

"No regular corps could have maintained its ground more firmly"

Site Documentation for the Battle of the Hook

October 3, 1781



2nd Public Meeting, TC Walker Education Center Auditorium
November 13, 2019



Project Team

Gloucester County

Katey Legg, Director, Gloucester Parks, Recreation and Tourism

Carol Steele, Assistant County Administrator



South River Heritage Consulting

- **Wade P. Catts, RPA**, Principal historical archeologist
- **Robert A. Selig, Ph.D.**, historian
- **Lt. Col. L.H. “Bucky” Burruss, USA (ret)**, local historian
- **Kevin Bradley**, GIS mapping



Project Goals

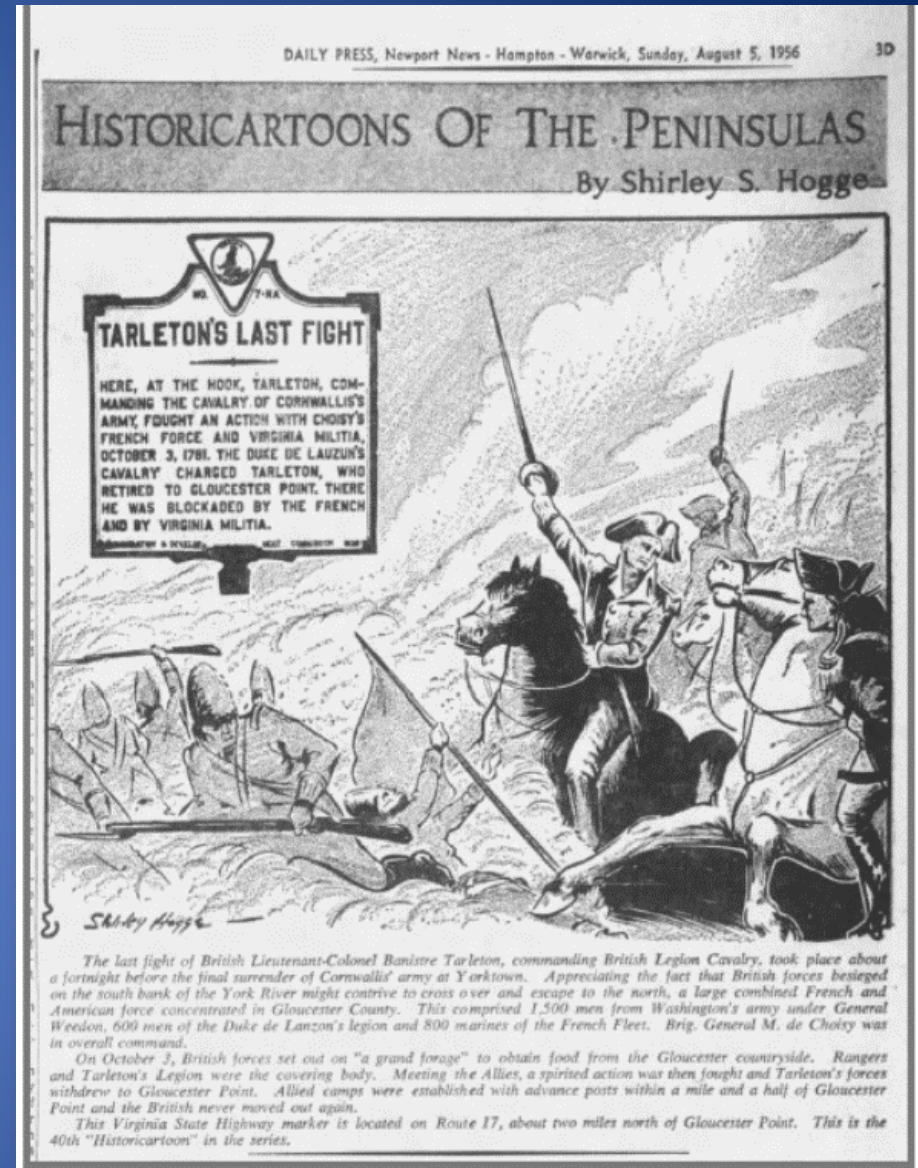
- Review Documentation (Historical Context)
- Field View (establish where and what condition)
- GIS Mapping (parcels, historical maps, aerials, etc.)
- Assess overall Site Integrity and Threats
- Assess potential of NRHP eligibility
- Develop Informational Brochure
- Prepare Documentation/Plan



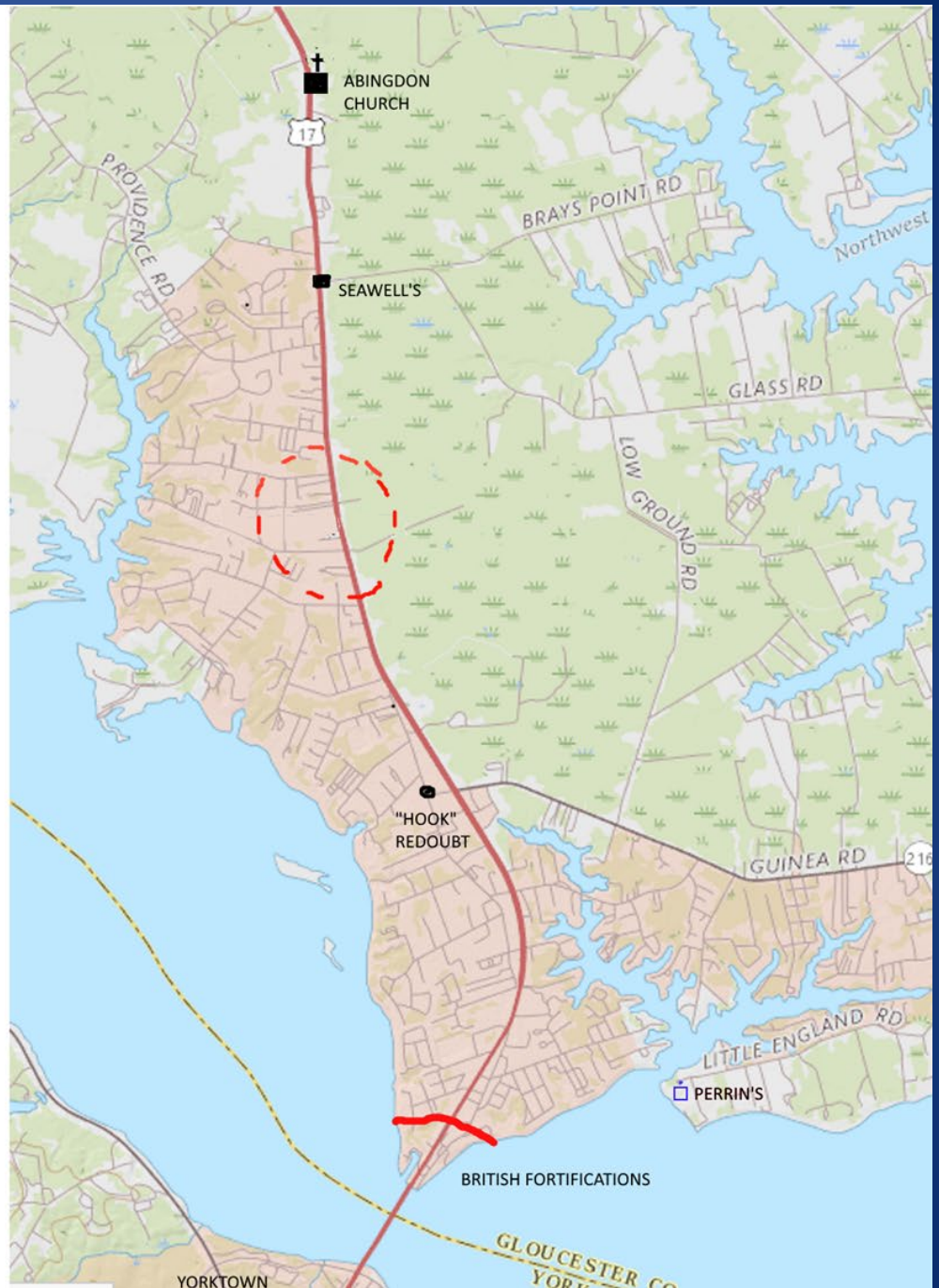
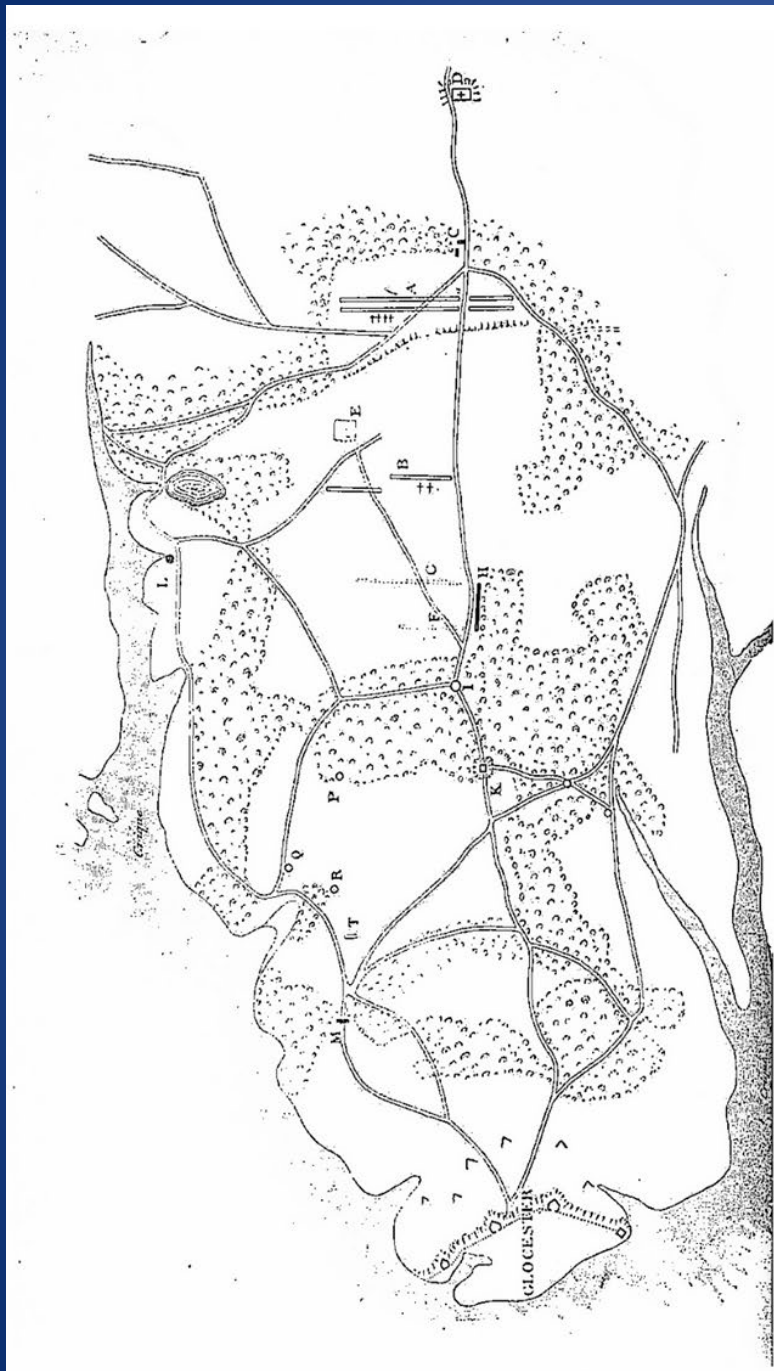
Current Historical Markers



Markers, intersection of Hook Road and Hayes Road



Daily Press (Newport News) August 5, 1956



Sources

- Secondary Sources
- Primary sources
 - pensions, letters, reports, diaries, public service claims, ships logs
- Historic Aerials & Maps
 - Gloucester Co. Plat Book
 - Du Perron Map
 - Siege Maps
 - 19th-20th c maps
- Historic Resources (Structures)
- Archaeological Collections
- Topography
- Landowners Knowledge
- Research of Others



Du Perron Map, 1781

"Environs de Gloucester", in *Journal particulier d'une campagne aux Indes Occidentales, 1780-1782*.
Firestone Library, Princeton University.

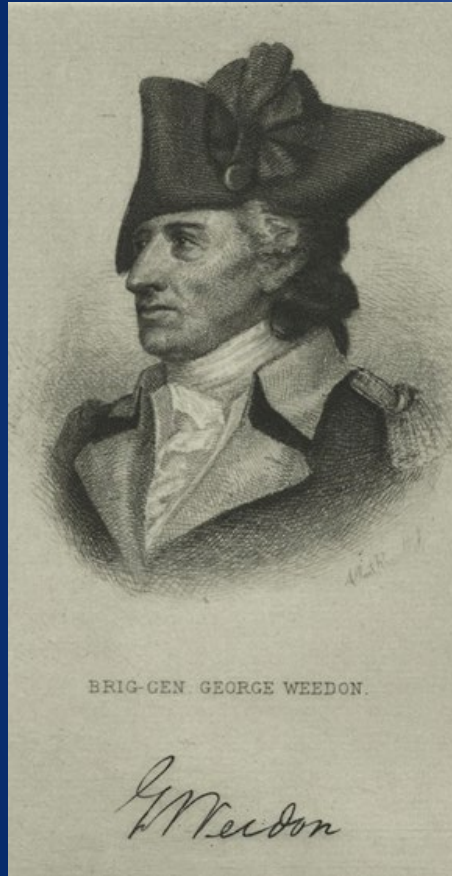


Joachim du Perron Comte de Revel
(or the Comte du Perron)

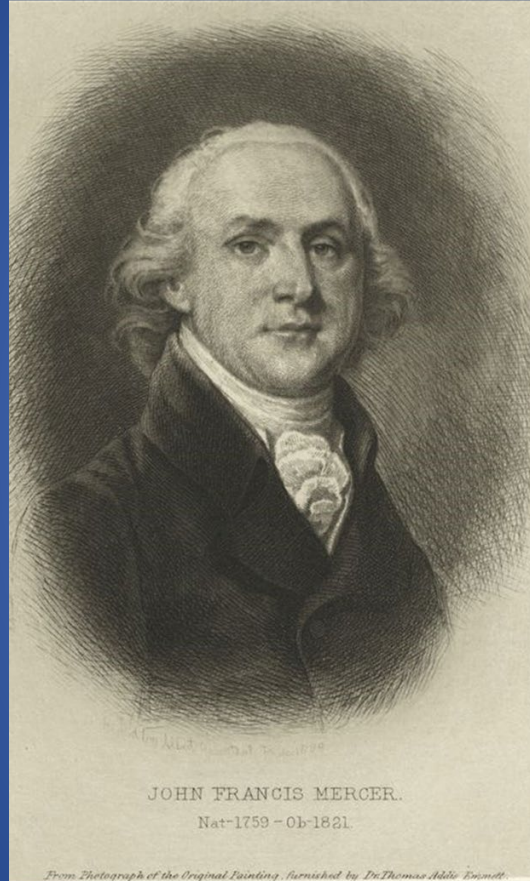


Invoyons par Gloucester.
A. Camp de St. Charles, les Français en camp.
Les Américains en camp.
B. Camp de la légion de Loup, les Français en camp.
C. Camp de la légion de Loup, les Français en camp.
D. Camp de la légion de Loup, les Français en camp.
E. Camp de la légion de Loup, les Français en camp.
F. Camp de la légion de Loup, les Français en camp.
G. Camp de la légion de Loup, les Français en camp.
H. Camp de la légion de Loup, les Français en camp.
I. Camp de la légion de Loup, les Français en camp.
J. Camp de la légion de Loup, les Français en camp.
K. Camp de la légion de Loup, les Français en camp.
L. Camp de la légion de Loup, les Français en camp.
M. Camp de la légion de Loup, les Français en camp.

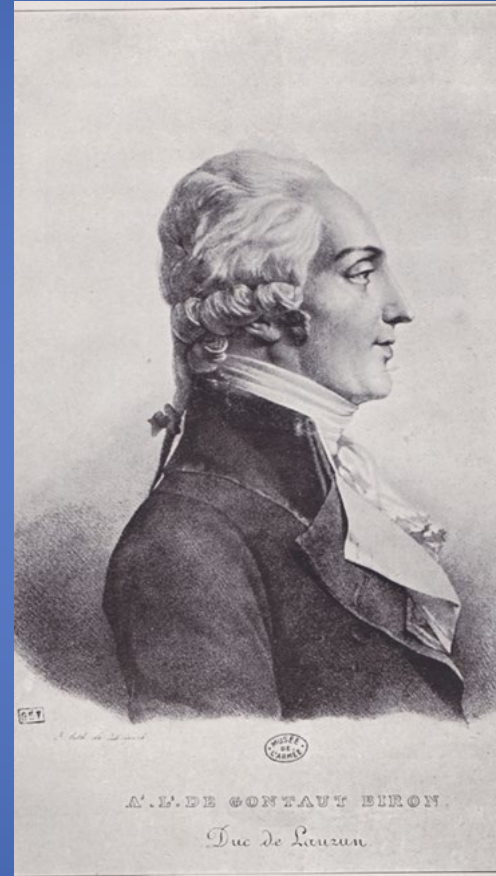
Allied Commanders



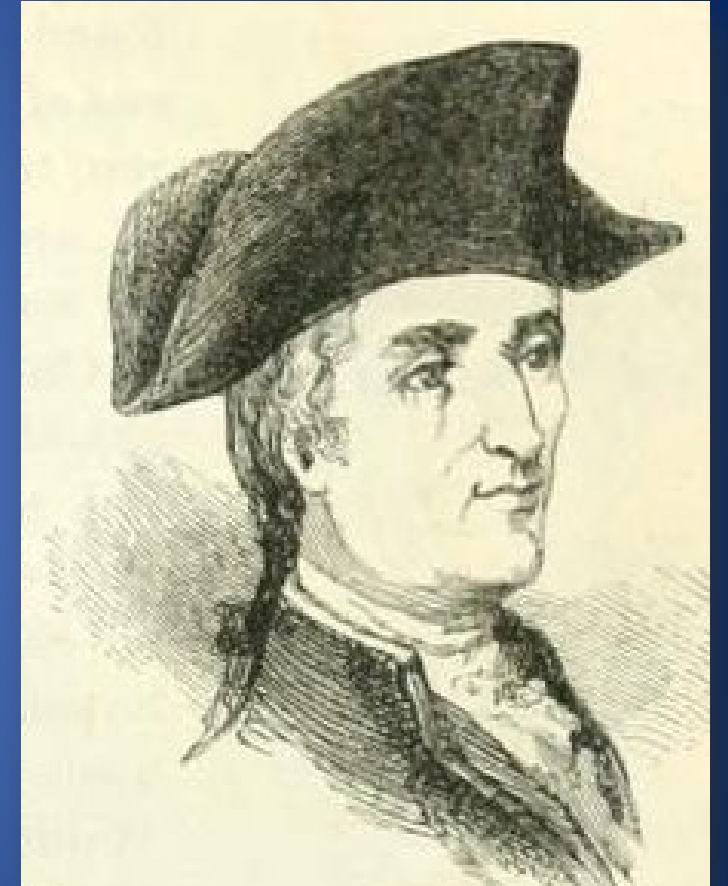
BG George Weedon



Col. John F. Mercer



Armand Louis de Gontaut,
Duc de Lauzun



BG Claude Gabriel de Choisy

Allied Forces Engaged



Mercer's Select Battalion of Grenadiers
(Virginia Militia)



Lauzun's Legion Cavalry
(Hussars)

Crown Forces Commanders



Lt. Col. Thomas Dundas
Gloucester Garrison
Commander



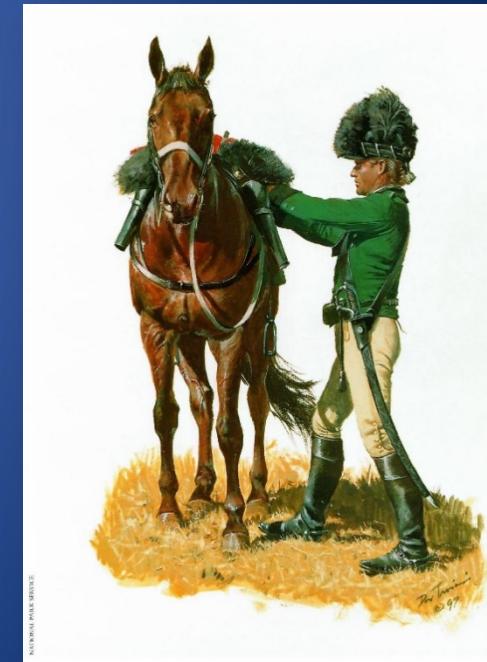
Captain Johann Ewald,
Hessian Field Jaeger Corps



Lt. Col Banastre Tarleton,
British Legion

Crown Forces

- British Legion/17th Light Dragoons
- Queen's Rangers (hussars & rangers)
- 23rd Regiment of Foot
- 80th Regiment of Foot
- Hessian Field Jager Corps
- North Carolina Loyalists



KOCSA Analysis

Military terrain assessment used by the US Army for tactical training and adopted by the ABPP

- Defining features – any feature mentioned in the battle accounts or shown on historic maps that potentially can be relocated on the ground.

Key Terrain

Observation /Fields of Fire

Cover/Concealment

Obstacles

Avenues of Approach/Retreat



Key Terrain

- Terrain feature that:
 - Dominates immediate area
 - Enhances defense or attack
 - Provides good observation, fields of fire
 - Maneuver choke point
 - Local control of surrounding area



High ground at Roane



Abingdon Church

Observation and Fields of Fire

- OBSERVATION
- Seeing the enemy
- Avoiding surprise



Intersection of Powhatan Drive and US 17

- FIELDS OF FIRE
- Where weapons may fire effectively (in range)
- No obstructions
- No dead ground
 - Places within range but not reachable with weaponry available



Cover and Concealment

- COVER
- Protection from enemy fire
 - Ditch, stream bank
 - Reverse slope (from direct fire)
 - Hedge, Fence, wall, building
 - Entrenchments



- CONCEALMENT
- Protection from Observation
 - Trees/woods
 - Reverse slope
 - Smoke, darkness, fog



Obstacles

- Impediment to maneuver
 - Steep slope
 - Forest, swamp, marsh, stream
 - Fenceline, hedgeline
- Barrier to maneuver
 - River



Avenues of Approach/Retreat

- (to key terrain)
- Route leading to objective
- Unobstructed terrain
- Gentle slope
- Can be constricted
 - Mobility corridor
 - Causeway
 - Limits size of moving unit



Intersection of Crewe Road and US 17

Du Perron Map, 1781

York River

Timberneck Creek

D'YORK

Jos. Seawell's

Whiting's
Plantation

Seawell's
Plantation

Seawell's
Ordinary

"The Hook"

Abingdon
Church

Gloucester
Point

Sarah's Creek

RIVIERE

Environ de Gloucester.
A, camp de ill. de choisy, les francois enjans,
les amercians en danger.
B, camp de la legion de lauson, l'infanterie appoye
aux cheuing.
C, Auboye, appellee Saulstaverin ou logoit le
commandant americain.
D, temple qui nous seroit a l'usage, et que l'on fortifia
dans l'intention de se defendre, si les francois eut tenté
de passer a Gloucester.
E, maison particuliere ou logoit plusieurs des choisy.
F, endroit ou le colonel Patton étoit en bataille, lorsqu'il fut choisy
par ill. le Duc de Lauzun.
G, endroit ou nous vinmes l'instat d'opie, nous mettre en bataille.
H, Le fort noir exprime l'infanterie anglaise qui jout en flanc ill. de Lauzun.
I, grand garde francois sur laquelle devoient se tenir tous les posts, de droite
et de gauche marqués par des O. elle fut ensuite portee dans la Redoute K qui
fut construite par ordre de la cour.
L, petite grand garde chargée de garder le village et empêcher un débarquement.
M, grand garde de l'ennemie.

Current list of Defining Features

Defining Features	KOCO A Assessment
Gloucester Court House	Avenue of Approach (Allies)
Seawell's Ordinary	Avenue of Approach (Allies)
Seawell's Plantation (aka "Sewell's Land")	Field of Fire; cavalry action - Crown Forces and Allied Forces
Whiting's Plantation (aka, "Whiting's Quarter")	Field of Fire; cavalry action - Crown Forces and Allied Forces
Great Road to Gloucester ("Long Lane")	Avenue of Approach (Allies); Avenue of Retreat (Crown)
Severn River Road (Saddlers Neck Road?)	Avenue of Approach (Allies)
Piney Swamp Road	Avenue of Approach (Allies)
Abingdon Church	Key Terrain
"Enclosed fields on either side of the road"	Field of Fire
"small meadow"	
"corn field"	Cover and Concealment; Avenue of Approach
"open field on the right"	Avenue of Approach
woods ("copse of woods on the left for 1/2 mile") ("one mile")	Cover and Concealment; Field of Fire both Crown Forces and Allies
2 shacks/cabins	Cover and Concealment; Obstacles
Redoubt K; a small advance'd redoubt, commanding the main road	Key Terrain; Obstacle; Cover and Concealment; Field of Fire
Coleman Swamp	Obstacle
Dixon's Mill (aka "Dixon's Old Field")	Key Terrain
post and rail fence along the [Gloucester] road (right side)	Obstacle; Crown forces battle line
"a post & rail fence which running to the right, at right angles with the road, enclos'd the old field in the rear"	Obstacle; Crown forces battle line
"Extensive Old Field"	
"fences dividing to the right & left at right angles, separated the fields on each side from the old field in front"	Obstacle
Gloucester Point	Obstacle; Avenue of Retreat (Crown), Cover and Concealment, Fields of Fire

Battle of the Hook Battlefield

Seawell's Ordinary

Joseph Seawell's
Plantation Complex

Orchard

Enclosed fields on either
Side of the road

Old fields
(not planted; fallow)

Woods

Redoubt at K



Post and Rail Fence

Worm Fences

Unnamed buildings
Shacks/cabins

Coleman Swamp

Great Road to Gloucester (Long Lane)

Du Perron Map, 1781

Public Service Claims Certificates, 1780-1783

Gibson Flourer	2 Sheep	Proved by Benjamin
John Flourer	1 negro man named 45y ^r old	Proved by Benjamin Flourer
Elizabeth Tool	1 Boy 6 or 7 years old	
William Briggan	Proved by J. Vaughan	2 Bundle
Elizabeth Sawell and	1 negro man Will 20y ^r old	Proved by Wm Sawell

10 head cattle, 20 hogs 1 horse 9 years old	10,000 Corn hills & fencing round it destroyed
11 Cattle 7 hogs	15,000 Corn hills and fencing round it 1 Kitchen 12 by 8 feet 1/2 Lot garden destroyed
2 by J. Vaughan	"15,000 Corn hills and fencing 'round it...destroyed" a travelling house 28 feet square pulled down a kitchen 20 by 16 feet a little garden & some outhouses in Gloucester Town
3 Cattle 10 Sheep 1 hog 100w	200 Bundles Fodder, 12 Turkeys

John Scott	1 negro Lad named 17y ^r old	Proved by himself
Thomas Todd's Estate	1 negro man Anthony 24y ^r old Thomas 25 Charles 15	Proved by Phil. Tabber
George Booth	1 negro man Charles 24y ^r old	Proved by J. Scott
Matthew Anderson	1 negro man York 40y ^r old Mar. 30	Proved by F. Tomkins Esq.
Judith & Mufson Clever	1 negro woman Phillis 35y ^r old Basket 25 man 10 2 small ones 5 or 6 years old	Proved by Johannes Duntlop

GENERAL ASSEMBLY – HOUSE OF DELEGATES, REPORTS OF LOSSES SUSTAINED FROM THE BRITISH

John Seawell	Negro Jacob 40 years old went to The enemy returned and died within (illeg.) after his return. Toby 25 y ^s old Abraham 20. Dick 55. Peter 20	2 Draft oxen Proved by J. Seawell himself	100 Bushels Indian Corn, 300 Bushels Barley in the Straw 60 Bushels Oats, 300 fowl of different kinds 1 Horse cart
		29 hogs 6 Cattle Proved by J. Vaughan himself	1 Dwelling house 36 by 26 feet burnt down, 1 Smoak house burnt 1 Billings (?) house & Stable burnt 1 dwelling house 28 by 16 feet pull'd down ½ acre of paling destroyed, 1 kitchen 16 by 12 feet destroy'd 1 Cornfield 16000 hills with new fencing destroyed 1 ½ Lots with pailing destroyed 2 Corn houses pulled down 5000 ^{lb} lignum vita ab ^t 5 £ worth 1 Bed 5 bedshades, 3 Tables, 7 Chairs 150 fowl of Different kindes
William Busbys Estate	1 negro Girl Rachel 4 y ^{rs} old Proved by Edw ^d Busby	10 head Cattle, 20 hogs 1 horse 9 years old	10,000 Corn hills & fencing round it destroyed
Edward Busby	Proved by Edw ^d Busby himself	11 Cattle 7 hogs	15,000 Corn hills and fencing 'round it 1 Kitchen 12 by 8 feet ½ Lot garden destroyed
William Teagles	1 negro woman Alice 60 y ^{rs} old 1 boy Gloucester 14 y ^{rs} old	5 Sheep 5 Brood Sows 9 Barrows 12 Shoots 7 Pigs 2 Cows and 2 Calves Proved by himself	20 Bushels wheat, 30 Bushels Oats Framing & plank for a house 20 by 28 feet 1000 rails a field of Corn about 52 ½ Barrels 2 Barrels old Corn & small houses (?) 4 large window frames & 3 small d ^o with Sashes 35 pieces of glass 8 by 10 a Garden destroyed & houses in a Lot damaged 6 m nails of different sorts
The Estate of John Thruston Gen ^t deced	1 negro man Phill 50 years old went to the enemy ret ^d & died in a few days	1 horse 3 years old taken & not returned Proved by Jn ^o Vaughan	a Dwelling House 30 by 20 feet pulld down & destroyed a Large & almost new Store house Burnt a Dairy and Smoak House pulled down a large Garden destroyed a parcel of new posts pails & rails & plank destroyed, a Cornfield about 45 barrels with the rails &c destroyed dwelling House Kitchen & Store house damaged

Corn Hills in 18th Century Virginia

https://www.history.org/Almanack/life/trades/traderural_corn.cfm

- Yields were about 15 bushels/acre or about 2,700 hills/acre
- Seawell, Busby, Teagle acreage approximately 15.17 acres
- Thruston corn barrels = 6.1 bushels/barrel, or 16,470 corn hills
- Thruston acreage = 7.3 acres
- Overall damaged acres = 22.47 acres



We have used, and continue to use, a wide variety of sources:

Military:

- American

Militia

Continental Army

→ journals, letters, diaries, pension applications

- French

Infantry/Cavalry

Naval

→ journals, letters, diaries, logbooks

- British

→ journals, letters, diaries

Civilian:

- American

Patriot

Loyalist

→ Damage claims

Maps:



Militiaman Enoch Breedon is one of many Americans who commented on the hussars' facial hair.

They [Breedon and the King William County militia] crossed York river at White house ferry, in the month of August as well as this affiant recollects, where they joined General Weedon's army. They were then marched down to Ware Church in Gloucester County where they were joined by the French Horse under Duke Lauzan — **Those troopers all wore large mustachios on their upper lip, and very large whiskers.** — lower down they were joined by a large body of French Infantry — At Seawells [Seawell's Ordinary], near Gloucester town, the Duke Lauzens horse, who were in advance, had a skirmish with the enemys horse, and beat them back to their entrenchments —

*Pension Application of Enoch Breeden,
King William County militia,
S1747, National Archives, Washington, DC.*



Last page of the Journal of Robert Guillaume, baron de Dillon (1754-1837)

Pendant cinq ou six jours, que nous restâmes à
Gloucestor-court-house à attendre que M. de Choisy nous
ait joint avec ses 800 hommes, M. de Laurum et moi
fîmes plusieurs reconnaissances, Gloucester-town,
et nous ^{en} rencontrâmes jamais que quelques petits
postes qui se repliaient aussi tôt que nous parviissions,
ce ne fut que le 3^e 8^e que M. de Choisy nous ayant.

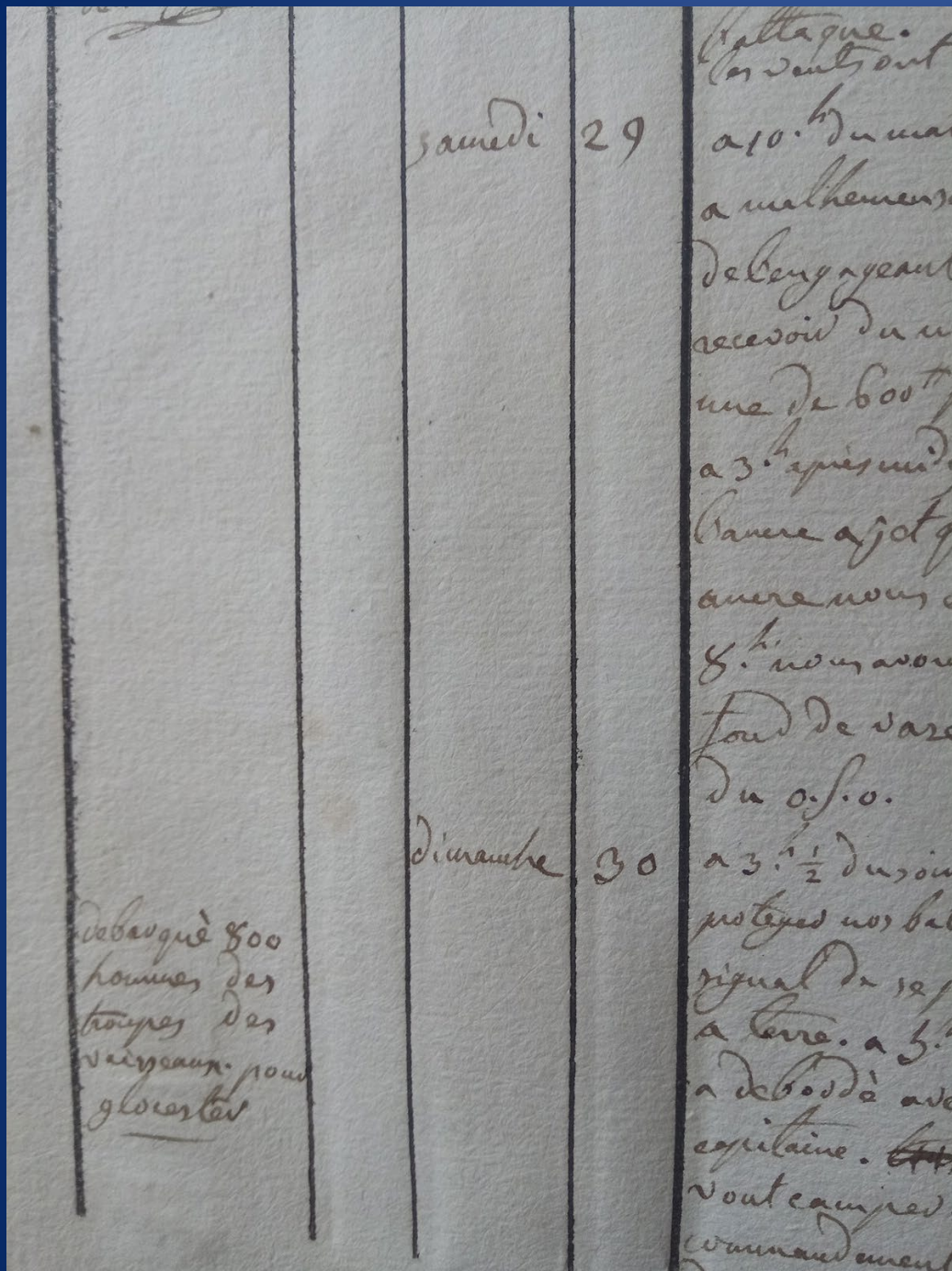


Lieutenant-colonel de la Légion des Volontaires de Lauzun, d'après l'ordonnance de 1778 et 1780
(dessin original de M. Michel Pétard)

Beginning of a letter written by Aved de Magnac to his father
21 October 1781 from on board the *Souverain*

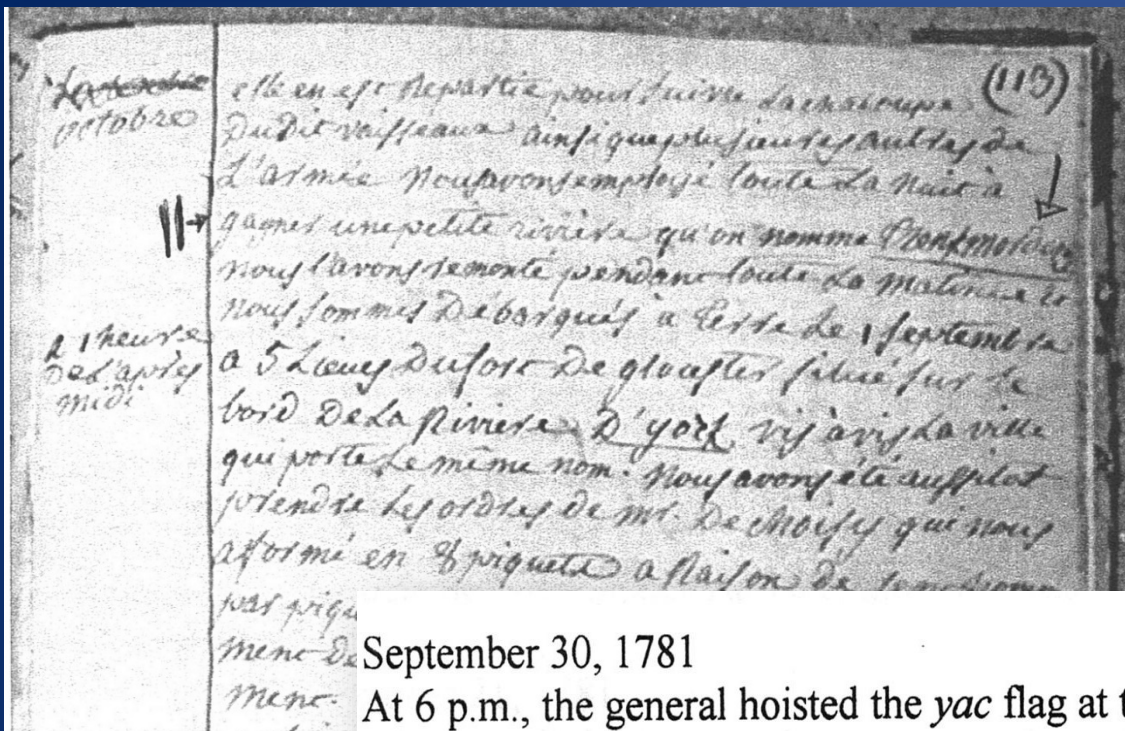
Dans la baie de Chesapeake, devant la rivière de York, à bord du *Souverain*
Le 21. 8. br 1781.

J'ay reçu mon très cher père une de vos lettres le 15 de ce mois qui est d'unique
que j'aye reçue depuis notre départ de Brest d'attée du 22 avril; par laquelle
vous me mande que vous m'avez envoyé des paquets dans lesquels sont des lettres
que le ministre vous avoit écrit à mon égard et que je n'ay point reçu à
Brest: peut être que la résolve qui est arrivée à la Martinique depuis que nous
en sommes partis et qui y a laime beaucoup de paquets et lettres pour l'armée, pourra
elle en avoir apporté pour moy. qui bien ce que jerois me seront parvenus
trop tard: j'envis y desirerois mon brevet de lieutenant de frégate ademeure
que j'attens avec impatience; car j'ay la douleur de voir un de mes camarades
qui n'est pas moins de vous qui est au service que moy, qui étoit volontaire comme



Detail of the *Journal de Bord* of Jean-Baptiste Valentin des Mûres.

- Des Mures served as *garde du pavillon* on the 74-gun ship *l'Éveillé*.
- The journal covers the time between 2 May 1780 and 17 July 1782.



Journal de la campagne que j'ai faite sur le vaisseau du Roi l'*Hector* de 74 canons. du 23 décembre 1780 au 24 novembre 1781

Paul de Sers served as a *sous lieutenant* in the Regiment de Brie.

September 30, 1781

At 6 p.m., the general hoisted the *yac* flag at the main mast and fired one gun shot. This was the signal to leave the ship. Immediately, we ordered the detachment to embark the rowboat commanded by Mr. de l'Isle, Lieutenant. The rowboat left the *Hector* and went to the ship *Ville de Paris* to join its own rowboat. With other rowboats, it took all the night to reach a small river named Trenkmordery.

October 1st, 1781

We went upstream during the whole morning. We debarked October 1st at 1 p.m., at five leagues from the Fort of Gloucester, located on the York River on the opposite side of the town which has the same name. We presented ourselves straight away to Mr. de Choisy. He formed us into 8 groups (*piquets*), 100 men for each group. We received 25 men from the regiment *Picardie* as a complement to our detachment. The 8 groups were split into two battalions of 400 men each. The first one was commanded by Mr. de Vidart, captain at the

**UNIFORMES MILITAIRES
DES TROUPES
FRANÇOISES ET ÉTRANGÈRES**

De l'Infanterie Cavalerie Dragons et Hussards
Sous le Règne de Louis XVI.
Suivant les derniers règlements de 1778



(111)
Le 3^e de
relation
Le 3^e septembre nous avons été obligés de partir
le matin comme nous étions à
une lieue de Gloucester comme nous étions à
une lieue de notre nouveau camp nous
avons appris par des hussards de Lauzun
qui étoient blessés que Mr le Duc de Lauzun
à la tête de soixante hussards avoit attaqué
deux cents dragons anglais qui avoient
le Colonel Tarleton à leur tête et un
petit corps d'infanterie anglaise qui
fut attaqué ensuite par cent soldats américains.
Nous pressâmes toute suite notre
marche pour aller à leur secours. Mais
nous n'arrivâmes qu'après que Mr le Duc
de Lauzun les eut forcés à décamper
et à lui céder le terrain. Il y a eu
dans cette action quatre ou cinq
hussards qui ont été tués et une
dizaine de blessés.

Le 3 *septembre*, [sic] à 7 heures du matin, nous avons plié toutes nos tentes et nous sommes partis avec armes et bagages pour aller camper à une lieue de Gloucester. Comme nous étions à une lieue de notre nouveau camp, nous avons appris par des hussards de Lauzun qui étoient blessés, que Mr le duc de Lauzun, à la tête de soixante hussards, avoit attaqué deux cent dragons anglais qui avoient le colonel Tarleton à leur tête et un petit corps

d'infanterie anglaise qui fut attaqué ensuite par cent soldats américains. Nous pressâmes tout de suite notre marche pour aller à leur secours, mais nous n'arrivâmes qu'après que Mr le duc de Lauzun les eut forcés à décamper et à lui céder le terrain. Il y a eu dans cette action quatre ou cinq hussards qui ont été tués et une dizaine de blessés.



Eugene Lelievre, "Battle of the Hook"

nicht ab. Ich mußte in den ersten Tagen, als York in Virginia von dem Lord Cornwallis okkupiert wurde, von Gloucester aus eine Fouragirung decken. Ich war kaum drei gute Stunden über die Vorposten hinaus; so schickte der Leutnant Büchel, der mir die Linke mit 30 Jägern deckte, einen Mann zu mir, der mich zu sprechen verlangte. Er versicherte mir mit der aufrichtigsten Miene, daß 800 Mann schon über meine Rechte hinaus wären, um mich von Gloucester abzuschneiden. Ich glaubte es nicht, und es fand sich auch, daß dieser Mensch von einer benachbarten Plantage war abgeschickt worden, von wo aus

man die Wagen zum Fouragiren gesehen hatte, um das Welschkorn und sonstige Lebensbedürfnisse zu erhalten.

Nicht weit von eben dieser Gegend, als ich mit einem Detaschement war abgeschickt worden, um den Oberst Simioe zu unterstützen, der einen Ueberfall zu machen hatte, wurde mir ein Neger zugeführt, der mich zu sprechen verlangte. Er versicherte mir, daß 1000 Mann rechts und links im Hinterhalt lägen, und daß ich verlohren wäre, wenn ich nicht eilends zurück marschirte. Ich blieb auf meinem Wege, und ließ es zu meinem Glück darauf ankommen. Nachhero zeigte es sich, daß dieser schwarze Patriot diese List ausgesonnen hatte, um seine Landsleute zu retten, die auch übel wegkamen.

Johann von Ewald, *Belehrungen über den Krieg, besonders über den kleinen Krieg, durch Beispiele großer Helden und kluger und tapferer Männer.* (Schleswig, 1798), p. 513.

drei gute Stunden = nine miles (this is near Roanes, the High School, Fairfield Plantation, almost to Gloucester Court House)

Gloucester Court House Sept 27th 81

Mess^{rs} Wadsworth & Hart

W^o of Ben Brewster

5 Tons Fodder

@ 90/- £ 22. 10-

26,110 Bundles of

@ 60/- 18. 6

27th Loads Oats in straw

68. 14-

makes 18. 5. 0. at £ 6. 0. 0

£ 109 5 10

Rec^d at same time One Hundred
Nine pounds Eleven shillings in
full of the above

£ 109 5 10

Benjamin
10th 10-

Benjamin

45

Henry Pointer, John Stotts & John Spencer being
first sworn did proceed to Value the damage
sustained by John Lee Esq^r at Bottletown Town
in Gloucester County Ware Parish by the
French Troops stationed there as followeth

- To 205 Post & Rail, Fencing @ 5^{cts} per Rod £51.5.
- To pulling from a Garden 5.
- To Damages done 3 Stables 18.00
- To Damage to a Publick House 12.00
- To Do out Houses
- To 1850 Common Fence Rail, @ 40^{cts} per Rod 3.10

Sworn to before me
e May 29th 1782. John Whiting

The Agents for the French Army
1782 To John Dison
To forage for 27 Horses from
the 23^d of 1780ⁿ to 23^d March 1782

1782 Mar. 23

By Cash in hand £ 53..10..
By 10 Horses us^d 23^d Feb^y 15..
Paid to 23^d March
By 3 Horses taken Dec^r 13..10..
1781. 3mo discount
By one Horse Jan^y 3^d 02 3..
2 1/2 months discount
Balance to 23^d March 1782 due £ 76..12

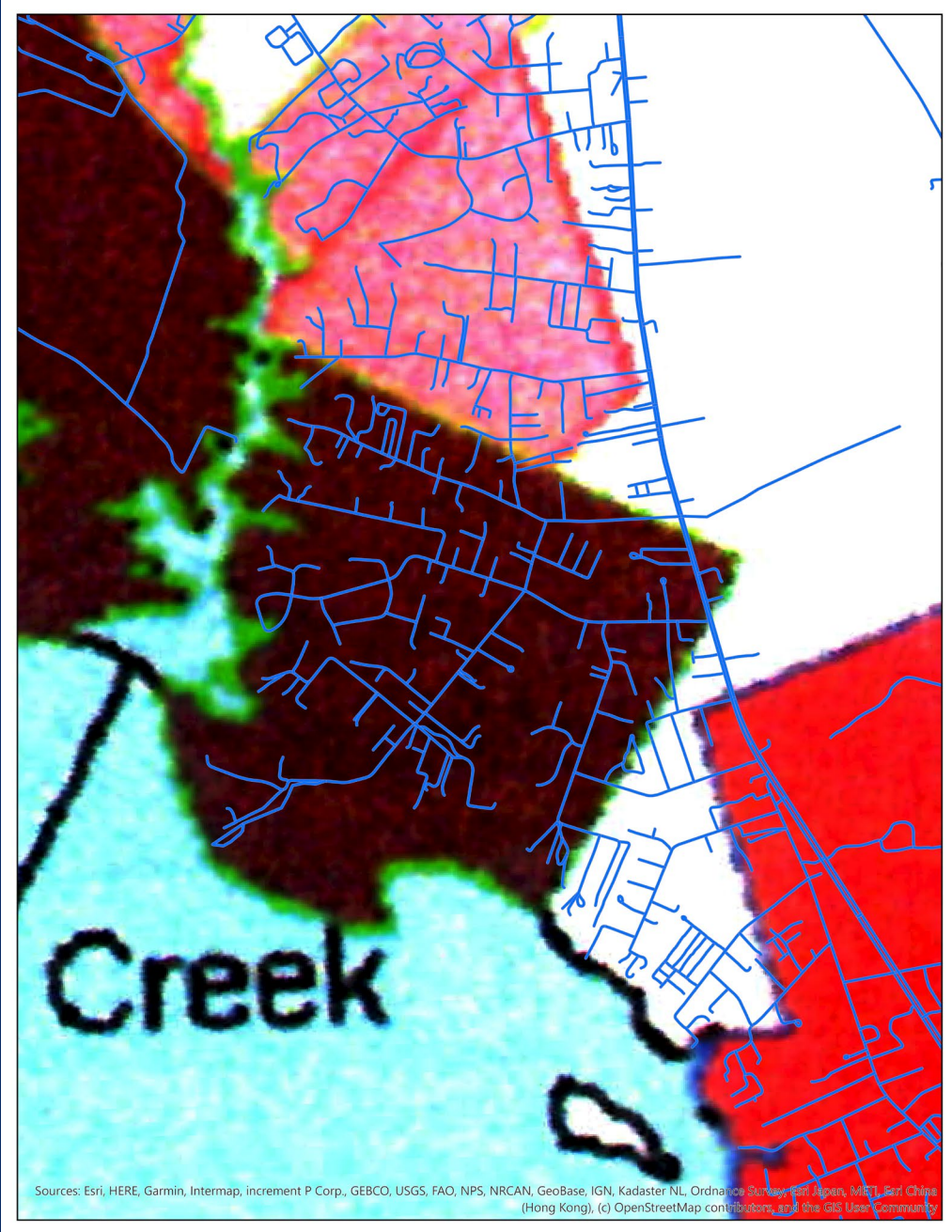
E. E. of John Dison

Mess^{rs} Wadsworth & Carter
Gentlemen

I have taken the liberty
to send my Acc^t against the French Army
as above requesting the fav^r of you
to get the needfull^y done for me
that Mr. Cary who now waits on you
with the present may be enabled

Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers
Box 40, Folder 13

Connecticut Historical Society
Hartford, CT

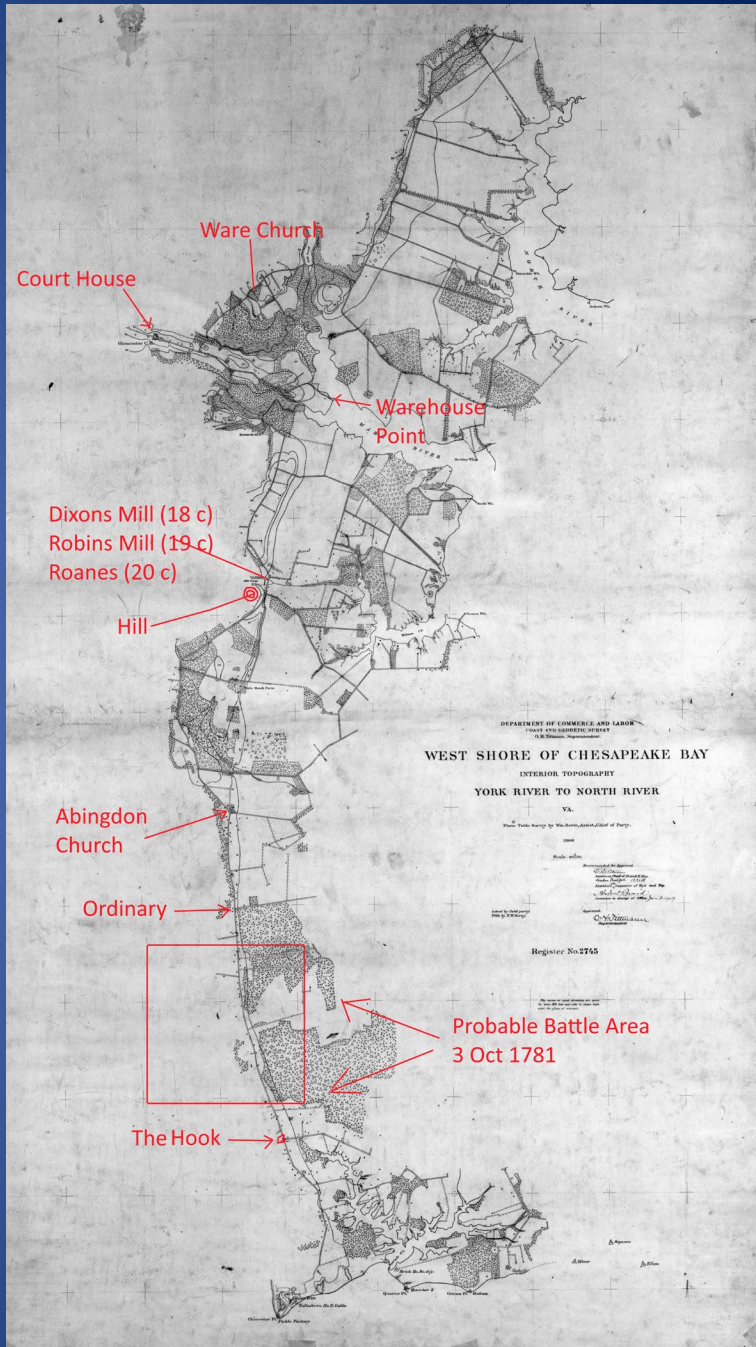


Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Swire, Hong Kong, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Mapping

Modern Roads overlaid with
17th Century Patent lines
(from David Brown,
*The Settlement of Abingdon Parrish,
Gloucester County, Virginia: Land Patents
and Archaeology, 1639-1669.*
The Gloucester Historical Society
in Virginia, Gloucester, 2015).

Paul Emigholz
mapping

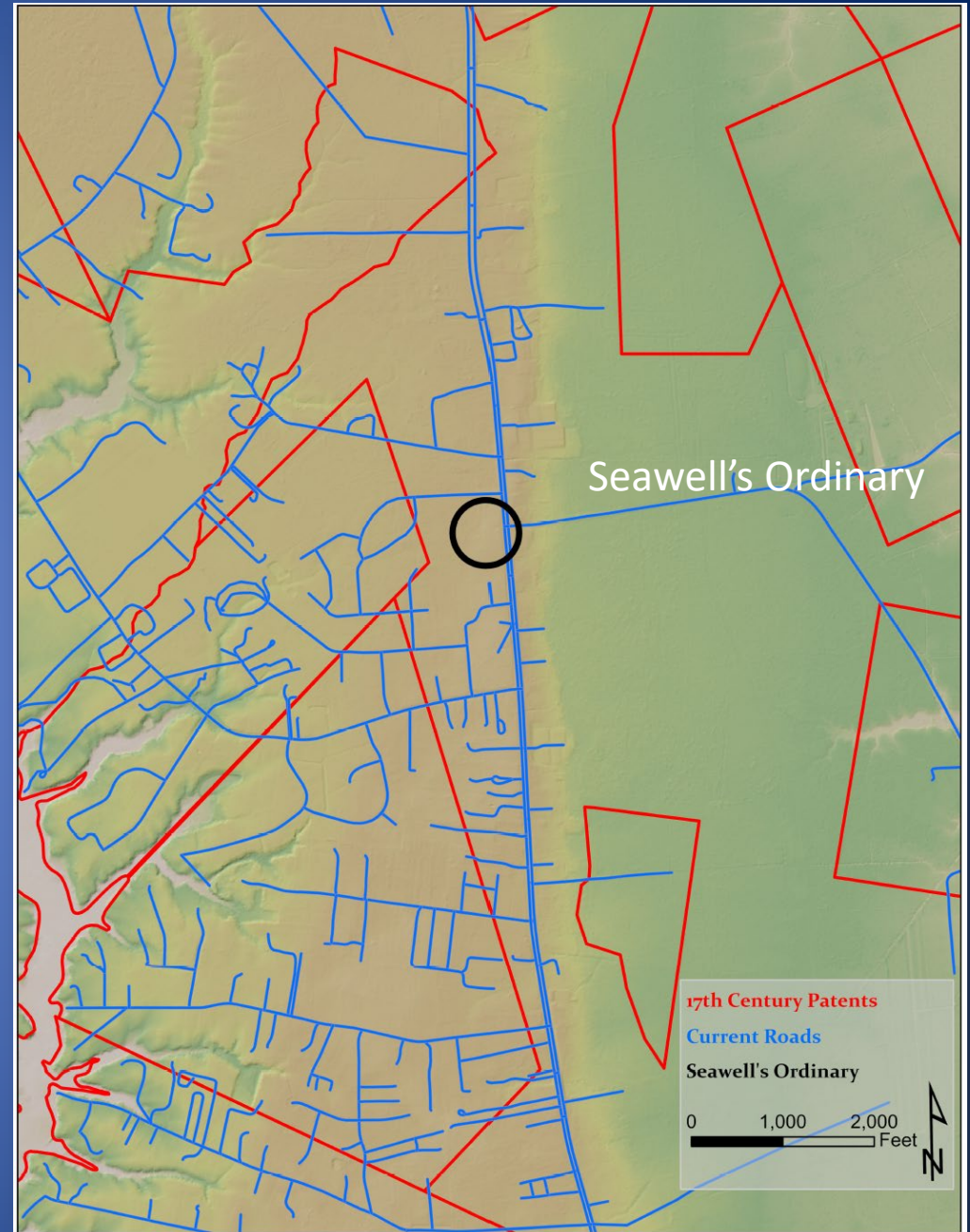


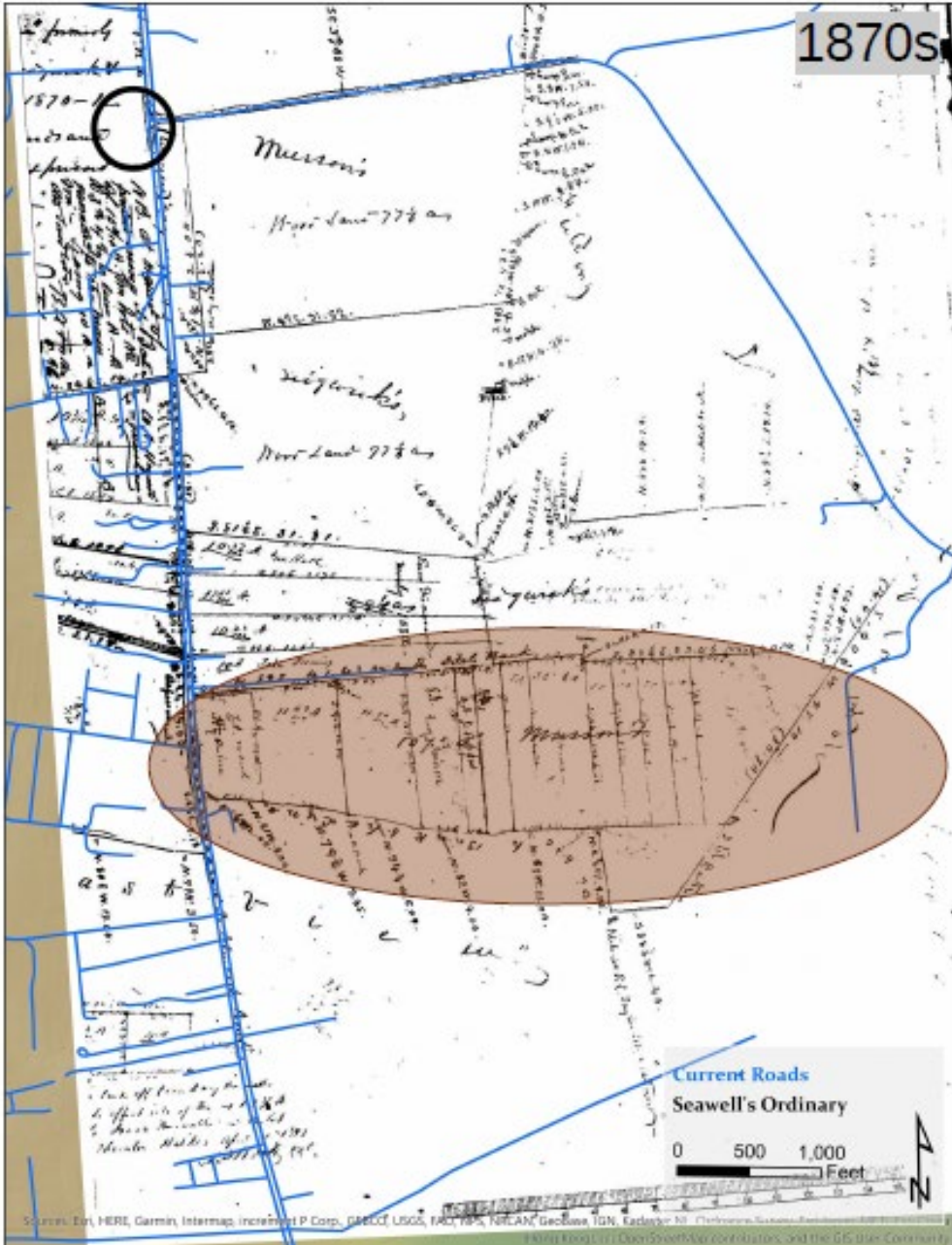
Mapping

LIDAR

Current Road System (blue)
17th Century Patent lines (red)

LIDAR, which stands for **Light Detection and Ranging**, is a remote sensing method that uses light in the form of a pulsed laser to measure ranges (variable distances) to the Earth.





Project Schedule

- Update (2nd) Meeting – November 2019
- Informational Brochure – April 2020
- Final Public Meeting – 26 April 2020
- Final Report/Preservation Plan – June 2020



How you can help us

- Do you have knowledge of artifacts, buildings, property lines, road traces, or documents related to October 1781?
 - Interested in what you have and where it was found.
 - **Do not need to acquire the collection, just review and record its contents.**



If so – Please contact us

Contacts

Wade Catts

South River Heritage Consulting
wadecatts@gmail.com

Robert Selig

Robertaselig@gmail.com



Thank You - Questions?

