



# National Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association

W3R-US.org ★ PO Box 38255 ★ Baltimore, MD 21231

The Honorable Richard M. Onderko  
Mayor, Borough of Manville  
325 N Main Street  
Manville, NJ 08835

January 19, 2026

Dear Mayor Onderko :

The surrender of Lord Cornwallis to General George Washington and the Comte de Rochambeau at Yorktown on October 19, 1781, rang in the end of the American War of Independence. In the summer and fall of that year, thousands of American and French forces had walked, ridden, and sailed almost 700 miles along the eastern seaboard. In 2009 Congress designated the land and sea-lanes through nine states from New England to Virginia the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail.

The hundreds of cities, towns and hamlets they passed through – we call them “Victory Towns” – stretch from Rhode Island through New York to Virginia. The Continental Army and its French allies marched from the cities of Newport and Providence, Rhode Island through Hartford, Connecticut; Trenton, New Jersey; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Wilmington, Delaware; and Baltimore, Maryland. And they marched through Manville, earning your city the designation as a “Victory Town.”

Hoping that the capture of New York City, center of British power in the nascent United States, would win American independence, Washington concentrated allied forces north of the city in July 1781. When a letter by French Admiral de Grasse brought news that he was sailing to the Chesapeake rather than New York City, Washington on August 14 decided to deploy to Virginia.

To keep the march hidden from Sir Henry Clinton in New York City, Washington ordered the construction of large ovens in Chatham to bake bread for the soldiers who presumably would lay siege to New York. To hide the scale of troop movements from British spies the allied armies crossed New Jersey in August 1781 on three parallel routes, thereby creating screens behind

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**Massachusetts ★ Rhode Island ★ Connecticut ★ New York ★ New Jersey  
★ Pennsylvania ★ Delaware ★ Maryland ★ Washington, DC ★ Virginia**

which the much larger French army marched to Trenton. The need to provide food, water, straw and firewood for the thousands of men and their animals on the march across war-ravaged New Jersey posed additional challenges that necessitated separate routes as well.

On August 28, units of the Continental Army under General Benjamin Lincoln set up tents at Springfield; the remainder of Washington's troops under Colonel John Lamb lay encamped at Chatham. French forces lay farther inland at Whippany. By late afternoon of August 29, Lincoln's column had reached Raritan Landing while Lamb encamped at Middlebrook and the First Division of French forces lay at on the English Farm at Liberty Corner.

Early on the morning of August 30, Colonel Lamb's column, some 550 men strong including the artillery park, stores, and a small wagon train, and maybe three dozen women and their children, marched from Middlebrook to Bound Brook, where they crossed the Raritan on Queen's Bridge. Next they followed the Millstone River which they crossed at Schenck's Mill, or Abraham Van Neste's Mill, into the Borough of Manville. From there they marched on Millstone River Road into Montgomery Township to Griggstown and Trenton. Meantime, troops under Lincoln stayed east of the Millstone, crossing at Kingston.

That same day of August 30, 1781, the First French Brigade marched from its camp at the English Farm down Newman's Lane to Finderne Avenue through Manville on Main Street, to its next campsite in Millstone Borough, then known as Somerset Court House. By the time the Second French Brigade had marched through Manville on August 31, around 600 American officers and soldiers accompanied by hundreds of horses and oxen as well as some 425 French officers with possibly as many as 1,000 servants, 4,500 soldiers, some 1,500 horses and 1,800 oxen, had marched through the Borough.

As the United States prepares to recognize its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026, the Victory Towns of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route have special reason to celebrate. During our founding era, they witnessed one of the great military maneuvers in American and World history, a march to a victory that helped create an independent United States of America, the world's longest enduring democracy.

Sincerely,



Dr. Robert Selig  
Trail Historian