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Author(s): Allan Forbes

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# Marches and Camp Sites of the French Army

beyond New England during the Revolutionary War

By ALLAN FORBES<sup>1</sup>

THE march of the French army from Newport, Rhode Island, to Yorktown and back to New England during the Revolutionary War was such a difficult achievement that I decided to make a study of the route, describing each day's march and the location of each of the camps. I have written elsewhere of the New England portion of this enterprise, both before and after the siege of Yorktown.<sup>2</sup> I propose to deal here with the marches and camp sites in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia.

The French became imbued with the new liberty they heard of in far-off America, and, in spite of the gaieties at home, the officers, many of whom belonged to the best families in France, were more than willing to assist us. There was so much talk about liberty at that time that the Chevalier du Couëdic wrote some verses about this country, the first lines of which are:

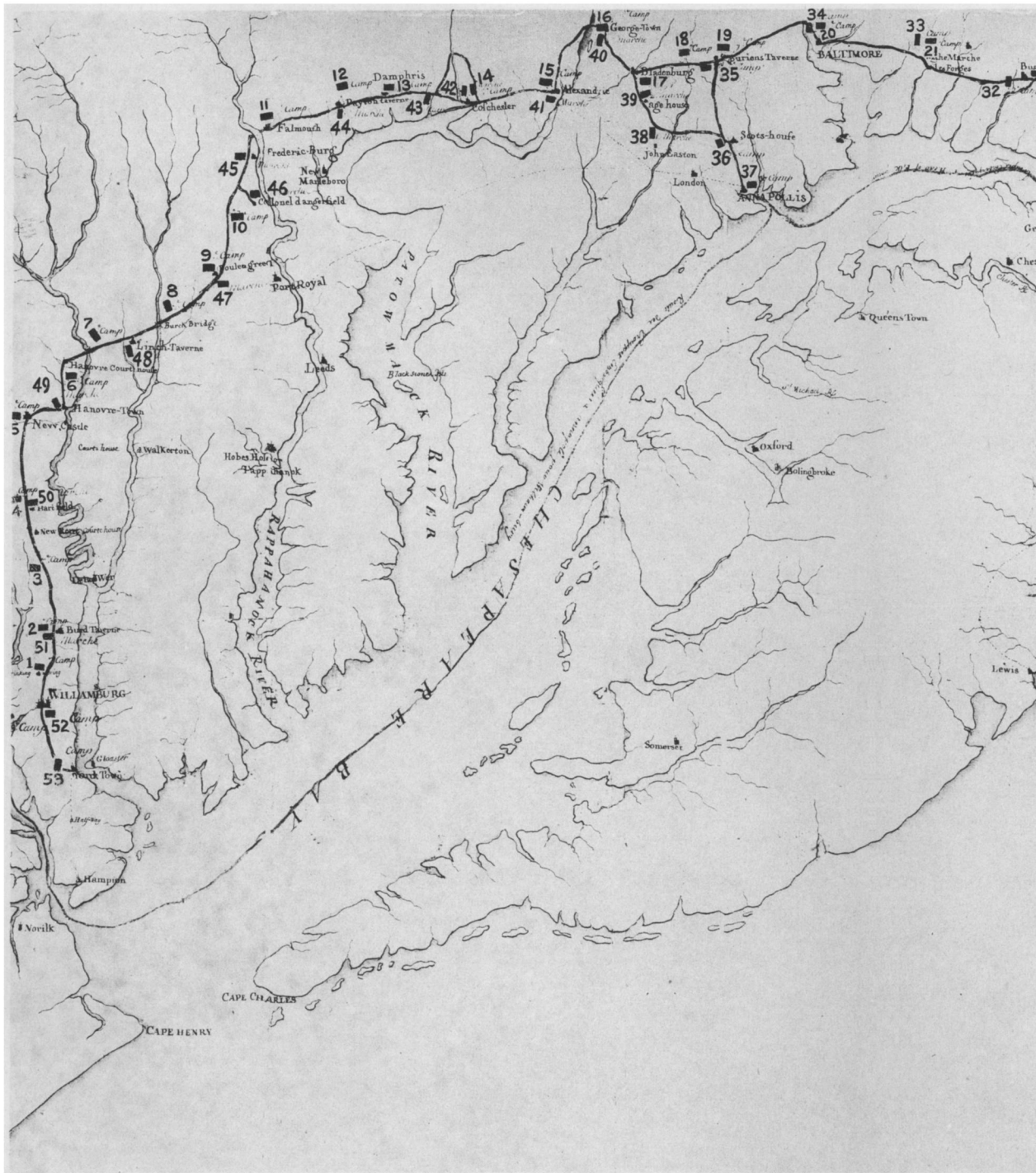
Well done, insurgent rebels ye,  
Winning your war for liberty!  
Your ideas bring to birth  
One more nation on the earth.<sup>3</sup>

This undertaking by our French allies in a foreign country, what with our poorer roads and difficult communications, involved them in many unaccustomed and trying experiences. Yet they "met these novel conditions with cheerfulness and skill. Occasionally some officer grumbled . . . but most of them found a relish in privations and enjoyed the campaigning. . . . To have served in the American war furnished a richer food for memory than to have fought by the

<sup>1</sup> This paper was read at the October, 1943, meeting.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings*, LVIII. 267-285; Allan Forbes and Paul F. Cadman, *France and New England*, I (Boston, 1925), 131-189.

<sup>3</sup> Charles-Louis du Couëdic, "Les Insurgens d'Amérique, 1778," *L'Observateur Anglais*, VIII. 174.



MAP SHOWING THE M  
 Portion of a manuscript map, "Côte de York-t





YOND NEW ENGLAND

ochambeau Papers in the Library of Congress.

Rhine. . . ."<sup>1</sup> Many reports can be found concerning the fine behavior of the French troops, and not a single instance is known of a theft on the march to their destination. The manuscripts of Pierre Étienne Duponceau recite the astonishing order that "if a Frenchman should have a dispute with an American the Frenchman should be punished, whether he was in the right or the wrong."<sup>2</sup>

The New England portion of the march to Yorktown consumed the period between June 10, 1781, when Rochambeau's forces left Newport, and July 2, when they crossed the Connecticut border into New York and made camp at Bedford (Camp No. 12).<sup>3</sup> Here they were joined by the Duc de Lauzun's contingent of hussars, which, starting from its winter quarters at Lebanon, Connecticut, had made a covering march by a more southerly route to protect the main forces from a surprise attack. The combined forces then moved on to North Castle (Camp No. 13), where they remained July 3-5, and thence to Phillipsburg (Camp No. 14), where, on July 6, the French and American armies united. The consequences of this junction remind one, as Ambassador Jusserand once said, "of Perette and her milk pot in La Fontaine's Fables"—referring to the fact that Cornwallis and Clinton were making a failure of the campaign. The French in their progress to this point had encountered many difficulties because of the heat and lack of provisions. Yet, according to Abbé Robin, a chaplain, there were fewer invalids than if the men had remained in garrison, a fact which he attributed to the precaution taken of drinking cider and of mixing rum with the drinking water.<sup>4</sup>

Phillipsburg, situated slightly east of Dobbs Ferry and about three miles from the Hudson, between Sprain Brook and the Bronx River, was at that time a community consisting of only a church, a tavern, two mills, one dwelling house, and a fish house. Some of the authorities say that part of the French army camped on the near-by

<sup>1</sup> James B. Perkins, *France in the American Revolution* (Boston and New York, 1911), 351.

<sup>2</sup> *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, II (1878), 247.

<sup>3</sup> The numbers given to the camp sites mentioned in this paper are those given on a manuscript map in the Rochambeau Papers in the Library of Congress, "Côte de York-town à Boston, Marches de l'Armée," 1782. Camp sites Numbers 1-11 on the march to Yorktown were in New England. That portion of the map showing the route and camp sites described in this paper is here reproduced. In this reproduction, for the purpose of greater legibility the original numerals designating the camp sites have been blotted out and larger numerals drawn in.

<sup>4</sup> Abbé Robin, *New Travels through North-America*, Philip Freneau, Translator (Boston, 1784), 29-30.

Greenburgh Hills, across the Bronx River from White Plains. Rochambeau made his headquarters in the Taylor (later Odell) residence, where a good many dinners and dances were held.

While the French were at Phillipsburg, several *fourrages* (commando raids we would call them now) were made into Morrisania, and on one of these expeditions Baron de Closen, who acted as interpreter for both generals, lost his hat and went back under fire to rescue it. He is said to have remarked: "A false vanity made me think more of the military derisive proverb, 'Ah, il a perdu son chapeau' than of the danger." His comrades laughed at him, but Washington said: "Dear Baron, this French proverb is not yet known among our army, but your cool behaviour during the danger will be."<sup>1</sup>

Until mid-August Washington had as his main concern an operation against the British in New York. This had been the first choice for the season's campaign agreed upon at his conference with Rochambeau at Wethersfield the preceding May. The alternative then proposed was a combined Franco-American military and naval campaign against Cornwallis. By August 14 Washington had come to the conclusion that an attack on New York was not feasible. At the same time, due to the turn of events in Virginia, he had high hopes that, given the assistance of a French fleet, a southern campaign would be successful.<sup>2</sup>

Such was the purpose in view when both the French and American armies left Phillipsburg on August 19. The first objective was to effect a crossing of the Hudson, King's Ferry being the spot chosen. The Americans, bolstered by \$20,000 in cash supplied from French funds, marched there by the most direct route, arriving on the twenty-first and crossing the river the same day. The French first made a retrograde march to North Castle, a feint, according to Abbé Robin, to deceive the British and the American Tories of the region.<sup>3</sup> They then proceeded to a spot near Crompond (Camp No. 16), a place which Claude Blanchard, the efficient Commissary General, found too full of Tories for his liking. Some of the French artillery, preceding the infantry, went on to King's Ferry in time to

<sup>1</sup> Clarence W. Bowen, "A French Officer with Washington and Rochambeau," *Century Magazine*, LXXIII (February, 1907), 534.

<sup>2</sup> *The Diaries of George Washington, 1748-1799*, John C. Fitzpatrick, Editor, II (Boston and New York, 1925), 254.

<sup>3</sup> Robin, *New Travels*, 36.

cross the Hudson on the twenty-first, but it was the following day before the rest of the French forces arrived, pitched camp (No. 17), and began to cross the river. The undertaking was a difficult one, requiring four days (August 22–25), but from all accounts it was carried out in a bold and scientific manner. The most attractive description is that given by John A. Stevens:

Washington watched the crossing of the allied forces from a marquee prepared for him at Verplanck's Point by the French officers; a brilliant pageant it was he witnessed. The broad stream glittering in the sunlight, flecked with innumerable boats bearing their martial array, in continuous line from Verplanck's Point, where the American colors waved from the little post of Fort Lafayette, to the beach beneath the guns of Stony Point. The chivalry of France, the war-worn veteran, de Rochambeau, the elegant and learned de Chastellux, the brilliant brothers de Vioménil, followed by their staffs, in which rode the flower of French nobility, Dukes, Barons, Knights and Squires of high degree. The reading of their names sounds like a page from the Chronicles of Froissart.<sup>1</sup>

The French now headed for Princeton, pitching camps (Nos. 18–23) on the way at Haverstraw and Suffern, New York, then, crossing the Pompton River three times, at Pompton, Whippany (four miles east of Morristown), Bullion's Tavern (now Liberty Corner), and Somerset Court House (now Millstone), New Jersey. At this point the American troops were again strapped, and Washington reported that they were showing signs of discontent. "A little hard money," he believed, "would put them in proper temper. Part will be better than none."<sup>2</sup> Again France was able to come to their assistance, this time with 2,500,000 livres which fortunately had just arrived in Boston, sent over by the King. Discontent ceased, and the armies were thereby set in motion again.

A nineteenth-century writer describes the impression made by the French soldiers on their march through New Jersey. ". . . The passage of the French divisions . . . excited the liveliest interest among the Jersey people. The allies' right column consisted of Lauzun's legion; the regiment Bourbonnais, uniformed in black turned up with red; the Royal Deux-Ponts, in white broadcloth coats faced with green; and the heavy artillery, the men of which were uni-

<sup>1</sup> John A. Stevens, "The Route of the Allies from King's Ferry to the Head of Elk," *Magazine of American History*, v (July, 1880), 6.

<sup>2</sup> DeB. Randolph Keim, *Rochambeau, A Commemoration by the Congress of the United States of America of the Services of the French Auxiliary Forces in the War of Independence* (Washington, 1907), 418.



formed in blue with white facings. The left column of the French army contained all the stores and baggage, together with the regiments Saintonge and Soissonais. . . ."<sup>1</sup> The same writer gives a rather gushing picture of our allies as they marched through Somerset County. "The view of such perfect phalanxes, thronging helms and thick array of waving banners was a new military experience . . . and when the *tambour-majors*, resplendent in *panache*, aiguillette and tinsel, flourished their ponderous batons, making the hills and valleys vocal with the melody of the Gallic bands, the acme of warlike splendor seemed to have been reached."<sup>2</sup> The Jersey people marveled at the "brave show" made by the Duc de Lauzun's Legion. The hussars, especially, were "sparkling with life and activity." Their officers were "all tall young men with handsome faces and noble bearings" and made a superb appearance "mounted on fine horses, richly caparisoned." Their mustaches seem to have aroused much interest. These "laughter-loving *beaux sabreurs*" excited the hearts of the American girls, and easily secured for themselves partners for a dance.<sup>3</sup>

The Comte de Fersen, the good-looking Swedish officer, nobleman, friend of the French Queen, and aide-de-camp of Rochambeau, who came over with the French army, spoke of New Jersey, in his letters to his father (who also served with the French leader), as one of the "finest and most highly cultivated provinces of America."<sup>4</sup> Baron de Closen, of decidedly German ancestry, but a loyal Frenchman, referred to the crossing of this state as a "fête," adding that he considered it the garden spot of this country—"pays de Cocagne."

The French reached Princeton (Camp No. 24) on August 31. The camp there was a little west of the old village, along Stony Brook. A map sent to me by Mr. Julian P. Boyd of the Princeton University Library indicates clearly its location, extending across the former Trenton and Mercer Traction Line and beyond or south of the university and the Princeton Golf Club, in what is known now as the Princeton Battle Field. Another detachment probably bivouacked in front of Nassau Hall.

<sup>1</sup> Andrew D. Mellick, Jr., *The Story of an Old Farm; or, Life in New Jersey in the Eighteenth Century* (Somerville, New Jersey, 1889), 536.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 538.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 539.

<sup>4</sup> "Letters of De Fersen, Aid-de-Camp to Rochambeau, Written to His Father in Sweden, 1780-1782," *Magazine of American History*, III (July, 1789), 438.

Princeton University possesses the original maps and diaries of Alexandre Berthier, who was chief map maker for Rochambeau and subsequently was made a marshal by Napoleon.<sup>1</sup> The diaries give detailed accounts of the marches, the roads taken, the churches and houses passed, but it is difficult to follow the route in the changed topography of today.

Trenton, the next stopping place (Camp No. 25), was mentioned by Baron Cromot Dubourg, one of Rochambeau's many aides, Assistant Quartermaster General, and, later, Maréchal de Camp, as being similar to a large French village.<sup>2</sup> While here the French troops bivouacked, according to one authority, south of the town of that day, below the house of Colonel John Cox (now known as the William Trent house), south of Ferry Road (now Ferry Street) and between the present South Broad Street and the Delaware River.

On September 1 our allies from overseas crossed the Delaware into Pennsylvania at Morrisville, where Blanchard reported the waters "neither broad nor deep," but below the ford "as broad as the Loire below La Fosse."<sup>3</sup> The route then lay through Bristol, a fashionable watering place until Saratoga Springs came to the fore. Camp No. 26 was set up near the Red Lion Inn in Bensalem Township, Pennsylvania, the building itself serving as the headquarters for the officers.<sup>4</sup>

From here the French set out on September 3 and 4 for Philadelphia (Camp No. 27). The exact camp site, according to my correspondent, Mr. James E. Gibson, was "a mile from the town towards the banks of the river, in Centre Square, where the City Hall is now located, midway between the Delaware and the Schuylkill." A bronze tablet in the inside court of City Hall records the encampment.

The city had by this time been regained by the Americans, Con-

<sup>1</sup> One of Berthier's brother officers is quoted as having carried on this conversation in regard to him:

"Where is Alexandre?" asked one. "I haven't seen him since we left camp this morning."

"Behind with the rear guard," answered another, "mapping and writing as usual. Tonight, in camp, he'll tell us just how many miles and kilometres we've marched, and how many stones might be taken from the road to make the path easier. And when we are asleep, he'll be writing in his journal or project book. A strange man is Alexandre. His pencil and his note books are his gods."

<sup>2</sup> "Diary of a French Officer [Baron Cromot Dubourg?]," *Magazine of American History*, iv (May, 1880), 378.

<sup>3</sup> Claude Blanchard, *Journal*, William Duane, Translator, and Thomas Balch, Editor (Albany, 1876), 135.

<sup>4</sup> This is one of the few Revolutionary inns still standing.

gress was sitting, and everyone, except the Tories and Quakers, was eager to welcome the two allied armies. Washington and Rochambeau, with their suites, arrived near the end of August, ahead of their armies, and received, quite naturally, an ovation as they alighted at the City Tavern. Abbé Robin gives this description of the entrance of the troops a few days later:

The arrival of the French army . . . was more like a triumph than simply a passing through the place. The troops made a halt about a quarter of a league from the city, and in an instant were dressed as elegantly as ever the soldiers of a garrison were on the day of review: they then marched through the town, with the military music playing before them, which is always particularly pleasing to the Americans . . . and the ladies appeared at their windows in their most brilliant attire. . . . All Philadelphia was astonished to see people, who had endured the fatigues of a long journey, so ruddy and handsome, and even wondered that there could possibly be *Frenchmen* of so genteel an appearance.<sup>1</sup>

Cromot Dubourg spoke of the pink trimmings of the Soissonnais and their grenadier caps with their great white plumes, which "astonished the beauties of the city," bringing a flutter to many a heart.<sup>2</sup> What a contrast to the poorly clad soldiers of our army! The French army marched to the State House, where Congress and the French Minister, La Luzerne, were assembled, the members saluting the flags as they passed by.

On the following day the Soissonnais performed a drill that was much admired, and, according to Blanchard, even the Tories agreed that the appearance and discipline of the troops was fine; but they spoiled the compliment by adding that of course the regiment was recruited in England. The Quakers went so far as to send a deputation, which declared, however, that it was not the military qualities of the French they admired, but the fact that the army lived in perfect order and discipline. Afterwards the French Minister was host at a turtle dinner at which "they drank all possible toasts."<sup>3</sup>

While in Philadelphia a French friend invited Washington to tea. It was brought into the room in a large soup tureen, with a silver soup ladle with which it was put into soup plates. According to Tronçon Ducoudray, a French officer of Brittany, the General in no way showed his amusement at the mistake.

<sup>1</sup> Robin, *New Travels*, 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Magazine of American History*, IV (May, 1880), 383.

<sup>3</sup> The traditional number of toasts on important occasions was thirteen, representing, of course, each state.

Rochambeau, with the First Division of the army, left Philadelphia on September 5 for Chester. Here Washington, who had preceded him, told him, with an excitement that made more impression on Rochambeau than did the news itself, about the arrival of the Comte de Grasse and the French fleet in Chesapeake Bay.<sup>1</sup> The camp site was at Marcus Hook (Camp No. 28), four miles beyond Chester.

Wilmington, Delaware, came next. The camp there (No. 29) was on the west side of the town, facing Lancaster Pike and extending nearly to Fourth Street. The only unusual incident that I have been able to find is the theft of some kegs of French crowns. The culprit, said to have been an American of some standing, broke a hole in the wall of the house used as headquarters of the French, but was detected.<sup>2</sup>

The next stop (Camp No. 30) was at Elkton (known in Revolutionary days as Head of Elk), at the very head of Chesapeake Bay, where both divisions of the army, which had left Philadelphia a day apart, were reunited. Here difficulties really began, since, in view of the impossibility of procuring enough transports for all, it was necessary to divide the French troops. Only the vanguards of both armies, twelve hundred men or so, including the grenadiers and chasseurs of the Soissonnais and Bourbonnais regiments<sup>3</sup> and Lauzun's infantry, took the water route; the remainder went on by land. Those who were ordered to proceed by land were at first reluctant, but later, when they learned of the rough sea passage and the drowning of half a dozen soldiers, they congratulated themselves.

The first camp of the land contingent was at Susquehanna Ferry (Camp No. 31), near Havre de Grace. The Comte de Dumas was entrusted with the difficult task of seeing to it that the men and equipment were ferried across the river. The next three marches, to Bush (Camp No. 32) in Harford County, Whitemarsh (Camp No. 33), and then Baltimore (Camp No. 34), were uneventful.<sup>4</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> "He [Washington] put aside his character as arbiter of North America and contented himself for the moment with that of a citizen, happy at the good fortune of his country." Comte Guillaume de Deux-Ponts, *My Campaigns in America: A Journal*, Samuel A. Green, Editor (Boston, 1868), 126n.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Montgomery, *Reminiscences of Wilmington, in Familiar Village Tales, Ancient and New* (Philadelphia, 1851), 287.

<sup>3</sup> Rochambeau's son led the Bourbonnais.

<sup>4</sup> Bush Harford has a marker, No. 140; Whitemarsh has a marker, No. 127.

three days' stay at Baltimore, September 13-15, was interesting. The city impressed the visiting army favorably, the contrast between Baltimore's straight streets and "the devious highways of Paris" being particularly striking, and the troops were glad to meet here a good many people who spoke French well. The camp site, an important one, has been described to me by Mr. J. Alexis Shriver, former Corresponding Secretary of the Maryland Historical Society, who has assisted me a great deal. It was on a hill, part of the Howard estate known as Howard's Park, then outside the city limits, now in the heart of the city and occupied by the Roman Catholic Cathedral. Two tablets have been erected to mark the spot, one on the Cathedral grounds and the other on the Calvert Hall School. The late George Forbes, who was familiar with Baltimore history, owned a playbill dated September 20, 1781, with the following manuscript memorandum: "The band of music that was provided for this night's performance belonged to the Regiment of the Count de Chalour, who with the French Army are here on the march to Virginia to attack Lord Cornwallis, posted at Yorktown."

These men were evidently lagging behind their fellows, for the main army left Baltimore on September 16, heading for Alexandria and camping en route at Spurrier's Tavern (Camp No. 35), a few miles west of Elk Ridge and about fifteen miles from Baltimore on the road to Washington.<sup>1</sup> Then, however, "upon the news of the arrival of the Romulus ship of war, with two frigates and a number of transports," they turned off toward Annapolis.<sup>2</sup> Between Spurrier's Tavern and Annapolis they camped at Scott's Plantation (Camp No. 36). At Annapolis, according to Mr. Richard J. Duval, former Librarian of the United States Naval Academy, the French had one encampment on the banks of Dorsey's (now College) Creek, and part of the detachment occupied what is now Worden Field at the Naval Academy, the parade ground of the midshipmen. A simple marker in the northwest corner of the field records their stay there. Other troops bivouacked near by in what is now the athletic field of St. John's College, and a bronze relief marks the spot where some of the French who died, probably of smallpox, were buried.

The visitors were very much impressed by the Annapolis women,

<sup>1</sup> The exact location is not certain. My correspondent, Mr. J. Alexis Shriver, believes the inn may have been the Van Horn Tavern, near Major Snowden's "Montpelier."

<sup>2</sup> Robin, *New Travels*, 45.

who were noted for their beauty. Abbé Robin gossips about them in his diary: "Female luxury here exceeds what is known in the provinces of France: a French hair dresser is a man of importance among them, and it is said, a certain dame here hires one of that craft at a thousand crowns a year salary."<sup>1</sup> The ladies, in their turn, were no less impressed by the French visitors, as can be seen from the sentiments expressed by Henrietta Hill Ogle in the spring of 1781, when the number of Frenchmen on hand was far less than in September: "This town is so dull, it would be intolerable were it not for the officers. . . 'Tis all marquises, counts, etc. . . I like the French better every hour. The divine Marquis de la Fayette is in town, and is quite the thing."<sup>2</sup>

Leaving Annapolis on September 21, a large part of the troops sailed down Chesapeake Bay for Virginia, the voyage of three days being uneventful. At the York River they joined the French fleet. The wagon train, horses, and equipages continued the long land march by a circuitous route to Williamsburg via John Easton's (Camp No. 38), Agahouse (Camp No. 39), Georgetown (Camp No. 40), Alexandria (Camp No. 41), Colchester (Camp No. 42), an unidentified site (Camp No. 43) on Queen Creek, a branch of the Potomac, near Dumfries, Peyton's Tavern (Camp No. 44), Fredericksburg (Camp No. 45), Colonel Dangerfield's (Camp No. 46), Bowling Green (Camp No. 47), Lynch's Tavern (Camp No. 48), Hanover Town (Camp No. 49), Hartfield (Camp No. 50), and Bird's Tavern (Camp No. 51)—fifteen marches in all.

Washington and Rochambeau reached Williamsburg on September 14, in advance of the troops coming down from the north. A salute was fired as the two generals arrived. Later in the day there was a review of the allied forces already assembled and a banquet at which "an elegant band of music played an introductory part of a French opera, signifying the happiness of the family, when blessed with the presence of their father, and their great dependence upon him."<sup>3</sup> The contingent which had sailed from Head of Elk on September 9 reached its destination on the twenty-third, and those who

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>2</sup> Kate M. Rowland, "Maryland Women and French Officers," *Atlantic Monthly*, LXVI (November, 1890), 653.

<sup>3</sup> Colonel Richard Butler's Journal, quoted in Edwin M. Stone, *Our French Allies* (Providence, 1884), 412n.

had journeyed by water from Annapolis arrived on the twenty-fourth. The former landed at Jamestown Island, at Burwell's Ferry, now known as Kingsmill's Wharf, situated about a mile below the mouth of Archer's Hope, and at Queen Mary's Port, while the latter landed at Hog's Ferry, near Jamestown. At Trebell's Landing, on the James River, five and a half miles southeast of Williamsburg, there is a marker recording the landing of the stores and artillery of both armies.

There are interesting connections between Williamsburg (Camp No. 52) and the French army both before and after the siege of Yorktown, particularly those centering around the College of William and Mary. The President's house, first used as Cornwallis's headquarters, subsequently served the same purpose for the French Surgeon General, Jean François Robillard, during the siege. While thus occupied it was accidentally burned, but the French, later on, took it upon themselves to repair it from their General Army Fund. French architecture is noticeable in some of the very sloping roofs of the building as now restored. The Wren building at the college served as the main hospital of the French army.<sup>1</sup> Just before the army proceeded northward the next summer, there occurred an event out of the ordinary in the life of the college, Rochambeau and a number of other distinguished French officers being among those in attendance. Doctor Coste, the first physician of the French army, delivered a medical oration in Latin. The President congratulated him and thanked the allies for their great assistance to the American cause, and at the same time gave him an honorary degree. Some years later, the King of France sent over two hundred French books, most of which were carelessly left in someone's cellar and were destroyed by fire. The few remaining are on exhibition in the college museum.<sup>2</sup>

The French troops remained at Williamsburg until September 28,

<sup>1</sup> Another hospital was at Vineyard Tract, half a mile east of the town. I have among my papers the interesting map of Williamsburg by Colonel Jean-Nicholas Desandrouins, a distinguished engineer in the French army, which shows the locations of sixteen important places connected with the visit of the two allied armies, including the camp sites. This French officer commanded the corps of engineers with the title of brigadier general, but was taken ill at Williamsburg and obliged to relinquish his duties. Charles N. Gabriel, *Le Maréchal de Camp Desandrouins, 1729-1792; Guerre du Canada 1756-1760; Guerre de l'Indépendance Américaine, 1780-1782* (Verdun, 1887).

<sup>2</sup> On October 18, 1931, the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the surrender of Cornwallis, Marshal Pétain dedicated an elaborate tablet in this building commemorating the 124 French soldiers who died there and in the vicinity of Williamsburg.

when they advanced toward Yorktown (Camp No. 53), their arrival there in assigned positions marking the completion of a 756-mile march from Newport, Rhode Island. After the successful conclusion of the campaign against Cornwallis they proceeded, about the middle of November, to their winter encampments, dividing among Hampton, Yorktown, Half-Way House (between these two places), Gloucester, Jamestown, Williamsburg, and West Point. Rochambeau probably had two headquarters, one at Williamsburg and the other at Newport. Contemporary comments indicate that the presence of so many foreigners in Virginia during the winter of 1781-1782 caused considerable friction with the resident English population. One writer, commenting on the situation at Yorktown, complained: "Some of the Inhabitants are turn'd out and others with their family confin'd to a room, a situation little better than a prison. . . . unless some measure is adopted to convince these Gentlemen that they were sent to assist, not to distress us, we in this part of the country may bid adieu to liberty, property and every thing dear to man."<sup>1</sup> Another said: ". . . there is a degree of harshness in a soldier's coming and taking a man's house, that our people have not been used to, nor can they put up with it quietly." Yet he admitted he would be doing the French army "great injustice" if he did not at the same time say they were "a sett of very orderly men."<sup>2</sup>

Rochambeau found the late spring in Virginia very warm, and the heat causing a good deal of illness among his troops, he decided to join the Americans near the Hudson. The First Division of the army accordingly started north on July 1, 1782, each of the three remaining divisions getting under way at one-day intervals. The order was as follows: the First Division, the Bourbonnais Regiment, under the Chevalier de Chastellux; the Second Division, the Deux-Ponts Regiment, led by the Comte de Deux-Ponts; the Third Division, the Soissonais Regiment, under the Vicomte de Vioménil; the Fourth Division, the Saintonge Regiment, led by the Comte de Custine. Lauzun's Legion composed the advance guard. The troops were to unite at Baltimore, and all were to proceed the entire distance by land, over the same route taken by those who had marched southward. A detachment of four hundred soldiers was left at York-

<sup>1</sup> William Reynolds to Governor Thomas Nelson, November 16, 1781, *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, II, 601.

<sup>2</sup> David Ross to Colonel William Davies, November 17, 1781, *ibid.*, 608.



town to keep guard. The marches were short, and, on account of the heat, were usually made during the night. On the way to the Rappahannock River there were ten halts, either at or near the following places: Drinking Spring (Camp No. 1), Bird's Tavern (Camp No. 2), not far from Monticello, Ratelof House (Camp No. 3), New Kent (Camp No. 4), New Castle (Camp No. 5), Hanover Town (Camp No. 6), Hanover Court House (Camp No. 7), Brink's (or Brunk's) Bridge (Camp No. 8), Bowling Green (Camp No. 9), and a location (Camp No. 10) twelve miles south of Fredericksburg, between Todd's Ordinary and Charlestown.

The army passed through Fredericksburg on July 14, crossed the Rappahannock, which the French said greatly resembled the Seine, and camped at Falmouth (Camp No. 11). Thence the route led to Peyton's Tavern (Camp No. 12) in Stafford County, the artillery resting at Green's Tavern, to Dumfries (Camp No. 13), and to Colchester (Camp No. 14). While at Colchester, Custine, Blanchard, and seven other French officers took the opportunity to visit Mrs. Washington at Mount Vernon. Custine presented her with a set of china made at his own factory in Lorraine. Blanchard declared the house to be the handsomest he had yet seen in this country. According to the latter, Custine remarked that it "was necessary to rejoin the flags of Mars and to leave those of Venus—(a very sad separation)."

The next halt after Colchester was at Alexandria (Camp No. 15). Here the troops camped on the ground formerly occupied by Braddock, and "the most elegant and handsome young ladies in the neighborhood danced with the officers on the turf, in the middle of the camp, to the sound of military music."<sup>1</sup> The route then led into Maryland, passing through Georgetown (Camp No. 16) and Bladensburg (Camp No. 17). The next camp was at Rose Tavern (Camp No. 18), the troops proceeding on July 24 and 25 to Spurrier's Tavern (Camp No. 19).

From this place the French went on to Baltimore (Camp No. 20), where probably the same camp site as on the southward march was used—"a charming position in the middle of a wood near a town," where the band played every evening, "people flocking there to hear the music." One contemporary source, however, places the camp site on the other side of the town on the Trenton road.

<sup>1</sup> François Jean Chastellux, *Travels in North-America, in the Years 1780-81-82* (New York, 1828), 3047.

In Baltimore, which Blanchard rated next to Boston and Philadelphia in importance, the French met with a most enthusiastic reception,<sup>1</sup> and there were flattering exchanges between the merchants and Rochambeau. On August 5 he held a review of the army. A French officer writes of this event: "I could not suppress my astonishment at the beautiful appearance [of the soldiers] and what appeared even more surprising, was that the troops could not have made a better showing even in France. . . ." Carriages containing "ladies, perfectly turned out," formed a semicircle. This diarist tells of the beautiful figures of the women, their tiny feet, and their hair done in the French style, "falling in tresses on beautiful shoulders, and on other charms of an alabaster whiteness!" At these maneuvers one of the Soissonnais Regiment accidentally shot a woman in the thigh, thereby causing a great deal of trouble to the commanding officer.

Seven more marches brought the army from Baltimore to Philadelphia. The first three halts were made at Whitmarsh (Camp No. 21), Bush (or Burchtown, as Blanchard called it) at a somewhat different spot (Camp No. 22) than on the journey southward, and Perryville (Camp No. 23) on the Susquehanna, some of the soldiers resting at the place where they had crossed the river on the way to Yorktown or at Havre de Grace. While taking a walk, one of the French officers was pleased to see a village being built near by, to be known by the name Frenchtown. Elkton (Camp No. 24) came next, then Newport (Camp No. 25), near the Delaware River, and a spot (Camp No. 26) near Chester, Pennsylvania.

On September 3 and 4, 1782, the last of the troops reached Philadelphia (Camp No. 27). The city was no less hearty in its greeting to the returning Frenchmen than when they had passed through the preceding September. Doubtless people were still talking about the grand ball given by the French Minister on May 31 to celebrate the birth of the Dauphin. "For some days prior to the entertainment, hairdressers were retained, shops were crowded with customers, and the ability of tailors, milliners and mantua-makers was tested to the

<sup>1</sup> One of my Baltimore correspondents, Mr. Carroll Dulaney, wrote me of an amusing incident. The French Consul General there, the Chevalier d'Annemours, while entertaining Rochambeau at his home on Harford Road, near the French army encampment, decided to erect a monument to Columbus. For many years afterwards, owing to the similarity of the words *cheval* and *Chevalier*, there existed a curious legend to the effect that it was placed there in memory of some horse.

utmost. The engagements of the gentlemen of the comb were so numerous, that on the morning of the eventful day, many ladies were obliged to have their heads dressed between four and six o'clock."<sup>1</sup> The French army supplied the cuisine with thirty cooks. A private room was provided for some Quaker ladies, with a gauze curtain through which they could view the entertainment without being noticed, the reason being that their simple dress would not permit them to join the assembly.

There were nine encampments on the way from Philadelphia to the Hudson. It must be remembered that the war had not yet been won, because the enemy still held New York City, and therefore the armies had to proceed cautiously and do much reconnoitering. The first halt was at the Red Lion Inn (Camp No. 28). Thence the French proceeded through Bristol and ferried across the Delaware, under the superintendence of Colonel Clement Biddle, Quartermaster General of the American Army, to Trenton (Camp No. 29), where, according to a local newspaper, camps were pitched on the "Commons" below the village and along the main road. The barracks occupied on their earlier visit were used either for housing or as hospitals. The army was now concentrated into two instead of four divisions.

There is little recorded in the French officers' diaries of the marches through New Jersey and New York to the place where the Hudson was crossed. The camp sites were near Princeton (Camp No. 30), at Somerset (Camp No. 31), Bullion's Tavern (Camp No. 32), Whippany (Camp No. 33), Pompton (Camp No. 34), Suffern (Camp No. 35), and Haverstraw (Camp No. 36), overlooking the Hudson.

After crossing the river to King's Ferry on September 14, the French were met by the American army, which was under arms to receive Rochambeau at Verplanck's Point. The Comte de Dumas describes the meeting as a real "family fête." The Americans remained at King's Ferry, while the French took ground at Peekskill.<sup>2</sup> On September 24 they moved on to Crompond (Camp No. 37), camping probably on what is now the Fair Grounds. From here they could repair to New York if necessary. On October 22-23, having

<sup>1</sup> Stone, *Our French Allies*, 506-507.

<sup>2</sup> *The Writings of George Washington*, John C. Fitzpatrick, Editor, xxv (Washington, 1938), 181.

received orders to proceed to Boston to embark his troops for the West Indies, Rochambeau broke camp and began the last stage of his march. Hunt's Tavern (Camp No. 38) was the first stop; thence the army proceeded to Salem (Camp No. 39), their last camp before reaching the Connecticut border. Desandrouins, writing about the experiences of the Bourbonnais Regiment, mentions the great difficulty they had in getting the wagons over the Croton River. The remainder of the route eastward was virtually the same as that followed the year before on the westward march. The troops arrived in Boston (the fifty-fourth camp from Yorktown) on December 3, 4, and 5, and sailed for the West Indies the day before Christmas.

The enthusiasm of our French allies, their knowledge of warfare, their splendid coöperation with the officers and men of the American army enabled us to win the victory. We are inclined to minimize the aid they contributed to the cause of our freedom, and are even inclined sometimes to believe that we ourselves, almost alone, brought about the victory. Moreover, very few of us today realize the importance of this aid in actual figures. It is safe to say that, exclusive of their navy, the French had between eight and nine thousand men at Yorktown, while the total number of French in the war, in the military, naval, and transport services, has been estimated at 47,989 and 96 vessels of all kinds,<sup>1</sup> a figure appreciated by few of us in this country. Whittier expresses France's assistance in these lines:

From Yorktown's ruins, ranked and still,  
Two lines stretch far o'er vale and hill:  
Who curbs his steed at the head of one?  
Hark! the low murmur: Washington!  
Who bends his keen approving glance  
Where down the gorgeous line of France  
Shine knightly star and plume of snow?  
Thou too art victor, Rochambeau!

<sup>1</sup> Keim, *Rochambeau*, 508.