



The Bulletin

The monthly newsletter of The National Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association

MARCH 2022

On the Web: www.w3r-us.org

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Grand Reconnaissance Helped Decide Allies' Next Move

George Washington hoped his new French allies would help him recapture New York City and avenge earlier defeats but three crucial days in July 1781 helped convince him that prospects for a seminal victory over the British were better in Virginia.

That conclusion followed a reconnaissance in force, better known as the Grand Reconnaissance or Le Grande Reconnaissance, in which Washington's forces and troops commanded by General Rochambeau observed and probed British defensive positions north of the city in an effort to determine the strength of their opponent.

Dr. Iris de Rode, author, lecturer, scholar and historian of the Washington-Rochambeau Trail, reviewed the events of July 21-23, 1781, in a detailed, fast-paced lecture at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, NY, March 16, 2022. The Roman Catholic seminary sits atop Valentine Hill, one of many key sites in the reconnaissance, which stretched across southern Westchester County and what is now the north Bronx from the Hudson River to Long Island Sound. The evenly divided hybrid presentation attracted about 200 people and was a highlight of a weeklong visit from France to Trail sites in New York by Dr. de Rode. (For more information about her trip, please see the State Report, Page 13.

Washington and Rochambeau had met in Wethersfield, CT, in May 1781 to discuss combined operations. The American was anxious to attack New York, from which he had been driven in 1776, for symbolic as well as practical reasons. The French commander was not so sure; he



Dr. Iris de Rode explains the importance of the Grand Reconnaissance. Photo by Jeff Canning

suggested the Chesapeake Bay area as an alternative target, especially since forces in Virginia commanded by the Marquis de Lafayette were in need of relief and support.

After agreeing to scout the situation around New York, the French left their camps in southern New England and joined the Americans in central Westchester in early July, with Rochambeau establishing his headquarters in the Odell House in Hartsdale. Washington's troops moved down the Hudson River Valley and established the Philipsburg Encampment between the French forces and the river.

After a challenging night march the evening of July 21, two French and two American columns rendezvoused on Valentine Hill shortly after midnight. The British responded, as hoped, a few hours later in the first of a series of encounters as the Allies moved eastward toward the Sound. By the end of the Reconnaissance, the Allies concluded that they had too few troops to attack the well-fortified "New York island," which they acknowledged was unlikely to fall to anything less than five coordinated attacks at various points. By August, Washington, lamenting his lack of troops because the states did not furnish their quotas, turned his attention southward, where the armies' collaboration during the Grand Reconnaissance would serve them well.

Dr. de Rode drew some of her information from unpublished French sources, including papers of the Marquis de Chastellux, a top aide to Rochambeau, from the family castle in France, which she was finally allowed to examine after three years of requesting access.

In other parts of the two-hour program:

- Nick Dembowski, president of the Kingsbridge Historical Society, focused on the importance of the King's Bridge, three miles south of Valentine Hill – the only access to Manhattan Island that did not require a boat. Manhattan, with the city at its southern end, was surrounded by rivers and marshes that served as a natural moat.
- Dr. Erik Weiselberg, principal historian for Revolutionary Westchester 250 (a county organization focusing on the upcoming 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in 2026 and the county's extensive involvement in the Revolutionary War), spoke about the Westchester Guides, who, utilizing their knowledge of the area, provided little known but invaluable service to the Allied forces.

Among those introduced by Constance Kehoe, emcee and president of Revolutionary Westchester 250, were Susan Seal, board president of Friends of Odell House Rochambeau Headquarters, and delegations from the Kingsbridge and Yonkers Historical Societies.

For more information about the Grand Reconnaissance, please visit:

<https://allthingsliberty.com/2017/06/le-plus-detailee-july-1781-reconnaissance-new-york/>

<https://www.nps.gov/waro/learn/historyculture/washington-rochambeau-revolutionary-route.htm>

<https://allthingsliberty.com/2022/02/prelude-to-yorktown-washington-and-rochambeau-in-new-york/>

– *Jeff Canning, National Recording Secretary*



Larry Abell, fourth from right, and other participants in the Feb. 27 ceremony pose with the photo of the Triple Nickle squadron and the collage of prominent African Americans that were presented to the Maryland Veterans Museum. Photo courtesy of Larry Abell

National Chair, Maryland Museum Honored by Veterans, Governor

National Chair Larry Abell was recognized by the National Association of Black Veterans (NABVETS) Black History Program at the Maryland Veterans Museum at Patriot Park Feb. 27, 2022.

The recognition came less than a week after Larry was cited by the governor of Maryland for his “dedicated service and commitment” as president of the museum.

Mike Moses, Maryland state NABVETS commander, said of Larry: “NABVETS recognizes your commitment towards your outstanding historical contributions to research, education, advocacy, filled with veteran historical data, and displays within the museum.” NABVETS has partnered with the museum to tell the African American story throughout our nation’s history.

Commander Moses and other NABVETS members have contributed many unknown African American stories, from the Revolutionary War to the latest conflicts. The commander served on the museum board and remains a liaison to the African American community. He presented two items during the event:

- A copy and enlargement of a photograph of a squadron of the Triple Nickle (the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion), an all-Black airborne unit of the U.S. Army during World War II. The museum also has been working with NABVETS to develop an expanded exhibit on the Tuskegee Airmen.

- A collage of prominent African Americans who have made significant contributions to America, developed by a NABVETS artist for display at the museum. Larry said the collage would expand current exhibits recognizing African Americans.

Larry has been named an honorary member of the NABVETS Board of Directors. Commander Moses indicated that his participation would be part of a larger national outreach program beyond Black veterans. Larry was selected in part for expanding the history of African Americans' contributions at the museum and for his support of veterans organizations. Under his leadership the museum has expanded its mission of "Honoring America's Heroes" through its galleries to "Helping America's Heroes." For example, the museum is leading a program of county and state military and community organizations to raise funds for homeless and disabled veterans.

The citation awarded Feb. 21 by Maryland Governor Lawrence Hogan reads in part: "On behalf of the citizens of this State, in recognition of a grateful tribute to commend you for the dedicated service and commitment you have demonstrated as President of the Maryland Veterans Museum ... in appreciation of your support and contributions on behalf of numerous historic and military organizations; and as our citizens join together with the veteran community in honoring your lifetime of volunteerism and leadership, we are pleased to confer upon you this Governor's Citation."

The museum serves veterans and community organizations throughout Maryland as well as many national organizations with its programs.

"This recognition is in no small part acknowledgement of our highly regarded Revolutionary War Gallery and extensive exhibits of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route," Larry said. "WARO and the National Park Service can share in this award as we partner as an information center for WARO."



W3R-US Receives \$10,000 Grant for Trip Planner

W3R-US has received a \$10,000 grant from Americana Corner to help develop a trip planner and travel app for the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail. The grant, announced on George Washington's birthday (Feb. 22, 2022), will supplement funding already in place from the National Park Foundation and the task agreement with the National Park Service, Executive Director Ellen von Karajan said.

W3R-US is one of 47 history organizations to receive inaugural grants through a program initiated by Tom Hand, creator and publisher of Americana Corner, a Web site he launched in 2020.

Tom, a 1982 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, created Gilman Cheese Corp. after leaving the military. After selling the company, he now spends most of his time writing for Americana Corner and helping organizations such as W3R-US that focus on early America. He serves on the American Battlefield Trust's Board of Trustees and the National Park Foundation's National Council.

"The Board of W3R-US salutes Tom for his love of history, his support of our efforts and of so many of our peers in the history world, and thanks him most sincerely for closing the gap in the budget for the trip planner for our national historic trail," Ellen said.

The grants will support a variety of efforts, including restoration of historical objects, creation of educational displays and improvements to historic sites that will enhance the visitor experience. "I am thrilled to be able to help others across America tell our country's wonderful story," Tom said.

For more information, please visit: www.americanacorner.com

Archival Web Site Expanded

The history section of the W3R-US archives Web site has been renamed Study Its History! and it has been expanded to include pages for Spain, Amerindian Nations and Stories.

Director Ralph Nelson explained that, on the personal Stories pages, he has links or references to about 40 stories from pension applications. "As we identify additional sources, I can link those in," he said of the work in progress.

W3R-US leaders, members and readers of *The Bulletin* are invited to help improve and expand the site by providing Ralph with additional sources.

Membership Memo

Welcome, new members!

W3R-US has developed a new membership category for Municipalities, and this month the Middlesex County, NJ, Division of History and Historic Preservation became the first municipal



entity to join. Along with managing sites on the Trail such as East Jersey Old Town Village, Low House Museum and Raritan Landing archaeological site, the Division's partnership with W3R-NJ has the potential to host programs related to the Trail and to collaborate with W3R-NJ to conduct unique projects. To learn more, please visit: [Middlesex County, NJ Division of History and Historic Preservation](#)



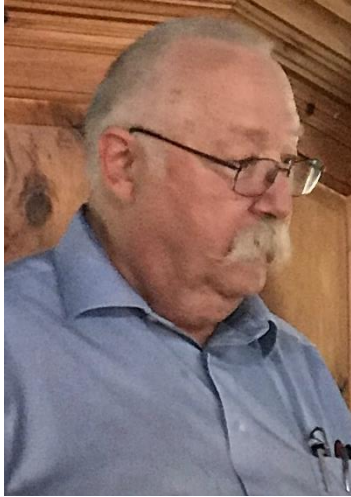
In another membership category first, Victoria's Cake of Westfield, NJ, has joined as a Corporate member. Owned by a French mother and daughter duo, Laurence and Victoria have created a Parisian atmosphere boutique bakery and coffee shop in downtown Westfield, a town through which a Continental Army line marched on Aug. 29, 1781, a date now celebrated as "March to Yorktown Day." Westfield will commemorate the 3rd annual March to Yorktown Day this year on Aug. 28. Please visit the Victoria's Cake Web site, www.victoriascakeofficial.com, and stop by for a sweet treat if you are in Westfield.

New members are always welcome and membership renewal season continues. Please visit: [W3R-US Membership](#) or print the membership form, [Individual Membership form W3R-US](#), and mail it with payment.

– Julie Diddell, National Membership Committee Chair

W3R-US Historian Receives Official Letter about Order of Merit

M. Philippe Etienne, Ambassador of France to the United States, has sent Dr. Robert Selig, W3R-US Historian, an official letter regarding his nomination for the rank of knight in the French National Order of Merit. The letter follows publication of the nomination in a decree



Dr. Robert Selig. Photo by Julie Diddell

signed in February by French President Emmanuel Macron. This prestigious honor recognizes Dr. Selig's eminent work in the development of the Washington-Rochambeau Trail.

The letter reads as follows:

Washington D.C., March 8, 2022

Dear Sir,

Please accept my warmest congratulations for your nomination to the rank of Knight in the French National Order of the Merit, by decree of the President of the French Republic on February 7, 2022.

This award reflects the deep gratitude of our authorities for your important contribution, as a brilliant specialist of the role of French forces under Count de Rochambeau during the American Revolutionary War, to the mutual friendship between France and the United States of America and to the promotion of the contribution of France to American independence. I would like to salute in this regard your prominent role in the National Park Service's Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail Project.

I will inform you as soon as we receive the insignias and diploma.

Once again, please accept my deepest congratulations for this award.

Sincerely yours,

Philippe Etienne

The French National Order of Merit (Ordre National du Mérite), founded in 1963 by President Charles de Gaulle, honors distinguished civilian and military achievements by French citizens and foreign nationals. It is the highest medal awarded to foreigners since the Legion of Honor, the very highest award, is generally reserved for French citizens.

Dr. Selig has asked that, since the medal is being awarded in recognition of his work on the Washington-Rochambeau Trail, it be presented to him during Yorktown Day this fall during a brief ceremony at the French memorial in Yorktown, VA, on Oct. 19.

Executive Director Presents to New Parks Director

It was a great honor for W3R-US to be asked by the Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) to present to the newly appointed Director of the National Park Service (NPS), Charles F. “Chuck” Sams III, at a PNTS conference Feb. 16, 2022. I spoke straightforwardly about our historic trail partner organization’s potential, plans, problems and needs – problems and needs shared north, south, east and west by scenic and historic trail partner organizations.

I joined two other trail partner organization executive directors – Andrea Ketchmark of the North Country Trail Association and Sandi Marra of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. Also on the panel were Reggie Chapple, NPS acting assistant director, Partnerships and Civic Engagement; Bob Ratcliffe, division chief, Conservation and Outdoor Recreation; and John Cannella, national program manager, National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and National Trails System.

Director Sams, an enrolled member, Cayuse and Walla Walla, of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation in Oregon and the first Native American to hold the post of director, greeted us in his native tongue and shared his tribal name – Mockingbird with a Great Heart. He then shared his goals for the NPS and said trails were an important part of his plans. Among them:

- Connect and empower a diverse and thriving work force
- Invest in the future of parks (including innovation in uses of funding)
- Confront the climate crisis and incorporate traditional ecological knowledge into parks stewardship
- Advance equity, inclusion and access
- Respect and strengthen indigenous relationships
- Create an NPS experience that meets expectations into the future
- Greatly improve, streamline and modernize NPS business practices

An excerpt from my presentation to Director Sams:

W3R-US believes our national historic trails are all poised to advance both a fuller telling of U.S. and North American history and to advance equity. But being under-resourced public land units makes it very difficult for us.



Charles Sams is sworn in as director of the National Park Service by Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland Dec. 16, 2021. Photo courtesy of the Department of the Interior

In fact, the imminent 250th anniversary of the nation presents an impending “equity emergency” in that we are running out of time to invest in telling the full stories of our founding.

To do that, W3R-US can play a major role but it will require resources to create expanded interpretation, trail signs, public art and monuments and to train a more diversified and younger corps of re-enactors – all to be co-created with our communities.

We need to provide more equitable outdoor access and even the most basic infrastructure in some formally redlined areas on this most urban trail – better street lighting, trees, sidewalks, bike lanes, pocket parks where abandoned lots and warehouses stand now.

To memorialize and exalt the role of some of the unsung participants, W3R-US is advocating now for a National Environmental Policy Act study needed by one of our partners to begin this year for a Liberty Memorial honoring African American soldiers so it can be completed on the National Mall in Washington in time for the 250th.

Without program and infrastructure investments such as these on trails such as ours, the story of America’s founding will ring hollow to the Black, Brown and Indigenous communities whose forebears also played a vital role in the nation’s founding and helped win our independence.

More attention to the systemic functioning of our trails in the form of increased appropriations AND enthusiasm within the NPS to support cooperative management will not only help trails such as Washington-Rochambeau live up to their potential but also help achieve the intent of this Administration, the National Trail System Act of 1968 and the 250th Anniversary Commission.

– *Ellen von Karajan, Executive Director*

From the Editor

I hope you continue to enjoy *The Bulletin* and find it helpful in keeping abreast of the activities of The National Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association on numerous fronts (so many that this edition is being published later in the month than usual). Thank you for your assistance, suggestions, comments and other kind words. To keep up with all news of our Association, please check our Web site regularly: www.w3r-us.org

State leaders are invited to provide information (by the end of each month for the following month’s edition) about their activities, which are presented in a separate section of *The Bulletin*. (Please see the reports beginning on Page 10.)

Your comments, suggestions and questions are welcome. Please email me at historicaljeff@aol.com

– *Jeff Canning, National Recording Secretary*

State Report

Delaware: Working with Cooch Home

State Chair Bill Conley met March 3 with Kaitlyn Dykes, the new state supervisor of the 18th-century Cooch Home in Newark, which sits on both the Cooch's Bridge battlefield (1777) and the Washington-Rochambeau Trail. They discussed ways the two organizations can work together to enhance the sharing of Delaware's Revolutionary War history, including sharing the home's rich history with travelers along the Trail. They are looking forward to a mutually beneficial relationship as they share the diverse stories of Americans in the war.



Kaitlyn Dykes and Bill Conley. Courtesy of Bill Conley.

In other activities:

- Vice Chair Peg Tighe continues to coordinate with U.S. Sen. Chris Coons' office on the potential visit by the French Ambassador to Howard High School in downtown Wilmington for a May 11 program. The ceremony will focus on Lauzun's Legion, which was stationed in Wilmington after the 1781 victory at Yorktown, and is part of an effort to share the story of the Revolutionary War with urban youth.
- Bill and Peg are scheduled to meet April 6 with Wilmington Councilwoman Maria Cabrera to discuss ways to share stories of Hispanic Revolutionary War heroes with the children of the city. The councilwoman has offered to form a committee to explore this outreach program. The city's Latino community sits along the Trail in the St. Paul's Church area. Thanks to Dr. Robert Selig, Julie Bell, Robert Reyes and Hector Diaz for sharing information.
- Confirmation was received that St. Joseph's Catholic Church, along the Trail in inner-city Wilmington, will support a W3R-DE ceremony honoring city veterans on Veterans Day in November. Board member Brenda Burns is researching a ceremonial event that will focus on minority veterans who live along the Trail.
- Bill met with Jen Boes, director of the Wilmington Tourist Bureau, explained the Trail's potential tourism impact and asked for her input on a potential Revolutionary War welcome center along the Trail in Wilmington.

- Bill met with Amanda August, director of Wilmington’s Jefferson Street Center, which sponsors a youth bike ride around the city and the Trail each summer, and shared the story of Sal Lilienthal’s 2021 ride through Brandywine Village. He suggested that W3R-DE could help generate more student participants in 2022.
- Bill met with ministers of three inner-city churches along the Trail and discussed ways to bring history into their congregations.
- Bill is coordinating with historian Julien Icher for a new Lafayette historical sign in Colonial Brandywine Village. Peg is coordinating with city officials on the sign’s placement.
- Two speakers have been confirmed for our new Fall Speakers Series. Author Thomas Welch will share the story of Wilmington cavalry commander and Washington aide Col. Allan McLane and George Widger will tell his story of reclaiming an abandoned Revolutionary War-era cemetery in Pigeon Run.
- Lt. Col. Carl Witte has offered to share the W3R-DE calendar of events on the Web sites of the Delaware Military Heritage Museum and the Delaware Military Order of the World Wars.
- Bill and Peg are laying the groundwork for greater awareness of W3R history and mission among inner-city Trail populations by 2026.

– Bill Conley, State Chair

New Jersey: Williams to Receive Mercer Oak Award

W3R-NJ member and friend Roger Williams has been selected to receive the 2022 Mercer Oak Award from the Princeton Battlefield Society at a June 16 reception at The Nassau Inn in Princeton. Roger is a historical interpreter of American history, especially as it relates to the Ten Crucial Days of 1776.

“I first met Roger at the Princeton Battle Monument in August

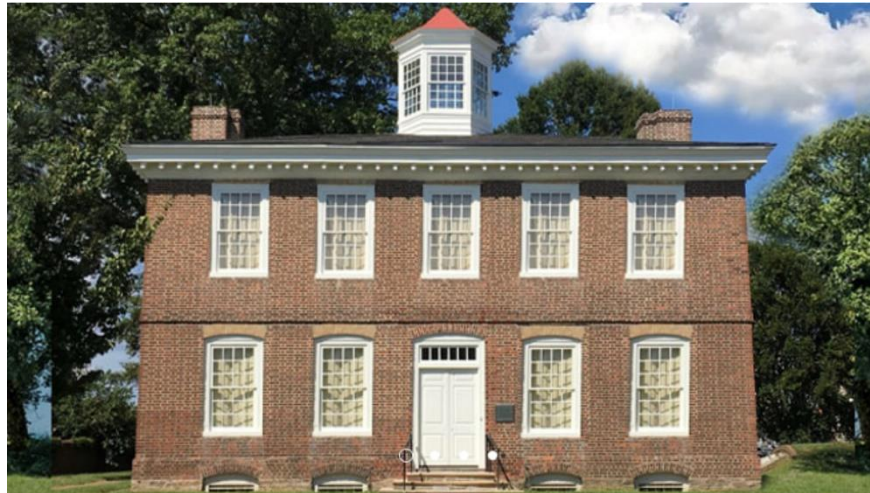


Roger Williams, center, welcomes the Bike and Kayak Tour to Princeton Aug. 20, 2021. Behind him at the Princeton Battle Monument, from left, are Mike Russell, president of the Princeton Battlefield Society; Princeton Mayor Mark Freda; Janice Sellinger, executive director of the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area; W3R-NJ Chair Julie Diddell; and W3R-US Director Sal Lilienthal. Photos courtesy of Julie Diddell

2021 as he was a part of the welcoming party for W3R-US Director Sal Lilienthal's ride into Princeton while on the Bike and Kayak Tour of the Trail," said Julie Diddell, W3R-NJ Chair. "Roger was fully entrenched in the spirit of the occasion and his remarks showed his passion to support the effort put out by W3R to bring to light the role that Princeton played in the march to Yorktown. There is no one who deserves this award more than Roger, and W3R-NJ is awe-struck by his natural talent as a historical interpreter and story teller."

For more information, please visit: www.PBS1777.org

The 1719 William Trent House Museum in Trenton has an abundance of online events that highlight the wonderfully diverse history associated with the Trail site. W3R-US Leadership Council member Sam Stephens and the rest of the Trent House Museum Association discover unique programs and



The Trent House.

bring them to the museum's free/donation-based online programming to reach a greater public audience. Please visit www.williamtrenthouse.org to attend the upcoming events.



Kevin Sullivan and Mary Swarbrick at a gathering after the Bike and Kayak Tour ceremony in Princeton.

The work to share the Trail story and grow W3R-NJ's influence in the state is ongoing and a targeted effort by Recording Secretary Mary Swarbrick in the area of enrolling new members through a mailing that was conducted in the past several weeks and has thus far led to the Middlesex County Division of History and Historic Preservation joining. We are especially grateful for Mary's dedication to W3R-NJ now and over the very many years for which she and her husband, Kevin Sullivan, have been generous volunteers and tireless advocates.

– Julie Diddell, State Chair



Participants in a celebration of New York’s recently signed 250th Commemoration Act raise hats and shout “Huzzah!” in Verplanck March 17. Among them were State Senators Pete Harckham, fifth from left, and Shelley Mayer, holding a bundle of papers, who led the celebration; Constance Kehoe, president of Revolutionary Westchester 250, center; and Dr. Iris de Rode, visiting historian, third from right. Photo by D. Santalis

New York: French Historian Visits Trail Sites

Dr. Iris de Rode, author, lecturer, scholar and historian of the Trail, spent a busy week in southern New York in mid-March during a visit from France.

The first part of the week of March 13 focused on sites in southern Westchester County and what is now the Bronx that were associated with the Grand Reconnaissance, capped by an illustrated lecture she gave at St. Joseph’s Seminary in Yonkers March 16. (Story on Page One.)

March 17 featured whirlwind visits to a dozen Trail-related sites in northern Westchester, including participation in a celebration of the state’s recently signed 250th Commemoration Act. The Act formally lets New York State start planning for the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in 2026, although local organizations such as Revolutionary Westchester 250, which organized her visit, already have been at work for a few years.

State Senators Shelley Mayer and Pete Harckham led the celebration, attended by about 35 local and state officials, re-enactors and residents, at the Hudson River waterfront in Verplanck, site of the King’s Ferry, where the combined French and Continental armies crossed the river in August 1781 on their way to Yorktown, VA, and back the following year. To watch a video of the half-hour event, please visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iIq-6RKZZL0> or <https://www.facebook.com/ShelleyMayerSD37/videos/5048042045253020>



Gathered at a Trail wayside under a gazebo in downtown Peekskill, part of French Camp 37, March 17 are, from left, Jeff Canning, national recording secretary of W3R-US; Linda “Lynn” Briggs, chair of the Yorktown, NY, Heritage Preservation Commission; Story Clark, founder and CEO of TravelStorysGPS; Frank Licameli, a retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel; Janet Lee Burnet, W3R-NY state chair; Dr. Iris de Rode, for whom this was the second stop of a dozen that day; and Constance Kehoe, president of Revolutionary Westchester 250. Photo by Marc Cheshire, Croton-on-Hudson village historian and the eighth member of the entourage

“It’s great to *see* where the French were, not just read about it in a book,” Dr. de Rode said, summarizing a theme that was expressed in many ways throughout the day – that there is no substitute for *being* where events happened, *touching* history. She said she hoped her continuing research in the papers of French participants would help bring to light more of the story of the French-American alliance.

Dr. de Rode’s guides in northern Westchester included Janet Lee Burnet, W3R-NY state chair; Jeff Canning, W3R-US national recording secretary, who lives in the area; and Linda “Lynn” Briggs, chair of the Yorktown, NY, Heritage Preservation Commission. In addition to Verplanck, Trail sites visited included:

- Old Saint Peter’s Church in Van Cortlandtville, which was used by the French as a military hospital in 1781 and 1782.
- Downtown Peekskill, part of French Camp 37 in 1782.
- Hunt’s Tavern (now a florist shop), French Hill, the site of the Delavan House, Rochambeau Park and what is now Hilltop Hanover Farm, all in Yorktown, where the French camped in 1782.
- Hallock’s Mill Pond in Yorktown, where the French reversed the course of Hallock’s Mill Brook. The area is being rehabilitated by its owner, Dr. Sir Murray Brennan.

Dr. de Rode’s itinerary also included the Odell House Rochambeau Headquarters in Hartsdale and the French Consulate in New York City.

– Jeff Canning, National Recording Secretary

Rhode Island: New Organization Promotes State's Role in War

A new nonprofit organization has been formed to spotlight the role of Rhode Island in the war for independence.

The mission of the Battle of Rhode Island Association (BoRIA) is to raise awareness of the state's unique Revolutionary War history, particularly that pertaining to the Rhode Island Campaign and Butts Hill Fort.



The new association grew out of the effort to restore Butts Hill Fort in Portsmouth. The work was initiated a year ago by the Portsmouth Historical Society in the form of the Butts Hill Fort Restoration Committee. As the restoration effort progressed, it became obvious that, to gain the public support and resources needed to restore, and particularly to maintain, this historic Revolutionary War artifact, it would be necessary to bring the story of the fort and its role in the war to a statewide audience.

Rhode Island's place in the revolution is in general not widely known but it is an interesting story and deserves to be told. The state is, at best, mentioned in history books for the burning of the HMS *Gaspee* in Narragansett Bay June 10, 1772. But those willing to dig a bit deeper may find reference to the one-day fight known as the Battle of Rhode Island, which is itself a part of a broader series of events known as the Rhode Island Campaign.

The BoRIA intends to tell the story of the British occupation of Aquidneck Island, the Battle of Rhode Island, including the Siege of Newport, and the arrival and departure of our French allies. It is a story important to a full understanding of the war in general and for Rhode Island history in particular.

The new association aims to be a focal point for exchange of information on Rhode Island's role in the Revolutionary War. "It is important to note," said Joe Studlick, co-chair of the Restoration Committee, "that the new organization in no way detracts from the efforts to open the restored Butts Hill Fort for public historical, educational and recreational pursuits. The association will support the fort's restoration while serving as the focal point for the exchange of historical information, educational resources, and events relative to the role of Rhode Island in the Revolutionary War. The story covers the state."

The association's Web site, which should be operational by mid-year, has drawn interest from such organizations as the Rhode Island Maritime Archeological Project, The National Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association and Souvenir Français USA. These and others have expressed interest in participating in, and contributing to, the site. The Heritage Harbor Foundation, founded by State Historian Emeritus Dr. Patrick Conley, recently provided \$2,500 to be used for the site.

Directors of the association recently met with Nick Edwards, program coordinator for the state's RI250 Commission. He was enthusiastic about the BoRIA's work and suggested that we brief the entire commission. Rhode Island Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea, who chairs the RI250 Commission, frequently emphasizes Rhode Island's role in the shaping of our country.

The Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati recently provided a grant of \$7,000. The society is made up of descendants of officers who served in the Continental Army, several of whom served during the Rhode Island Campaign. Many units from the Massachusetts State Militia also served in the campaign. The fact that this organization from another state would generously give to this effort is an indication of the type of interest the BoRIA expects to generate as more people become aware of both Butts Hill Fort and the related events.

The Whalley Foundation of Houston has provided \$10,000 toward the development of a master plan for Butts Hill Fort restoration. The plan is a critical goal for 2022. The BoRIA also has applied for other grants to fund the plan, which is expected to cost more than \$50,000. Once the plan is approved by the Portsmouth Town Council and the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, the way ahead for the restoration of the fort will be fixed.

– *Burton C. Quist, Director, Battle of Rhode Island Association*

Maryland: New Exhibits, Home Port

Historic Annapolis opened its new museum exhibit March 19 at the foot of Green Street at 99 Main St. Titled *Annapolis: An American Story*, three floors of exhibits document the many initiatives in the city that opened doors for this nation.

The *Pride of Baltimore*, a replica of a Clipper Ship that is the ambassador for the State of Maryland, has developed a home port partnership with The Eastport Yacht Club on the Severn River. The *Pride* will tour the Great Lakes this summer, telling the stories of Annapolis and Maryland.

On May 1, 49 West will open a new art exhibit featuring the classic thoroughbred horses of Maryland. Portraits of horses that made Annapolis the Colonial horse racing center go back to the first foundation horses arriving from the King's Stables in the early 1700s and include the great mare, Selima, who arrived in 1750, and whose blood line is included in such top stallions as Lexington and Man O' War.

– *Ellen Moyer, State Co-Chair* ■