

1994 - Saving the Rose Farm

Ann Rhinelanders had the idea in 1994 that the five towns affected by a proposed RT6 expressway should form a group and document the historical resources that were affected. We called it the Intercommunity Historic Resources Committee (ICHRC). Ann was then the Chair of the Andover Historical Society and a town representative on the Connecticut Department of Transportation's Rt. 6 Study Committee. Arnold Carlson was the Coventry Municipal Historian and a town representative on the DOT's Rt. 6 Study Committee. I was Vice Chair of the Bolton Economic Development Committee and also a town representative on DOT's Rt. 6 Study Committee working with Larry Larned, the Bolton Municipal Historian. Larry worked for the DOT and was a noted highway historian. Larry retired from the DOT and moved the next year and I then became the Bolton Town Historian. There were other members of the ICHRC that sometimes participated but they were not delegates to the DOT committee. It was at one of the ICHRC meetings at Loraine Busque's house (the White Tavern, Andover) that I saw Rice's book and knew immediately that the exact camp site locations in Connecticut had been forgotten. My wife, Susan, the Town Clerk of Bolton was the keeper of town historic records. I discovered that the 5th Camp was on the Rose Farm, not next to Bolton High School as the Town of Bolton had depicted since at least 1971.

The Army Corps of Engineers wanted to put Route 6 Alt 54 through the middle of the Rose Farm, so I made side by side copies of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's topographical maps and the French Camp 5 map that showed conclusively that Camp 5 was on the Rose Farm and would be destroyed by the proposed Route 6 Alt 54. Susan and I then sent the copies of the side by side maps to the French Consul in NYC and to the French Ambassador in Washington DC and asked them to write to then Connecticut Governor Rowland and ask that Camp 5 be saved as invaluable Franco-American Heritage. Their letters made headlines in the Hartford Courant, Governor Rowland agreed, and the center of Bolton and Camp 5 were spared. The Consul also put me in contact with Dr. Jacques Bossier who chaired the Governor's Francophone Committee and Jacques invited me to their meetings from then on.

I also gave copies of the maps to Richard Rose, and his family, the owners of the Rose Farm. He then contacted me and offered to sell the farm to Bolton to preserve Camp 5 and the center of Bolton forever. The Bolton Economic Development Committee liked the proposal and Rusty Kelsey (Chairperson) and I organized a meeting with town staff and Patricia Morianos and then proposed the purchase to the Bolton Selectmen. No immediate action was taken but Bolton established a committee to make recommendations for the purchase of open space.

1996 - Documenting the Route in CT

The highway proposal quickly died but Ann Rhineland, Arnold Carlson and I decided in 1996 to continue the ICHRC to press for state legislation to document the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Road. I chaired the ICHRC from then on and wrote the early 1996 and 1997 drafts of the Connecticut legislation with the cost estimates (\$85,000) that Jack Shannahan (SHPO, Director) provided. I also did the early research to provide correct trail and camp locations so our representatives knew the facts to support Connecticut documentation of the trail. I produced copies of Rochambeau's map on parchment paper to be given to any legislator who would co-sign the legislation and to other citizens who actively supported the legislation.

In 1998, Russell Wirtella (Sons of the American Revolution), Serge Gabriel (Governor's Francophone Committee), Jay Jackson (Society of the Cincinnati), Arnold Carlson, and the 2nd Dragoons joined me at the State Legislature to request that the W3R be released from committee and sent to the legislature for a vote. Captain Sal Tarantino and his dragoons were late because the security guards were alarmed by what they saw. The Dragoons were stopped, disarmed of their swords, and questioned before they were released and Sal was allowed to speak before the legislative committee.

State Representative Pamela Sawyer then convinced the State Representatives of Connecticut to define the route and underwrite the archeological surveys of all the CT camps. That summer, Jack Shannahan of the State Historic Preservation Office invited Arnold Carlson, Ann Rhineland, and me to join him and Mary Donahue in interviewing the candidates to do the W3R research. We chose Robert Selig for the historical documentation and Mary Harper for the digs.

1998 - Starting the W3R Newsletter

That summer I also began the W3R newsletter.

<http://www.connecticutsar.org/revroad/contents.htm>

That fall, as Bolton Municipal Historian, I called a meeting where the archeologists presented pictures of the 60 Native American and Revolutionary War artifacts they had found at Camp 5, proving it was Camp 5 was on the Rose Farm. That same evening we created the Bolton Historical Society and simultaneously created the original Friends of The Rose Farm to work to purchase and preserve W3R Camp 5, now known as Bolton Heritage Farm. That was our last meeting of the ICHRC. About 60 people attended including our State Representative and Senator.

1999 - Forming a National W3R

Late in 1999 Dr. Bossiere informed me that Souvenir Francaise had decided to support the national W3R and I provided him with a list of the most active W3R newsletter subscribers in each of the nine W3R states. Souvenir Francaise invited everyone to a meeting at Washington's command house in New York to create the first national organization. The Committee met once and then began establishing state committees in each of the nine states. It changed the name from Road to Route and chose the logo for the route. The committee did succeed in creating several state organizations before it was reorganized into the current W3R committee in 2003.

2000 - Initiating Designation as a National Historic Trail

Bolton remained in the forefront of the effort to create the Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail (W3RNHT). I sent W3R documentation and asked Congressman Larson and Senator Lieberman to introduce the federal legislation to fund the National Park Service study of the entire 600+ mile route to Yorktown, Virginia. At the historic meeting at the Bolton Senior Center (arranged by Patricia Morianos) where Congressman John B Larson decided to introduce the legislation were Jay Jackson (Society of the Cincinnati), Patricia Morianos (CT. Democratic State Central Committee), Jane Maneggia (President, Bolton Seniors), some of the Congressman's staff and myself.

Congressman Larson and Senator Lieberman introduced the first bills in March of 2000 to study the possibility of creating the W3R National Historic Trail. The bills passed unanimously.

Gwen Marrion put together that State Matching Grant open space proposal for the purchase of Bolton Camp 5. The tiny but highly placed opposition to the proposal planned to defeat the \$1.3 million Camp 5 purchase by putting it up for referendum along with an 8% tax increase and a \$2 million Library expenditure. At the largest Town meeting up until that time, Patricia Morianos played a major roll in Bolton becoming the first community to preserve one of the French camps. The opposition failed to get enough signatures for a referendum so the Bolton townspeople turned the tables and put it to an immediate town vote. Bolton Seniors and even the Chairperson of the tight fistd Bolton Taxpayer's organization all spoke in favor of the purchase. The purchase passed overwhelmingly.

2007 - NPS Supports the W3R as a NHT

The National W3R Committee began to lead the effort in 2001 and reorganized in 2003. They created a credible organization that could work with the NPS and had an organization that could help manage the W3R NHT when passed by Congress.

This year the NPS completed the reports funded since 2000. Senator Lieberman and Congressman Larson have again introduced legislation but this time it is to actually create the National Historic Trail. The cost would only be \$300,000 to \$400,000 per year for the NPS to manage and plan.

These bills are the first stage of the legislative process. Senate bill S. 686 has been referred to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee where it is being considered. The house has referred their bill H.R.1286 to the House Committee on Natural Resources. See:

www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=s110-686

Dr. Jacques Bossiere, who has been our friend since 1996 recently retired from the national W3R organization. He has been chairman of the board of directors of the national W3R organization since the December of 1999, when we met to create the first national organization. The W3R organization is now under the able leadership of Kim Burdick, chairperson.

See www.w3r-us.org