboard these little craft, many without food. It was only the next day [12 June] with the help of the tide that the boats got up the river. All the troops disembarked on the 12th and camped beyond the town of Providence, where the army spent several days."<sup>114</sup> On 18 June, the first of Rochambeau's four divisions set out from Providence for Waterman's Tavern. By 6 July 1781, the combined allied forces, some 6,000 Americans and a little over 4,000 French, were encamped around Philipsburg in modern-day Greenburgh. Rochambeau's force was quite small by European standards: a review on 10 July 1781, following arrival in Greenburgh showed 4,200 NCOs and enlisted men under his.<sup>115</sup>

The Continental Army had spent a difficult winter around Morristown and in the Hudson Highlands. On 1 January 1781, the Pennsylvania Line had had enough and mutinied in Morristown. A settlement was reached on 9 January and the troops furloughed until March. On 20 January about 200 men of the New Jersey Line mutinied in Pompton. This time the

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<sup>113</sup> On Lauzun's Legion see my *Hussars in Lebanon! A Connecticut Town and Lauzun's Legion during the American Revolution, 1780-1781* (Lebanon, 2004).

<sup>114</sup> Jean François Louis *comte* de Clermont-Crèvecœur had entered the Auxonne Artillery in 1769. His account of the American campaigns is published in *The American Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783* Howard C. Rice, Jr. and Anne S. K. Brown, eds. 2 vols., (Princeton and Providence, 1972), vol. 1, pp. 15-100, the quote is from p. 27.

<sup>115</sup> The table is based on National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Military Service Records, Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-1783. M246, Roll 136: Returns of the French Army Under Count Rochambeau, 1781-82 (six returns), Washington, DC.

rebellion was put down by force. As winter turned into spring, the Continental Army barely maintained its strength while Crown forces were marching almost at will across the southern states. Despairingly Washington wrote on 9 April: "We are at the end of our tether, and ... now or never our deliverance must come". The campaign of 1781 had to produce results.

The "Grand Reconnaissance" of 21-23 July 1781 to probe British defenses around New York City convinced Washington that his forces were not strong enough to conduct a successful siege of the city. But the selection of the object of the 1781 campaign was not his. That decision would be made by Admiral de Grasse, whose fleet was indispensable to any successful operation. Enter the frigate *Concorde* with a letter from Admiral de Grasse informing the two generals that he was sailing to the Chesapeake rather than New York. De Grasse' letter arrived in White Plains on 14 August: the Chesapeake and the capture of a British army under Lord Cornwallis would be the objective of the campaign. Washington quickly shifted gears: on 18 August, four days after the arrival of de Grasse' letter, the two armies were on their way to Virginia.<sup>116</sup>

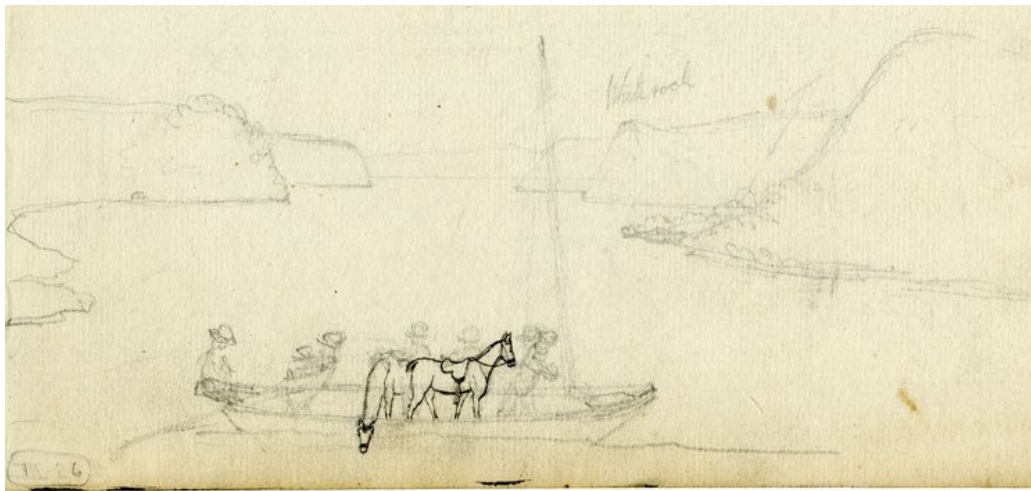
Once the decision to redeploy to Virginia had been made on 14 August 1781, allied forces began their march for Yorktown during the night of 17/18 August. By the evening of 25 August all allied forces had crossed the Hudson River either from Dobbs Ferry to Sneedeen's Landing or from Verplanck's Point to Stony Point and were marching in three separate columns across New Jersey. At Princeton the three routes merged. On 1 September the Continental Army crossed into Pennsylvania as the 1st French Brigade marched from its camp at Princeton to Trenton. The following day, 2 September, it crossed by ferry and ford, as the 2nd Brigade arrived in Trenton as well. On 3-5 September the allied armies paraded before the Continental Congress and set up camp along the banks of the Schuylkill River.

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<sup>116</sup> See my *The Franco-American Encampment in the Town of Greenburgh, 6 July – 18 August 1781: A Historical Overview and Resource Inventory*. (Greenburgh, New York: Town of Greenburgh, 2020) <https://www.odellrochambeau.org/news/free-book>

#### 4.3 American Forces crossing at Lower Ferry, 7-11 September 1781

Having spent the night of 5 September 1781 at Wilmington, General George Washington arrived at Head of Elk a day ahead of the Continental Army. He was anxious to reach his home in Mt. Vernon which he had not seen since his departure for Boston in the summer of 1775. On 7 September 1781 he instructed Lieutenant Jacob Mytinger of the Maréchaussée Corps, i.e., Captain Von Heer's Troop of Light Dragoons, to ride ahead to Baltimore: "After leaving at this Place with me Two Dragoons, you will immediately proceed on with the others of your Command, over the lower Ferry of Susquehannah, upon the Road to Baltimore; to which latter Place you will go on, and wait my Arrival there, unless you receive further Orders from me."<sup>117</sup> On 7 September 1781, Mytinger and his Light Dragoons were the first allied forces to cross the Susquehanna on the Lower Ferry on their way to Yorktown.

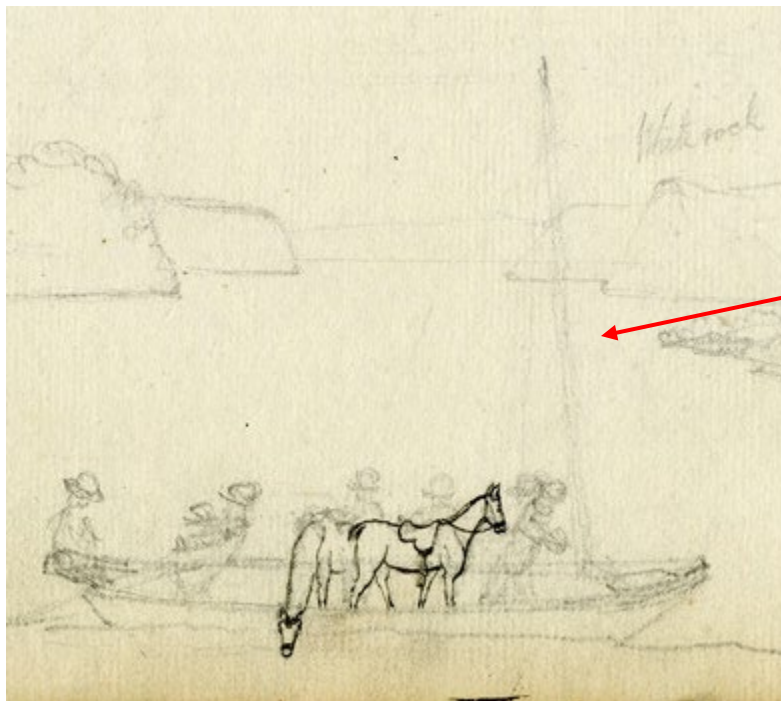


Detail of a pencil on paper drawing of "Sketch of a Sailboat Carrying Passengers and Horses", ca. 1800, from the Latrobe Sketchbooks, by Benjamin Henry Latrobe. The caption on the website of the Maryland Center for History and Culture identifies it as a "partial pencil sketch features two horses and several men in a single-masted sail boat on an unknown river." The drawing is within a collection of drawings showing scenes along the Susquehanna, and though Latrobe does not identify it the drawing most likely depicts the crossing of the Susquehanna on the Lower Ferry from Havre de Grace to Perryville. The small ferry was sufficient for normal traffic but would prove utterly insufficient for the thousands of soldiers, wagons and animals of the allied armies later that year and in 1782.

<https://www.mdhistory.org/resources/sketch-of-a-sailboat-carrying-passengers-and-horses/#gallery>

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<sup>117</sup> Quoted from the on-line edition of Washington's Papers at <http://memory.loc.gov>



Ferry mast and boom mentioned by Louis Philippe in March 1797

In March 1797, a few years before Latrobe’s drawing, Louis Philippe, *duc d’Orleans*, future king of France, crossed the Susquehanna on his way south from Philadelphia. “After considerable trouble the four of us and our mounts boarded a single boat. One of the horses fell into the water, and we had the devil’s own time hauling him back aboard. With a strong headwind we were forced to come about three times before we could land, and it was all the more vexatious because of a low boom swinging, each change of tack terrified our horses, and it was not easy to keep them calm.”<sup>118</sup>

The danger posed by high winds is mentioned in many accounts. Traveling in July 1762, Victor Hugo Palsits wrote that coming from Charleston he “arriv’d at Susquehanna a Little before Sunset but seeing a Fine dish of the Largest Oldwives & best that Ever I Eat, did not chuse to pass such a delicious repast but made a Hearty mean on them, with Indian Jonny cake, the people here call them Sun perch [...] cros’d the Ferry after Night, but the Sea so high by a Southerly Wind that it was with difficulty I kept my Horse om his Legs – arrivd at the 3 Tunns 2 Miles west of Susquehanna about 8 P.M. good Oats but no Hay [...] [july] 28<sup>th</sup> Set off Very Early [from “2 Miles west of Susquehanna”] – Arrivd at Bush Town about 8. a.m.”<sup>119</sup>

<sup>118</sup> *Diary of My Travels in America: [By] Louis-Philippe, King of France, 1830-1848*. Translated from the French by Stephen Becker, transl., and ed., (New York: Delacorte Press, 1977), p. 15.

<sup>119</sup> Victor Hugo Palsits, *Journal of Benjamin Mifflin: The Record of a Tour from Philadelphia to Delaware and Maryland, July 26 to August 14, 1762* (New York, 1935), pp. 8-9.

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Account of Expenses on the road

	£	s.	d.
Princeton	9	8	7
Trenton	11	11	0
Bristol	7	16	9
Philadelphia	7	15	0
Chester	3	4	0
Wilmington	3	11	2
Christian Bridge	1	3	9
to Warrington		17	6
Susquehanna Ferry	1	10	0
Bill D. at Darline	4	9	0
to pay for the watch		8	0
Wilmington	7	6	0
Baltimore	1	6	6
with the Count	1	17	0
Quineas at 30/	55	4	3
	39	15	6
£	15	11	9

Detail of expenses for Washington's ride to Yorktown. It shows expenses for Susquehanna Ferry and at "Durbin's" on the right/west bank. He crossed early on 8 September 1781.<sup>120</sup>

Accompanied by his staff and the two dragoons, Washington left Head of Elk early in the morning of 8 September 1781 on (Old) Philadelphia Road and having crossed the Susquehanna at Lower Ferry reached Baltimore that same evening after a journey of 53 miles on horseback. In his diary Washington recorded that "Judging it highly expedient to be with the army in Virginia as soon as possible, to make the necessary arrangements for the Siege, & to get the Materials prepared for it, I determined to set out for the Camp of the Marqs. de la Fayette without loss of time and accordingly in Company with the Count de Rochambeau [who rode in a carriage] who requested to attend me, and the Chevr. de Chastellux set out on the 8th. and reached Baltimore where I recd. and answered an address of the Citizens."<sup>121</sup> The citizens of Baltimore had planned elaborate festivities for their illustrious guest. On 18 September, the *Pennsylvania Packet* reported that ten days earlier,

<sup>120</sup> George Washington Papers, Series 5, Financial Papers: Revolutionary War Receipts, June 1775 - December 1783, available at [https://www.loc.gov/resource/mgw5.117\\_0001\\_0222/?sp=87](https://www.loc.gov/resource/mgw5.117_0001_0222/?sp=87)

<sup>121</sup> Quoted from the on-line edition of Washington's Papers at <http://memory.loc.gov>.

on Saturday, 8 September, "his excellency general Washington accompanied by adjutant general Hand, and other officers of distinction arrived at the Fountain-Inn, in this town, on his way to Virginia. His excellency was received in this vicinity, and escorted to his quarters, by Captain Moore's troop of light dragoons, where he was most respectfully complimented by a number of gentlemen. The Baltimore artillery companies gave his excellency a handsome salute, and the inhabitants in general, seemed to vie with each other in testifying their respect and affection for his person and character. In the evening every part of the town was elegantly illuminated. Very early the next morning his excellency (with his attendants) proceeded on his journey, the object of which is obvious, and, undoubtedly, of the last importance." That night the company was entertained at Adam Lindsey's Coffee House and spent the night at the Fountain Inn. The reception at Lindsey's was covered, but Daniel Grant, owner of the Fountain Inn, charged Washington for eight dinners for his suite as well as dinner for seven servants and the boarding of sixteen horses.

"[V]ery early" the next morning, 9 September, Washington "with Colo. Humphry only" and presumably the two dragoons as well left Baltimore. Rather than riding through Bladensburg, Washington crossed the Patuxent on Queen Anne Bridge, and rode through Prince George's County Warburton, where he crossed the Potomac after a sixty mile ride and rode up to Mount Vernon for the first time since he had set out for Boston in April 1775. "The rest of the family jogg on easily" via Bladensburg, his private Secretary Colonel Jonathan Trumbull wrote in his diary.<sup>122</sup> Rochambeau took an even more leisurely pace. A letter written by Rochambeau to his second in command the baron de Vioménil from the Rose Tavern on 10 September 1781 indicates that he departed Baltimore relatively late on 9 September and probably spent the night at Spurrier's Tavern. From there he continued to Mount Vernon where he arrived in the evening of 10 September 1781. The *chevalier* de Chastellux accompanied by a small group of French officers arrived on 11 September.

The Continental Army had spent a difficult winter around Morristown and in the Hudson Highlands. On 1 January 1781, the Pennsylvania Line had finally had enough and mutinied in Morristown. A settlement was reached on 9 January and the troops were furloughed until March. On 20 January about 200 men of the New Jersey Line mutinied in Pompton. This time the rebellion was put down by force and two men were executed on the 27 January 1781. As winter turned into spring, the Continental Army barely maintained its strength while Crown forces were marching almost at will across the southern colonies. Despairingly Washington wrote on 9 April: "We are at the end of our tether, and ... now or never our deliverance must come". The campaign of 1781 had to produce results.

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<sup>122</sup> Jonathan Trumbull, Jr. "Minutes of Occurrences respecting the Seige and Capture of York in Virginia, extracted from the Journal of Colonel Jonathan Trumbull, Secretary to the General, 1781." *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* vol. 14, (April 1876), pp. 331-338, p. 333.

The “Grand Reconnaissance” of 21-23 July 1781, conducted to probe British defenses around New York City, convinced Washington that his forces were not strong enough to conduct a successful siege of the city. But the selection of the object of the 1781 campaign was not his. That decision would be made by Admiral de Grasse, whose fleet was indispensable to any successful operation. Enter the frigate *Concorde* with a letter from Admiral de Grasse informing the two generals that he was sailing to the Chesapeake rather than New York. De Grasse’ letter arrived in White Plains on 14 August: the Chesapeake and the capture of a British army under Lord Cornwallis would be the objective of the campaign. Washington quickly shifted gears: on 18 August, four days after the arrival of de Grasse’ letter, the two armies were on their way to Virginia. Having crossed the Hudson in late August, the allied armies quickly marched across New Jersey in three columns and on 1 September the first elements of the Continental Army entered Pennsylvania, paraded past Congress in Philadelphia, and set up camp south of the city. Following a brief rest, the allies resumed their march with the first units of the Continental Army reaching Head of Elk in Maryland on 6 September. French forces departed from Philadelphia in brigades of two regiments each plus an artillery contingent; the First Brigade consisted of the Bourbonnois and Royal Deux-Ponts, the Second Brigade of the Soissonnois and Saintonge regiments. On 7 September, the First French Brigade joined them; once the Second Brigade had arrived on 8 September, about 7,000 American and French troops were encamped at Head of Elk.

#### **Strength of the Continental Army on the March to Maryland<sup>123</sup>**

Regiment/Unit	Commanding officer	Strength
Commander-in-Chief's Guard	Captain Caleb Gibbs	70 officers and men
Rhode Island Regiment	Lt.-Col. Jeremiah Olney	360 officers and men
First New York Regiment	Colonel Goose Van Schaick	390 officers and men
Second New York Regiment	Colonel Philip Van Cortlandt	420 officers and men
Combined New Jersey Regiment	Colonel Mathias Ogden	400 officers and men
Canadian Regiment (Congress' Own)	Brigadier Moses Hazen	270 officers and men
Light Infantry Regiment	Lt.-Col. Alexander Scammel	380 officers and men
Second Continental Artillery	Colonel John Lamb	200 officers and men
Corps of Sappers and Miners	Captain James Gilliland	50 officers and men
Artificer Regiment	Lt.-Col. Ebenezer Stevens	150 (? Unknown)
Total:		2,720 officers and men

<sup>123</sup> Charles H. Lesser, *The Sinews of Independence. Monthly Strength Reports of the Continental Army* (Chicago, 1975), p. 208. The strength returns for July *ibid.* on pp. 206/7. There are no strength reports for August 1781.



Washington had hoped that there would be a sufficient number of watercrafts assembled at Head of Elk to transport his troops to Virginia, but he soon learned, much to his chagrin, that his needs far surpassed the resources available: only twelve sloops and eighteen schooners were waiting at Head of Elk. Though they were enough for most of the Continental Army, only Rochambeau's grenadiers and chasseurs, most of the officers and men of the Auxonne artillery, for the infantry of Lauzun's Legion, a little over 3,000 troops in all, could be embarked. The remainder was ordered to continue on land to Baltimore.

The Continental Army was the first to embark. The "Order Book" of the Light Infantry under Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Scammell recorded the organizational structure of the Continental Army for the sea journey.

"Division Morning Orders Sept 8, 81

The Commander in Cheafe guards, Light Troops, Genl Heasons Regt artillery Sappers & Miners & the artificiers Will imbark as the first divison of American troops, care will be taken to keep as much as poseble Corps together."<sup>124</sup>

Since "Genl Heasons", i.e., the 2d Canadian Regiment (Congress Own) under Brigadier General Moses Hazen also included the Rhode Island Regiment, the First American Division numbered about 1,450 officers and men.<sup>125</sup> The combined New Jersey regiments, about 400 officers and men and the 1st and 2d New York, about 800 officers and men, were to form the Second American Division and march with French forces to Baltimore.

Somehow shipping space for the combined New Jersey Regiment was found, however, since Colonel Philip van Cortland, commanding officer of the 2d New York Regiment, could write to his father Pierre from Baltimore on 15 September that "the french army march'd this morning by land from this Town for Anapolis which is about 30 miles distant General Lincoln was at the last mentioned place with the light Infantry Jersie Brigade Hazens and the artillery - they have been detained waiting for the French Fleet to Return which put out the

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<sup>124</sup> Record Group M 853 reel 8, vol. 52, p. 124. NARA, Washington, DC.

<sup>125</sup> Captain James Duncan of Hazen's Regiment wrote: "Here [Head of Elk] we were delayed 6 or 7 days, being busily employed in embarking ordnance stores of all kinds on board the vessels. In the meantime, the French troops with some other corps of our army proceeded by land for Baltimore. The bay not being able to furnish a sufficient number of vessels, the Rhode Island regiment with ours was obliged to embark on board a number of flat-bottomed boats, which had been constructed at Albany and brought to this place [Head of Elk]. We set out on this arduous and very hazardous undertaking about September 15 and arrived at Williamsburg the 26<sup>th</sup>." "Diary of Captain James Duncan of Colonel Moses Hazen's Regiment in the Yorktown Campaign, 1781," in William H. Egle, M.D., ed., *Pennsylvania Archives*, Second Series, vol. 15 (Harrisburg, 1890), pp. 743-752, pp. 745-746.

other day after the English".<sup>126</sup> That brought the First American Division to some 1,850 officers and men as it embarked for Virginia. Next embarked the grenadier and chasseur companies of Rochambeau's four infantry regiments, most of his campaign artillery, i.e., approximately 200 officers and men of the 2d Battalion of the Auxonne Artillery Regiment as well as a little over 200 chasseurs and grenadiers of Lauzun's Legion, a good 1,200 men.<sup>127</sup>

On 9 September, even before the Head of Elk contingent had embarked, the remainder of the troops, around 3,500 French with their wagon trains, began their march to Baltimore. The French departed on 9 September; the New York Brigade, i.e., the 1st and 2d New York Regiments, around 390 and 420 officers and men, arrived at Head of Elk on 9 September only and were ordered to continue their march to Baltimore. The embarkation of 2/3 of the Continental Army at Elkton meant that only the New York regiments would cross the Susquehanna at Lower Ferry – one day behind French forces. The only information about the crossing is an entry in the journal of Ensign Samuel Tallmadge of the 2d New York Regiment:

Camp at the Head of Elk Monday Sept<sup>r</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> 1781

Struck Camp before day, and marched on to northeast, halted, then Continued our march to Charlestown and took breakfast, after which marched on to lower ferry on Susquehanna River, Just at the emptying of the river into Chesapeek Bay, Charlestown and northeast being situated at the head of Chesapeek Bay

Crossed the ferry and Encamped. [on the right/west bank of the Susquehanna]

Camp at the Lower ferry on the Susquehannah River Tuesday

Sept<sup>r</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> 1781

Struck Camp at the beating of the Revallee and marched on the Bushtown and Encamped<sup>128</sup>

Tallmadge is not precise in giving locations but since its needs for water and shelter were similar the camp must have been close to where the French army had camped the previous day. On 12 September the regiment left its "Camp near Bushtown" quite late in the day as it

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<sup>126</sup> *The Revolutionary War Memoir and Selected Correspondence of Philip von Cortlandt* Jacob Judd, ed., (Tarrytown, 1976), p. 167.

<sup>127</sup> Clermont-Crèveceur wrote that "only the grenadiers and chasseurs with eight 12-pounders, six mortars and two 4-pounders were embarked, and it was decided that the rest of the army would push on to Baltimore where enough boats could be found to transport them." Clermont-Crèveceur, *Journal*, p. 52.

<sup>128</sup> "Journal of Samuel Tallmadge" in: Almon W. Lauber, ed. *Orderly Books of the Fourth New York and Second New York Regiments, 1778-1783 ...*, (Albany, 1932), pp. 739-769, p. 750.

“marched about Eleven O’clock proceeded on to Gun powder River which we Crossed and Encamped in the woods.” On 13 September the regiment “struck Camp about Eight O’clock and marched on to Baltimore passed through the town and Encamped.” Two days later, on 14 September, “the first N. York arrived at this town and Encamped with the Second Regiment forming the Brigade.”<sup>129</sup> The 1st New York Regiment departed from Head of Elk one day behind the 2d New York Regiment on 11 September 1781. Thomas Graton, a wagoner from Massachusetts with the 1st New York Regiment, recorded the journey.

On 11 September Graton of the 1st New York Regiment “marched to Milford Notingim and encamped.”<sup>130</sup> The location of the campsite in (West) Nottingham is unknown but may have been the same as that of the preceding French forces. The following day on 12 September “marchd to Orcterary and crosd Susquehana River we foarded the River it is one mile and ¼ and sixteen Rods (1 rod = 16.5 feet) acros past over 4 miles and encamped. Ye 13 marched to the trap and Encamped. Ye 14<sup>th</sup> marched Hartford Cross Roads Bushtown Harford Gunpowder Notingim Forges and encamped. Ye 15<sup>th</sup> marched Kingsborough Baltimore and encamped.” At Perryville the Susquehanna was too deep to ford; his mention of a campsite in “Notingim” and the sentence “we foarded the River” indicate that at least the wagons crossed at Bald Friar’s Ford but their number is unknown.<sup>131</sup>

How large was the American wagon train? Exact numbers have not been found, but assuming the Continental Army had a wagon: soldier ratio similar to Rochambeau's forces it would have consisted of approximately 50 to 60 wagons most likely drawn by six-ox teams, adding 300 to 350 oxen. To this need to be added an unknown number of horses of American officers who had embarked at Head of Elk and the horses and empty wagons that had pulled 30 large boats from the Hudson to Head of Elk where the boats had been loaded with men and material for Yorktown. In his memoirs John Hudson of the 2nd New York Regiment (who had turned 13 on 12 June 1781) wrote “*We carried on our march boats so large that it took a wagon and eight horses to draw them.*” Hudson’s statement indicates that the 2nd New York alone had 272 horses just for the wagons transporting the boats.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Tallmadge, *Journal*, in: Lauber, *Orderly Books*, p. 760.

<sup>130</sup> *Thomas Graton His Book* is part the proof of service he submitted with his Pension Application W14824, NARA. Graton (1757- 1809) was from Winchendon, MA.

<sup>131</sup> Before Conowingo Lake was created in 1925-28, a ford known as Bald Friar Ford, (supposedly named after a bald-headed man named Fry) and a ferry run by James Laird, crossed from the mouth of Conowingo Creek on the east side to Peddler Run (Glen Cove) on the west about 2 miles above the dam. The modern traveler has to cross the Susquehanna on Route 1.

George Johnston, *History of Cecil County, Maryland, and the Early Settlements Around the Head of Chesapeake Bay and on the Delaware River: With Sketches of Some of the Old Families of Cecil County* (Elkton: The Author, 1891), p. 345.

<sup>132</sup> *Cist’s Advertiser* Part 1, Vol. 3, No. 3, 28 January 1846.

Graton’s account implies that while the 2nd New York, around 400 men strong, crossed from Rodgers Tavern at the Lower Susquehanna Ferry, the 1st New York, or at least their wagons, also around 400 men strong, crossed upstream at Bald Friar’s Ford. On Monday, 17 September, the two regiments marched to Fell’s Point and “Embarked About one OClock and Came to sail about Six in the Afternoon, proceeded down the River about three miles and Came to ancor winds beng Contrary.”<sup>133</sup>



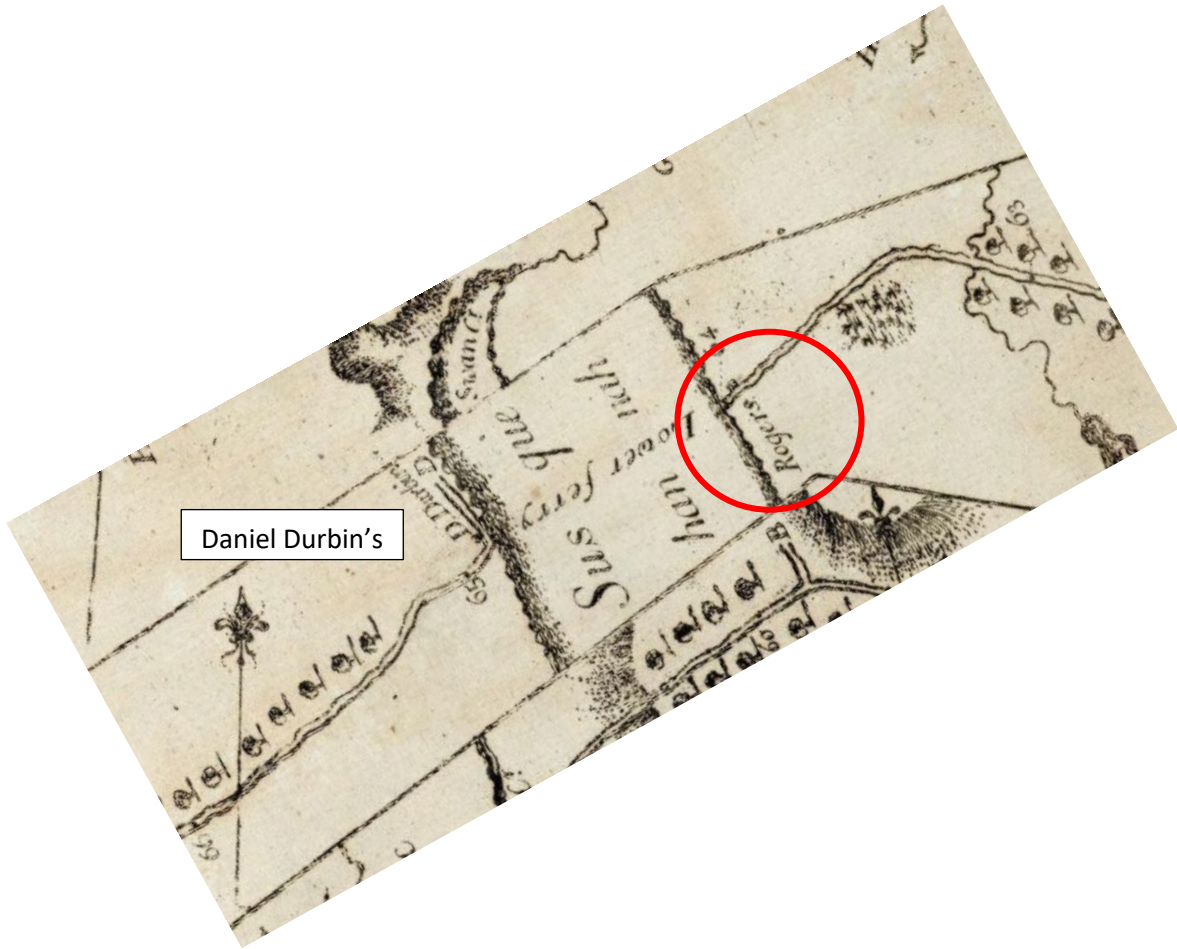
Detail of Simeon DeWitt, “Map No. 124E: From Susquehanna to Bushtown” (1781)  
 New-York Historical Society, New York, NY.  
 The square black dots mark the distance in miles from Philadelphia.

One of the few times the Susquehanna is mentioned in a pension application is the application filed by Ezra Loomis of Bolton, Connecticut. Loomis was born on 28 December 1764 and had begun his first enlistment at age 15 in April or May 1780. Loomis deposed that

“This deponent went to the Susquehannah river west of the head of Elk river, and was then taken sick, and left with troops who had charge of poor cattle worn down by service. This deponent saw the French army with the troops under Washington. After the surrender of Cornwallis the militia were discharged, and this deponent reached home in the beginning of January, 1782.”<sup>134</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Tallmadge, *Journal*, in: Lauber, *Orderly Books*, p. 760.

<sup>134</sup> Pension Application of Ezra Loomis, No. S23772. NARA. Loomis does not tell us where/which side of the river he lodged.



Daniel Durbin's

Detail of Christopher Colles, *A Survey of the Roads of the United States of America* (New York: 1789), "From Philadelphia to Annapolis Md. (56)"

Colles' is the first true road atlas of the United States. The numbers 63, 64, 65, 66 mark the distance in miles from Philadelphia.



Site where the trial took place?

Detail of Dennis Griffith, "Map of the State of Maryland laid down from an actual survey of all the principal waters, public roads, and divisions of the counties therein; describing the situation of the cities, towns, villages, houses of worship and other public buildings, furnaces, forges, mills, and other remarkable places; and of the Federal Territory; as also a sketch of the State of Delaware shewing the probable connexion of the Chesapeake and Delaware Bays (Philadelphia: J. Vallance, 1794)



Site where the trial took place?

Daniel Friedrich Sotzmann, *Maryland und Delaware* (Hamburg: Bey Carl Ernst Bohn, 1797)



S.S. Moore & T.W. Jones, *The Traveller's Directory, Or A Pocket Companion: Shewing The Course Of The Main Road Philadelphia To New York, And From Philadelphia To Washington. ... From Actual Survey.* (Philadelphia: Printed For, And Published By, Mathew Carey. 1802)  
"Road from Philadelphia to Washington. (Maps) 9, 10, 11 and 12."

Behind the New York Brigade followed the American wagon train of roughly 50 wagons, some of whose loads had to be transferred to the boats before the wagons could continue their march to Yorktown.<sup>135</sup> Here too our information is rather scarce. More importantly,

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<sup>135</sup> When "Gen<sup>l</sup> Washington Marchd his Army to Virginia to Attack Lord Cornwallis – I was orderd to load My team with Tents (which I did) & followed Gen<sup>l</sup> Washingtons Army to head of Elk in Maryland, where my team was taken on board of a Vessell, & I was orded with it. I went to York Town Afors<sup>d</sup> &

since the Lower Ferry could not handle that many wagons, the wagons did not cross the river on the ferry but were ordered to take a detour and cross the river at Bald Friars Ford. On 7 September 1781, Washington had instructed Colonel Henry Emanuel (sic) Lutterloh from his headquarters at Head of Elk, that in order

*To avoid the Delay of Ferriage, the Teams and Horses of the Army will proceed from hence to the Bald Friars Ford on Susquehannah, from thence to Bush, to Baltimore, to Elk Ridge Landg, to Bladensburg, to George town. from thence to Falls of Rappahanoc, avoiding Accoquan Ferry, to Caroline Court House, to New Castle, to Williamsburg. On this Rout you will proceed and make the Necessary Preparation of For. age at the several Stages, not preceeding the Army at too great Distance. I have already wrote to the States of Maryland and Virginia on the Subject of Forrage, and have a promising Prospect from their Assurance, that you will be fully supplied in Time at the several Places where it will be wanted; but if unhappily this Resource should fail, you are required, however disagreeable the Measure, to use the Power which the Army will afford, to procure the necessary Supplies, in such Manner however as may be least distressing to the Inhabitants. The Occasion is great; our Circumstances are pressing; at any rate the March must not be retarded for Want of any Supplies within your Department.*

The next day, 8 September 1781, Colonel Timothy Pickering received these instructions from Washington from Head of Elk:

*Dear Sir:*

*As soon as you have arrang'd Matters, and sent on a Gentleman of your Department to mark out the different stages and Halting Places for the Horses and Teams on the following Route, viz. from hence to Bald Friars, thence to Bush, Baltimore, Elk Ridge Landg, Bladensburg, George Town, from thence to Falls of Rappahannock avoiding Acoquan Ferry, Caroline Court House, New Castle, Williamsburg.<sup>136</sup>*

That same 8 September 1781, the first French forces reached the Susquehanna River.

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Delivered the Tents to the Quarter Master, & was employd hauling Morters, Cannon Cannon Balls & other stores for the Army." Pension Application of Asahel Allen W 25346. NARA.

<sup>136</sup> The Orderly Book of Colonel Lamb's 2nd Continental Artillery has survived in two versions (6/20 - 10/21/1781 and 8/4 - 10/27/1781) in the New-York Historical Society and is available on microfilm #143, reel 14, and N-YHS microfilm #118.1, reel 12. The quote is taken from the version on microfilm #143, reel 14.



## 5. French Forces Crossing at Lower Ferry, 8-11 September 1781

Following a brief rest, the allies resumed their march with the first units of the Continental Army reaching Head of Elk on 6 September. On 7 September, the First French Brigade joined them; once the Second Brigade had arrived on 8 September, about 7,000 American and French troops were encamped at Head of Elk. Washington had hoped to find a sufficient number of watercrafts assembled at Head of Elk to transport his troops to Virginia, but he soon learned, much to his chagrin, that his needs far surpassed the resources available: only twelve sloops and eighteen schooners were waiting. Though they were enough for most of the Continental Army, of French forces only the four grenadier and four chasseur companies of Rochambeau's infantry regiments, approx. 800 men, and the infantry of Lauzun's Legion, approx. 220 officers and men, embarked for College Landing.<sup>137</sup> The remainder, a little over 3,000 troops in all, received orders to continue land for Baltimore. On 8 September 1781, Rochambeau, who was pressing ahead to Baltimore with Washington, informed the baron de Vioménil, his second in command who was accompanying the troops, that it was the intention of Washington that "as soon as the troops will have arrived in Baltimore, the cavalry of Lauzun's Legion continues its march on land in a way that allows the greatest distances possible [while] the baron de Vioménil embarks the rest of the army at Baltimore if that is possible."<sup>138</sup> If it could not be embarked at Baltimore, the campaign artillery as well as the wagon train was to follow the route of Lauzun's Legion, which was to press on as quickly as possible once French forces had reached Baltimore. The hussars would receive details of their route in Baltimore from Pierre François de Bévillé, *maréchal général des logis* on Rochambeau's staff.<sup>139</sup> The instructions did not mention the destination, but as the route was "the same that had been given by General Washington in Philadelphia", i.e., via Caroline Court House and Newcastle, it had to be Williamsburg.<sup>140</sup>

On 3 September Washington had written to Rochambeau: "From the head of Elk, the Cavalry, Carriages and such Artillery as may be sent by Land, will proceed by the following rout: Lower ferry on Susquehannah; Baltimore; Elk ridge Landing; Bladensburg; George Town, on Potomack river. From hence a rout must be pursued to Fredericksburg, that will

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<sup>137</sup> A review of 1 October 1781 lists six officers and 106 NCOs in the grenadier company and seven officers and 104 NCOs in the chasseur company. Archives Nationales, Paris, call no. D2C32.

<sup>138</sup> Rochambeau's instructions to Vioménil of 8 September 1781 are quoted from a copy in Fonds Vioménil, Académie François Bourdon in Le Creusot, France, LB0074-97.

<sup>139</sup> The duties of the *maréchal general de logis* included responsibility for planning marches, selecting camps, and regulating transportation and supply.

<sup>140</sup> For a detailed description of the marches and likely routes see my *Cultural Resource Survey and Land and Water-Based Route Investigation of the French Encampments at Bush Town in Harford County, Maryland, on 10/11 September 1781 and from 24 to 29 August 1782*. (Baltimore, Maryland: Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail Project in the State of Maryland, 2013) available on-line at <https://w3r-us.org/history-by-state/>.

avoid an inconvenient ferry over Occoquan, and Rappahannock river at the Town of Fredericksburg. The latter may, I believe, be forded at Falmouth (two miles above Fredericksburg) and the latter [former] by leaving the common rout a little upon the left from George Town."<sup>141</sup>

On 9 September, even before the Head of Elk contingent had embarked, 300 hussars and the officers assigned to accompany the field artillery<sup>142</sup> as well as Lauzun's artillery, seven officers and 101 NCOs and cannoniers with four light 1-lb guns *à la Rostaing*, under the command of the *vicomte* d'Arrot and the French wagon train, departed from Head of Elk on their march to Baltimore.<sup>143</sup> The French wagon train was enormous. Between 25 August and 22 September, i.e., on the journey across New Jersey to Annapolis, Wadsworth paid 195 teams with 1,170 oxen to transport supplies and equipment. Once the equipment had been loaded on board vessels, Wadsworth discharged 85 teams at Annapolis leaving 110 teams with 669 oxen to draw the empty wagons drawn to Williamsburg.<sup>144</sup> On 18 September, Vioménil wrote to Rochambeau from Annapolis that "Since all our wagons will go to Williamsburg on land without a load, and [...] I am convinced that we could save the king more than fifty thousand livres by sending back those that are of the least use [to us]."<sup>145</sup>

As the wagon train left Annapolis on 21 September 1781, Louis Alexandre Berthier wrote that "Lauzun's Legion, the artillery horses, and the army wagon train formed a column numbering 1,500 horses, 800 oxen, and 220 wagons."<sup>146</sup> More than half of those wagons were private wagons of officers; the "official" French wagon train for which Wadsworth kept records consisted of 110 wagons of drawn by 660 oxen. Since the waggoners, mostly recruited in New England and New Jersey, were unfamiliar with the roads, thirty American troops under the command of an officer who knew the roads were detached to provide protection and guidance on the way to Yorktown.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Quoted from the on-line edition at <http://memory.loc.gov>.

<sup>142</sup> Rochambeau's field artillery, i.e., the 2nd Battalion of the Auxonne Regiment, consisted of eight 12-Pounders, sixteen 4-Pounders and six 6-inch howitzers of the Gribeauval system introduced in 1776.

<sup>143</sup> René Marie *vicomte* d'Arrot, *colonel commandant* of the Legion, was born in Parthenay in February 1749 (or December 1754?). He began his military career in December 1767, as a sub-lieutenant in the *légion de l'Île de France*. In 1779 he accompanied Lauzun to Senegal. On 1 April 1780, he became *colonel commandant* of Lauzun's Legion. He sailed for the Caribbean after Yorktown and became governor of Tobago in 1783. He returned to Paris from the Caribbean in 1802, where he died in 1821.

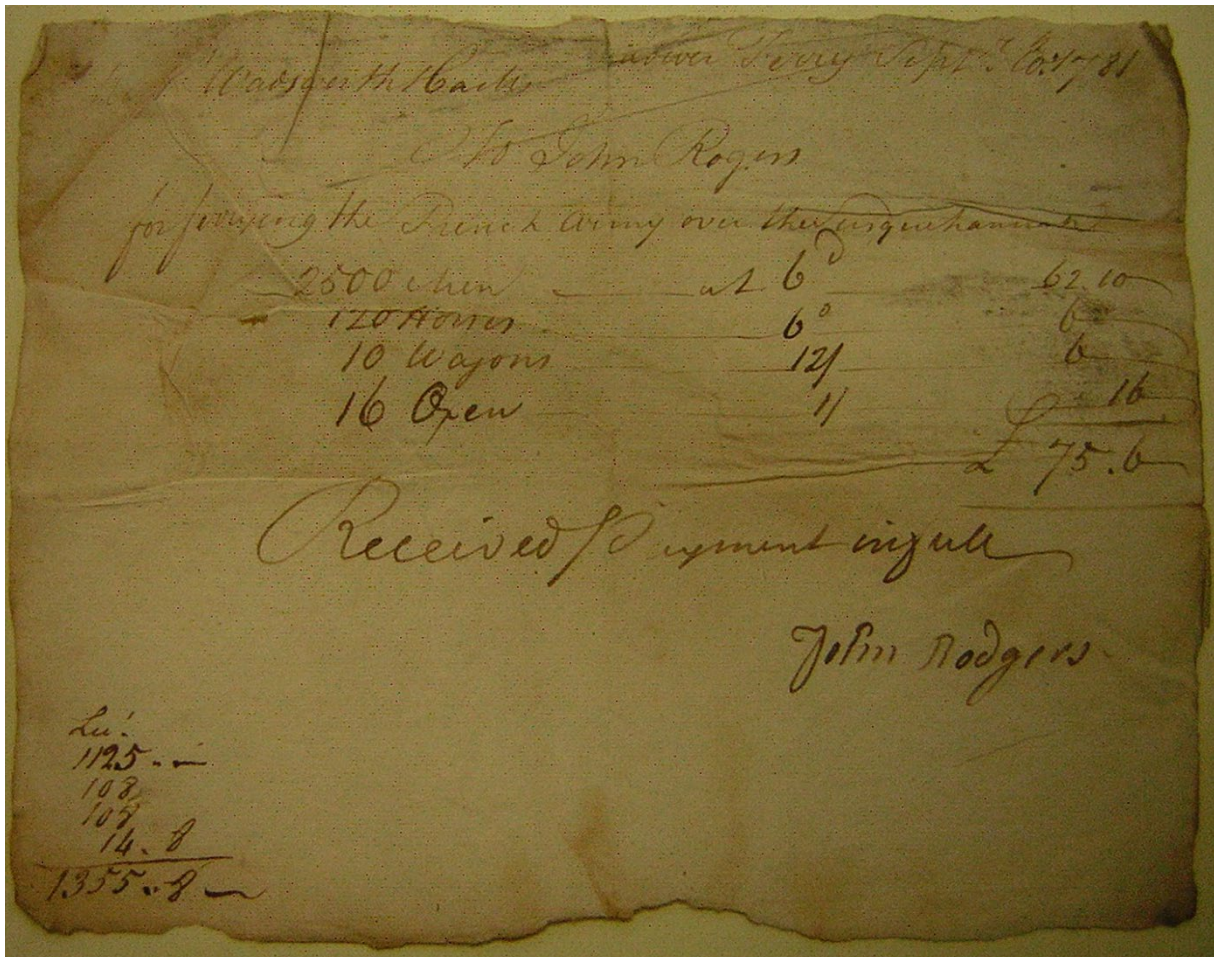
<sup>144</sup> The discharge paper for 46 teams from Colchester, Connecticut is in Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers, Box 155. Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Connecticut. The waggoners were allowed 39 days for the journey from Annapolis to Colchester.

<sup>145</sup> Fonds Vioménil, LB 0074-104.

<sup>146</sup> Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns*, vol. 2, p. 83.

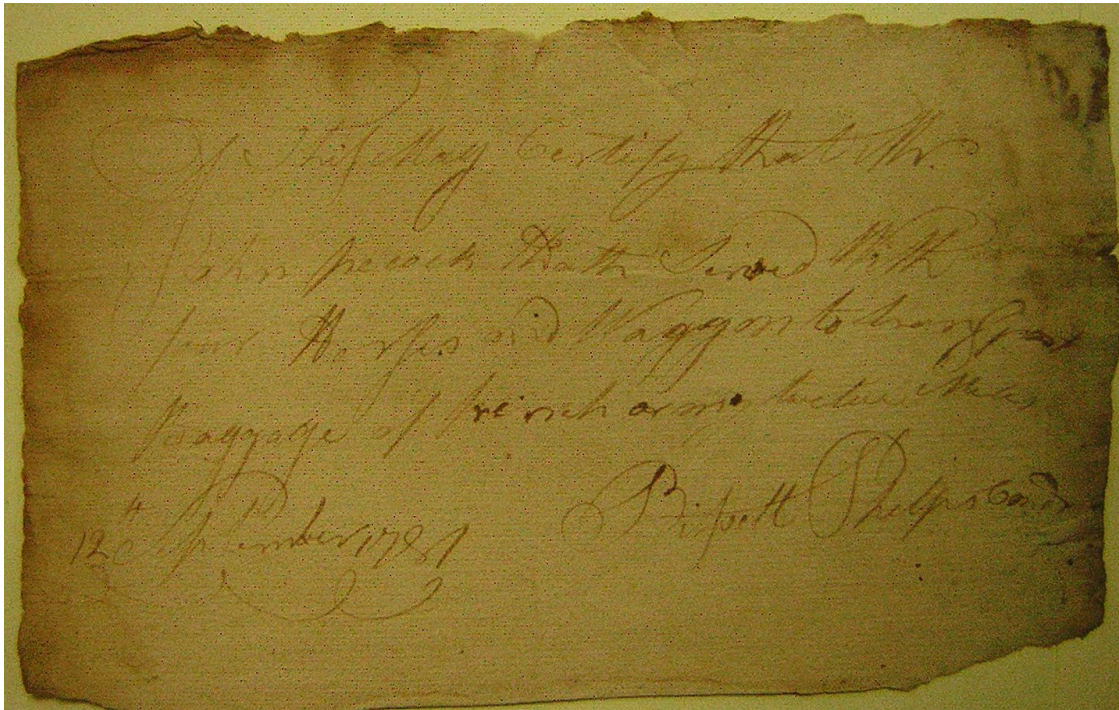
<sup>147</sup> "Mémorandum du Baron de Vioménil pour une réunion avec l'intendant," dated 18 September 1781. Fonds Vioménil LB 0074-127.

These numbers suggest a column departing from Head of Elk for Bald Friar Ford of around 305 wagons drawn by more than 1,800 animals, mostly oxen but some horses as well, another 1,500 horses both for officers who had embarked at Annapolis as well as pulling the pieces of the Auxonne artillery (also embarked at Annapolis) plus around 400 horses for the hussars of Lauzun's Legion, the officers and their servants, the Legion's wagons and artillery train (which remained with the Legion on its way to Gloucester in Virginia, never went to Annapolis and not included in Berthier's estimate) for a total that may have approached 4,000 animals: only 120 horses, ten wagons and sixteen oxen crossed at Rodgers Tavern.



Once the crossing was completed John Rodgers on 10 September 1781 presented his ferry bill "for ferrying the French Army over the Susquehanna". Rodgers charged Jeremiah Wadsworth and Carter, sole suppliers for French forces, for ferrying 2,500 men across the Susquehanna 120 horses, 10 wagons, and 16 oxen. The number of soldiers is an

approximation. The remainder of French forces had either already embarked at Plum Point or was crossing the Susquehanna upstream at Bald Friar Ford.<sup>148</sup>



All along the march French forces enlisted local help, e.g., John Peacock served with his four-horse team “to transport Baggage of french army twenty (?) Miles”. He is listed among the Non-Associators and Non-Enrollers in Harford County to the 10<sup>th</sup> September, 1775.<sup>149</sup>

As they approached the Susquehanna the troops were preceded by Mathieu Dumas, a quartier-maître tasked with reconnoitering the roads and laying out the campsites. Dumas arrived at Elkton on 6 September where he found

“the American Army which had a march and a half ahead of us, camped a mile in front of the city on the other side of the creek. I reconnoitered a suitable emplacement to camp the French army on this side.

Mr. de Rochambeau arrived. He found two officers of Mr. de Grasse’s fleet here who brought him some dispatches and who went up to Annapolis on the cutter *Le Serpent*. They confirmed verbally what we learned yesterday.<sup>150</sup>

There are not enough means very near here to board the army. [...] I was charged by the general [Rochambeau] to go reconnoiter the means to cross the Susquehanna River”.

<sup>148</sup> Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers, Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT.

<sup>149</sup> Preston, *Harford*, p. 348.

<sup>150</sup> i. e. the news of the arrival of Admiral de Grasse and his fleet in the Chesapeake Bay on 30 August.

The 7 at ["Wilmington" crossed out] Head of Elk

I left very early this morning to go reconnoiter the Lower Ferry on the Susquehanna and, in general, all the means to cross this river which is one of the largest on this continent.

I crossed at a small city called Charlestown where we find the Chesapeake Bay. [...] The shores of the Susquehanna are not pretty in this area. The riverbed is not deep but the lands are poor and little cultivated. [...] <sup>151</sup>

### Strength of the French Army on the March to Maryland<sup>152</sup>

UNIT	PRESENT NCOs and Men	DETACHED	IN HOSPITALS along the route	TOTAL
Bourbonnois	787	178	64	1029
Soissonnois	896	116	44	1056
Saintonge	851	115	77	1043
Royal Deux-Ponts	842	172	29	1043
Artillerie	239	240	31	510
Mineurs	-	23	-	23
Workers ( <i>ouvriers</i> )	32	-	4	36
Lauzun's Legion	593	13	4	610
TOTAL	4,240	857	253	5,350

On 10 September, the hussars accompanied the wagons and the artillery to Bald Friar Ford where they crossed the Susquehannah River and bivouacked near Poplar Grove at the intersection of modern US 1 and MD SR 136. From 11 to 13 September, the hussars rode south on MD SR 136 through Darlington to Churchville toward Bush and Route 7 toward Baltimore, where they arrived on 12 September.

Behind the hussars followed the French infantry. Compared to the rest of the march of French forces from Newport, RI, to Yorktown, VA, there are relatively few accounts of the march of the French infantry from Head of Elk to Bush Town and on to Baltimore. There are several reasons for this. Many of the most reliable diarists embarked at Head of Elk and never reached Bush Town. These journals include the journal of Claude Blanchard<sup>153</sup> and Count Wilhelm von Schwerin, a twenty-six-year-old sub-lieutenant of grenadiers of the Royal Deux-Ponts.<sup>154</sup> Among the recent publications is the *Journal de l'Armée aux ordres de Monsieur le*

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<sup>151</sup> Mathieu Dumas, *Journal of a French Quartermaster on the March to Yorktown June 16-October 6, 1781*. Norman Desmarais, transl., and ed., (Revolutionary Imprints: Lincoln, R.I.: 2022), pp. 88-92.

<sup>152</sup> The return is dated 1 August 1781. Military Service Records, Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-1783. M246, Roll 136: Returns of the French Army Under Count Rochambeau, 1781-82 (six returns), NARA.

<sup>153</sup> *The Journal of Claude Blanchard, Commissary of the French Auxiliary Army sent to the United States during the American Revolution* Thomas Balch, ed., (Albany, 1876).

<sup>154</sup> Schwerin's original correspondence was sold to an American collector in the early 1960s; all quotes are from copies made for the Library of Congress in 1930. See Robert A. Selig, "'Mon très cher oncle': Count William de Schwerin reports from Virginia." in the *Colonial Williamsburg. The Journal*

*Comte de Rochambeau pendant les campagnes de 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783 dans l'Amérique septentrionale* kept by comte de Rochambeau's 21-year-old nephew Louis François Bertrand Dupont d'Aubevoye, comte de Lauberdrière, a captain in the Saintonge Infantry and one of his aides-de-camp.<sup>155</sup> The *chevalier* de Chastellux did not write a single word about the march,<sup>156</sup> and the *duc* de Lauzun had embarked at Plum Point with his infantry.<sup>157</sup> Others such as Captain François-Ignace Ervoil d'Oyré (1739-1798), an engineer with Rochambeau's army, devoted only a few lines to the march.

*Le 8 7bre de Head of Elk, au ferry de la Susquanah, 16 miles. ...*

*Le 9. Du ferry à Bush-town, 11 miles. Bush-town consists of a few houses gathered close to the small bush River, which has basins to turn the mills. From the ferry the country is more open, and the soil appears fertile. One encounters numerous very new clearings. Agriculture is almost exclusively that of maize (=corn)*

*From Bush Town to Philipps Tavern 12 miles*

*The county is extremely wooded, and cut up by several streams which run factories. The most considerable one is the forge of Nottingham on one of the branches of the Gunpowder (River). The ore there is very rich, and, to judge from the looks of the soil, should be abundant.*<sup>158</sup>

William de Deux-Ponts (1754-1807) of the Royal Deux-Ponts Regiment wrote:

*On the 9<sup>th</sup> of September, we resumed our march. The trains were separated from the columns of troops, on account of the slender means which the ferry over the Susquehanna River affords for passing in boats; they were obliged to make a detour and to seek a ford seven miles above*

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*of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation* Vol. 22 No. 2 (Summer 2000), pp. 48-54, and "Eyewitness to Yorktown." *Military History* vol. 19 No. 6 (February 2003), pp. 58-64.

<sup>155</sup> *The Road to Yorktown: The French Campaigns in the American Revolution, 1780-1783*, by Louis-François-Bertrand du Pont d'Aubevoye, comte de Lauberdrière Noman Desmarais, transl. and ed., (El Dorado Hills: Savas Beatty, 2021) The original French text was published as Louis de Lauberdrière, aide de camp du général de Rochambeau, *Journal de la campagne d'Amérique (1780-1783)* présenté et annoté par Jonathan de Chastenot (Saint-Léger éditions, 2020). See also my "America the Ungrateful: The Not-So-Fond Remembrances of Louis François Dupont d'Aubevoye, Comte de Lauberdrière" *American Heritage* Vol. 48, No. 1, (February 1997), pp. 101-106, and "Lauberdrière's Journal. The Revolutionary War Journal of Louis François Bertrand d'Aubevoye, comte de Lauberdrière" *Colonial Williamsburg. The Journal of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation* Vol. 18, No. 1, (Autumn 1995), pp. 33-37.

<sup>156</sup> See the introductory essay to Marquis de Chastellux, *Travels in North America in the Years 1780, 1781, and 1782*. Howard C. Rice, Jr., ed., 2 vols. (Chapel Hill, 1963).

<sup>157</sup> *Mémoires de Armand-Louis de Gontaut, duc de Lauzun*, Edmond Pilon, ed., (Paris, 1928).

<sup>158</sup> d'Oyré (1739-1798) was one of nine engineers to serve with Rochambeau's army in North America. His *Notes relatives aux mouvemens de l'armée française en Amérique* have the call number MSS L2008F163 M; his 37 letters are catalogued under MSS L2009F30 M. Oyré, who travelled in a group of officers that may have included the *chevalier* de Chastellux reached Baltimore on 9 September.

*the ferry; the detour which they are making, the bad roads which they will meet with, will deprive us for several days of them; and we gaily make an exchange of our beds for simple bearskins. The troops passed over the Susquehanna ferry today, the 9<sup>th</sup>, in boats, and we went into bivouac a mile from the lower ferry, where we crossed the river.* <sup>159</sup>

*On the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, we bivouacked at Bush, Harford.*

*On the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, we marched to White Marsh.*

*We were there joined by our tent wagons, but we hear nothing yet of our baggage-trains.* <sup>160</sup>

The three accounts known to have been kept by enlisted men, Georg Daniel Flohr (1756-1826) of the Royal Deux-Ponts Regiment,<sup>161</sup> André Amblard (1754-?) of the Regiment Soissonnois and an anonymous grenadier in the Bourbonnois Regiment,<sup>162</sup> contribute very little to our knowledge of the march. Flohr wrote:

*On the 8th we had a day of rest near Head of Elk. On the 9th we broke camp again, 15 miles to Harford or New Harford, a little town. That same day we encountered along the way a little town by the name of New Carlstadt. On the 10th we broke camp again 12 miles to Bartsch tavern (= Bush Tavern or Bush Town), a tavern along the road. We set up camp very close to it. On the 11th again 15 miles to Capt. Philipp, a pretty area. On the 12th we made 20 miles to Baltimore, a German city of respectable size, very much determined by trade because of its convenient harbor which via a wide river reaches all the way to the city. We set up camp very close to the city on a large free/open plain. Where the approach of the fellow countrymen was again as strong as in Philadelphia. There we rested, very joyfully, until the 16th.*

André Amblard, an enlisted man in the Soissonnois Regiment, recorded in his *Histoire des campagnes* how

*Le Passage de La Rivierre La Susquanna se fis avec difficulté faute d'avoir été prévu et L'armée resta Presque deux Jours sans vivres et sans tentes ny Equipages – the passage over the Susquehanna River took place with difficulty since it had not been foreseen and the army remained for almost two days without supplies and without tents and camp equipment.* <sup>163</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> William de Deux-Ponts, *My Campaigns in America* Samuel Abbot Green, ed., (Boston, 1868).

<sup>160</sup> Deux-Ponts, *Campaigns*, p. 128.

<sup>161</sup> Georg Daniel Flohr, "Reisen Beschreibung von America welche das Hochlöbliche Regiment von Zweybrücken hat gemacht zu Wasser und zu Land vom Jahr 1780 bis 84." Fonds Patrimoniaux MS 15 Médiathèque André Malraux, Strasbourg, France. See my "A German Soldier in America, 1780-1783: The Journal of Georg Daniel Flohr." *William and Mary Quarterly* 50, no. 3, (July 1993), pp. 575-590.

<sup>162</sup> The anonymous grenadier embarked at Head of Elk. His journal is among the Milton Latham Papers, MMC 1907, in the Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

<sup>163</sup> Amblard, who enlisted at age 19 in 1773, was discharged as a captain in 1793. His manuscript is located in the Archives Départementales de l'Ardèche in Privas, France. Passages from this journal

That leaves all of four accounts – those of Jean François Louis *comte* de Clermont-Crèveœur,<sup>164</sup> Baron Ludwig von Closen,<sup>165</sup> Marie François Joseph Maxime Cromot du Bourg,<sup>166</sup> and Dumas, all of whom took the route via Bald Friar Ford rather than cross the Susquehanna at Lower Ferry. Still, their descriptions of the crossing contain valuable details of the area and the mechanics of the crossing. Clermont-Crèveœur of the Auxonne artillery wrote:

*9 September (21 miles) From Elkton to Octoraro Creek. We found the roads frightful and arrived in camp extremely late. The country is abominable, cut up by deep ravines and many small rivers, which the soldiers were obliged to ford after removing their shoes and stockings.*

*10 September (24 miles) From Octoraro to Bushton [Bush] the roads were virtually impassable. We crossed the Susquehanna River, the troops in boats [at Lower Ferry] and the artillery and wagons 10 miles upstream by a ford 2 ¼ miles wide. This was the only one practicable, but barely so, since the bottom was so rocky that the horses risked breaking their legs. All the way across we were in water up to our waists, and the horses up to their knees. The wagons crossed with the greatest difficulty. We lost several horses. The crossing took an hour and a quarter. That day the artillery marched 29 miles [sic; this contradicts his own statement of 24 miles after the date]; still, when we reached camp, we had no time to rest as we had to leave at once.*

*The landscape is very picturesque here. Approaching the wide river, we came down a very steep mountain that descended abruptly to its bank, leaving no room to walk at the bottom. We saw only one house on the whole route.*

Barons Ludwig von Closen and Marie François Joseph Maxime Cromot du Bourg also took that route but again left few details though they tell us where they spent the night of 9/10 September 1781. Closen wrote in his journal for 9 September:

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can be found verbatim in the journal of unidentified officer of the Soissonnois regiment preserved in the Huntington Library in California and which also contains maps of all French campsites possibly copied from Berthier. For the return march his journal only contains a list of the towns the army marched through. See my "A New View of Old Williamsburg. A Huntington Library Manuscript provides another glimpse of the city in 1781." *Colonial Williamsburg. The Journal of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation* Vol. 22 No. 1, (Spring 2000), pp. 30-34.

<sup>164</sup> Clermont-Crèveœur, *American Campaigns* vol. 1, pp. 15-100.

<sup>165</sup> Acomb, Evelyn, ed., *The Revolutionary Journal of Baron Ludwig von Closen, 1780-1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958).

<sup>166</sup> Marie-François Baron Cromot du Bourg, "Diary of a French Officer, 1781" *Magazine of American History* 4, (June 1880), pp. 205-214, p. 214.



*“Since the road for Baltimore obliged the army to cross the Susquehanna River at Lower Ferry, where there was only one boat, M. de Rochambeau ordered the horses of the officers, artillery, and Lauzun legion to cross it at the [Bald Friars] ford, which was 5 miles higher up. We were forced to make this detour, and consequently, we arrived in the evening of the 9<sup>th</sup> at Porter’s mill, on Orlavara [Octoraro] Creek, where we found a rather good lodging.”*

The next day, 10 September, the two officers

*“crossed the Susquehanna at the ford 4 miles farther on, where it is two miles wide.<sup>167</sup> The view from the banks of this river was very picturesque; but the crossing, on the other hand, was diabolic. Although there were only one and one-half feet of water, the rapidity with which it flowed, and the endless large stones all the way across, made this lark very drawn out, tedious, and even dangerous, because our horses stumbled at every step. Du Bourg and I crossed it, however, with our retinue, without the least accident. We joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade at Bushtown, 18 miles from the ferry, where it was occupying its 32<sup>nd</sup> camp [since departure from Providence, RI]. Since it had crossed the Susquehanna the day before and camped on the right bank, it had had to make only 15 miles the first day and 12 miles the second, whereas we had made 36. Bushtown is rather ugly and situated on marshy ground.”*

On 11 September, the infantry of the 1st Brigade marched on to Whitemarsh,

*“but we two pushed on as far as Baltimore, where the Legion arrived the same day” [i.e. on 11 September]. “The 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade joined us only the next day”, i.e. on 12 September.<sup>168</sup>*

Mathieu Dumas, one of Rochambeau’s aides-de-camp, had been sent ahead to reconnoiter a ford across the Susquehanna called Bald Friar Ford, but still provides a brief description.

*“Meantime the main body of the army was still retained on the left bank of the Susquehanna by the difficulty and scantiness of the means to pass that river, at its mouth, at the bottom of the bay. Some ferry boats and the remainder of the boats which we had been able to collect could hardly suffice to convey the troops, by slow degrees, from one bank to the other. I was particularly ordered to direct this passage. Being informed by some country people that this broad river was fordable in the fine season a little below the falls, twenty miles above its mouth, I repaired to the spot with guides, by very difficult roads. I sounded the ford with great precaution across broken rocks and the eddies (=the reverse current created when water flows past rocks) in the torrent to the breadth of between six and seven hundred toises. (=0.72 to 0.85*

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<sup>167</sup> Clermont-Crèveœur, *American Campaigns*, vol. 1, p. 53, and Rice and Brown, vol. 2, p. 53.

<sup>168</sup> Acomb, *Closen*, pp. 125/6.

miles) The bottom was everywhere composed of loose boulders, and the depth of the water from three to four feet”<sup>169</sup>



Detail from *Côte de York-town à Boston: Marches de l'armée* showing the route of the French infantry from Head of Elk to Bush Town via Lower Ferry (Havre de Grace) and the hussars of Lauzun's Legion and the wagons and campaign artillery via Bald Friar Ford.

Rochambeau Map Collection, call number G3716.S3 1782.C6 Vault: Roch 65, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. Available on-line at [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/map\\_item.pl](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/map_item.pl)

<sup>169</sup> Mathieu Dumas, *Memoirs of his Own Time* 2 vols., (London, 1839), vol. 1, p. 61.



Detail from Berthier, *Bivoüac à Lower-ferry, le 9 Septembre, 15 miles de Head of Elk*.  
Reproduced in Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns* vol. 2, Map 77.

[https://findingaids.princeton.edu/catalog/C0022\\_c0077](https://findingaids.princeton.edu/catalog/C0022_c0077)

Louis-Alexandre Berthier Collection, C0022, Manuscripts Division, Department of Special Collections, Princeton University Library



Detail from Berthier, *Bivoüac à Lower-ferry, le 9 Septembre, 15 miles de Head of Elk*.  
[https://findingaids.princeton.edu/catalog/C0022\\_c0077](https://findingaids.princeton.edu/catalog/C0022_c0077)

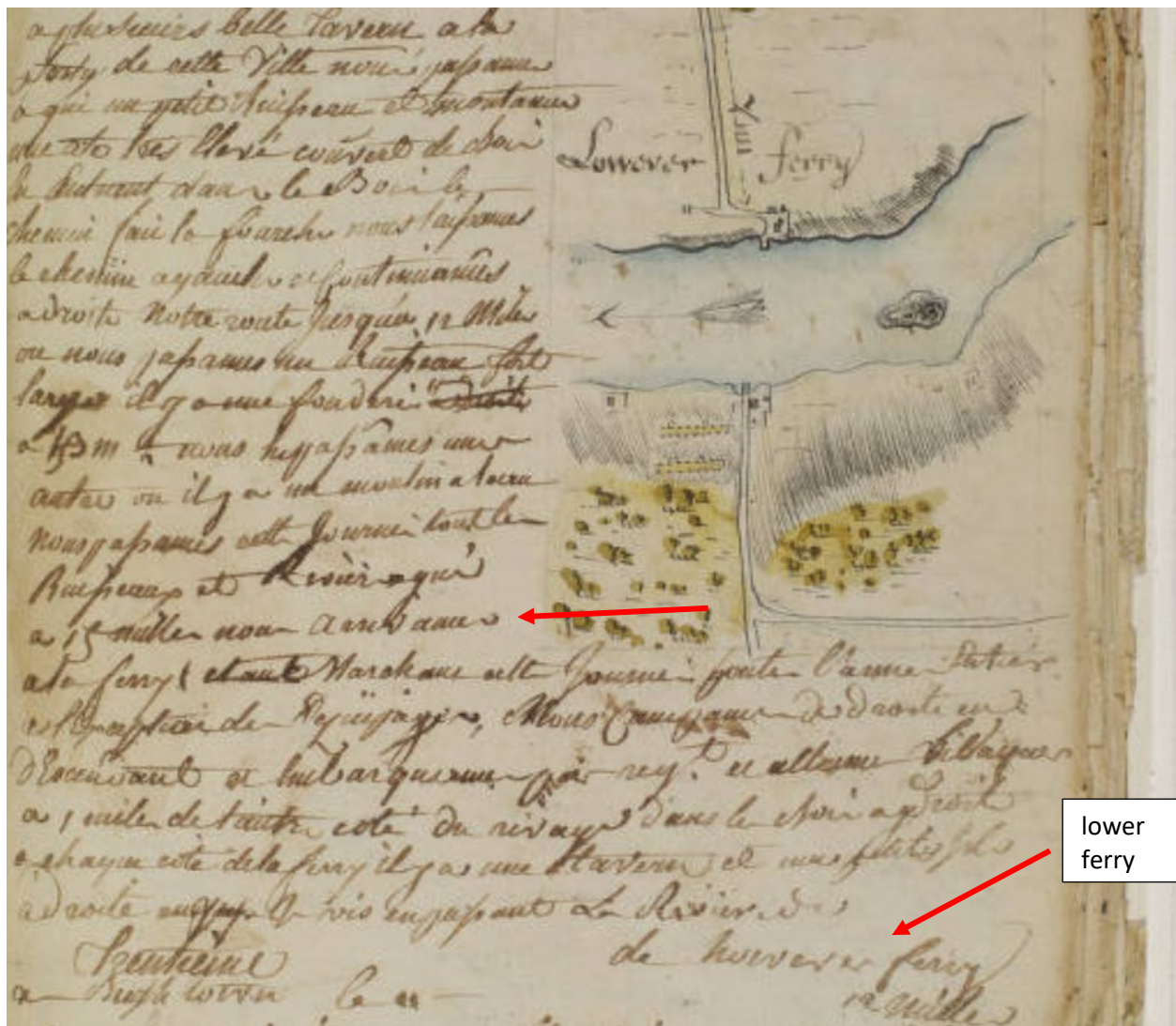
Louis-Alexandre Berthier Collection, C0022, Manuscripts Division, Department of Special Collections, Princeton University Library

Berthier's road descriptions published in Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns*, vol. 2, provides detailed descriptions and maps of the march routes and roads until August 1781, but just as French forces enter Maryland his account ends abruptly on p. 81 with the entry: "From Elk Bridge to Head of Elk. ½ Mile." The last surviving road map of the march to Virginia in 1781 (Map 60) also ends at Head of Elk. No equivalent material by Berthier exists for 1782.



Detail of *Journals and records of the campaigns of Rochambeau's army, 1781-1782*. Call Number mssHM 621, Huntington Digital Library, Huntington, California. The map has been rotated to match the flow of the Susquehanna.

<https://hdl.huntington.org/digital/collection/p15150coll7/id/29760>

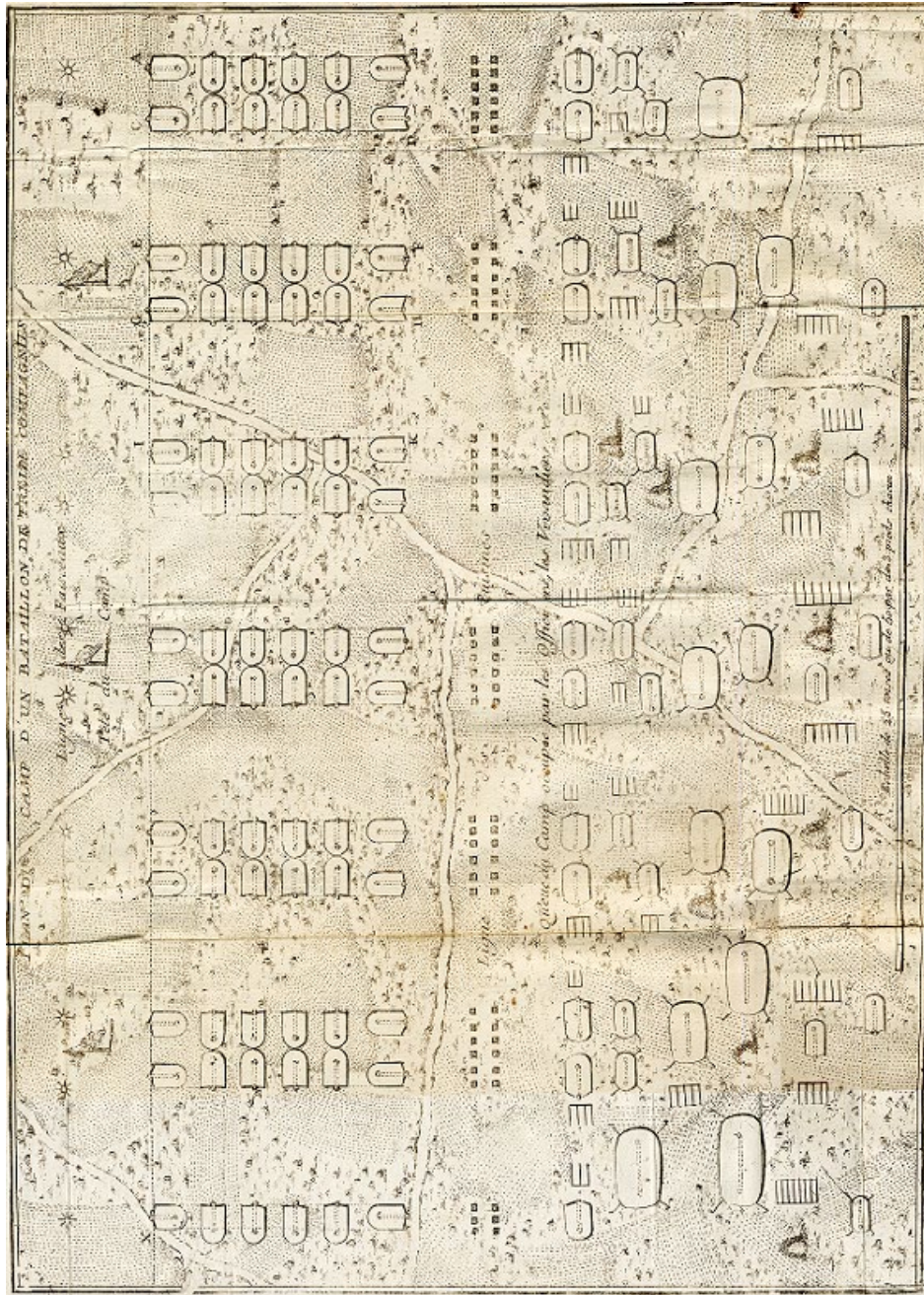


The accompanying text reads in part :

*A 15 miles nous arrivames a la ferry etant Marchans cette Journée faite l'âme Entier a l'Exception des Equipages Nous campames de droite en d'escendant et Embarquames par regt et allons bivaquer a 1 mile de l'autre cote du rivage dans le sein (?) a droite a chaque cote de la ferry il y a une taverne et une petite Isle a droite on peut le vis (?) en passant La Rivere.*

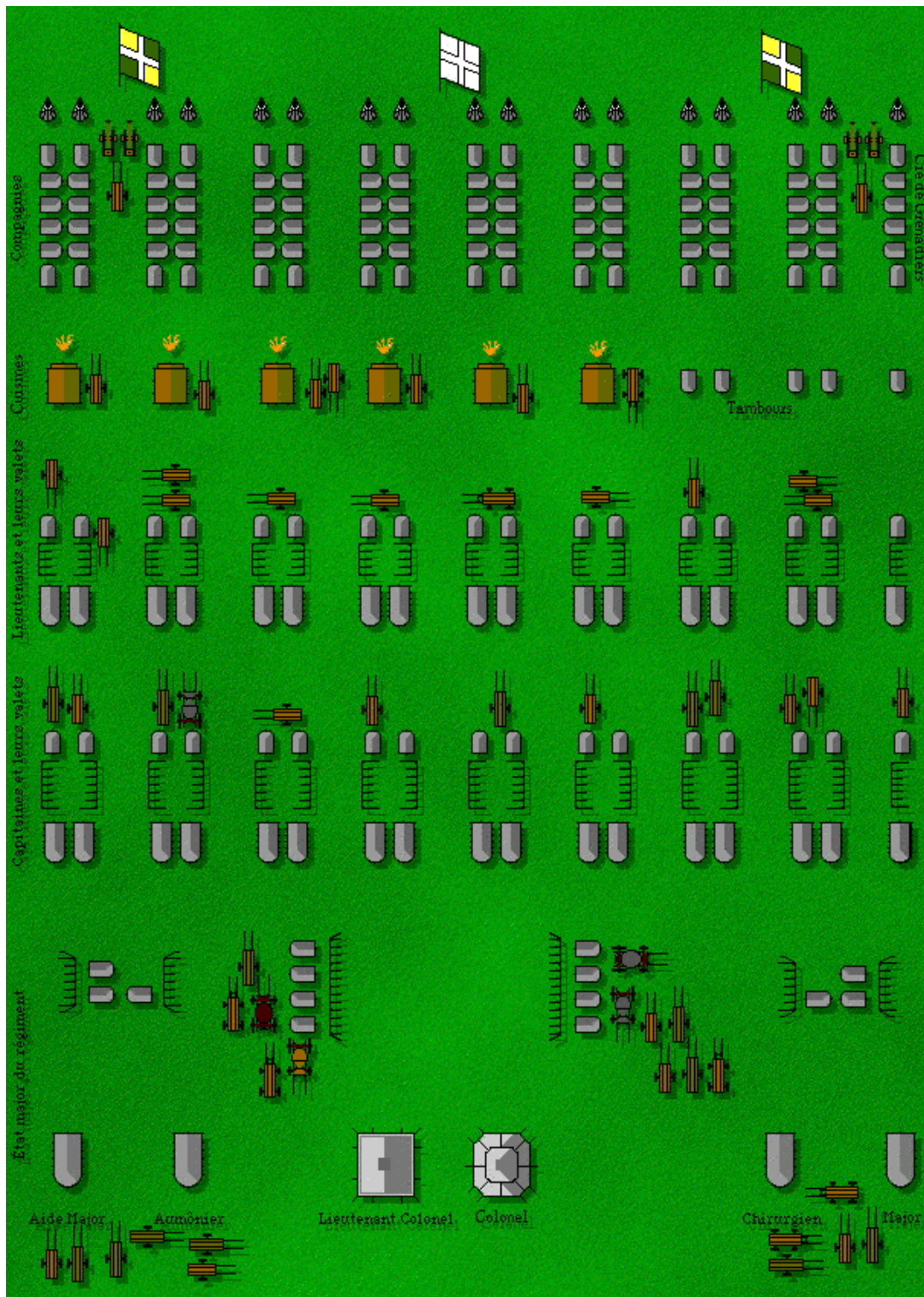
At 15 miles [from the camp at head of Elk] we arrived at the ferry having marched that whole day without having seen a soul with the exception of the wagons we camped on the right on the decline and embarked by regiment and went to bivouque a mile on the other side of the river in the filed (?) on the right on each bank of the ferry is a tavern and a small island on the right one can see it when crossing the river.

## 5.1 Lay-out and Organization of a French Encampment



French campsite drawing for a single bataillon from Guillaume *Essai sur la castrametation, ou, Sur la mesure et le tracé des camps: contenant les premiers principes pour l'arrangement des troupes : la formation de l'ordre de bataille & la distribution ou construction du camp: avec un précis des différentes gardes qui en font la sûreté* (Paris, 1748)<sup>170</sup>

<sup>170</sup> Available at <http://patricemenguy.free.fr/sujetsdubienaime/Sommaire.html>. French *pieds* are used in the drawing but 1 *pied* = 12.8 inches.



French campsite for one battalion by Jean-Louis Vial.<sup>171</sup>

<sup>171</sup> The drawing as well as the following slightly edited essay are available at [http://vial.jean.free.fr/new\\_npi/revues\\_npi/1\\_1998/npi\\_198/1\\_inf\\_camp\\_im](http://vial.jean.free.fr/new_npi/revues_npi/1_1998/npi_198/1_inf_camp_im) . Used by permission.



The French army had precise regulations concerning lay-out and organization, in particular the *Ordonnance portant règlement sur le service de l'infanterie en campagne* of 17 February 1753, and the *Ordonnance sur l'exercice de l'infanterie* of 5 June 1755. Concerning the basic camp-lay-out, the 1753 regulation states that each row of tents is made up of only one company, but the 1755 exercise manual changes that regulation in that companies are now paired to form platoons which will camp together, meaning that each row of tents is now composed of two companies except for the grenadier company in the First Battalion and the chasseur company in the Second Battalion (following the army reforms of 1776 which created two-battalion regiments), which as elite companies always camp by themselves.<sup>172</sup> The (green) drawing represents the battalion camping on the left (grenadiers are on the left); the second battalion camping on the right would be an exact mirror image of the drawing with chasseurs on the right. As shown in the camp lay-out, *vivandiers*, i.e., the sutlers, camped in the same row as the tambours, right after the kitchen fires but before the *officiers subalternes*. The set-up of a camp was based a set of rules determined by the number of brigades, squadrons, or battalions and the seniority of regiments and of the captains of the companies. "When all regiments of infantry, cavalry and dragoons camp such that each one, following its seniority, occupies the place that it must, according to its rank, either in first or second or third line, that is called to be camped *in order of battle*, because it is the same order that they keep when they *present battle* to the enemy".<sup>173</sup>

A camp was established hierarchically from the right to the left and from the rear to the front. It was made on two, three or four lines according to the lay of the land. Places were assigned by the *maréchal général des logis de l'armée*, with the cavalry on the wings, and the infantry in the middle. When the *maréchal général des logis* had determined the site of the camp he put the detachments of infantry, cavalry or dragoons that accompanied the vanguard in charge to delimit with stakes driven into the ground, the place to be occupied by each battalion or squadron, the width of streets, the place of tents. What is described here is a French infantry camp for a battalion consisting of sixteen fusilier companies of 40 men and one grenadier company of 45 men.<sup>174</sup>

In the front of the battalion were placed on the same alignment the stacks of arms, situated at almost 10 pas (9m 75 cm) in front of the line of the first tents. Stacks of arms were opposite to each company and covered with a coarse linen or drill called coat of arms (*manteau d'armes*) to protect arms from inclement weather. To construct a stack of arms the

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<sup>172</sup> Since the *ordonnances* creating the two-battalion regiments do not address the camp lay-out it is assumed that the French army continued to pair its fusilier companies during the 1770s and 1780s.

<sup>173</sup> Louis Charles Dupain de Montesson, *L'art de lever les plans de tout ce qui a rapport à la guerre et à l'architecture civile et champêtre* (Paris, 1763).

<sup>174</sup> i.e., a one-battalion regiment 17 companies and 925 men. In 1776, French infantry regiments were re-organized into two-battalion regiments of 20 companies and a strength of 1,007 men.

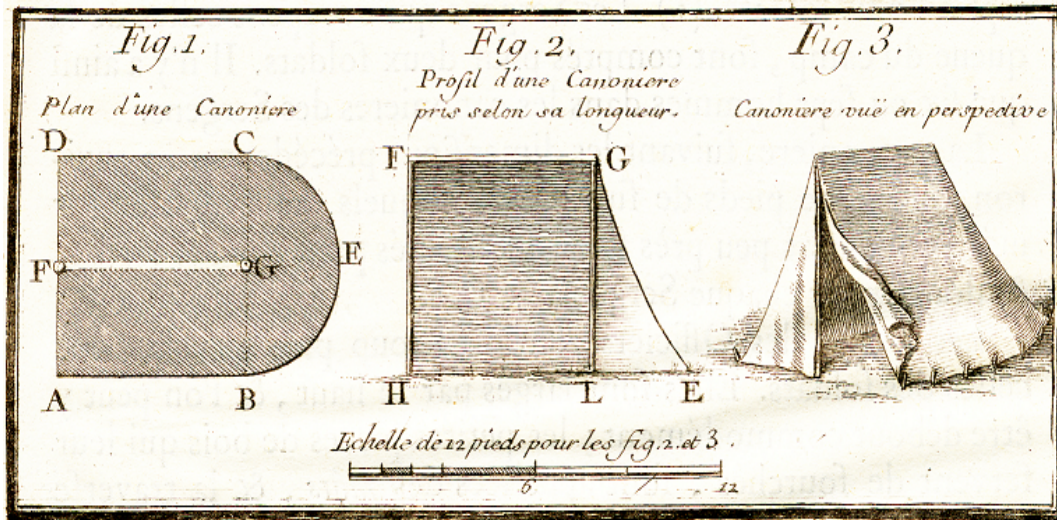
quartermaster from each company traced a circle of approximately 8 *pieds* (2m 60 cm) of circumference on ground for the guns of his company, soldiers dug around this circle a groove of approximately 3 *pouces* (8 cm) in depth and 1/2 *pied* (16.5 cm) in width, and they put earth in slope against the stack of arms, they filled in the groove with grass and drove small wood stakes of half foot in length into the middle of the groove to sustain the gun crooks and thus to insulate them from the humidity of the ground. They drove in center a stake of 8 *pieds* (2m 60) in length and 8 *pouces* in circumference along which they hung the coat of arms that formed a cone. This model of stack of arms was only built for instruction or stay camps. For temporary camps the circumference was simply fitted with branches intertwined on which rested crooks. There was one coat of arms per company and one more per battalion for the picket. The coat of arms measured 6 *pieds* high and 1 *pied* 9 *pouces* in circumference in the upper part and 19 *pieds* in circumference on the lower part of which 2 *pieds* were needed to close the opening. Tents and coats of arms were marked in black letters with the name of the regiment and the company number (Instruction of 17 February 1753).

In the right part of the battalion camp was the grenadier company, then further at left were the colonel's company and then that of the lieutenant-colonel, called "lieutenance" in French if he commanded a company; then came the other fusilier companies. During campaigns regiments camped by brigade, a brigade being a unit of two regiments, the older regiment occupied the right and the younger regiment the left.

According to the instruction on 17 February 1753, infantry tents measured 10 *pieds* 4 *pouces* (3 m 35 cm) in length with the apse, 6 *pieds* (1 m 95 cm) width and 5 *pieds* 8 *pouces* (1 m 84 cm) height, they were held up by two wooden forked stakes of 10 *pieds* and one strut of 8 *pieds* (2 m 60 cm) and stretched with 21 small stakes, the name of the regiment had to be written in black on the linen. These tents were not large yet had to lodge a *chambre* of eight soldiers, though in practice they housed fewer as there were always detached or invalid soldiers in a company. A sergeant counted for two soldiers, one camped in the first tent and the other in the last of its company.

Therefore for a battalion there were 7 tents for the grenadier company, 96 tents for the sixteen fusilier companies, and 3 tents for drummers for a total of 106 tents. Since Rochambeau's 20-company infantry regiments were hardly ever at their full strength it is safe to assume a similar number of tents. The first tents of each company opened toward the head of the camp, the last toward the outside and the others toward the great streets, they were back to back keeping a space between them of one *pas* (1 m approximately) called the small street. Only the grenadier company did not put up its tents according to this principle, but side by side looking at the exterior of the battalion camp.

Since the *ordonnance* of 1749 there were two flags per battalions, placed at 5 *pas* (5 m approximately) before the first tents, opposite the great street of the center. Each of these flags was guarded by a soldier, holding his sword in hand with a loaded gun deposited nearby on small two wooden forked stacks driven into the ground.



French tent from LeBlond, *Essai* p. 333.



Planche X Page 246  
Tome 1<sup>er</sup>

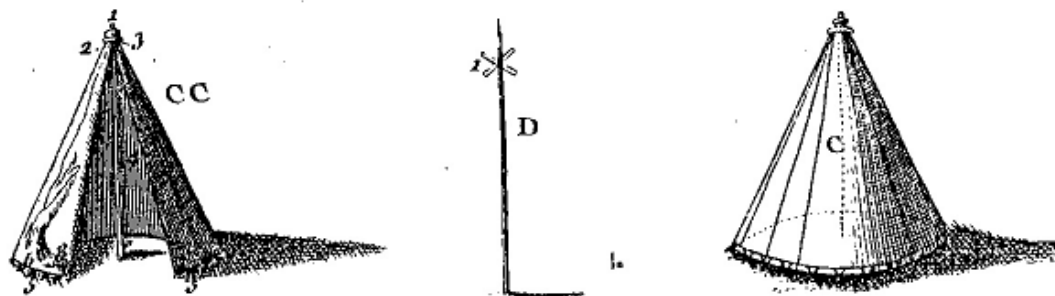
Plan pour faire voir comment sont couchés neuf soldats dans une tente, tirée de l'ouvrage de Puysegur "L'Art de la Guerre"

In his *Art de la Guerre*" of 1748, Puysegur shows this engraving with nine soldiers in a tent of 8 *pieds* square excl. the apse and 7 feet (2 m 27 cm) high.<sup>175</sup>

<sup>175</sup> Jean-François de Chastenet, *marquis de Puysegur, Art de la Guerre, par Principes et par Règles* 2 vols., (Paris, 1749), vol. 1, plate X.

From January 1757 onward the infantry was provided with battalion support guns composed of one light 4-pounder *à la suédoise*.<sup>176</sup> This piece and its limber were probably placed before the first tents on the alignment of the stack of arms of the great street, between the colonel company and that of the lieutenant. Each piece was served by a crew of sixteen gunners: eight detached from the Royal Artillery Corps, eight were pulled out the regiment plus one supernumerary. The 1774 *ordonnance* for the artillery increased the number to two Gribeauval 4-Pounders per battalion; their crews most likely camped next to their pieces.

The arms stand was build at the right part of the battalion camp across from the tents of grenadiers, one *pas* before the first stack of arms. The arms stand was used to keep the arms of soldiers that were at work. It was built with two wooden forked stacks and one strut, sometimes covered with branches; it also served to deposit the arms of the forty eight fusiliers appointed for different services and was called a *picket*. A guard consisting of one man per company was posted at hundred *pas* before the battalion camp.

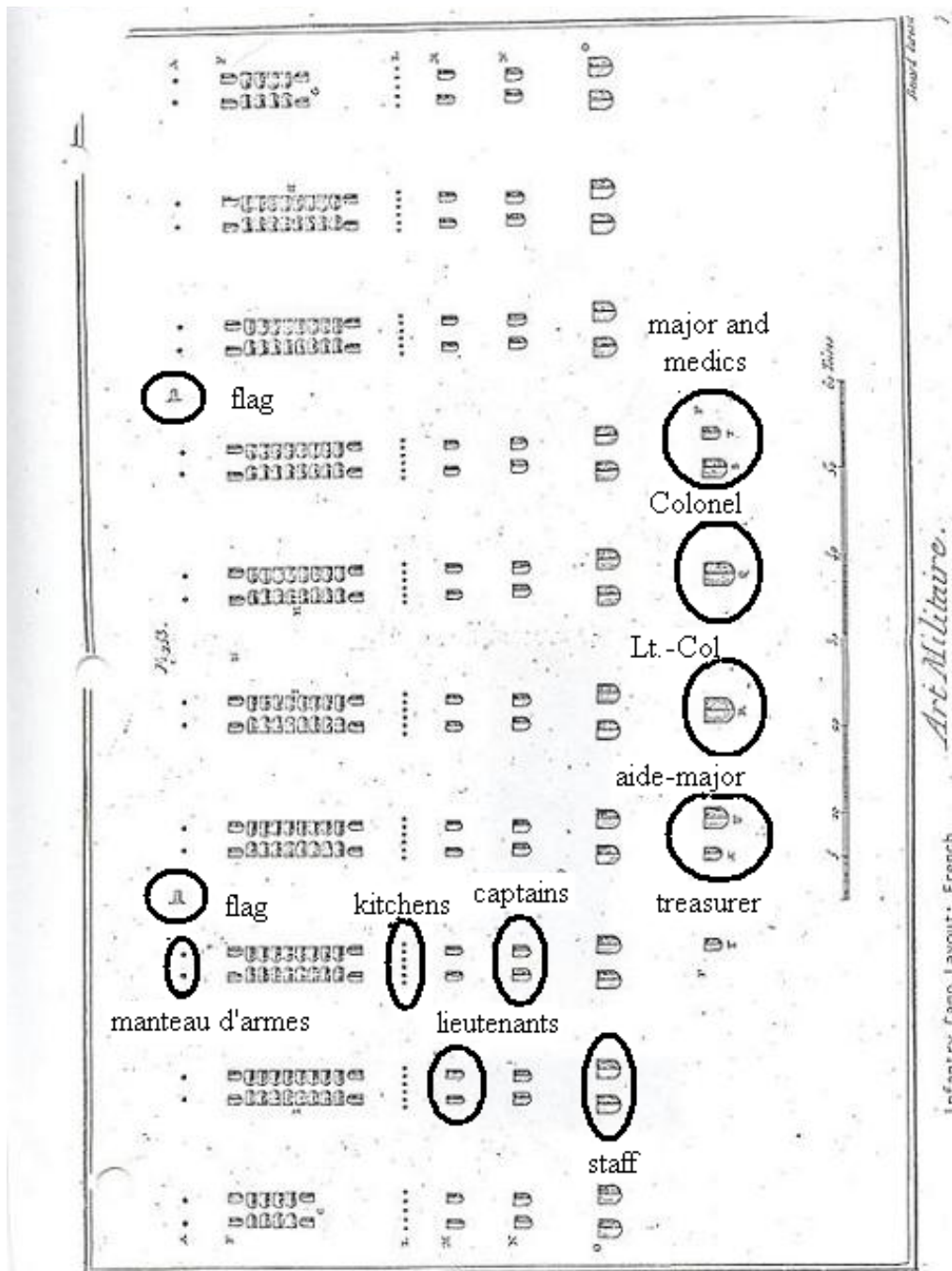


Arms Tent (*manteau d'armes*)<sup>177</sup>

The Lieutenant's Camp was placed at twenty *pas* from the *vivandiers*, each lieutenant camped behind his company, in the interval of these twenty *pas* they placed their servants, their horses, their kitchen, their wood and forage. Twenty *pas* further back were the tents of captains and their servants similarly arranged.

<sup>176</sup> *Ordonnance du Roi portant établissement d'une pièce de canon à la Suédoise à la suite de chacun des bataillons de son infanterie, tant françoise qu'étrangère, qui serviront en campagne* of 20 January 1757.

<sup>177</sup> Joseph-Ignace-Magnus de Spahr, *Instructions militaires* (Paris, 1753) Plate 1<sup>e</sup>.



This 184-tent lay-out of a regimental camp of 10 companies is about 140 toises (840 feet) wide and 80 toises (513 feet) deep plus latrines, butcheries, and pasture for horses further off in the distance.<sup>178</sup> At 9 soldiers each the 184 tents would have slept 1,656 men. In the configuration of 1776 the French infantry encampment in Cecil County in 1782 covered close to 1700x500 feet or around 20 acres, 25 acres when the space for the artillery is included.

<sup>178</sup> Nicolas d'Hericourt, *Elemens de l'Art militaire* (1st ed., 1739); the description is taken from vol. 2 (1756) of the 6 vols. edition printed in Paris, 1756-1758, pp. 5-12. 1 toise = 6 pieds = 6 feet 5 in.

Finally in the rear of the camp, was the regimental headquarters at fifty *pas* back from the captains. The colonel and colonel lieutenant in the center, the first at right and the second at left of the interval of the middle of the battalion. In the two-battalion regiment of Rochambeau's army the colonel and lieutenant colonel would have moved to the rear center between the two battalions. The major at right on the alignment of the grenadier company and the aide-major at left behind the last company of fusiliers. The surgeon was located between the colonel and the major, the chaplain between the lieutenant-colonel and the aide-major. These superior officers were theoretically required to lodge in their camp, but as the itinerary of Rochambeau's forces shows usually lodged in a near-by house or tavern. They had far more spacious tents than the troops, round or square, with camp bed, chairs, tables etc. The tents of superior and subordinate officers opened toward the head of the camp; those of servants toward the rear or sideways.

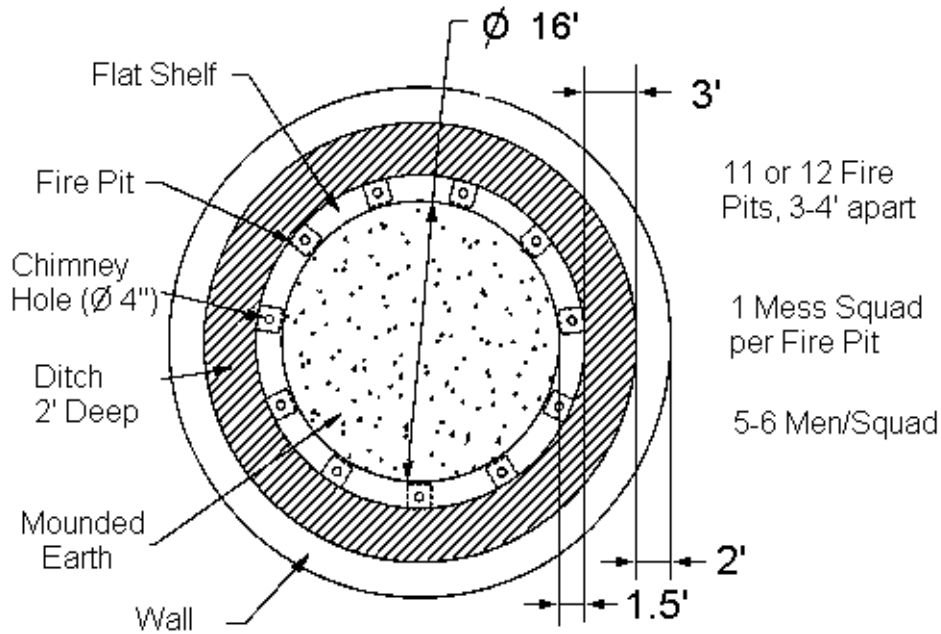
Butcheries were located 50 *pas* behind the headquarters. The latrines were dug at 150 or 200 *pas* before the battalion of the first line and at 100 *pas* behind the headquarters of the last line, they had a shelter with two forked stakes of 4 1/2 *pieds* length and a strut of 12 *pieds* length.

Kitchens for the soldiers were located 10 *pas* behind the company tents, the *vivandiers* were another 10 *pas* behind the kitchens with their horses, wagons, wood and forage arranged around their tents. There were three *vivandiers* per battalion that lodged in three tents similar those of the troops. There was one earth kitchen per company and one more for the drummers. The kitchens measured approximately 3 *pas* in length and 4 *pieds* in width, based on the lay of the land. The soldiers dug a pit of 2 *pieds* 3 or 4 *pouces* deep. They were built opposite of the small street that separate companies. On the same alignment like the kitchens behind the first companies of the right were the three tents of the battalions' drummers and the sixth tent of the grenadier company.

The tin or sheet iron kettles would be placed on two pieces of sod to allow the draught of the fireplace to escape through the chimney hole. Barrel-hoop "broilers" may also have been used.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> John U. Rees "As many fireplaces as you have tents..." *The Continental Soldier*, vol. XI, no. 3 (Summer 1998), 26-32).



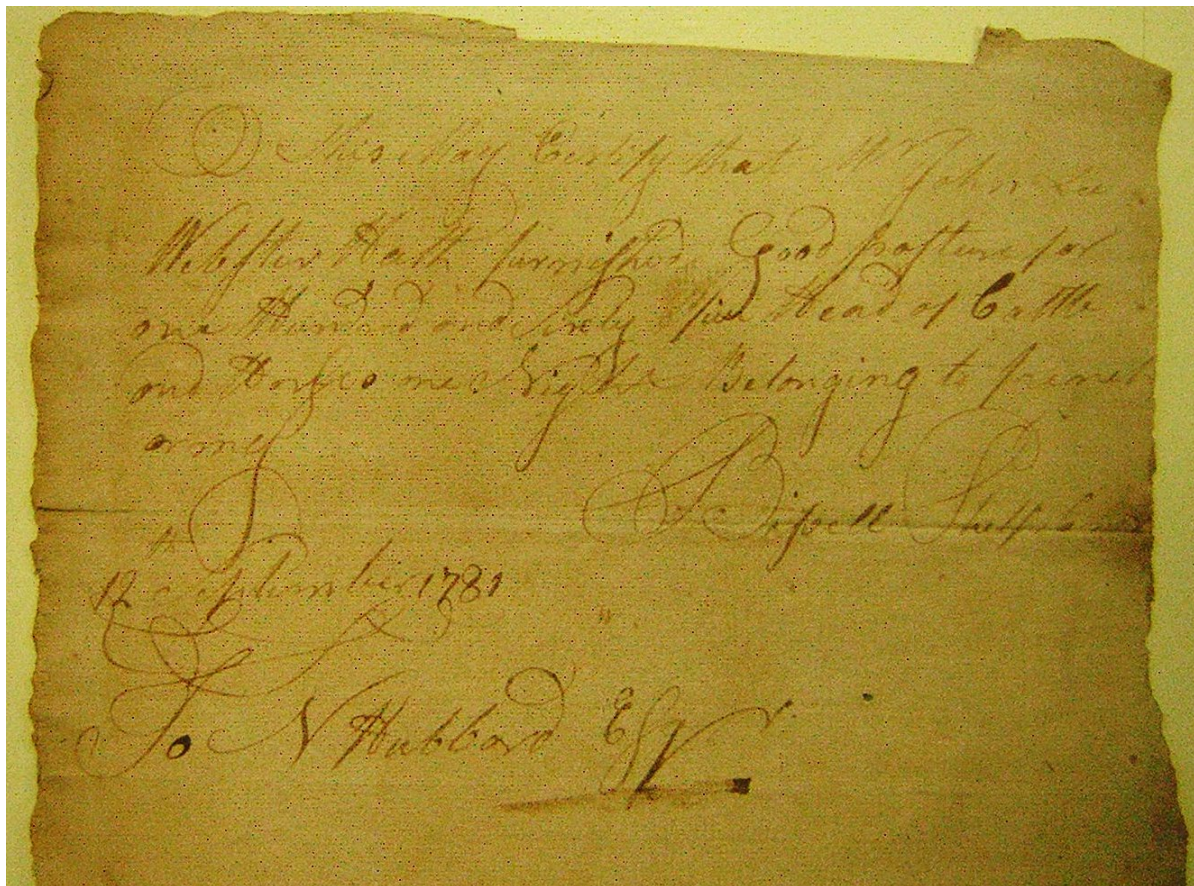
Overhead view of earthen kitchen<sup>180</sup>



Camp kitchen in use

Locals benefited greatly from the presence of French forces in their neighborhood. Not only did those thousands of men and their animals need to be fed, Jeremiah Wadsworth and John Carter as Rochambeau's sole purchasers paid in silver and gold rather than in virtually worthless Continental dollars or certificates. Several receipts for purchases in Harford and Cecil Counties survive in the Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers in the Connecticut Historical Society in Hartford.

<sup>180</sup> The dimensions are those given in Humphrey Bland's *Treatise of Military Discipline* (1762).



On 11/12 September 1781, John Lee Webster provided “Good pasture for one Hundred and Sixty five Head of Cattle and Horses”.

These may well have been draft animals for the “baggage trains” that most likely camped at Bush Town on 11/12 September 1781.

John Lee Webster (ca. 1735-1795) a quaker who lived in Spesutia Lower Hundred was a partner in Bush River Ironworks and one of the wealthiest men in the county. In 1767, Bush River Iron- works Co. owned a furnace, 3 mills, about 20 slaves, 3,000 acres of land, a large bay schooner and other watercraft, plus all the equipment required for the iron and milling business. Webster was elected to represent Harford County in House of Delegates in 1788 and 1789 but never attended.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Preston, *Harford*, p. 352.



I have Certified that Mr Jacob Reynolds  
has kept nine Hundred Sixty Nine  
Cattle and Horses one night in the  
Cist of Captain Roger Buckley M<sup>o</sup>g  
French Army  
Sept 10<sup>th</sup> 1781

Jacob Reynolds' property in West Nottingham lay on way to Bald Friar Ford. Reynolds kept 969 head of cattle and horses, at least a quarter of all animals in the column for the night of 9/10 September 1781, another clear indication that few animals crossed on the Lower Ferry.

Mess<sup>rs</sup> Wadsworth & Carter  
To Jacob Reynolds  
To 1 Sheep for the Waggoners — £1. 2. 6  
Rec<sup>d</sup> West Nottingham Sept. 10<sup>th</sup> 1781 of Mess<sup>rs</sup>  
Wadsworth & Carter twenty two shillings & six pence  
pence in full of the above  
£1. 2. 6  
Jacob Reynolds

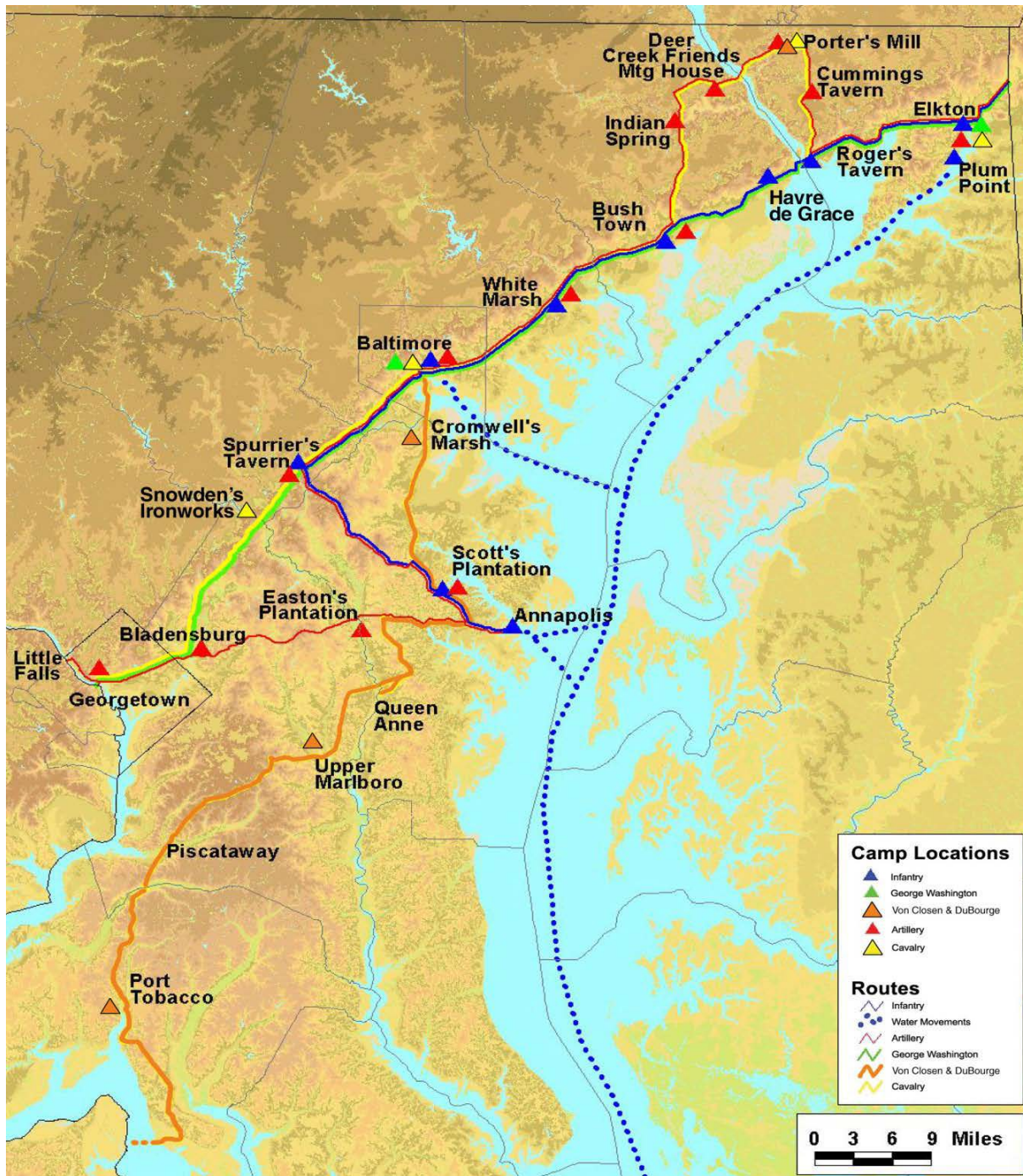
36. 15  
41. 6

Jacob Reynolds also sold the waggoners one sheep.

This I May Certify that Mr. William  
Haines kept in Pasture One Hundred &  
Six by Head of Oxen & Horses Belonging to  
the Royal Artillerie French Army Certified  
By George Symonds  
W. Nottingham Sept 10 1781

On 9/10 September 1781, William Haines (1725-1800) of West Nottingham pastured 160 oxen and horses “Belonging to the Royal Artilerie”

By 15 September, all remaining allied forces and their wagon trains were encamped in Baltimore where American forces embarked on vessels waiting at Fell’s Point to take them to Virginia. Vioménil considered the vessels unseaworthy and decided to continue his march. While encamped at Spurrier’s Tavern in the evening of 16 September a messenger informed him of transport vessels waiting for his troops at Annapolis to take them to Virginia as well. By 7:00 a.m. on 19 September, they had reached Annapolis. Here the troops set up camp on the south-east side of College Creek along the grounds of St. John’s College and the US Naval Academy. Over the next few days, the French infantry and their baggage as well as the field artillery embarked on 15 vessels sent by Admiral de Grasse. The *Romulus* of 74 guns, the frigates *Gentile*, *Diligente*, *l’Aigrette*, the captured British frigates *Isis* and *Richmond*, and nine transports, sailed late in the afternoon of 21 September 1781. By 26 September 1781, the allied armies were assembled in Williamsburg, two days later the siege began. On 9 October, allied artillery opened fire on Lord Cornwallis; the storming of Redoubts No. 9 and 10 by French and American forces on the evening of 14 October sealed his fate. Their escape route blocked by a French fleet under Admiral de Grasse and an ever-tighter siege line on land, Crown forces laid down their arms five days later and surrendered to the combined armies of George Washington and the *comte de Rochambeau*. Franco-American cooperation on land and on sea had won the war. American independence was achieved.



Land and water routes of allied forces across Maryland to Yorktown, September 1781. Map courtesy of Robert Reyes.

## 6. Return March of American Forces, November 1781

### 6.1 George Washington's Return Ride to Philadelphia, November 1781

On 27 October 1781, French forces began to re-embark, and on 4 November the fleet carrying the comte de Grasse, who had never set foot on the American mainland, sailed out of Lynnhaven Bay for Fort Royal on Martinique, where it arrived on 26 November 1781.

On 5 November, Washington received word on that his stepson John Parke Custis was dying. He immediately left Yorktown for Eltham, home of Anna Maria, Martha Washington's sister, and her husband Burwell Bassett, about 34 miles from Yorktown. He arrived in the evening of 5 November while his aides Laurens, Smith, and Trumbull waited at Byrd's Tavern. On 7 November, Trumbull accompanied Washington and the family to Custis' funeral in the Bassett family plot near Queen's Creek north of Williamsburg. After the funeral, the group returned to Eltham, having ridden about 50 miles that day. Washington stayed at Eltham until 10 November before he continued to Mt. Vernon, arriving on 13 November.<sup>182</sup>

Handwritten expense account for Washington's travels from Yorktown to Mt. Vernon and on to Philadelphia. The document lists expenses for various locations and a total sum. Two red arrows point to the entries for 'Annapolis' and 'go between Annapolis & Baltimore'.

Location	Expense
To Expenses at Annapolis	4.1.7
To go between Annapolis & Baltimore	5.14
at Ferry	0.16.6
Baltimore	12.5.10
Philip's Tavern	3.14
Maguahan Ferry	1.15
go between	9.4
Head of Rte	3.7.6
Christiana	0.15
Wilmington	12.10
Chester	5.6
Cherryhill	0.7.6
Sum carried up	64.9.11

<sup>182</sup> Detail of expense account for Washington's travels from Yorktown to Mt. Vernon and on to Philadelphia. [https://www.loc.gov/resource/mgw5.117\\_0001\\_0222/?sp=97](https://www.loc.gov/resource/mgw5.117_0001_0222/?sp=97)

The assumption that Washington stayed at Rodgers Tavern is based on the chronological sequence of expenses, which lists ferry expenses before the tavern expenses, and on the itinerary kept by Washington's Private Secretary Jonathan Trumbull.<sup>183</sup>

14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> at Mount Vernon — when we  
 leave & sleep at Mr Calvert's — Mount Airy  
 in Maryland — the father of Mr Custis —  
 21<sup>st</sup> in Annapolis — Sup & spend the night with Gov Lee  
 22 — Annapolis — by Invitation dine with the  
 Gov & Assembly of the State — in public —  
 23 — Ride to Baltimore — meet Mr Washington  
 24<sup>th</sup> Ride to Tangiermouth & pass the River  
 at evening is very calm & quiet —  
 25. Breakfast at head of R. — reach Wil-  
 mington to sleep — hard Rain & very Wet  
 26<sup>th</sup> Dine at Chester — arrive in Phila  
 27<sup>th</sup> in Phila — hard Rain —

<sup>183</sup> Jonathan Trumbull, "Journal of Occurrences from 12 August to Seige of York, in Virginia - and return to Phila. Nov. 1781" Special Collections MUNN 37. Fordham University Libraries Archives and Special Collections, Fordham University, New York, NY. The ms journal ends with the arrival in Philadelphia on 27 November while published journal ends with a partial entry on 5 November 1781 already.

Washington departed from Mount Vernon on 20 November for Annapolis where he arrived later that day, after having traveled about 45 miles. From Annapolis he crossed the Severn River and continued to Baltimore, where his wife joined him, and they spent the night of 23/24 November. From there via Philip's Tavern (just east of Nottingham Ironworks) to Havre de Grace, where he crossed the river at "Susquehannah Ferry" to the "Susquehannah Tavern", i.e., Rodgers Tavern, where, having traveled about 40 miles, he spent the night of 24/25 November 1781. The night of 25/26 November was spent in Wilmington, Delaware,

Washington arrived in Philadelphia in the afternoon of 26 November 1781 and took up lodging in the Benjamin Chew Home at 110 S. Third Street (between Walnut and Spruce). Washington stayed in Philadelphia until 23 March 1782, when he crossed the Delaware into New Jersey and the Hasbrouck house in the Hudson Highlands.

## 6.2 The Return March of Continental Army Forces, November 1781

Except for a small group of about 85 Delaware recruits, the same units, i.e., the 1st New Jersey, 2d New Jersey, 1st New York, 2d<sup>d</sup> New York, Rhode Island, and Hazen's Canadian Regiment, all returned to the northward in November and December 1781. Some of them, such as Colonel Lamb's Continental Artillery, the Light Infantry, Joseph Plumb Martin's Corps of Sappers and Miners, and the Corps of Artificers, traveled north on water. Since they all landed at Elkton at the same location where they had embarked in mid-September, their route is not part of this study. Once again the diary of Samuel Tallmadge of the Second New York Regiment and two accounts by waggoners are the only primary sources by participants for the return march.

Based on the scarce information available about the order and organization of the march it appears that for most of the way the New Jersey and New York regiments marched a day apart with the New Jersey Regiments in front.<sup>184</sup> The British prisoners of war totaling about 6,000 officers and men were marched into Maryland before they were sent on to Lancaster in Pennsylvania. Samuel Tallmadge and his Second New York Regiment had received 440 prisoners on 3 November and began the march north at 5:00 a.m. the next day. By 11 November, they reached Fredericksburg, and delivered the prisoners "to an officer of the Virginia militia".<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> No Orderly Book or other primary source for the reconstruction of the march of the New Jersey regiment has been located. See William S. Stryker, *The New Jersey Continental Line in the Virginia Campaign of 1781* (Trenton, 1882), p. 26.

<sup>185</sup> T.W. Egly, *History of the First New York Regiment 1775-1783* (Hampton, NH: Peter E. Randall, 1981), p. 210. Strength reports for the Continental Army for October 1781 and January 1782 in Lesser, *Sinews*, pp. 210-213. He gives the total strength of the New Jersey Brigade near Morristown

On 25 November, the "Jersey Regiment marched to the [Susquehannah] River and Crossed, Stormy Weather prevented our Regt marching."<sup>186</sup> Since Tallmadge's New York regiment could not cross the next day either, the New Jersey troops gained another day on the New Yorkers. Based on the itinerary of the New York Regiment that means that the New Jersey Regiment probably marched into Pennsylvania on 29 November for a camp in or near Marcus Hook in Pennsylvania.<sup>187</sup> The 30<sup>th</sup> saw the regiment just outside Philadelphia.

That left the waggoners and the wagon train. For the march north the wagon train had been reduced to an absolute minimum. On 22 October 1781, Thomas Cogswell had written to Thomas Pickering from "Camp near York Town" that "Mr Lincoln is going to take charge of the teams with the Prisoners, the three teams from the Jerseys I wish he might keep along with him till they get home or till we overtake him, the best of the Continental Teams he will keep with him till the last and then Deliver them to the Quarter Master."<sup>188</sup>

Two waggoners, Thomas Graton and an unidentified waggoner from Sutton mention the crossing of the Susquehanna in their accounts. Graton departed from Williamsburg 6 November 1781, and crossed the Potomac into Maryland on 15 November. Under 20 November he wrote "we took the lower Road at Bush. Ye 21 [November 1781] we marched to ye Ferry of Susqhehanna & stayd till ye 23 of the wind being Blustering the crossed to Charlstown and came to the head of Elk & encamped till ye 25." Upon reaching Newburgh he was discharged on 26 December and reached his home on 26 January 1782.<sup>189</sup> The unidentified waggoner from Sutton was inoculated against the smallpox sometime in November 1781 and remained in the Williamsburg – Yorktown area and did not set out for home until 16 December 1781. Coming from Gunpowder Ferry "on the 30 [December 1781] we marched to Susquahannah river 20 miles & on the 31 we marched a crosst the River and arrived at the Head of Elk 16 miles." On 25 January 1782 he was back home in Sutton again, "Which makes it 613 miles from Williams Burg in vergina"<sup>190</sup>. Based on the waggoners data he traveled on average of 15 miles per day.

French forces spent the winter of 1781/2 in Virginia and set out for New York in July 1782.

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as 542 and of the New York Brigade at Pompton, NJ, as 767 "Present fit for duty & on Duty." Ibid. p. 212.

<sup>186</sup> Tallmadge, *Journal*, p. 767.

<sup>187</sup> Tallmadge, *Journal*, p. 767.

<sup>188</sup> Miscellaneous Numbered Records (The Manuscript File) in the War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records, 1775-1790s. Record Group 93, 125 reels, reel 83. NARA

<sup>189</sup> *Thomas Graton His Book* in his Pension Application W14824. NARA.

<sup>190</sup> NARA RG 93 M859 Roll 97, Doc. # 28325. He does not mention the crossing of the Susquehanna on the way to Yorktown. He only wrote: "on 5 day of Sept [1781] we marched for the Head of Elk river whair Blair had one horse stole and Wiswel Had another Stole both in one Night we stayed two Days and then marchd to Boltimore in mereland State."

## 7. The Return March of French Forces, September 1782

### 7.1 French crossing the Susquehanna at Lower Ferry, 23 to 31 August 1782

Following the victory at Yorktown on 19 October 1781, French forces went into winter quarters in and around Williamsburg; Lauzun's Legion spent a few weeks in Hampton before deploying to Charlotte Court House in western Virginia on 9 February, where it arrived on 24 February 1782.<sup>191</sup> Having waited in vain for instructions from Versailles for the campaign of 1782, Rochambeau decided in mid-June to march his forces north into New York State from where he had set out for Yorktown the previous summer. Similar to the march south in 1781, Rochambeau organized his little army into five divisions for the return march. This organization was maintained until the arrival of French forces at Crompond, today's Yorktown Heights in Westchester County, on 19 September 1782. It was the organizational structure and make-up in which French forces crossed the Susquehanna in August 1782.<sup>192</sup>

Lauzun's Legion formed the First Division of Rochambeau's forces. It departed from Charlotte Court House on 10 June and reached Petersburg on 17 June 1782. Following procedures established in French military *ordonnances*, each division was accompanied by an assistant quartermaster, an *aide-major général des logis*; in the case of Lauzun's Legion this was Captain Louis-Alexandre Berthier, future chief of staff of Napoleon. After two weeks of rest the Legion departed from Petersburg again on 1 July. After five days of marching, the route of Lauzun's Legion coming from Petersburg and that of Rochambeau's infantry coming from Williamsburg merged just south of Hanover Court House on 5 July. At that point Lauzun's Legion was marching three days ahead of the infantry, after the unplanned camp for the infantry at Bowling Green the difference was four days.

On 1 July, the Bourbonnois Regiment, Rochambeau's Second Division, departed from Williamsburg.<sup>193</sup> This second division was led by *aide-major général des logis* George Henry

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<sup>191</sup> For details on winter quarters and the return marches from Virginia see my *Revolutionary War Route and Transportation Survey in the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1781-1782. An Historical and Architectural Survey*. (Richmond, Virginia: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 2009), available on-line at <https://w3r-us.org/history-by-state/>.

<sup>192</sup> This itinerary from the Rochambeau Papers in the Library of Congress vol. 4, 469-478, is titled "Ordre de Marche pour porter l'armée Française aux ordres de M. le Cte. de Rochambeau de ses différens Quartiers en Virginie à George-town sur la Rive gauche du Potowmak où Elle doit rester jusqu'à nouvel ordre en 22 jours de marche y compris Quatre Séjours", and dated "Williamsburg, 28 June 1782", and signed by Quartermaster-General de Béville. It is unpublished. The full itinerary is used in my *Survey in the Commonwealth of Virginia*.

<sup>193</sup> For historical accuracy the eighteenth-century spelling of *Bourbonnois* rather than the modern *Bourbonnais* is used in this report. The same applies for the *Soissonnois* regiment.



Victor Collot.<sup>194</sup> Accompanied by his two sons and 30 workers, Béville preceded the first infantry division by "24 heures, plus ou moins, -- 24 hours more or less", to widen the road, fill up potholes, and repair bridges &c. The remaining three divisions were preceded by 15 workers each. Nothing is known about the organization and arrangements of the march and camp lay-out of Lauzun's Legion.

As Rochambeau did not accompany his forces, and the *baron* de Vioménil, his second in command, had not yet returned from France, the march to the north stood under the day-to-day command of the *chevalier* de Chastellux.<sup>195</sup> Besides the approximately 75 officers and about 800 other ranks of the Bourbonnois, the Second Division also included the First Division of the *artillerie du parc*, i.e., the 6-inch howitzers and 12-lb guns of the Auxonne Regiment of Artillery. Rochambeau's Field artillery, i.e., the re-enforced Second Battalion of the Auxonne, had brought 30 guns, i.e., eight 12-pounders, sixteen 4-pounders and six 6-inch howitzers - six more than its full supplement of eight 12-pounders, twelve 4-pounders, and four 6-inch howitzers (= 24 pieces) to America.<sup>196</sup> Since the sixteen 4-lb guns drawn by four horses each served as battalion support guns, two per battalion, this means that the *artillerie du parc* consisted of the 12-pounders and howitzers divided into four divisions of two 12-pounders drawn by six horses and one howitzer drawn by four horses each.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Collot would go on to play an important role in American history. Born on 20 March 1750, he joined the Chamborant Regiment of Hussars in October 1765, and became a captain in February 1778. In 1780, Rochambeau appointed his nephew one of his aides-de-camp before promoting him to the position of *aide-maréchal général des logis* with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. Collot was the chief supply officer of the Legion until its departure from Philadelphia in May 1783. Governor of Guadeloupe in 1792, he briefly came to the United States as a British prisoner of war on parole after the surrender of the island in April 1794. Paroled in Philadelphia in 1796, he was approached by French minister to the United States Pierre Adet, to survey the lands west of the Appalachian Mountains and investigate how they could be claimed for France. Having completed his journey along the Ohio and Mississippi, despite American and Spanish suspicions and numerous arrests, he returned to Paris from Louisiana in December 1796. Based in part on Collot's information, Napoleon acquired the Louisiana Territory from Spain on 1 October 1800 but sold it to the United States 2 1/2 years later. Collot died in Paris on 13 May 1805. Gilbert Bodinier, *Dictionnaire des officiers de l'armée royale qui ont combattu aux États-Unis pendant la guerre d'Indépendance 1776-1783* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (Chailland, 2001), p. 119. See Neil A. Hamilton, "A French Spy in America. French Cartographer Victor Collot," *American History*, vol. 34, no. 3, (August 1999), pp. 22-27, and Clifford M. Lewis, "The Reconnaissance Expedition of two French Navigators," *West Virginia History*, vol. 43, no. 1, (1981), pp. 21-38.

<sup>195</sup> Chastellux does not comment about the march. See Marquis de Chastellux, *Travels in North America in Years 1780, 1781 and 1782*. Howard C. Rice, Jr., ed., 2 vols., (Chapel Hill, 1963), vol. 2, p. 473.

<sup>196</sup> This increase was because Rochambeau had four regiments of infantry who needed their full supplement of battalion guns. The itinerary does not specify how the six howitzers were divided.

<sup>197</sup> The organization of a French artillery regiment is specified in *Ordonnance du roi concernant le corps royal de l'artillerie* of 3 October 1774, Titre huitième: "Du Service du Corps-Royal en campagne."

The five divisions were to occupy the same camps successively except on rest days when two divisions were always to camp side by side. Rochambeau's wagons as well as those of the intendant,<sup>198</sup> the treasurer,<sup>199</sup> and other officials were to form the van of the Second Division; the private wagons of the officers were to travel at the head of the division to which the officers belonged. It also included part of the wagons of the general headquarters, an unspecified number of supply wagons, the wagons assigned for the heavy luggage of the troops, and hospital wagons. The rear was formed by two faster moving wagons to pick up stragglers and to assist exhausted soldiers.

The Third Division, including the Royal Deux-Ponts, commanded by *comte* Christian de Deux-Ponts<sup>200</sup> had an identical make-up except that it included the Second Division of the *artillerie du parc* as well as the infantry support guns of the First Division, i.e., two 4-lb Gribeauval cannon for each of the two infantry battalions in a regiment. Since Rochambeau divided his battalion support guns into two divisions only for this march, this means that the Third and Fifth divisions each had eight 4-lb guns. This division, which was led by Cromot Dubourg, departed on 2 July.<sup>201</sup>

The Fourth Division, including the Soissonnois Regiment of Infantry, under the command of *comte* de Vioménil and led by his nephew the *comte* d'Ollone, again had the identical make-up with the Third Division of the *artillerie du parc*, departed on 3 July.

The Fifth Division, including the Saintonge Regiment of Infantry, commanded by *comte* de Custine and led by the Charles-Louis Berthier, Louis-Alexandre's younger brother, had both

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<sup>198</sup> Jean des Cilleuls, "Le service de l'intendance à l'armée de Rochambeau." *Revue historique de l'Armée* No. 2, (1957), pp. 43-61.

<sup>199</sup> Aimé Costantini, "Le corps Rochambeau face aux difficultés financières et économiques du royaume et des Etats-Unis d'Amérique (1780-1782)." *Revue Historique des Armées*, 1976, 3 (4 Special), pp.106-137. [also in *Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire*, 1979 (41), pp.107-126.]

<sup>200</sup> See my "Das Deutsche Königlich-Französische Infanterie Regiment von Zweybrücken or Royal Deux-Ponts." *Journal of the Johannes Schwalm Historical Association*.

Part 1: April 1756 - March 1780, in vol. 6, no. 4, (2000), pp. 52-59.

Part 2: March 1780 - June 1781, in vol. 7, no. 1, (2001), pp. 43-53.

Part 3: July 1781 - June 1783, in vol. 7, no. 2, (2002), pp. 29-43.

Part 4: June 1783 - 21 July 1791, in vol. 7, no. 3, (2003), pp. 42-52.

On Christian de Deux-Ponts and his time in Virginia see my "And is, Alas! The Hour of our Parting Come?" *Colonial Williamsburg. The Journal of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation* Vol. 18, No. 4, Summer 1996, pp. 46-53.

<sup>201</sup> Marie-François, *baron* Cromot du Bourg, "Diary of a French Officer, 1781" *Magazine of American History* Vol. 4, (March 1880), pp. 205-214, (April 1880), pp. 293-308, (May 1880), pp. 376-385, (June 1880), pp. 441-452.

the Fourth Division of the *artillerie du parc* as well as the Second Division of the campaign artillery. It departed Williamsburg on 4 July.<sup>202</sup>

For the time being the siege artillery and 150 men of the Auxonne artillery remained at West Point, Virginia, as did an additional 400 men, 100 each from each regiment, as a garrison at Yorktown and the sick. Because of the excessive July heat the troops frequently began their march as early as 1:00 a.m., marching through the night.

On 19 September 1782, shortly after the crossing of the Susquehanna, Rochambeau's forces showed the following strength:

Regiment	Commanding Officer	Total
Bourbonnois	<i>marquis</i> de Montmorency-Laval	48 company-grade officers, 62 NCOs and 923 other ranks <sup>203</sup>
Soissonnois	<i>comte</i> de Saint Maisme	56 company-grade officers, 71 NCOs and 926 other ranks
Saintonge	<i>comte</i> de Custine	60 company-grade officers, 66 NCOs and 936 other ranks
Royal Deux-Ponts	Christian <i>comte</i> de Deux-Ponts	47 company-grade officers, 66 NCOs and 920 other ranks
Auxonne Artillery	de la Tour	40 company-grade officers, 50 NCOs and 454 other ranks
Mineurs	Captain de Chazelles	1 officer, 3 NCOs and 19 other ranks
Workers	de la Chaisse	2 company-grade officers, 3 NCOs and 32 other ranks
Lauzun's Legion	<i>duc</i> de Lauzun	30 company-grade officers, 3 cadet gentilhommes, 26 NCOs and 537 other ranks
Total:		287 company-grade officers, 347 NCOs and 4,747 other ranks <sup>204</sup>

This was more or less the strength with which French forces entered Maryland with Lauzun's Legion in the lead, which crossed the Potomac at Georgetown on 14 July. By the early afternoon of 21 July, the last of Rochambeau's five division lay encamped in Georgetown.<sup>205</sup> Having traveled around 13 miles, Lauzun's Legion "sur les 6 heures", i.e., around 6 in the evening of 22 July, rode into Baltimore, followed by the Regiment Bourbonnois on the 24<sup>th</sup>. The remaining regiments of Rochambeau's forces arrived over the

<sup>202</sup> On Berthier see the biographical essay in Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns*, vol. 1, pp. 191-220.

<sup>203</sup> There is no break-down for detached and sick men, possibly around 200 per regiment? Many of the sick for all the regiments were in hospitals along the route rather than in camp.

<sup>204</sup> Military Service Records, Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-1783. M246, Roll 136: Returns of the French Army Under Count Rochambeau, 1781-82 (six returns), Washington, DC.

<sup>205</sup> See my *Cultural Resource Survey and Land and Water Based Route Reconnaissance for the Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Trail in the District of Columbia, September 1781 to July 1782*. (Washington, DC: Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Trail [WaRo], 2016).

next three days. Beginning on 27 July, French forces spent almost a month in Baltimore before the First Division, i.e., Lauzun's Legion, departed for New York on 23 August. The infantry regiment Bourbonnois departed the next day, followed by the other three regiments which again departed over the next three days, one regiment at a time. The first encampment on the march was at White Marsh Forge for the night of 23/24 August. The next morning the Legion departed for its camp at Bushtown, 24/25 August. From there it covered the remaining 12 miles to Susquehanna Lower Ferry, where its wagons arrived at daybreak. They immediately crossed the river, followed by the infantry and the hussars. At a walking speed of around 3 miles per hour, the infantry, which arrived before the roughly 300 mounted hussars, had been on the road for around four hours. The manuscript marks the arrival of the wagons as at "point du jour", at daybreak. Civil Twilight at Havre de Grace/Perryville on 25 August is at 5:29 a.m., sunrise at 6:00 a.m. By 11:00 a.m., within a good five hours, the close to 600 officers and men of the Legion, their 300-plus horses, their artillery pieces, and their wagons, had crossed over and lay encamped on the other side. In the afternoon 40 wagons belonging to the army ferried over as well.<sup>206</sup>

On 26 August followed the Bourbonnois Regiment. The comte de Lauberdier, one of Rochambeau's aides-de-camp, wrote a very typical entry about the crossing at Lower Susquehanna Ferry into his journal. "The Bourbonnais Division marched to the Susquehanna ferry which is a mile wide at this place."<sup>207</sup> Unlike in September 1781, none of the units were forced to make the detour via Bald Friar's Ford. Lauberdier explained the reasons thus: "Despite that," i.e., that the river was one mile wide, "they crossed entirely on the same day because of the precautions that Mr. de Béville had taken to bring all the flat boats from Baltimore for the baggage and artillery. We cannot imagine the untiring attention that a staff officers in charge of these types of embarkations must devote to diminish the frequent risks and to prevent accidents." French quartermaster had obviously learned from their experiences the previous year and prepared for the crossing of the Susquehanna. The "untiring attention" mentioned by Lauberdier extended over weeks, beginning on 11 July, when the governing Council of Maryland informed the Chevalier d'Annemours, Consul General of France to the United States as well as to the State of Maryland from 1779-1793, "no Mode occurs to us, of making suitable Accommodation for the Officers of his most Christian Majesty's Army, while they remain in Baltimore Town, so proper as the one you

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<sup>206</sup> The details concerning the crossing of the Susquehanna are taken from the unpublished "Suite du Journal des Campagnes 1780, 1781, 1782, dans l'Amérique septentrionale" Manuscript Collections C0938 no. 469, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.

The journal begins with the departure of the Bourbonnois Regiment from Williamsburg on 1 July 1782 and ends with the encampment at Crompond, i.e., Yorktown Heights, in Westchester County, New York, on 20 September 1782. The sections covering the time prior to 1 July 1782 and from 20 September to the departure of French forces from Boston on 25 December 1782 have not been found.

<sup>207</sup> Desmarais, *Lauberdier*, pp. 222/23.

have suggested, of employing a Person to procure Houses or Rooms for them; and we have therefore appointed Mr Archibald Colder, a Gentleman who we trust will make such Provision as will be most agreeable to them.”<sup>208</sup>

A week later, on 18 July, Dumas took a letter from Chastellux to the governor in Annapolis asking for instructions concerning the march of French forces across the state. The next day Dumas returned to Chastellux in Bladensburg with Governor Thomas Sim Lee’s response. Chastellux had asked that just as in Virginia he would have the power to lodge headquarters anywhere and to impress boats to cross the rivers.<sup>209</sup> To assist Chastellux in his tasks, Lee had appointed Captain Archibald Golder of Annapolis “to provide Quarters for the French Army, on their March through, and during their Stay in this State and to procure Waggon, Carts, Teams and Drivers, Vessels and hands for the Carriage and Transportation of their Baggage through the State.”<sup>210</sup> Golder’s instructions of 18 July were very precise:

“We have appointed you to provide Quarters for the French Army on their March through, and during their Stay in this State, and to procure Waggon, Carts, Teams and Drivers, Vessels and Hands, for the Carriage and Transportation of their Baggage through the State. You are to endeavour to rent proper and suitable Houses and Rooms for such Officers and Persons as the Commanding Officer shall direct, and in Case the Owners of the said Houses and Rooms will not consent to rent them for a liberal Price, you must pursue the Directions of the Act for quartering Soldiers, a Copy of which you have enclosed; and if Carriages, Teams and Drivers, Vessels and Hands cannot be procured on Hire; We do hereby give you full and ample Power and Authority to impress the same, and do direct you to give the Owners of the said Carriages and Vessels, Certificates expressing the Time they were employed in such Service, which shall be adjusted and paid, you will keep an Account of the Certificates you issue and make a Return of them to this Board. You must immediately proceed to the French Army, and inform the Commanding Officer of your Appointment and Powers; for these Services we will allow you a genteel Compensation.”<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> *Archives of Maryland* vol. 48, p. 218. His time in Baltimore is covered in *Memoirs by Charles François Adrien Le Paulmier le Chevalier D’Annemours* (Clark County Historical Association: Institute for Regional Studies, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark., 1994)

<sup>209</sup> This background is paraphrased in the “Suite du Journal.”

<sup>210</sup> *Archives of Maryland* vol. 48, p. 217.

<sup>211</sup> *Archives of Maryland* vol. 48, pp. 218/19. Golder’s powers are dated 18 August, suggesting that Lee’s information to the French consul was premature. There is slightly different French version/translation in the “Suite du Journal”. Archibald Golder had been promoted to captain in the Extra Regiment of the Maryland Line 1 September 1780, became Paymaster on 18 October 1780 and served as Quartermaster from 18 July 1780 until 11 November 1782. He died in 1807. A brief biography is <https://hithermann.wordpress.com/2017/06/07/a-person-of-trust-the-story-of-archibald-golder/> His name is variably spelled as Golder and Colder.

The powers Lee had granted Golder were crucial for the smooth travers of French forces across Maryland. How they operated during the crossing of the Susquehanna is described in detail in the manuscript journal by an unidentified French supply officer. The author was most likely de Béville, *quartier-maitre General* of Rochambeau's army, writing about himself in the Third Person Singular. Since this unique source provides information found nowhere else it deserves to be quoted in detail.

For 19 August the journal reads: "M de Béville, in consequence of orders by M le comte de Rochambeau, placed an embargo onto the port and had impressed the ferries, sloops, the people and other vessels which he needed to cross the Susquehana. By noon he already had more than half of the boats assembled [in port]." This would have been impossible without the cooperation of Golder and the authority granted him by Governor Lee.

"Three three-mast vessels entered the port charged with our heavy artillery. The troops that were on board rejoined their units at camp. The three artillery companies and the pioneers (= *mineurs*) ordered to occupy the barracks at Whetstone Point did not debark but went to sleep on board of their ships. The *Romulus* and the *Guadeloupe* spent the day to lighten in order to be able to cross the bar which is at the entrance of the Patapsco.<sup>212</sup>

The 20<sup>th</sup> [of August] [...] M de Béville saw depart in the evening the sloops and ferries destined for the passage across the Susquehanna. It carried a detachment of 30 men of the Saintonge Regiment commanded by an officer. [...]

The 21<sup>st</sup> [of August] [...] M Golder departed in the morning of the same day for Lower Ferry on the Susquehanna to impress the boats that might be found there. [...]

M Dumas left in the afternoon to go and set up as quickly as possible at the ferry of the Susquehanna to put everything in order for the passage of the army as soon as the ferries will have pulled up.

The 22<sup>nd</sup> [of August] The road which the troops have to take to traverse the city of Baltimore is marked and the necessary lines of communications are opened."

Riding ahead of the troops, "M de Béville" together with his two sons, departed Baltimore at daybreak of 23 July with Lauzun's Legion, laid out the camp for the Bourbonnois regiment

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<sup>212</sup> These were the units that had been quartered temporarily at West Point, Virginia. They spent the winter of 1782/83 in Baltimore before sailing back to France in 1783. A final transport of 85 French officers and soldiers under Captain François Xavier Christophe baron de Hell of Lauzun's Legion sailed from Baltimore on the *Pintade* on 5 October 1783 and entered Brest on 10 November 1783.

The embarkation list is in Archives Nationales, Paris, Marine B/4/185.

at White Marsh and spent the night at the home of “Madam Oignon” on the left/east bank of the Gun Powder River “which is passed on a good wooden bridge.”<sup>213</sup> On 24 July he “continued his route for Lower Ferry, where he arrived toward evening. He found the small flotilla that had departed from Baltimore had arrived [after a three days’ journey] in the evening of the previous day, which caused him great joy. He established himself in the small tavern that is at the ferry on the right [west] side of the Susquehanna river. M Dumas had already crossed during the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> only with the resources of the Susquehanna ferry which consisted of three sail boats, each of which could carry six or eight horses. The intendant and his equipage, the [illeg.] cart, their vehicles and baggage, M de Mars with the vehicles of the hospital, M Dann with the wagons of foodstuffs, and 20 other wagons and vehicles also crossed over on the 23<sup>rd</sup> after the arrival of M de Béville at the ferry. [...]”

“M de Berthier, who conducted the Volontaires-Etrangers de Lauzun, having arrived in the evening at the ferry, M de Béville had him cross immediately to the other side of the river to reconnoitre the campsite which it [Lauzun’s Legion] would occupy the next day and charged him with the debarkation [of Lauzun’s Legion planned for] the next day.

The 25<sup>th</sup> [of July] The wagons of the Volontaires Etrangers de Lauzun arrived at the ferry at daybreak where they were carried across immediately, there was the most beautiful weather in the world without the least wind, as soon as the infantry arrived it was also ferried across and thereafter the hussars, for whom the crossing of the wagons was interrupted. At 11 a.m. the whole corps was in its assigned camp one mile beyond the ferry. In the afternoon 40 wagons with foodstuffs and other items crossed over. [...]

The 26<sup>th</sup> [of July] At daybreak M de Béville crossed his equipage to the left [east] bank of the Susquehanna, the Volontaires Etrangers de Lauzun rested in their camp on the left [east] bank of the river. The equipage of M le comte de Rochambeau and that of M le chevalier de Chastellux had no sooner arrived at the ferry that they were ferried across. M de Béville crossed the ferry with M Collot to go with him to reconnoitre the camp which the Regiment Bourbonnois was to occupy one mile beyond the ferry on the left of the grand road to Head of Elk. [...]

M le comte de Rochambeau crossed the river after having seen the Regiment Bourbonnois cross. It was windy all morning which hindered the passage, but [the wind] having stopped

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<sup>213</sup> Hannah Onion was the widow of Zacheus Barret Onion. Onion was a member of the Committee of Observation of Baltimore County. He was commissioned captain in the Gunpowder Battalion of Militia on 25 June 1776. *Archives of Maryland* vol. 11, p. 144. Onion had died in 1781. Onion’s home called “Heathcote’s Cottage” stood on Belair Road. See <https://www.kingsville-md.us/history/>. See also William B. Marye, “Place Names of Baltimore and Harford Counties” *Maryland Historical Magazine* vol. 53 no. 3 (1958), pp. 238-252, pp. 238-240.

around noon the crossing recommenced anew after one had taken the precaution in advance to ferry the tents of the Bourbonnois to the right [west] bank.<sup>214</sup> All the wagons of that division having crossed by 9 in the evening one began crossing the artillery at 11 by the light of the moon and at 3 in the morning it was in its camp. [...]"

Baron Ludwig von Closen, a captain in the Royal Deux-Ponts Regiment and aide-de-camp to Rochambeau, rode with the general rather than with his regiment. He recorded that "On the 26<sup>th</sup>, we arrived, after marching 11 miles, in *Lower Ferry* (the lowest ferry) on the Susquehanna; the troops, as well as the artillery and wagons, crossed there rather quickly. For this purpose, some boats for the crossing and some *skows* had been sent on ahead from Baltimore."<sup>215</sup> His account confirms that the campaign artillery was still with the regiments.

"The 27<sup>th</sup> [of August] M de Béville went to the ferry at daybreak whence began, everything having ben found in good order, the crossing of the wagons with the foodstuffs of the Third Division."

The Royal Deux-Ponts formed part of the Third Division, and Closen recorded that "On the 27<sup>th</sup> we saw the Royal Deux-Ponts arriving; the winds and tide were more favorable to it than to the Bourbonnais. [...] The camp was established 1 ½ miles beyond the river, which might be one-half mile wide there. The artillery in our division crossed only at midnight, since the tide was too strong towards evening."<sup>216</sup>

Having crossed himself, Béville on 27 August rode on to Head of Elk to lay out the camp for the Second Division, which had a day of rest at Perryville while Lauzun's Legion departed from the Lower Susquehanna Ferry and marched to Head of Elk. This sequence repeated itself over the next few days with Béville riding ahead of the Bourbonnois Regiment by two days until he reached Philadelphia on 29 August. That same day the Saintonge Regiment crossed the Susquehanna and encamped next to the Fourth Division. Lauzun's Legion rode into Philadelphia around 10:00 a.m. on 30 August. When the Saintonge Regiment broke camp in the morning of 31 August, more than one week after Dumas had crossed the vanguard of the French army on 23 August, one of the most eventful weeks in the history of the Lower Susquehanna Ferry was finally over.

There are three French maps that show the crossing of the Susquehanna and the French campsites in August 1782.

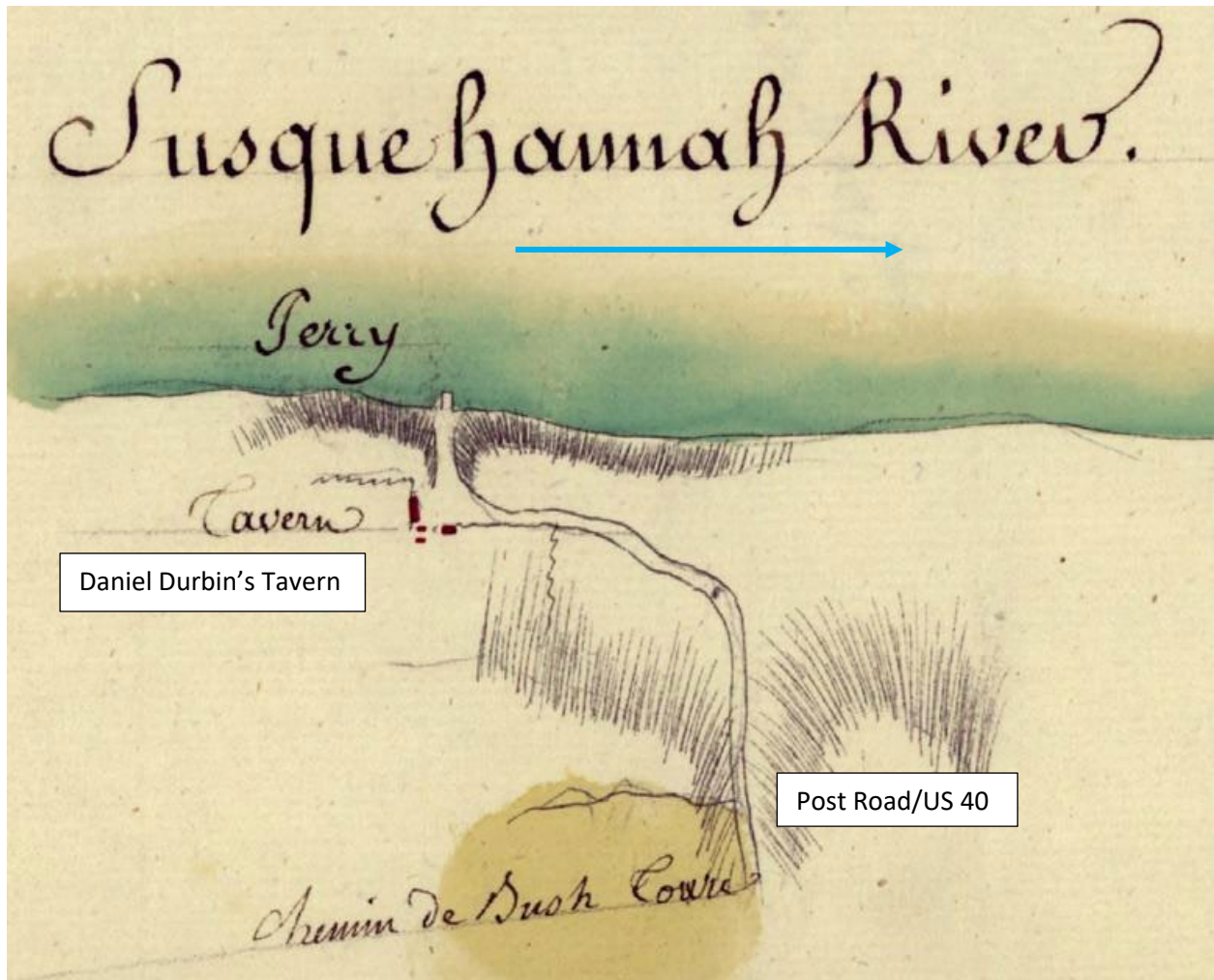
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<sup>214</sup> The original reads *à la rive droite* – to the right bank, though it should read: to the left/east bank.

<sup>215</sup> Acomb, *Closen*, p. 227.

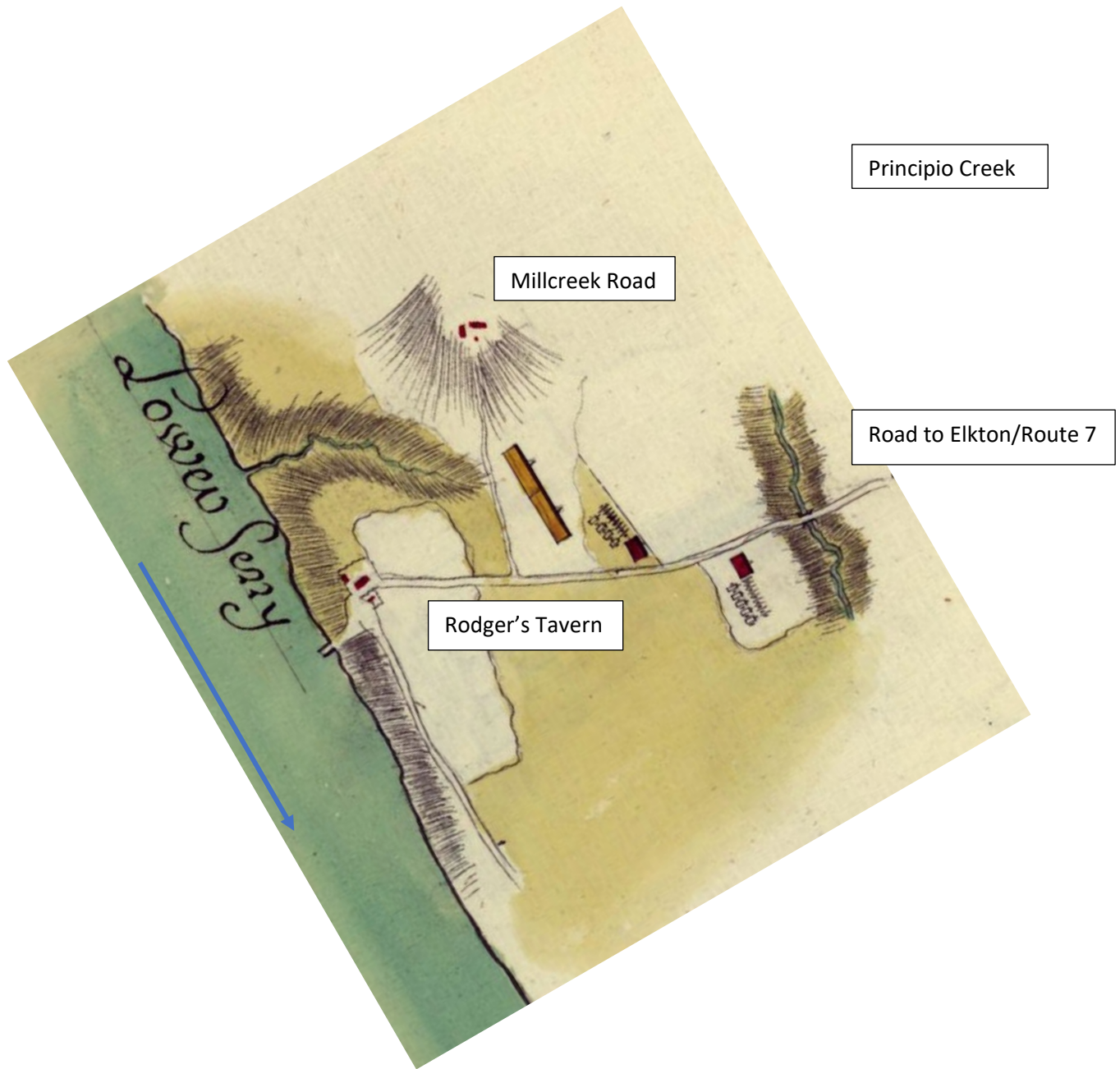
<sup>216</sup> Acomb, *Closen*, p. 228.





Detail of "23d Camp at Lower Ferry". (26ff August 1782)  
Rochambeau Map Collection. Library of Congress.

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3701sm.gar00001/?sp=24>



Detail of "23d Camp at Lower Ferry". (26ff August 1782) Rochambeau Map Collection. Library of Congress.

"The camp was established 1 ½ miles beyond the river". It is about 1.5 miles from Rodgers Tavern to Millcreek Road and the infantry campsite just beyond; one artillery detachment is encamped in the vicinity of Principio United Methodist Church, the other just beyond Principio Station Road.

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3701sm.gar00001/?sp=24>



The two yellow quadrangles indicate two regiments of infantry. The red squares indicate the regimental artillery/campaign artillery of the two regiments. There are two regiments shown here since they had a rest day following the crossing of the Susquehanna. Lauzun's Legion is not shown even though it lay encamped here on 26 August 1782.

Detail of Camp à Lower ferry, Le 26 Aoust, 12 miles de Bush Town. Le 27 Séjour.  
Louis-Alexandre Berthier Collection, C0022, Manuscripts Division, Department of Special Collections, Princeton University Library  
[https://findingaids.princeton.edu/catalog/C0022\\_c0125](https://findingaids.princeton.edu/catalog/C0022_c0125)



The map shows two regiments of infantry as well as the artillery.

It is unknown what the faded light yellow rectangles indicate.

It is about 1.5 miles from Rodgers Tavern to Millcreek Road<sup>217</sup>

<https://hdl.huntington.org/digital/collection/p15150coll7/id/29829>

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<sup>217</sup> *Journals and records of the campaigns of Rochambeau's army, 1781-1782* mssHM 621, Huntington Digital Library, Huntington, California.

Officers who were not involved in the crossing, primarily aides de camp to Rochambeau, to Chastellux or to the baron Vioménil, had time to look around and recorded their impressions in their journals and diaries. The comte de Lauberdière “saw nothing remarkable in the area around the ferry except for the boatman’s daughter who has a very pretty appearance, accompanied by the graces, politeness and naïvité which we can expect of a 15-year-old, but which we cannot expect to encounter, given the rusticity which is the common state of sailors and boatmen.” Neither Lauberdière nor Closen provide the name of the young girl, who most likely was Mary McCaskey.

On 25 June 1782, the Cecil County Court records a "license granted to Alexander McCaskey to keep Tavern at Susq. Lower Ferry. Samuel Thomas, Timothy [illegible] [illegible] 6000 lb. Tobacco". It also granted him a separate license to keep a ferry at same location.<sup>218</sup> Since French forces crossed the Susquehanna in September, Rodgers was no longer running the ferry. Alexander McCaskey (c. 1740 – 1798) was married to Hannah Mifflin (1751-1796); their daughter Mary was born in 1768, which would make her 14 in 1782.<sup>219</sup>

Baron Ludwig von Closen, a captain in the Royal Deux-Ponts Regiment and also an aide-de-camp to Rochambeau, recorded his arrival at the ferry on 26 August. “Before crossing the river, we had an excellent lunch at the house of the proprietor of the ferry, where we saw one of the pretty girls of the countryside (referred to thereafter in our conversation as *Miss Susquehanna*). [...] There is nothing remarkable about the view from the ferry; it is only rural on the right [west] bank, which is better cultivated than the left [east bank]. There are several houses scattered along the river, but not one of them is attractive. In the middle of the Susquehanna, 1600 feet above the ferry, there is an island known as Watson’s Island after the owner, who resides there. It is only two miles in circumference but is extremely well cultivated; its banks are rather steep and keep the river from overflowing it. The island has the reputation of being the healthiest place in the country.”<sup>220</sup>

Coming from Head of Elk, the Second Division of French forces camped on 29 August near Newport and was followed by the Third Division on 30 August. Without stopping again in Delaware, French forces crossed over into Pennsylvania from 29 August to 3 September 1781. From there they marched on to a month-long encampment at Crompond, today’s Yorktown Heights. On 6 December, French forces marched into Boston. In the morning of Christmas Day, the French fleet raised anchor for the West Indies, where news of the signing

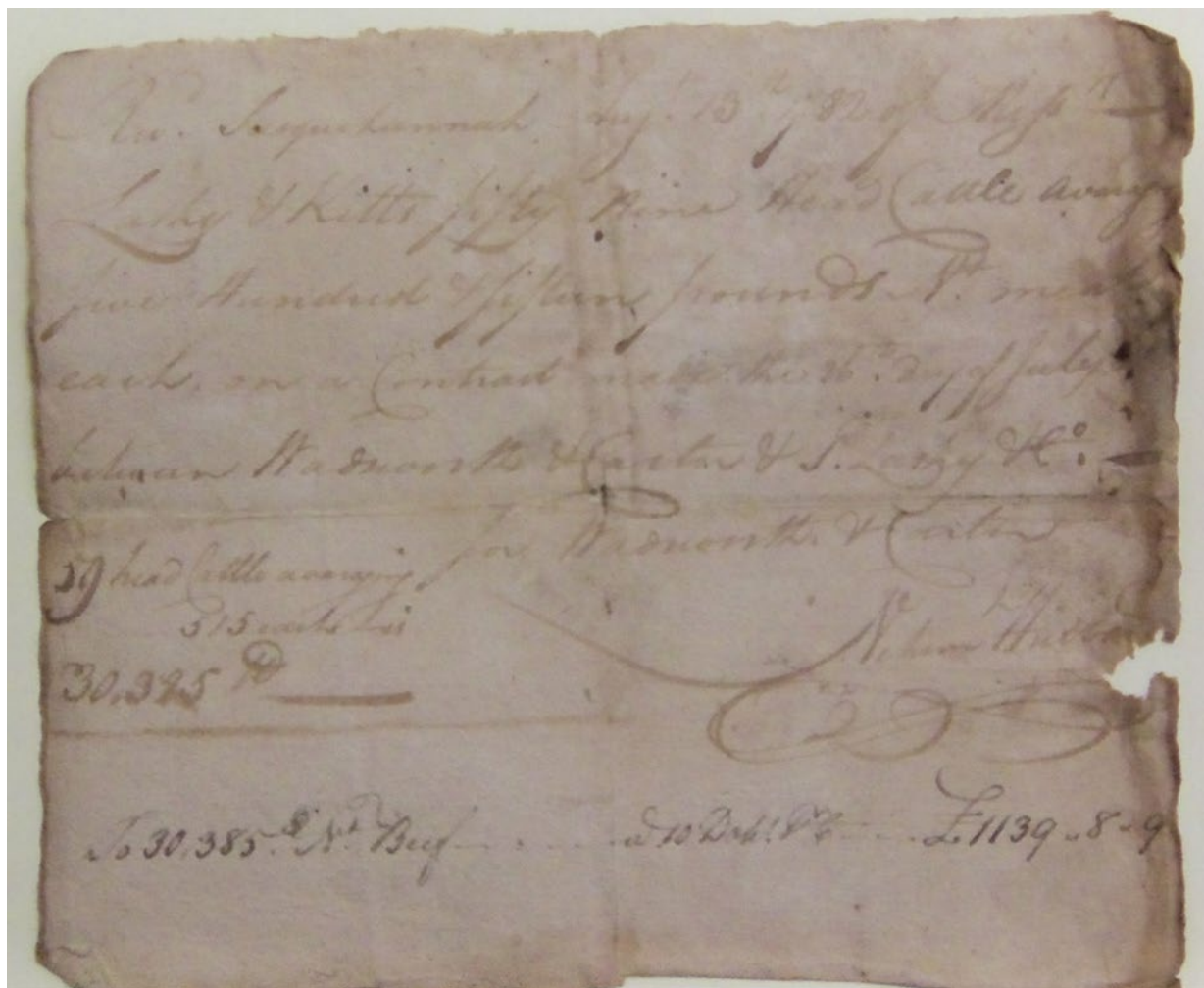
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<sup>218</sup> Cecil County Court Minutes, 1777-1784, p. 110. Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, call No. MSA C635-2. Research Courtesy Jennifer Pitts.

<sup>219</sup> History of Baltimore City & County, Necrology: Death: July 21, 1822; "Aged 56 years, wife of Dr. John Coulter." That would give her year of birth as 1766, her mother would have been only 15 years old. [https://www.myheritage.com/names/alexander\\_mccaskey](https://www.myheritage.com/names/alexander_mccaskey)

<sup>220</sup> Acomb, *Closen*, p. 228.

of the Preliminaries of Peace on 30 November 1782 reached the troops in mid-February 1783. In mid-April the troops sailed back to France, where they arrived in late June.<sup>221</sup>



Just like in September 1781, French forces and their gold and silver were welcome guests in August 1782 as well.<sup>222</sup>

<sup>221</sup> See my *The Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Trail in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1781 - 1783. An Historical and Architectural Survey*. (Boston: Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association of Massachusetts, 2017).

It is available on-line at <https://w3r-us.org/history-by-state/>

<sup>222</sup> Additional receipts for supplies provided by farmers living on either side of the Susquehanna are in Box 44, Folder August -10 September 1782 and Folder 11-30 September 1782 in the Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers in the Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Connecticut.

## 7.2 Rochambeau's Farewell Journey, January 1783

Though Rochambeau had accompanied his forces from their encampment at Crompond through Connecticut to Rhode Island, he would not accompany them to the Caribbean but return to France instead. While quartered in Providence the *comte* de Lauberdière on 1 December 1782, wrote in his journal, "we embraced our friends who were about to betake themselves where their desires called them and M de Rochambeau, his son, the *comte* de Vauban, and I mounted our horses to betake ourselves to Philadelphia. The Chevalier de Chatellux and his aides de camp, M. de Béville and a number of officers of the staff of the army. M de Choisy etc took the same route on different days with the same intention."<sup>223</sup> On the evening of 12 December 1782, Rochambeau had dinner with French ambassador de la Luzerne in Philadelphia.

Taking the familiar route via Chester in the morning of 2 January, Rochambeau spent the nights of 2/3 January, in Wilmington, 3/4 January in Christiana, and 4/5 January Head of Elk. In the morning of 5 January 1783, he crossed the Susquehanna at Lower Ferry, rode into Baltimore, and departed from Fell's Point on the *Romulus* for Annapolis the same day. On 8 January 1783, Rochambeau, Chastellux, Choisy, and Béville, part of a group of 17 officers in all, embarked on the frigate *Emeraude*. Aware of British vessels lying in wait on the ocean, the frigate, using a strong north-easterly wind, after a six-day wait, sailed out of the bay about two hours before nightfall on 14 January 1783 with British frigates in hot pursuit.<sup>224</sup> After a very fast crossing the vessel arrived at Saint-Nazaire on 10 February 1783.

Rochambeau never returned to the United States, but Washington stop at Rodgers Tavern a few more times, e.g., on his way from Mount Vernon to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia he crossed the Susquehanna in May 1787. He recorded in his diary:

"Friday 11th. Set off before breakfast. Rid 12 miles to Skirretts for it. Baited there and proceeded without halting (weather threatening) to the Ferry at Havre de gras where I dined but could not cross the wind being turbulent & squally. Lodged here.

Saturday. 12th. With difficulty (on acct of the Wind) crossed the Susquehanna. Breakfasted at the Ferry house, on the East side – Dined at the head of Elk (Hollingsworths Tavern)."<sup>225</sup>

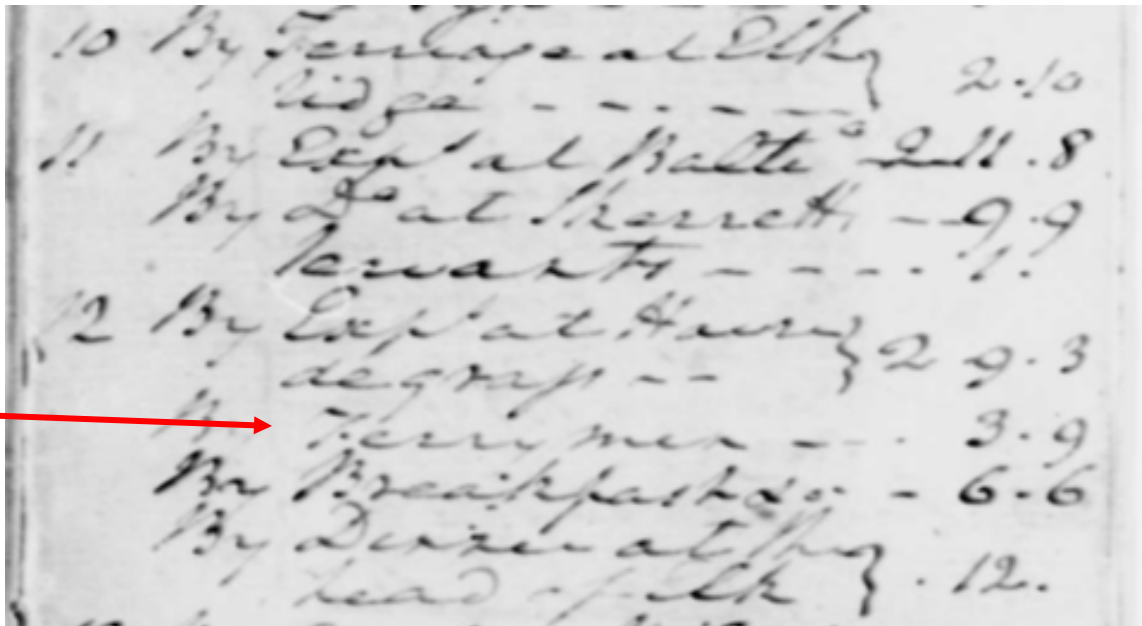
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<sup>223</sup> Desmarais, *Lauberdière*, p. 252.

<sup>224</sup> "Journal de notre navigation" Rochambeau Papers, Library of Congress, volume 13.

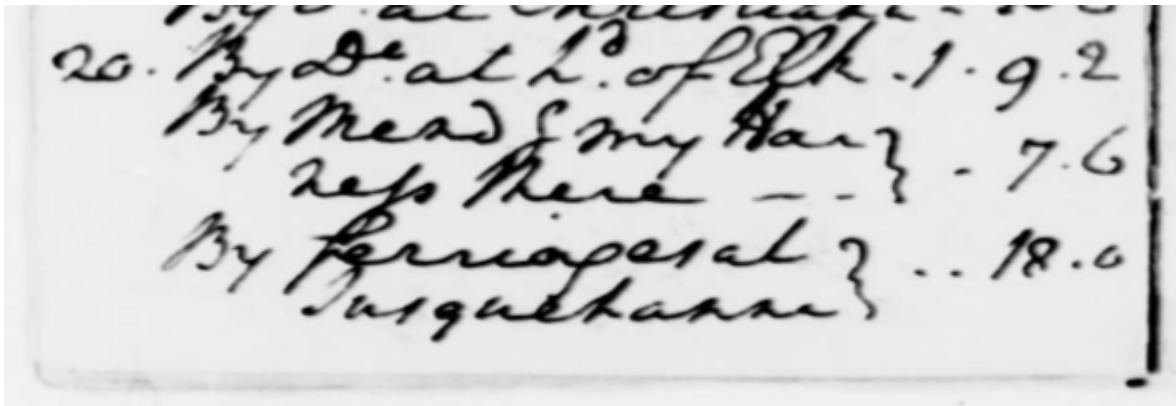
<sup>225</sup> *The Diaries of George Washington* vol. V July 1786-December 1789. Donald Jackson and Dorothy Twohig, eds., (University of Virginia, Charlottesville 1979), p. 186.

His expense account for 12 May 1787, shows 3/ 9d for the ferrymen and 6/ 6d for breakfast, most likely at Rodgers Tavern.<sup>226</sup>



On the way home from Philadelphia in September, Washington's diary reads

"Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup>. Sett off after an early breakfast. Crossed the Susquehanna and dined in Havre de gras at the House of one Rodgers and lodged at Skirretts Tavern 12 miles short of Baltimore."<sup>227</sup>

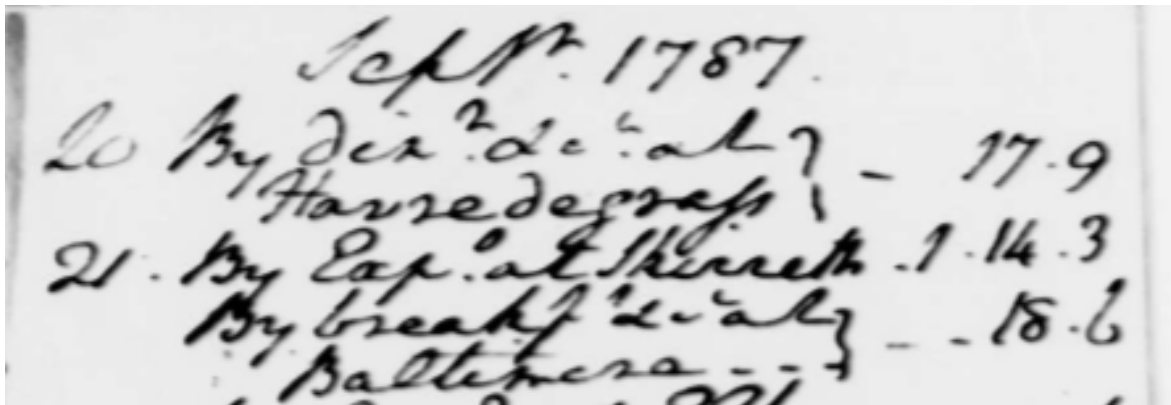


<sup>226</sup> Image 2 of George Washington Papers, Series 5, Financial Papers: Pocket Book of Daily Expenses, Constitutional Convention, 1787

[https://www.loc.gov/resource/mgw5.117\\_1036\\_1051/?sp=2&st=image](https://www.loc.gov/resource/mgw5.117_1036_1051/?sp=2&st=image)

<sup>227</sup> *The Diaries of George Washington* vol. V, July 1786-December 1789. Donald Jackson and Dorothy Twohig, eds., (University of Virginia, Charlottesville 1979), p. 186.





Ferry expenses on 20 September 1787 ran to 18/, dinner to 17/9d.<sup>228</sup>

On 4 February 1789, the Electors for the first President of the United States cast their votes, but it was only on 6 April that the votes were counted. George Washington received the news that he had been elected on 15 April. The next day, 16 April 1789, he set out for New York City. The night of 16/17 April was spent at Spurrier's Tavern, some twelve miles south of Baltimore. Washington arrived in Baltimore on 17 April and departed again early on Saturday morning, 18 April. It is unknown where he spent the night of 18/19 April, but it was probably in the neighborhood of Havre-de-Grace. He reached Wilmington late in the evening on Sunday, 19 April. Just after noon on April 20, Washington crossed on Gray's Ferry into Philadelphia.

On Thursday, April 30, 1789, Washington was sworn in as the First President of the United States nearly two months after the first four-year term of George Washington had begun. The American Revolution, which had begun fifteen years earlier on 5 September 1774 with the first meeting of the First Continental Congress to coordinate resistance to Britain, was over.

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<sup>228</sup> Images 13 and 14 of George Washington Papers, Series 5, Financial Papers: Pocket Book of Daily Expenses, Constitutional Convention, 1787.

[https://www.loc.gov/resource/mgw5.117\\_1036\\_1051/?sp=14](https://www.loc.gov/resource/mgw5.117_1036_1051/?sp=14)

No expense accounts or diary for Washington's travels to New York for the swearing-in ceremony as president are known to exist.

## 8. Conclusion

This report is titled: *What was he really up to? An Inquiry into the Revolutionary War activities of John Rodgers of Rodger's Tavern*. The answer to the question is: he was up to many things. The eight years from late 1774 until late summer of 1782, when the last French forces had crossed the Susquehanna on their way north, were busy years for Rodgers, no matter which side of the river he lived on.

In the summer of 1774, political unrest swept across the British colonies on America's Eastern seaboard. The unrest did not leave Maryland and Harford County untouched. Living in Lower Susquehanna Ferry, which would become Havre de Grace in 1782, 46-year-old John Rodgers did not stand aside for long. We do not know why he chose the side of the supporters of Independence, maybe his Scottish background and ethnicity influenced the decision. We do not know when, why or if he immigrated to what would become the United States or if he was born here. Nor do we know, if he was an immigrant, whether he came by himself or as part of a family unit. As an 18-year-old he certainly would have been old enough to either remember the Battle of Culloden of 16 April 1746 or have heard about it from his parents or family members no matter where he had lived in 1746. Married to Elizabeth Reynolds on 14 January 1764, he had seven children, Thomas (\*c.1763), Alexander (\*c.1765), a daughter Margaret born in the late 1760's, the exact year not yet known, a daughter named Anna (\*1769) and a son named John (\*1771). A third daughter Rebecca was born in May 1781, another son named George Washington Rodgers was born in February 1787.

Rodgers received license for a tavern on the right bank of the Susquehanna in Harford County in August 1774, which was renewed in August 1775. Rodgers' name does not appear among the early leaders of the opposition against Great Britain. He was not a Paca, a Rumsey, a Hall or a Garrett, did not belong to the Great Families of Maryland who were about to fill the ranks of the Committee of Safety, to man the revolutionary government in Annapolis. He was not even a member of the Committee of Observation that constituted itself in Harford County during the winter of 1774-75. As the year 1775 unfolded, however, Rodgers' name appears with ever greater frequency in the historical record as a vocal and active supporter of American Independence. In December 1774, the Provincial Congress in Annapolis "resolved that the freeholders and others and freemen from fifteen to sixty years of age should form themselves into companies of sixty eight men, to choose a captain, two lieutenants, an ensign, four sergeants, four corporals and a drummer for each company." We do not know when Rodgers joined this revolutionary militia, whether he was among the men recruiting their own companies, or whether a group of men gathered in his tavern trusted him enough to elected Rodgers their captain. The historical record is silent, but we know that when the companies raised in Harford County were organized into battalions in September 1775, John Rodgers was captain of Company No. 5 in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of Militia commanded

by Colonel Aquila Hall. A postscript reads "The company is young but enrolling daily." Maybe the company formed in response to a Council of Safety order of 14 August 1775, that all able-bodied freemen between 16 and 50 who were not Minutemen enroll in the militia?

A few days later, on 21 September 1775, Rodgers appears for the first time in the record of the Harford County Committee of Observation when the Committee selected James Horner, John Rumsey, Samuel Howell and John Rogers to "carry the association framed and resolved upon by the last Convention to all freemen resident in the said County of Harford, and require their subscription to the same, and to return the same to the Committee, and also to return the names of those that do not on Application or within 10 days after sign the same, to the said Committee to be by them transmitted to the next Convention." The *association* referred to was the "Association of the Freemen of Maryland" of 26 July 1775, which read in part that "We, therefore, inhabitants of the Province of Maryland, firmly persuaded that it is necessary and justifiable to repel force by force, do approve of the opposition by arms to the British Troops employed to enforce obedience to the late acts and statutes of the British Parliament, for raising a revenue in America." Military obligations and political responsibilities, commanding troops and enforcement of revolutionary ideology, went hand in hand in Revolutionary America. Well before the Declaration of Independence of 4 July 1776, Captain John Rodgers had linked his fate with that of the American Revolution.

By the summer of 1775 if not earlier, Rodgers also leased the Lower Susquehanna Ferry on the Harford County side of the river, but it is unknown from whom he leased the ferry. Ferry fees together with the income from the tavern provided a sound economic base for the immigrant from Scotland and his family. Rodgers never strayed far from that base. Volunteers from the Flying Camp and Minutemen marched from Harford County to support General George Washington's Main Army during its retreat from New York in the summer of 1776 and during the dark days of the winter of 1776-77. Rodgers was not among them. When the war came to the shores of Harford and Cecil Counties in August 1777, Captain John Rodgers, innkeeper in Harford County, and his company, were called out to assist in the defense against British forces under Sir William Howe. Aaron Mc Comas deposed in his pension application "That he entered the service of the United States in the month of October in the year 1777 as a private in the company commanded by Captain John Rodgers which company was attached or belonged to the Battallion or Regiment commanded by Col Francis Holland." Rodgers and his company were doing duty as far away as Newcastle County in Delaware, where Mc Comas "was verbally discharged from first tour by Captain John Rogers."

By that time it was late May 1778, and his military career was reaching its end. Rodgers kept his company and rank during a reorganization of the Maryland and Harford County militia in April 1778, but when he moved across the river into Cecil County sometime during the summer of that year (?), his commission became dormant. In June 1778, Harford County

paid off the last debts owed to Captain John Rodgers. His name is not found on the roster of the 30<sup>th</sup> or Susquehanna Battalion in Cecil County compiled on 9 September 1778. Nor is his name to be found anywhere in Cecil County militia records. While in Harford County, Rodgers had successfully carried out his political obligations to suppress dissent and if necessary disarm opponents. That role too came to an end once Rodgers moved to Cecil County. No evidence of such activity has been found.

From August 1779 until the summer of 1782, Rodgers focused on economic activity as landlord of Rodgers Tavern in Cecil County and leaseholder of the Lower Susquehanna Ferry. His first tavern license in Cecil was granted on 18 August 1779 and renewed in October 1780. During the pivotal year of 1781 when allied armies moved to Yorktown he held the lease to the tavern and the ferry, and while American forces under the marquis de Lafayette probably paid him in Loan Certificates, Rochambeau's French forces paid in gold and silver. Rodgers stood much to gain. By June 1782, he no longer held those licenses in Cecil County, and for the next few years the historical record for Rodgers' activities is incomplete. It is only in June 1791 that Rodgers appears in the Cecil County Court Minutes as holder of a license for the tavern and ferry at the Susquehanna Lower Ferry. Rodgers apparently had moved across the river again since on his way home from the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, George Washington on 20 September 1787 "Crossed the Susquehanna and dined in Havre de gras at the House of one Rodgers."

When John Rodgers died on 10 April 1794 and was buried in White Clay Creek Cemetery in New Castle County, Delaware, the Scottish immigrant had done well for himself. A man of the first hour, he stood high enough in the esteem of his fellow revolutionaries to elect him as their captain. Scanty as the record is, he fulfilled his duties from providing food and supplies to leading them to wherever they were sent, and if he called them to arms, he also discharged them as was his duty. He had acquired considerable amount of property and the census of 1790 showed him owning seven slaves as well.

That leaves the question of his military rank. Was he a Colonel? The answer is: No. There is no evidence that Rodgers ever reached a rank higher than Captain in the militia of Harford County. With the war over and won in 1783, Marylanders no longer saw a need for a militia. There was no internal enemy and no Western frontier. With the start of the first session of the Maryland Assembly on 7 November 1785 the Militia Act of 1774 expired and was not renewed. For the first time since 1733, Maryland did not have a militia established by law. John Kenneth Rowland argues that by the time Rodgers died in 1794, some Marylanders had "formed volunteer companies since the end of the Revolution, but they had remained social

clubs for old soldiers.”<sup>229</sup> Did Rodgers join one of those “social clubs” where his fellows veterans started to call him “colonel” and he began to use it himself? There is no historical evidence for such a conjecture, but we know that on 18 May 1786, “Col. John Rodgers of Harford County” received land in Cecil County.<sup>230</sup> A few years later on 18 January 1791, John Fergus, a shopkeeper in Cecil County named “Col. Rodgers and Andrew Cochran” his executors in his verbal will. When the will was recorded on 8 March 1791, John Rodgers and Elizabeth Rodgers were two of the witnesses.<sup>231</sup> In October 1791, John Rodgers is identified as a “Gentleman” in Cecil County.<sup>232</sup> Lastly, there is a deed of 25 October 1793 from “Col. John Rodgers of Cecil County to William Pinkney of Annapolis.”<sup>233</sup>

It was right around that time that Maryland began to discuss the need for a militia force in the context of Britain’s war with France that started in February 1793. With French ships carrying refugees from the West Indies reaching the United States, and privateers sailing from and into American ports, Maryland, and the United States, despite Washington’s neutrality proclamation of 22 April 1793, feared being pulled into the war. On 30 July 1793, John Strieker, a prominent Baltimore merchant, formed the *Baltimore Independent Company*, a volunteer military company which he placed at the disposal of the governor for the enforcement of neutrality in Maryland. The Maryland legislature, which had refused to pass a militia law in December 1792, now passed a militia bill on 28 December 1793. It enrolled every able-bodied white male citizen between 18-45 years of age into the militia. Each man had to provide his own arms and equipment; only religious ministers were exempted from service. Since just like in the old Continental Army each states had to meet a quota to a national defense force renamed the United States Army in 1796, a militiaman could voluntarily enroll in a company that counted toward that quota. By the time the first postwar Maryland militia law went into effect on 20 June 1794, Captain John Rodgers was dead. And for more than two centuries lived on as Colonel John Rodgers, though even some of his staunchest supporters seem to have been suspicious of the colonelcy. Charles Oscar Paullin, for example, wrote in his *Commodore John Rodgers* that “In 1778, he received from the governor and council of Maryland a commission of captain of militia. Whether he was promoted to a higher rank is not known. In the latter part of his life he was always called Colonel John Rodgers.”<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> John Kenneth Rowland, *Crisis and Response: The Creation of Maryland’s Militia, 1793-1794*. MA Thesis, College of William and Mary 1968, p. 2.

<sup>230</sup> Harford County Circuit Court (Certificates, Unpatented, HA) 1787/05/09. MSA S1222-421,

<sup>231</sup> Cecil County, Maryland Wills 1777-1810. Briefly abstracted by John W. McCoy (2010)

<https://sites.rootsweb.com/~chevaud/dutoit/images/cecilwil.pdf>

<sup>232</sup> Harford County Court, Land Records JLG I, pp. 4-9, MSA CE113-9. Research Courtesy of Jennifer Pitts.

<sup>233</sup> Harford County Court, Land Records JLG I, p. 495, MSA CE113-9. Research Courtesy of Jennifer Pitts.

<sup>234</sup> Paullin, *Commodore John Rodgers*, p. 17.

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