

“No regular corps could have maintained its ground more firmly”

Site Documentation for the Battle of the Hook October 3, 1781

3rd Public Meeting, Gloucester Public Library Community Room
July 7, 2021

American Battlefield PROTECTION PROGRAM
National Park Service
“Working Together To Preserve America’s Historic Battlefields”



SOUTH RIVER HERITAGE CONSULTING



Project Team

Gloucester County

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South River Heritage Consulting

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- Maryland State Archives Collections
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- Don Troiani
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Project Goals

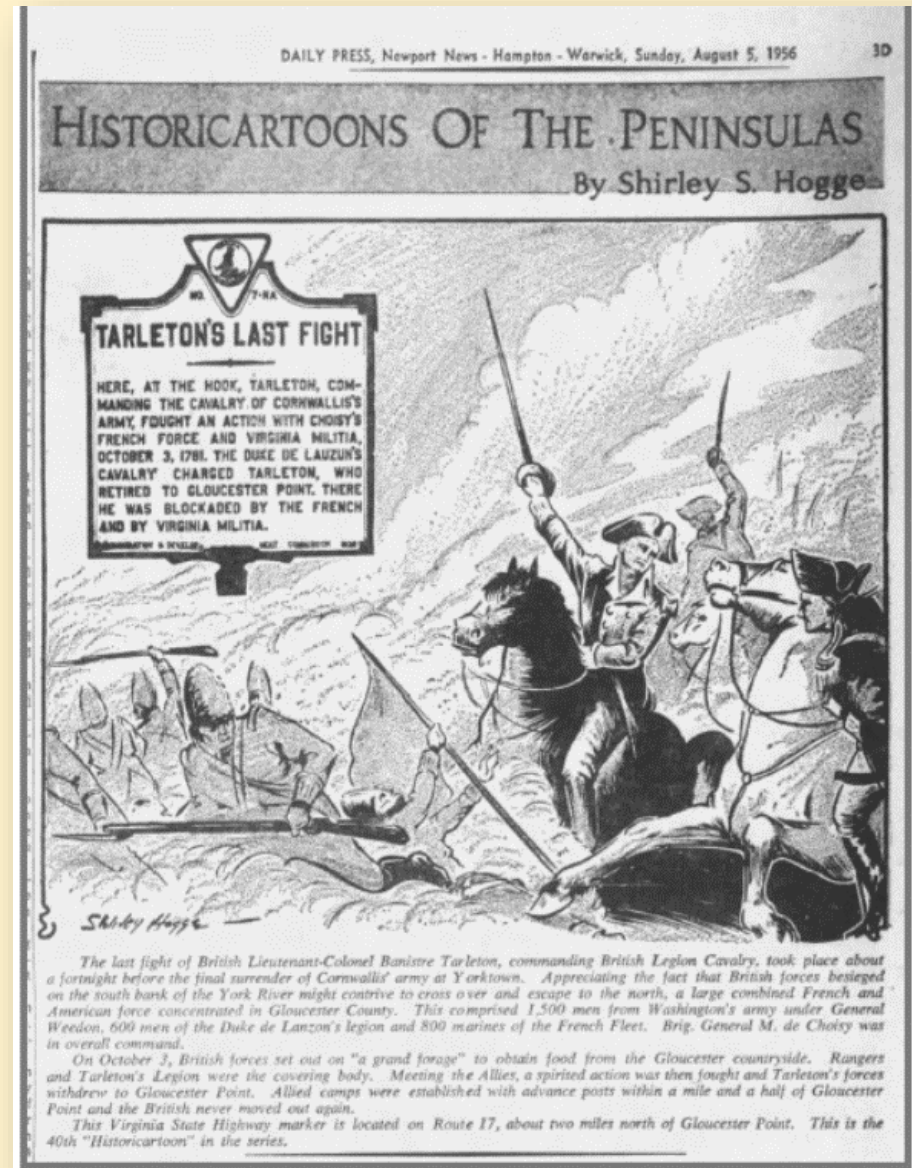
- Review Documentation (Historical Context)
- Field View (establish where and what condition)
- GIS Mapping (parcels, historical maps, aerials, etc.)
- Assess overall Site Integrity and Threats
- Assess potential of NRHP eligibility
- Develop Informational Brochure
- Prepare Documentation/Plan



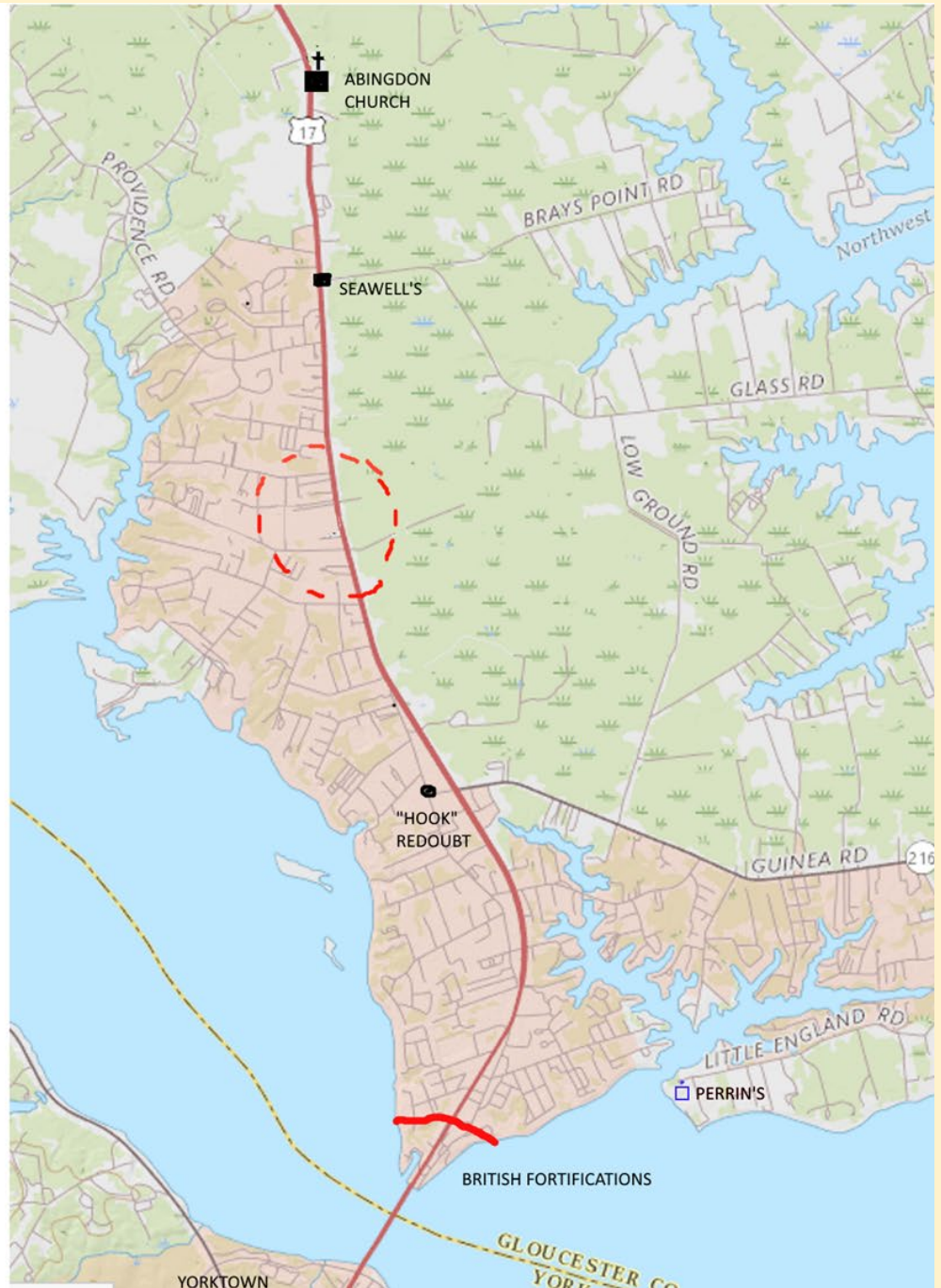
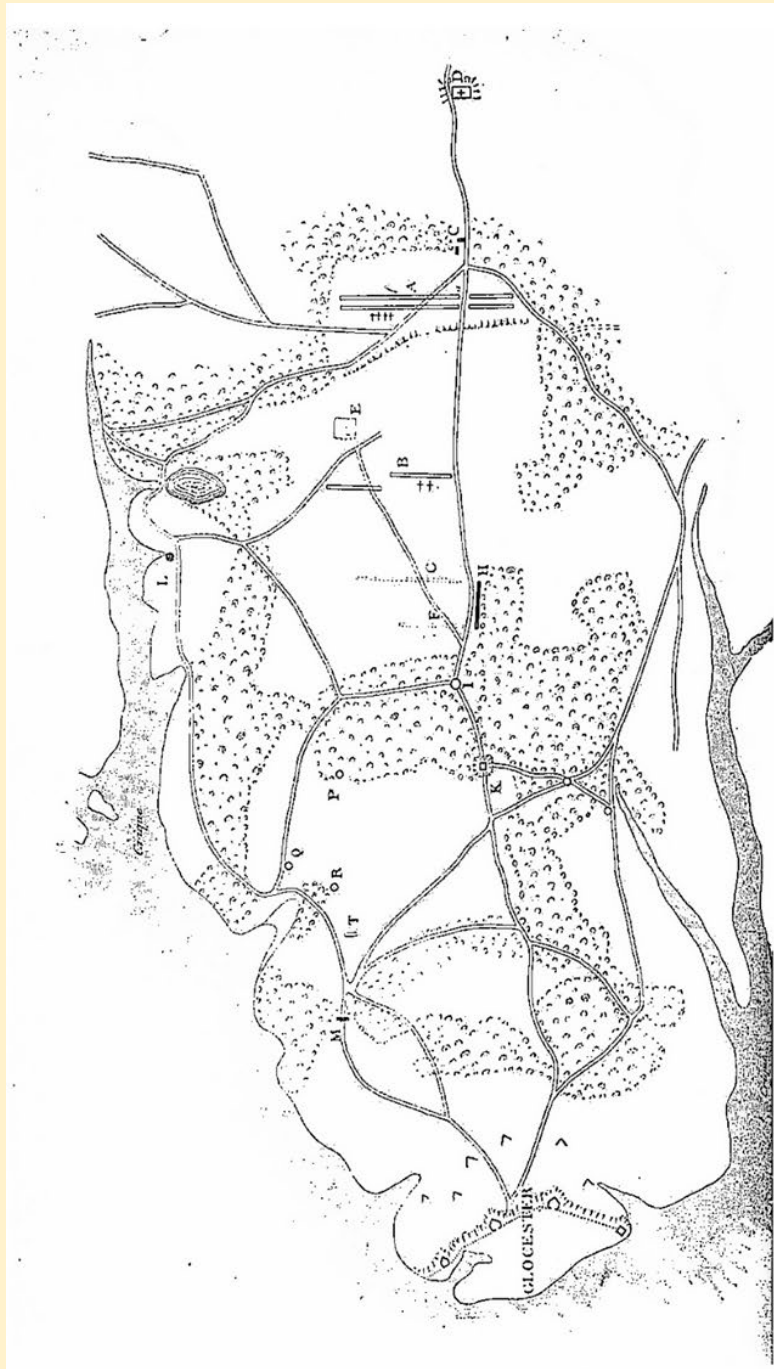
Current Historical Markers



Markers, intersection of Hook Road and Hayes Road



Daily Press (Newport News) August 5, 1956



Sources

- Secondary Sources
- Primary sources – almost 200
 - 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



American Sources

155 American primary sources, both military and civilian, including:

- General George Weedon with George Washington, Gabriel de Choisy, commanding officer of allied forces in Gloucester County, and Virginia Governor Thomas Nelson
- Detailed accounts of John F. Mercer (“Mercer’s Grenadiers”) and Henry Lee
- Pension Applications filed in the 1830s – including 10 hussars from Lauzun’s Legion
- Civilian Service and Damage Claims – information on land use, surface feature, fences and other man-made features, allowing for the placement of troops on the landscape and a more accurate reconstruction of approaches to the battlefield and battlefield actions.

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.*



Gloicester Court House Sep^r 27th 81

Mess^{rs} Wadsworth & Hart

By Ben Brewster

5 Tons Fodder

@ 90¢ £ 22. 10-

26,110 Bundles of

@ 60¢ m. 18. 6

27th Loads Oats in straw

68. 15-

makes 18. 5. 0. at £ 6. 0. 0

£ 109 5 12

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

£ 109. 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

French Sources

- Lauzun's Legion "sources"
 - D'Arrot's papers, Robert Dillon's journal, Hugau's account, duc de Lauzun's account
- French naval and infantry officers – 16 accounts (in French, few previously published or used in Yorktown Campaign research)
 - Lieutenant Joachim du Perron of the Regiment de Monsieur Infantry
 - Sous-lieutenant Paul de Sers d'Aulix of the Regiment de Brie Infantry
 - Garde du Pavillon Jean Baptiste Victor Valentin des Mures (serving on *l'Hector*)

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 y rencontrâmes jamais que quelques petits
postes qui se repliaient aussi tôt que nous parviissions,
ce ne fut que le 3^e 8^{eu} que M. de Choisy nous ayant.

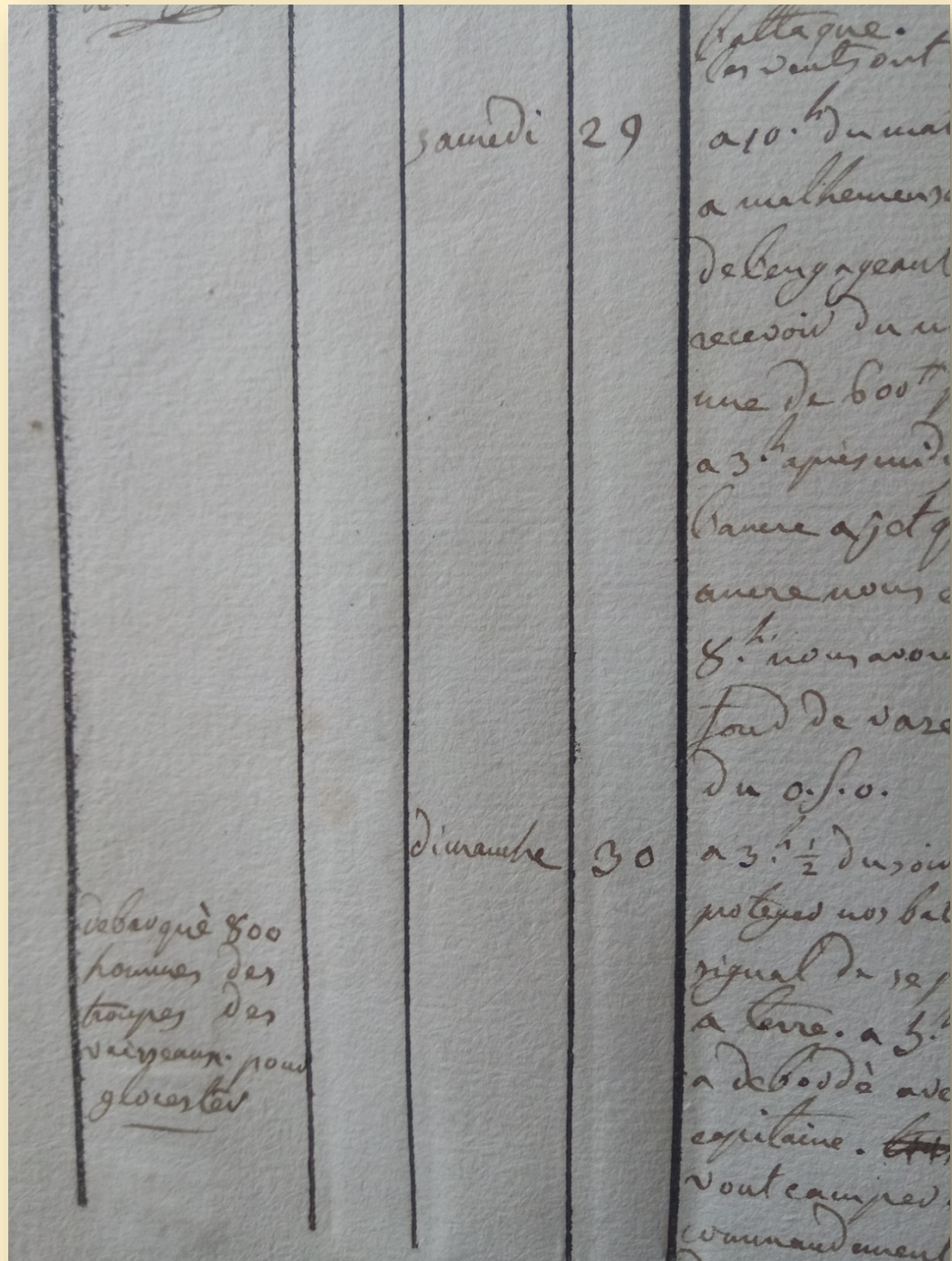


Lieutenant-colonel de la Légion des Volontaires de Lauzun, d'après l'ordonnance de 1778 et 1780
(dessin original de M. Michel Pétard)

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 riviere de York a bord du *Souverain*
Le 21. 8. bre 1781.

J'ay reçu mon tres cher pere une de vos lettres le 15 de ce mois qui est d'unique
que j'aye recüe depuis notre départ de Brest d'attée du 22 avril; par laquelle
vous me mande que vous m'avez envoye des paquets dans lesquels sont des lettres
que le ministre vous avoit écrit a mon egard et que je n'ay point recüe a
Brest: peut être que la resoluë qui est arrivee a la Martinique depuis que nous
en sommes partis et qui y a laissee beaucoup de paquets et lettres pour l'armée, pourra
elle en avoir apporte pour moy. qui neveu ce que j'avois me seront parvenus
trop tard: j'eden y desirerois mon brevet de lieutenant de frigate 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 me



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

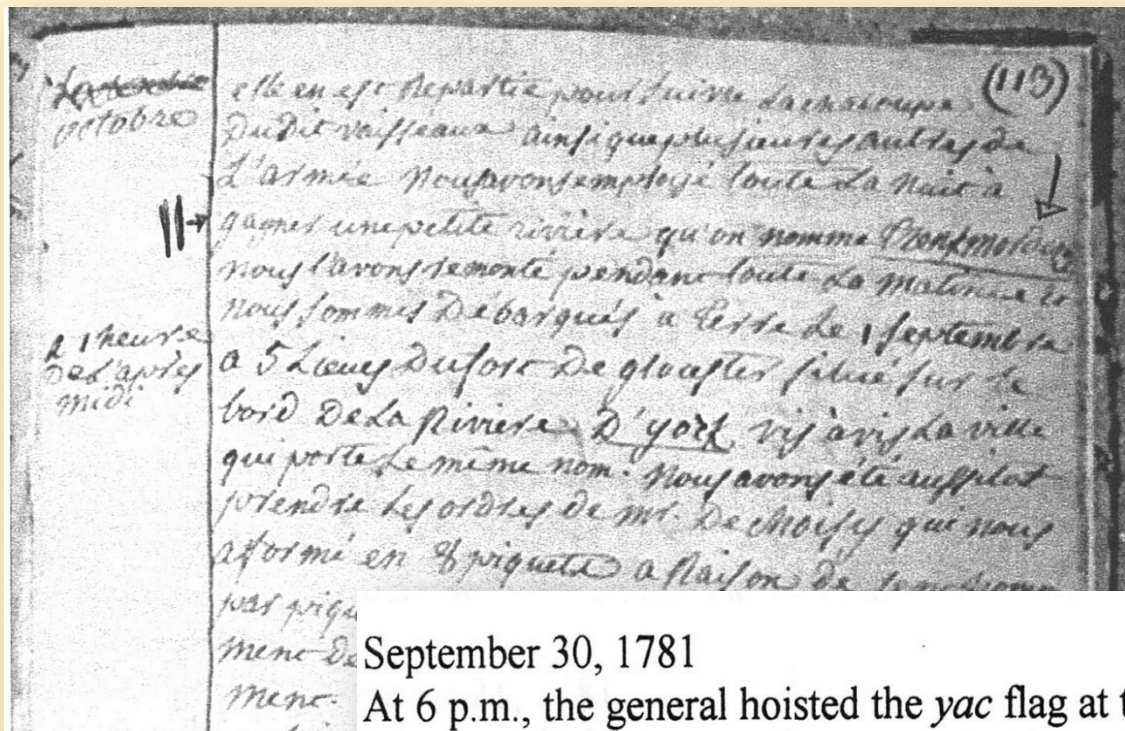
- Des Mures served as *garde du pavillon* on the 74-gun ship *l'Éveillé*.
- The journal covers the time between 2 May 1780 and 17 July 1782.

**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




Brie N^o. 25 .



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

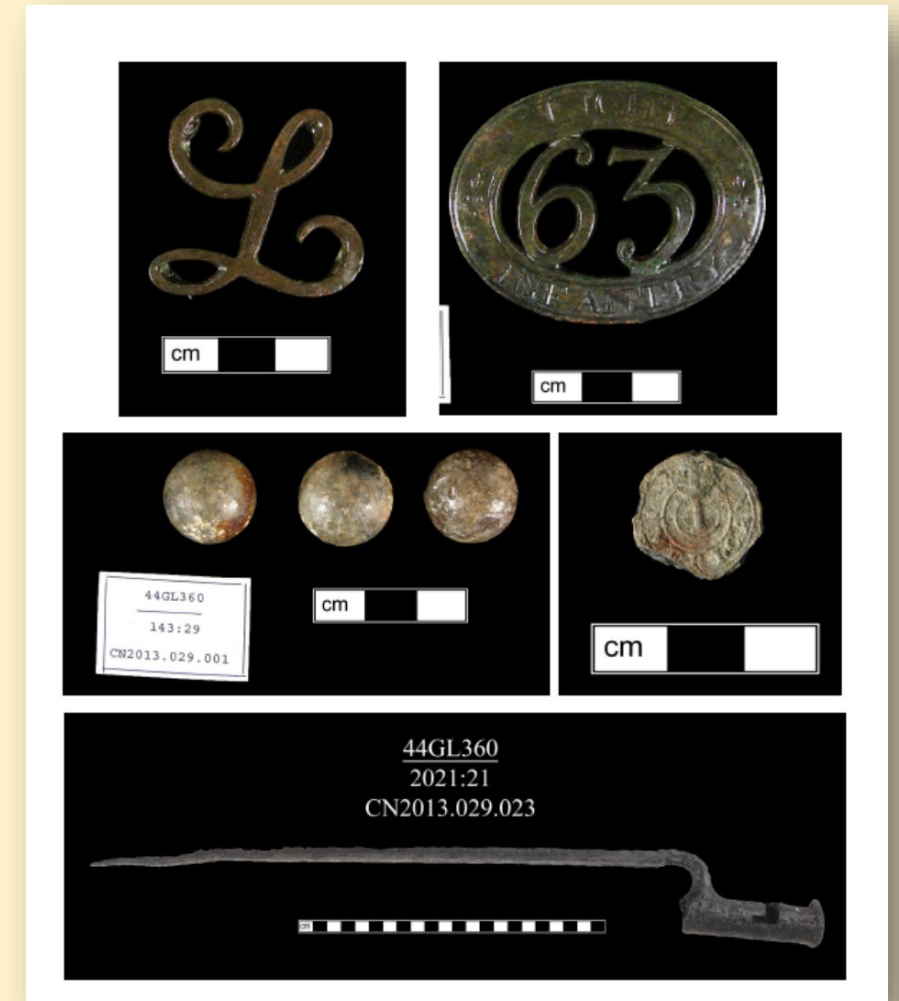


Eugene Lelievre, "Battle of the Hook"

Crown Forces Sources

- Compared to Allied sources, Crown Forces sources are minimal
- Three Accounts
 - John Graves Simcoe (sick in hospital, not in the battle)
 - Banastre Tarleton
 - Hessian Jäger Captain Johann Ewald

Crown Forces artifacts recovered from Tyndall's Point
During recent archaeological investigations



nicht ab. Ich mußte in den ersten Tagen, als York in Virginia von dem Lord Cornwallis okkupirt 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 Plantasche 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 ausgedacht 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)

Du Perron Map, 1781

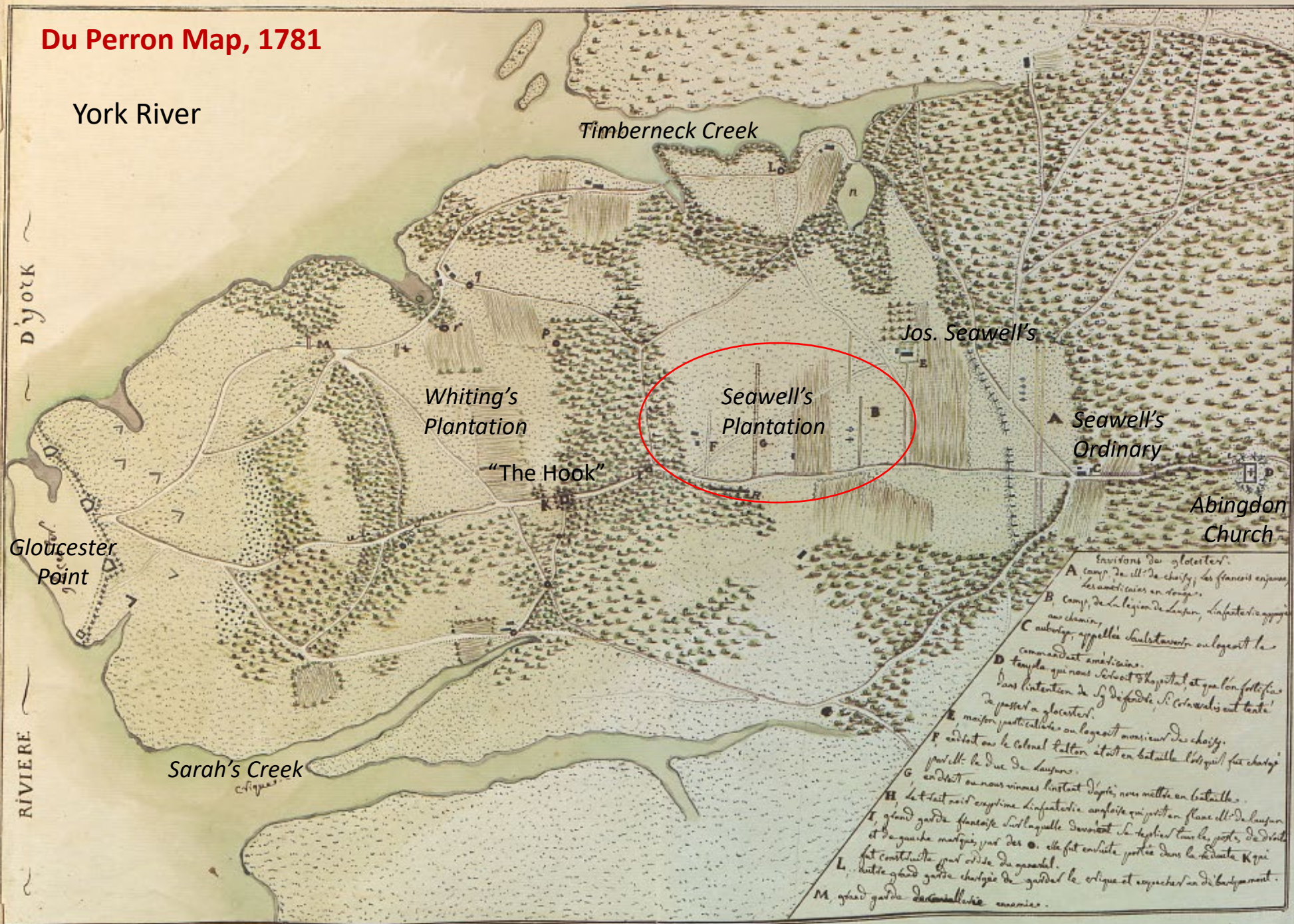
"Environs de Gloucester", in *Journal particulier d'une campagne aux Indes Occidentales, 1780-1782*.
Firestone Library, Princeton University.



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



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

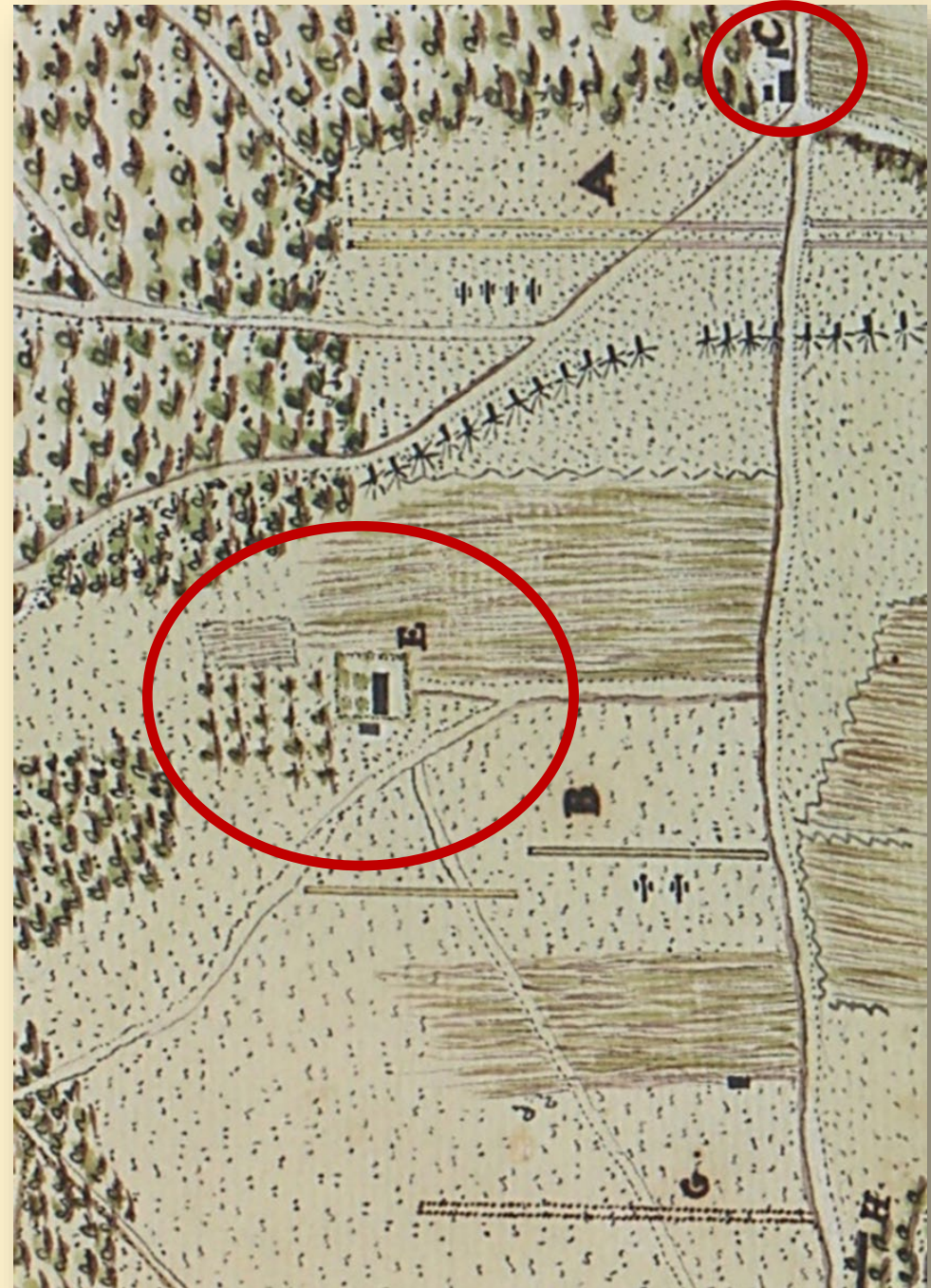
Sarah's Creek

RIVIERE

Environ de Gloucester.
A, camp de ill. De choisy, les françois enjans,
des amériens en danger.
B, camp de la légion de Lauzun, l'infanterie appoyé
sur chemins.
C, Aubourg, appelée Saulstavern ou logeait le
commandant amériens.
D, temple qui nous seroit à l'hostel, et qu'on fortifia
dans l'intention de s'y défendre, si les françois eut tenté
de passer à Gloucester.
E, maison particulière ou logeait monsieur Des choisy.
F, endroit ou le colonel Patton étoit en bataille, lorsqu'il fut chargé
par ill. le Duc de Lauzun.
G, endroit ou nous vinmes l'hostel d'opie, nous mettre en bataille.
H, Le fort noir exprime l'infanterie anglaise qui jouten flanc ill. De Lauzun
I, grand garde françois sur laquelle devoient se tenir tous les posts, de droite
et de gauche marqués par des O. elle fut embûte partie dans la nuit de K qui
fut constituée pour ordre de la garnison.
L, petite grand garde chargée de garder le village et empêcher un débarquement.
M, grand garde de la garnison ennemie.

Seawell's Ordinary, labelled "C" on the Perron map.

Detail of the Perron map, showing Seawell's Plantation (labelled "E" on the map).



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 | one negro man Will 20y ^r old | proved by Wm Sawell |

| | |
|--|--|
| 10 head cattle, 20 hogs | 10,000 Corn hills & fencing round it destroyed |
| 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 |
| 2 by J. Vaughan | feet 1/2 Lot garden destroyed |
| | "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 out houses in Glouster Town |
| 3 Cattle 10 Sheep 1 hog 100 w ^o | 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 | 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 | proved by F. Tomkins Esq. |
| Judith & Mufses | 1 negro woman Phillis 35y ^r old | proved by Johannes Duntlop |
| Clearer | 1 Basket 25. narrow 10. 2 small ones 5. or 6 years old | |

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



Seawell's Ordinary depicted on an 1836 property plat and superimposed on a modern quadrangle map. Note the location of Seawell's Plantation along Providence Road (solid red dot).



Approximate location of the site of Seawell's Plantation (red circle), along Providence Road, based on historical sources (USGS).

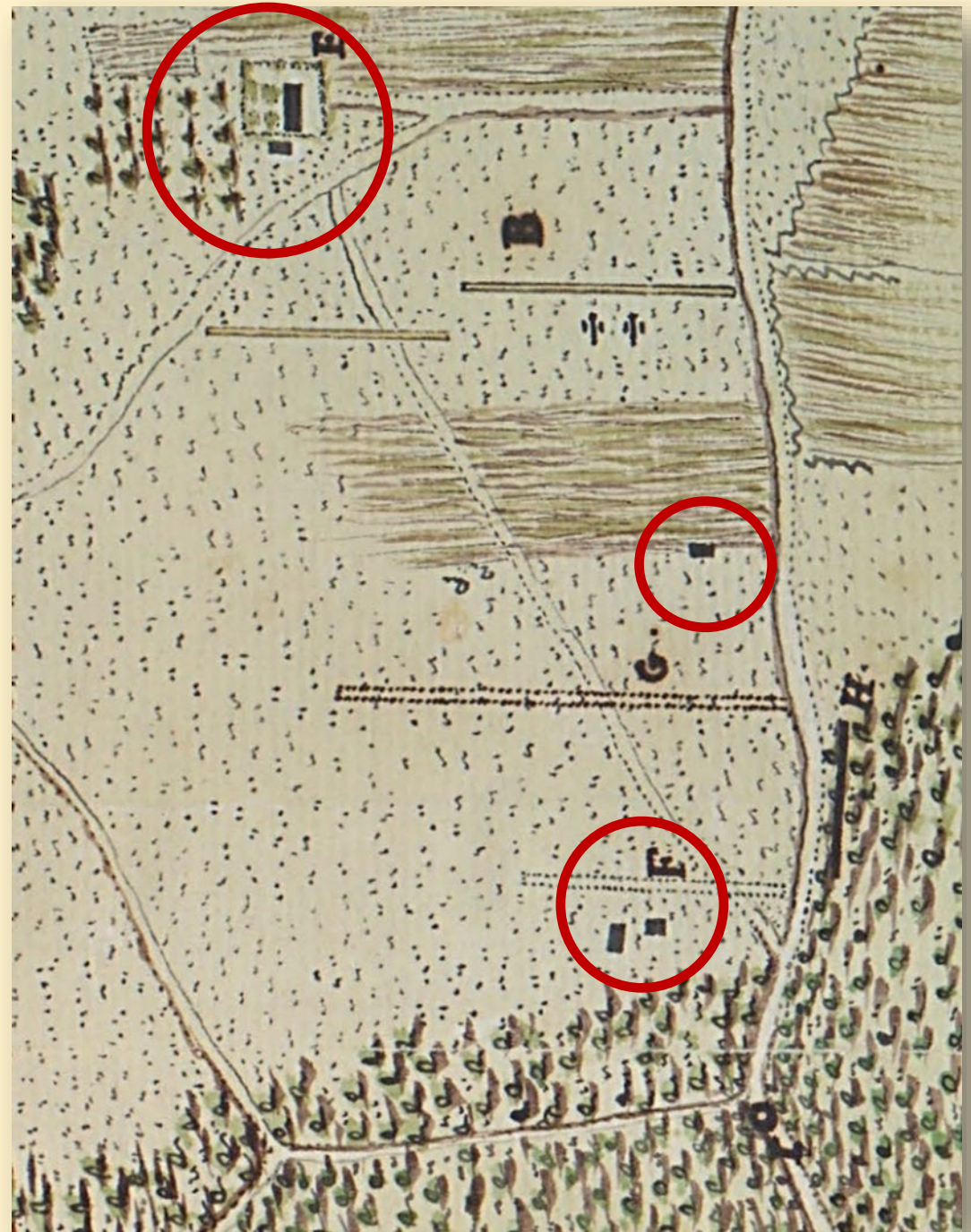
Maria Edwards, granddaughter of John Seawell:
"...The American and French troops at one time camped in the field on the left-hand side as you go up to the house called the Wind-mill field, and fed to their horses, and destroyed a fine crop of corn. Many years later my uncle John Tyler found, in an old "day-book" a full account of it, in which my great-grandfather stated his grievances, and thought my father should have put it in his hands while he was in Congress...."



The area south of Seawell's Plantation (labelled E), where Whiting's Quarter was situated. Note the building above "G" – this is likely Whiting's Quarter.

Whiting's Quarter – *"a rather pretty house on the right of the road...."*

The grouping of two buildings near "F" - these are the "shacks" identified by Perron.

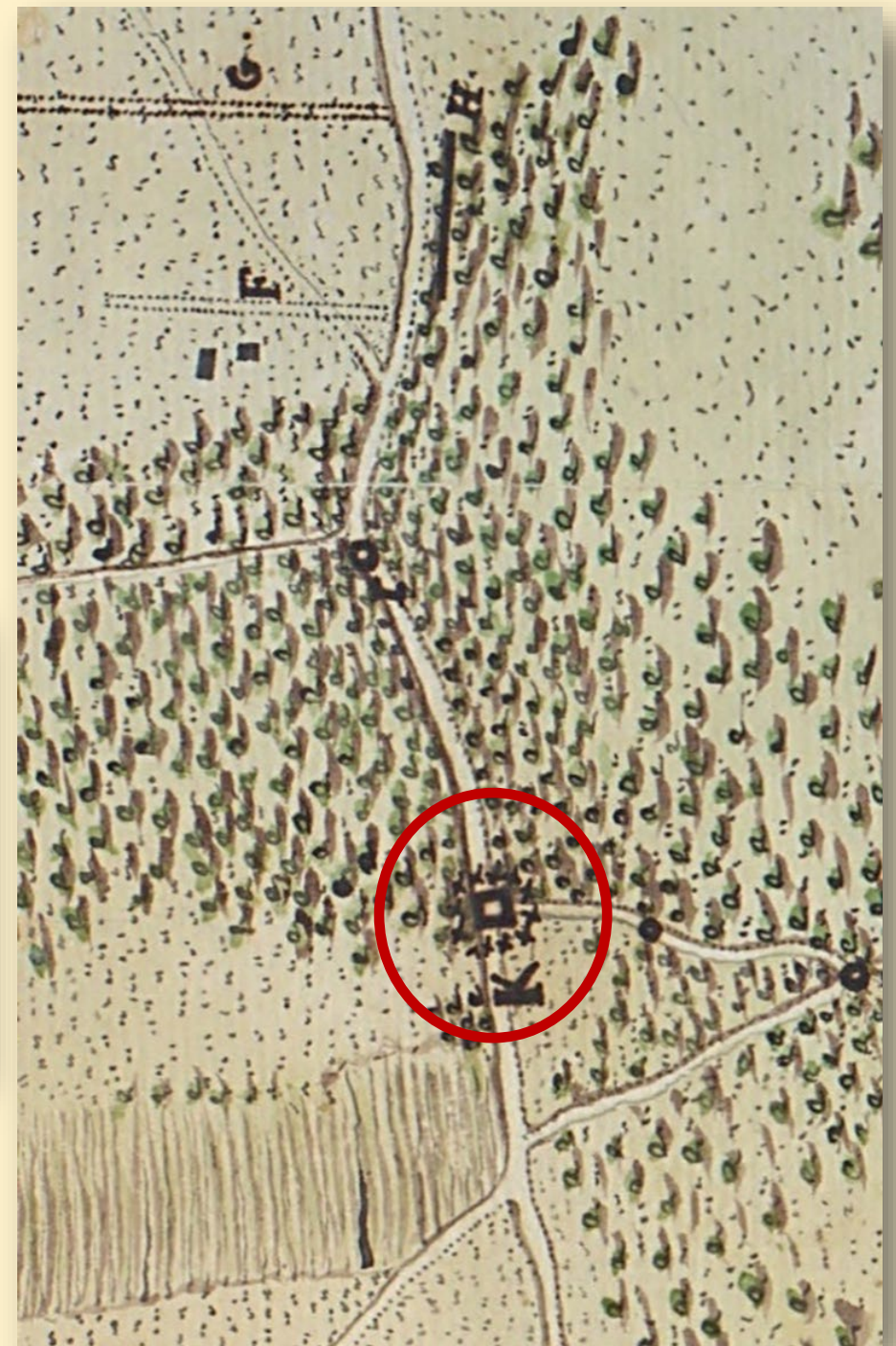


REDOUBT K

Right: Detail of Perron map, showing placement of Redoubt K at intersection of the Great Road/Lane to Gloucester Point, at the current intersection of Hayes Road and Hook Road. Note the smaller circular redoubts at “I” and to the north of Redoubt K.



Above: Wooded area where the project team hypothesizes Redoubt K was situated. View is looking west from the intersection of Hook Road and Hayes Road



REDOUBT K



Plat of the Division of Joel Hayes' Property, 1880, showing the location of the cavalry symbol (in red) on the map identified as "The Hook". The location is currently at the intersection of Hook/Guinea Road and Hayes Road.



Detail of Ewald's Map, showing the location of Redoubt K. The redoubt is shown on the road, with cleared ground around it (land that had brush and trees removed), and the belt of woods north of it.

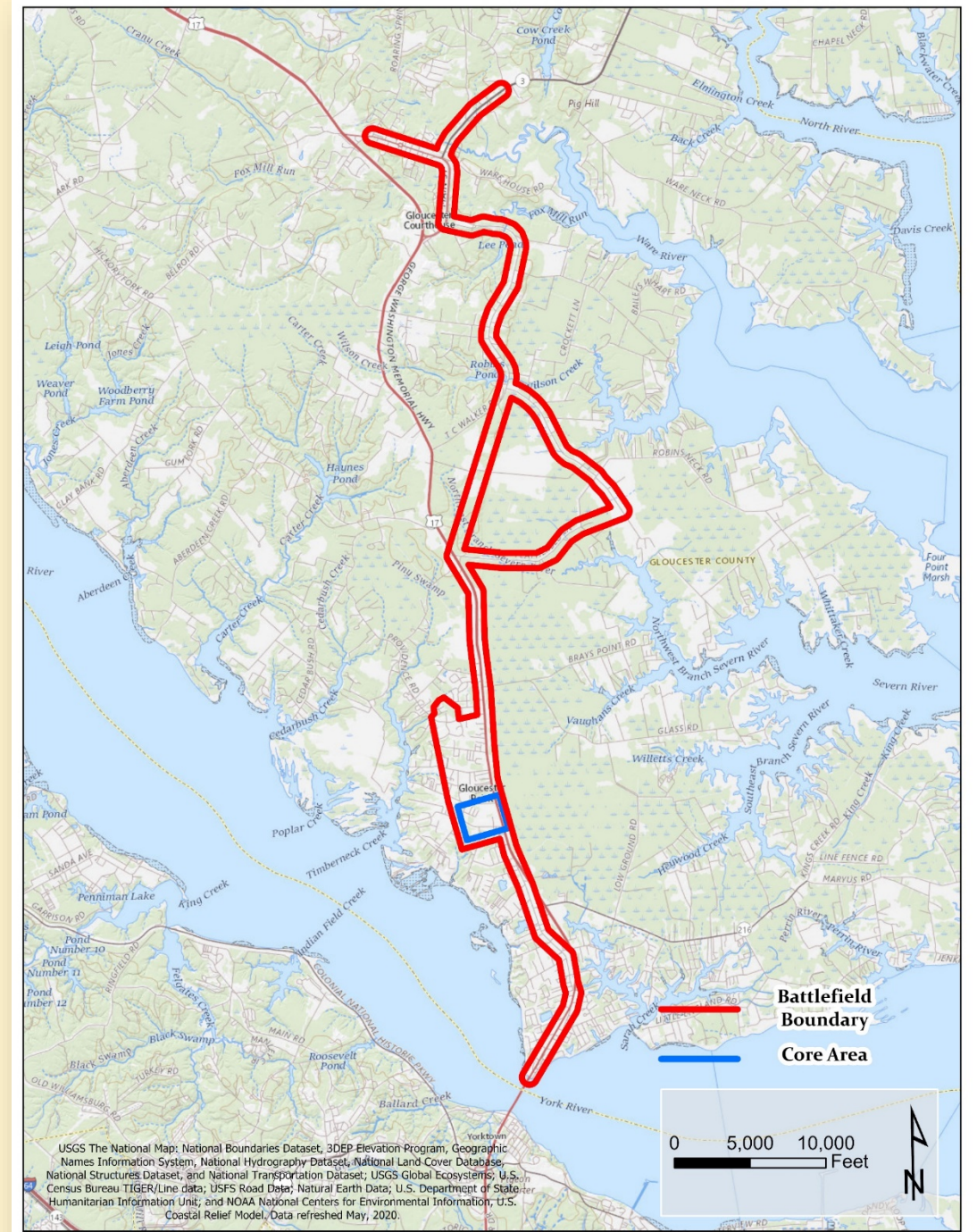
CORE AREA OF HOOK BATTLEFIELD

- Centered on the area of Crewe Road to the north, Powhattan Drive to the south, US Route 17 to the east, and Williams Landing Road to the west
- the ground over which the battle was fought, and also includes areas east of US Route 17 along the margins of Coleman Swamp.
- The area contains strip malls, shopping centers, residential subdivisions, a school and public parkland.
- the area contained within the Core Area consists of approximately 6,509,706.69 ft sq (604,771.54 m sq) (150 acres)



BATTLEFIELD BOUNDARY

- Focused on the road network used by Allied and Crown Forces
- Great Road/York River Road
- Severn River Road (route today is County Road 629 (Warner Hall Road) to approximately the intersection with County Road 614 (Featherbed Lane).
- Extends from Ware Church to Tyndall's Point
- Approximately 12 miles
- Includes areas of maneuvering on the day of battle (Roane, Ware Church, Gloucester Courthouse, Seawell's Ordinary, Seawell's Plantation site, Tyndall's Point)



The Battle of the Hook – Where Egos Collide



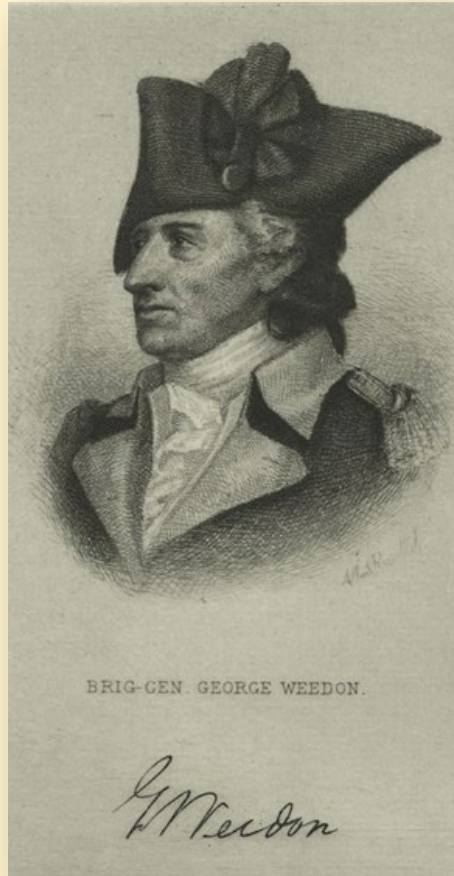


Ware Parish Church. Brigadier General Weedon addressed a letter to General Washington on October 3 1781, identifying this location as his temporary headquarters and many number Virginian's identified Ware Church as a camping point in their pension applications.



View from the high ground at Roanes, looking east at the intersection of Route 629. Allied forces encamped at this location the night before the Battle of the Hook and use the road leading east as an avenue of approach

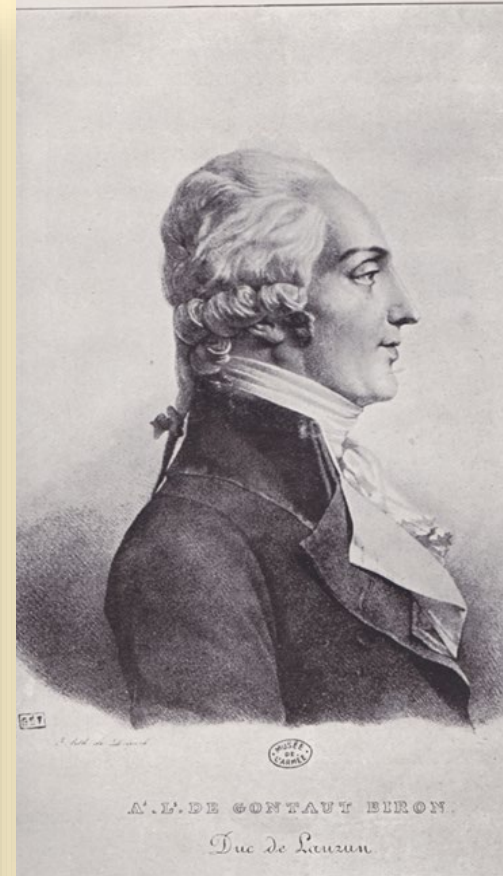
Allied Commanders



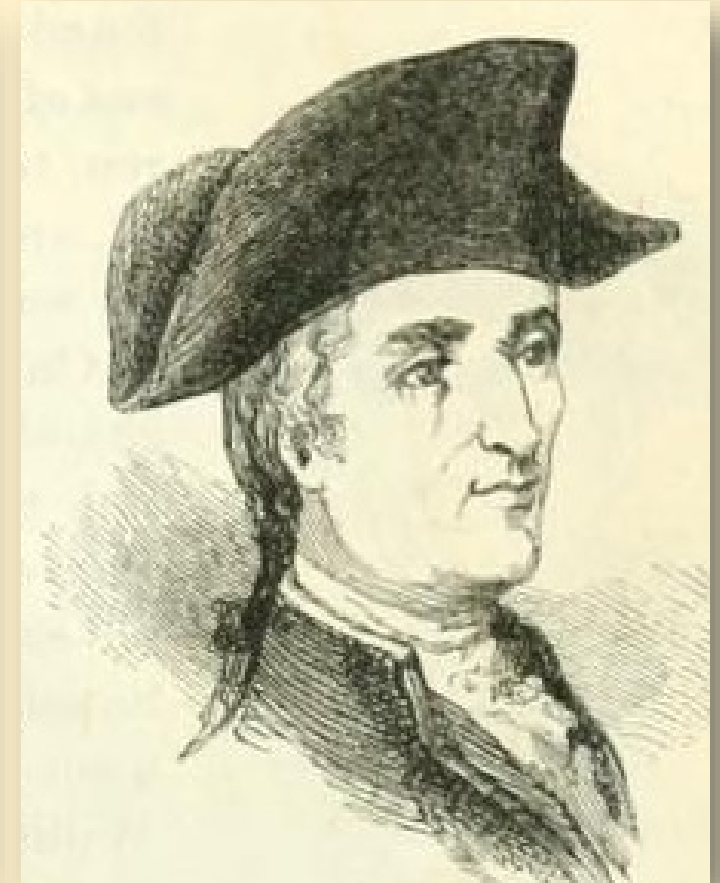
BG George Weedon



Col. John F. Mercer
c.1803, by Robert Field.
(courtesy of
Maryland State Archives Collection).



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)

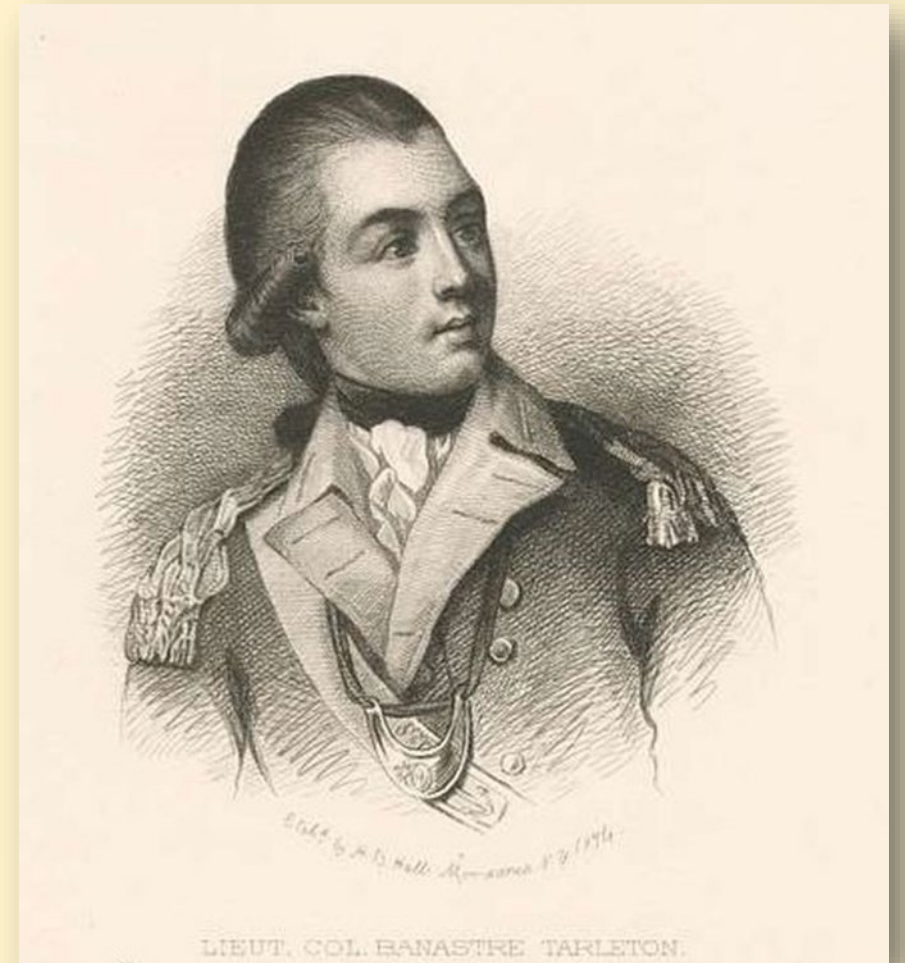
Crown Forces Commanders



Lt. Col. Thomas Dundas
Gloucester Garrison
Commander



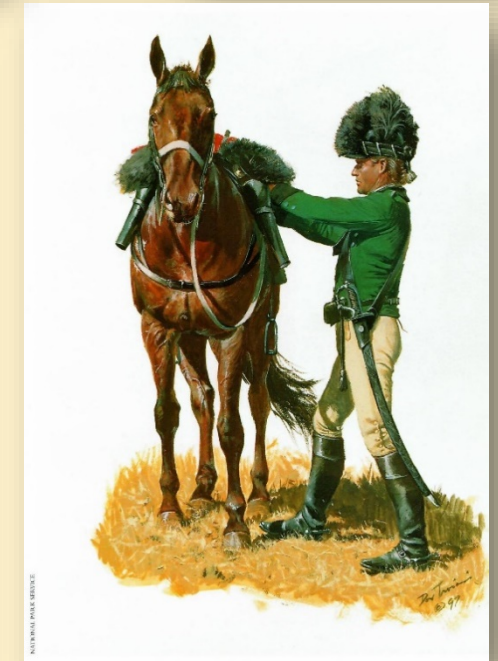
Captain Johann Ewald,
Hessian Field Jaeger Corps



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



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

IMPORTANCE OF THE FRENCH FORCES



Recommendations for Planning

- Update 2011 Gloucester Point/Hayes Village Area Development Plan and the 2016 Gloucester County Comprehensive Plan to reflect the results of the ABPP battlefield study.
- Provide Core Area and Battlefield Boundary information to battlefield neighborhoods and communities.
- Provide updated information to state and local heritage sites (Gloucester County Historical Society, Preservation Virginia, Rosewell and Fairfield Foundations) and environmental stewardship organizations to be included in their historic interpretation, education, and stewardship outreach and efforts.
- Provide updated information to land conservation groups and planning organizations for use in coordinating and bolstering land conservation and open space preservation.
- Develop an archaeological resource management plan for the Gloucester Point and Battle of the Hook.
- Encourage adoption of consistent and/or compatible definitions for historic resources in ordinances.
- Consider applying the Historical and Cultural Preservation Overlay (already part of the County's zoning) to the Core Area of the Battlefield.

Recommendations for Historical and Archaeological Resource Research and Protection



- Prepare National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Battle of the Hook.
- Encourage adoption of consistent and/or compatible definitions for historic resources in ordinances.
- Consider adopting a historic battlefield protection zoning overlay or apply the Historical and Cultural Preservation Overlay already part of the County's zoning to the Core Area of the Battlefield.
- Little England (Perrin's) at the mouth of Sarah's Creek may be a candidate for an Historical and Cultural Preservation Overlay.
- Address the Core Area in land development designs and allow the Gloucester County Historical Committee the ability to review and recommend historical and/or archaeological investigations prior to approval of permits.
- Fully catalog and interpret the archaeological assemblages recovered from the more than 30 years of archaeological work within the Gloucester Point Archaeological District.
- Abingdon Park (14.07-acres) is an excellent location to place wayfinding markers and/or exhibits explaining the Battle of the Hook.
- An ongoing archaeological program in Abingdon Park could be developed that engages the community in the history and archaeology of their neighborhood and foster stewardship of cultural resources.

Recommendations for Land Conservation and Acquisition

- Work to protect battlefield lands within the Core Area and larger Battlefield Boundary. (possible funding from American Battlefield Protection Program, the American Battlefield Trust, and the Archaeological Conservancy).
- Protect smaller parcels to link larger conservation tracts (for example, Seawell's Ordinary).
- Work to protect lands as part of a larger open space network that extends throughout the battlefield. There are protected and unprotected lands throughout the battlefield without a specific battle-related story, but these lands serve to form a larger network to link key areas of the battlefield and display a representation of the battle-era landscape feel/setting.
- Protect and promote agriculture as an industry and historic land use in the battlefield.
- Coordinate natural resource protection and battlefield land conservation.
- Publicize and celebrate land conservation efforts at battlefield-related heritage sites to underscore the inherent relation between battlefield protection and land conservation.

Recommendations for Land Conservation and Acquisition – Seawell’s Ordinary

- Consider acquisition by public sources or non-profit funds of Seawell’s Ordinary and the undeveloped lots to the south and west of the 10-acre property.
- Location of the headquarters and major encampments of the allied forces – particularly the French infantry and artillery, and the Virginia militia. Functioned as the site of the Gloucester County terminus of the courier route established for dispatches to and from Washington’s headquarters outside Yorktown.
- Important part of the Yorktown campaign. Prior to the battle, it was visited by Crown forces during their numerous foraging excursions from Gloucester Point to near Gloucester Court House.
- Funding for purchase of this site could be provided by the American Battlefield Protection Program or the American Battlefield Trust.



Recommendations for Heritage Tourism

- Identify interpretive sites along public corridors/places associated with the Battle of the Hook and the Siege at Gloucester Point.
- The 100-acre Woodville Park offers an opportunity to provide wayfinding and/or exhibits for the public that tell the history of the role of Gloucester County in the Siege of Yorktown.
- The 4-acre parcel at Tyndall's Point Park illustrates the area's military history. New interpretive panels/exhibits could serve to link this site with other Revolutionary War wayfinding at the above two park locations, thus establishing a "Revolutionary Trail."



Recommendations for Heritage Tourism

- Create thematic brochures and information to be available at the Gloucester Museum of History, the Gloucester Visitors Center, and other interpretive sites.
- Work with the NPS to incorporate Gloucester County's role in the Yorktown Campaign into the interpretation of the Yorktown National Battlefield Colonial National Historical Park. Currently such coordination is underway with the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route in Virginia.
- Publicize and celebrate land conservation efforts to publicly recognize the inherent relation between battlefield protection and land conservation.
- Coordinate with agencies in Gloucester County, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the Tidewater Region to recognize and interpret battle-related sites and locations.



Thank You - Questions?



BATTLE OF THE HOOK 3 OCTOBER 1781

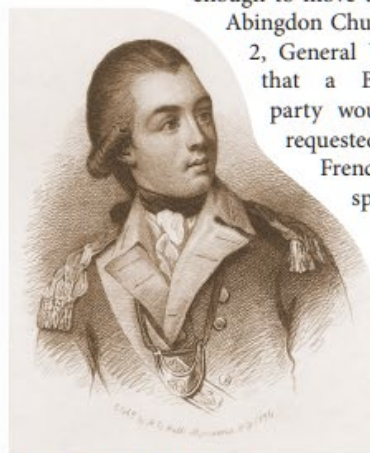


**"On arriving I perceived the English cavalry three times more numerous than mine; I charged it without stopping."
--Armand Louis de Gontaut, duc de Lauzun**

GENERAL HISTORICAL CONTEXT

On August 1, 1781, British general Lord Charles Cornwallis sailed from Portsmouth and occupied Yorktown and Gloucester Point. Fortifying Gloucester Point was crucial for the defense of his main post in York and the British constructed four redoubts. Reinforced with 250 British cavalrymen of Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton's British Legion, the Gloucester Point garrison stood at around 1,000 British, German, and Loyalist troops on the day the Battle of the Hook.

At Yorktown more than 8,000 Continental Army forces under General George Washington, 8,000 French troops commanded by the comte de Rochambeau, and a French fleet under the comte de Grasse laid siege to the British Army on water and on land. At Gloucester Court House stood around 1,200 Virginia militia under American Brigadier General George Weedon, 800 infantry assigned to French naval vessels, and 300 French chasseurs and grenadiers and 300 French hussars of the duc de Lauzun's Legion under the overall command of French Brigadier General Gabriel de Choisy. On October 1, General de Choisy felt strong enough to move to the vicinity of Abingdon Church. On October



Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton

2, General Weedon learned that a British foraging party would be out and requested 150 of Lauzun's French hussars to spearhead each of the two columns advancing on the York and Severn River roads in the morning of October 3.

BRITISH FORCES

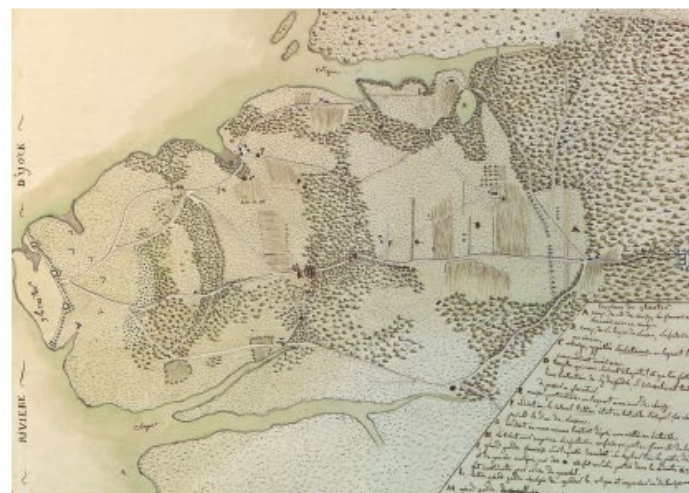
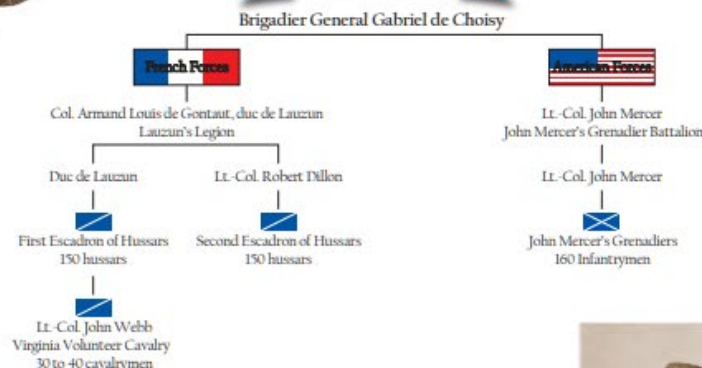


Queen's Rangers button



Tarleton's Legion script "L"

ALLIED FORCES



Perron map. Courtesy of Princeton University Library.



Brigadier General George Weedon (1734-1793)

THE BATTLE OF THE HOOK

Led by an advance guard of 50 French hussars commanded by the duc de Lauzun, the Allied (French and American) columns departed at 7:00 a.m. South of Abingdon Church on the York River Road (US 17), Virginia militia sent word to Weedon that a British foraging party was at Whiting's Quarter (near today's Powhattan Drive), collecting forage, cattle and sheep. Around 10:00 a.m., the loaded forage wagons were on their way back to Gloucester Point. Informed of Tarleton's British column ahead of him, Lauzun hurried to catch up. When Tarleton discovered Lauzun's van he decided to offer battle. Concurrently he laid an ambush by posting a company of Hessian Jäger and a detachment of Simcoe's Ranger infantry



Hussar of Lauzun's Legion. Courtesy Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University

along the main road to Gloucester Point. The Jäger had hardly taken post when French hussar and Virginia volunteer cavalry scouts made contact. Upon hearing the carbine fire Lauzun advanced with his full guard and without stopping "charged" Tarleton, who was waiting with a detachment of his dragoons for Lauzun.

In the ensuing melee Tarleton was unhorsed by one of his own dragoons. As Tarleton's men galloped across the field to rescue their commanding officer, Lauzun retreated into the shelter of his hussars. In their rush to rescue him, Tarleton's cavalry lost all unit cohesion and was unable to carry the attack to the allied cavalry.

Meanwhile, French Lieutenant Colonel Robert Dillon's hussar squadron had reached the field by the Severn River Road.

Now more than 300 riders strong, the Allied cavalry resumed the attack. The Allied cavalry pushed Tarleton back, who responded by ordering about 60 men from the British 17th Light Dragoons and the British 23d Regiment of Foot to dismount and reinforce his infantry line. The British infantry advanced under cover of the woods, forcing the Allied cavalry to retreat.



23rd Grenadier badge

The British horse was pressing forward along the road in a line with their infantry in the woods. At this critical moment and advancing at a run American Lieutenant Colonel John Mercer and his Virginia militia Grenadier Battalion reached the battlefield. The French hussars reformed behind Mercer's command which quickly deployed along a rail fence. Mercer's grenadiers commenced firing as the British dragoons came within 250 yards and the infantry were within 150 yards. When Tarleton called a retreat, Mercer probably could not have held out much longer. Half of his grenadiers were out of ammunition; one grenadier remembered that fewer than 100 cartridges remained unexpended in the battalion.



THE AFTERMATH

Around 2:00 p.m. a jubilant French General de Choisy informed General Weedon of the victory and Washington congratulated "the Army upon the brilliant success of the Allied Troops near Gloucester" in his General Orders for October 4.



Captain Johann Ewald (1744-1813)

After it had been cleared of battle-related debris, Allied forces occupied the British redoubt that had guarded the road to Gloucester Point and turned the battlefield into their campsite. The next two weeks were spent repeatedly probing British defenses. In the evening of October 14, when Franco-American forces stormed Redoubts No. 9 and 10 across the river in Yorktown, allied troops under Choisy carried out a diversionary attack on Gloucester Point. The loss of redoubts No. 9 and 10 convinced Cornwallis that the time had come to ask for surrender terms.

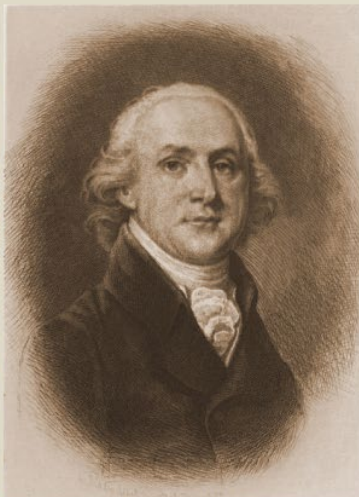
After Cornwallis had signed the Articles of Capitulation in the morning of October 19, Washington, "with many congratulations," sent Choisy the surrender instructions for Gloucester Point. At three o'clock in the afternoon, one hour after Cornwallis had surrendered his troops across the river in Yorktown, Tarleton's men marched out of their earthworks at Gloucester Point "with shouldered Arms, Drums beating a British or German March, the Cavalry with their Swords drawn" and their flags cased. Lauzun's hussars and Mercer's Grenadiers witnessed the real last surrender of British forces in the United States. We "saw Tarleton's Corps dismount and some of them cried," remembered George Gibson. Tarleton was not among them. Fearing retaliation, he had asked to be excused, but it is more likely that he wanted to escape the humiliation of surrender. The militia was discharged. One Virginia militiaman recalled that "Weedon drew up the troops ... and with a wave of the hand, which he will never forget, told the troops to go home."

The effects of the war in Gloucester County lingered for years to come. For three months thousands of men and hundreds of horses had raked the county for supplies. By want, inclination, or order they had impressed or plundered at will. Even Hessian Jäger Captain Johann Ewald "felt sorry for these poor people." Cornfields were devastated and fences and houses destroyed, but what hurt most was the loss of enslaved Blacks. Some 600 African American freedom seekers were re-captured in Gloucester Point, others returned voluntarily, but many more died, escaped with Crown forces, or remained enslaved and were whisked off in French ships.



Seawells Ordinary

The Battle of the Hook, the largest cavalry engagement of the War of Independence, played a critical role in forcing the surrender of Cornwallis. It had been a tremendous success on many levels. Forcing Tarleton to retreat behind his earthworks at Gloucester Point provided the allies with an enormous boost of morale; the marquis de St. Simon considered it "a lucky omen for us." For the remainder of the siege, Tarleton stayed bottled up in Gloucester Point. Never again would the hated Scot scour the county for supplies. On a tactical level the victory sealed off the last potential escape route for Lord Cornwallis. Sixteen days after the Battle of the Hook, Britain's last operational field army laid down its arms.



Lieutenant Colonel John Francis Mercer (1759-1821)



Lauzun's infantry button. Marian L. HURLEY, "A Collector's Guide to French Military Buttons of the American Revolution 1775 to 1783" (1998)



Charge Of Lauzun's Hussars. Courtesy David Wagner

For more information on other County attractions please contact

Gloucester Parks, Recreation & Tourism
6382 Main Street
P.O.Box 157
Gloucester, VA 23061
(804) 693-0014

Website: <https://www.gloucesterva.info/820/Museum-of-History>



Gloucester County would like to thank Don Troiani and David Wagner for permission to reproduce their artwork.

To learn more about the history of Gloucester and Gloucester County during the War of Independence please visit the Gloucester Courthouse Circle Historic District and the Gloucester Museum of History (circa 1770) at 6539 Main Street (804) 693-1234, Abingdon Episcopal Church, Rosewell Ruins, and Tyndall's Point Park at 1376 Vernon Street, refortified by the British army in August 1781.

This brochure was made possible by a grant from the American Battlefield Protection Program. The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the U.S. Government. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by the U.S. Government.