

W3R[®]-US Auto Tour through New York

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Historical Overview

After marching across CT in 1781 June the 4,000 men of the French Expeditionary Force (FEF) camped in the Ardsley / Dobbs Ferry / Hartsdale NY, area near the campsites of the Continental Army. For six weeks the allies explored the strength of British defenses around New York City. Then, seizing an opportunity to use French naval support to trap and defeat a smaller British army in Virginia, the allied high command changed plans, marched their armies south, and captured the British army led by General Cornwallis in Yorktown VA.

Immediately after the victory the Continental army marched north to NY to prevent the British army in New York from breaking out and capturing West Point and the great chain across the Hudson River. The French remained in Virginia for nine months to ensure that the British prisoners were placed in secure compounds. Then they, too, marched north, staying briefly in NY before moving east through CT and RI to Boston, from which they embarked for the Caribbean Islands.

Consider the economic benefit to New York from housing and provisioning 5,500 French troops for six weeks and the added security provided by the French troops.

For more details on the 1781 history and march route click the History link in w3r-archive.org and choose the link to this state. The link to Historical Maps leads to ten NPS maps with a shaded path where the roads taken in 1781 are overlaid on a modern roadmap.

Auto Tour through New York

The French Army marched into New York to join the many regiments of the Continental Army that were besieging New York City. Two different paths to exit New York into New Jersey were taken by the French Army and the Continental Army, so we provide a tourist route to follow each army.

AUTO ROUTE TO FOLLOW THE FRENCH ARMY:

1. Start your auto tour in Bedford NY. See the end of the CT auto tour to read how to get here from the Connecticut border.

2. Go right on Rt 172. When it hits Rt 117 go right to Mt Kisco and turn left onto Rt 133. Follow this to turn left and merge with Rt 100, then follow Rt 100 south. It will join Rt 9A and become a divided highway until Hawthorne. Find Rt 100 there and follow its twists and turns as it goes south past Washington's Headquarters Museum near Valhalla and the White Plains National Battlefield Site, past Camp 14 where the French camped for six weeks to Hartsdale, where Rochambeau had his headquarters.

3. From Hartsdale we follow the route of French unit B. Take Rt 100 back north as it twists and turns past Hawthorne and Millwood and over Pines Bridge, then take Rt 118 left and follow it north when it goes right after a mile. After several miles Rt 118 intersects Rt 202 in Yorktown Heights.

4. Take Rt 202 left on Croton Ave to Furnace Dock Rd, then west (right) on this to Rt 9A and north (right) on this to Trolley Road. Take that left (west), and it becomes Kings Ferry Road into Verplank.

5. Take the ferry across the Hudson to Stoney Point. From Stoney Point take Rt 202/9W south to West Haverstraw.

6. Shortly thereafter take Rt 202 west and follow that all the way to Suffern NY, near the NJ border.

AUTO ROUTE TO FOLLOW THE CONTINENTAL ARMY:

1. From Dobbs Ferry (N41.01547°, W73.86931°) follow Rt 9 north to where it merges with Rt 9A at Crotonville, then follow Rt 9A (off the divided highway) to Trolley Road. Take that left (west), and it becomes Kings Ferry Road into Verplank.

2. Take the ferry across the Hudson to Stoney Point. From Stoney Point take Rt 202/9W south to Palisades NY near the NJ border.

3. The route north re-traced essentially the French Army path (above) in reverse.

Pearls along the Necklace -- Nearby Revolutionary-Era Sites

ARDSLEY: General Washington's headquarters with the besieging regiments was located where the Ardsley High School now stands. See the Hudson River Valley guidebook at <http://hudsonrivervalley.org/>

DOBBS FERRY: The website <https://www.villagehistorian.org> includes a pictorial account of the 1781 encampment of the allied American and French armies in Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Hartsdale, and Edgemont NY.

HARTSDALE: General Rochambeau was quartered at the Odell farm during these six weeks. This is still standing and used as a museum. See the Hudson River Valley guidebook at <http://hudsonrivervalley.org/>

SCARSDALE: Maj. Gen. Chastellux stayed at a house that is still standing on Healy Ave. South, near the eastern border of the Sunningdale Country Club. See the Hudson River Valley guidebook at <http://hudsonrivervalley.org/>

The W3R[®]-NY, Hudson River Valley National Historic Area, the Hudson River Valley Greenway, and a design team from the National Park Service Harpers Ferry Center have selected fifteen sites of historical significance to the story of the W3R[®]-NHT. The sites now being developed further are:

- Bedford, Bedford Village Elementary School
- Dobbs Ferry, Waterfront Park
- Fishkill, Van Wyck House, Fishkill Historical Society
- Hartsdale, Odell House, 425 Ridge Road
- Newburgh, Washington's Headquarters State Historic Site
- North Castle, Smith's Tavern, North Castle Historical Society
- North Salem, Town Hall Complex
- Old St. Peter's, Oregon Road and Locust Avenue
- Peekskill, Park Street and N. Division Street
- Stony Point, Stony Point Battlefield State Historic Site
- Suffern, Avon Park, Lafayette Avenue and Washington Avenue
- Verplanck, Riverview Avenue
- West Point, West Point Visitors Center
- White Plains, Tibbits Park
- Yorktown Heights, Franklin D. Roosevelt State Park