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— felicia barber + riley wentzler —

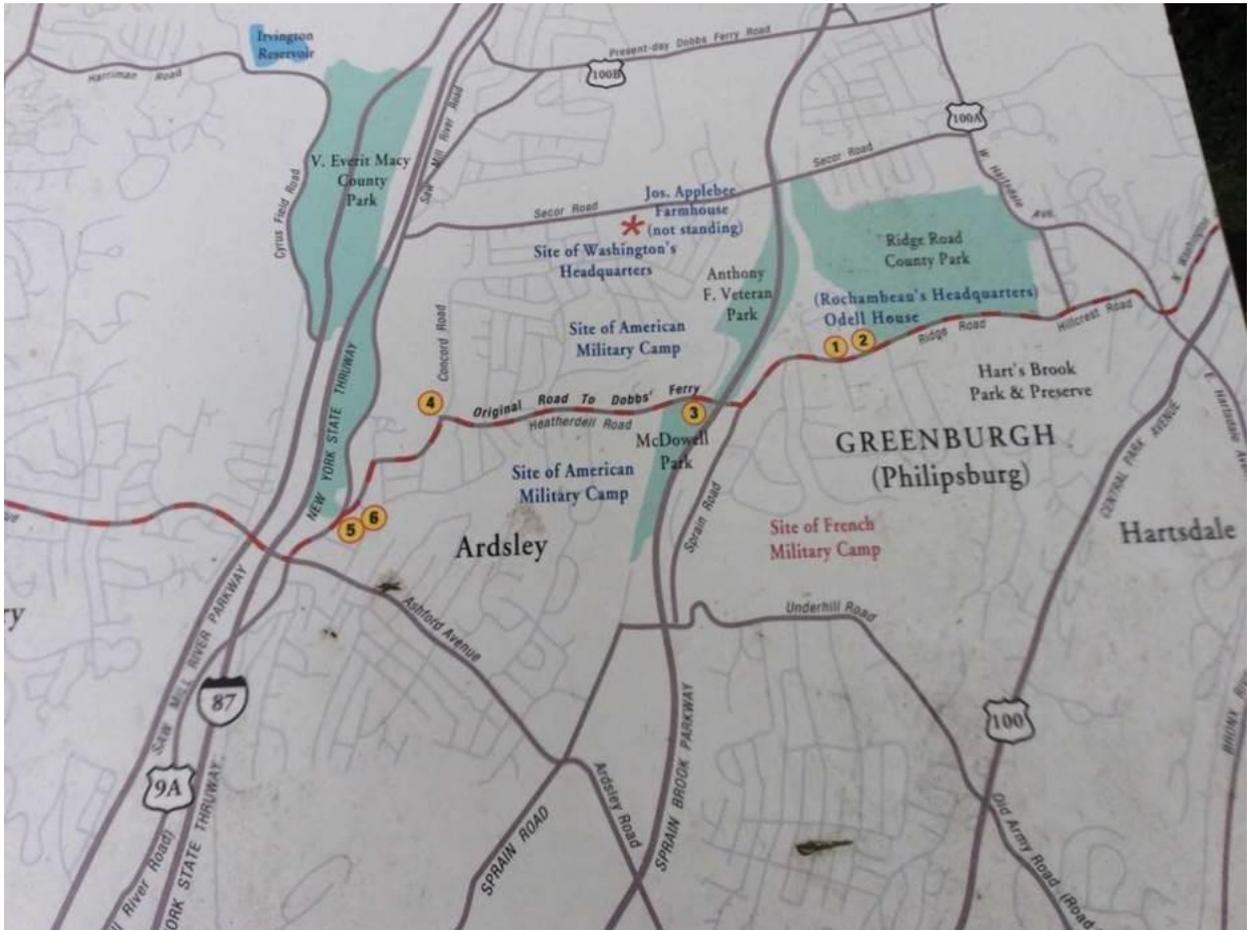


A Fateful Journey: The Uniqueness of Ardsley and The Story of Washington and Rochambeau's Journey through Greenburgh

By: Riley Wentzler & Felicia Barber

General George Washington's Army camped in many spots in Greenburgh from 1775-1781 and French General Jean-Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur Rochambeau with the French Forces camped in Greenburgh from July 6th 1781- August 18th 1781 (Donovan 2015 p. 24). During the Franco-American Encampment in 1781, the two armies frequently traveled back and forth between their two camps. This route followed what is now Heatherdell Road in Ardsley, Ridge Road in Hartsdale,

and Hillcrest Road in Hartsdale. This line was then known as “The Old Road to Dobbs Ferry.” “The Old Road to Dobbs Ferry” is marked in **red** on the first map



(Map Courtesy of The Ardsley Historical Society)

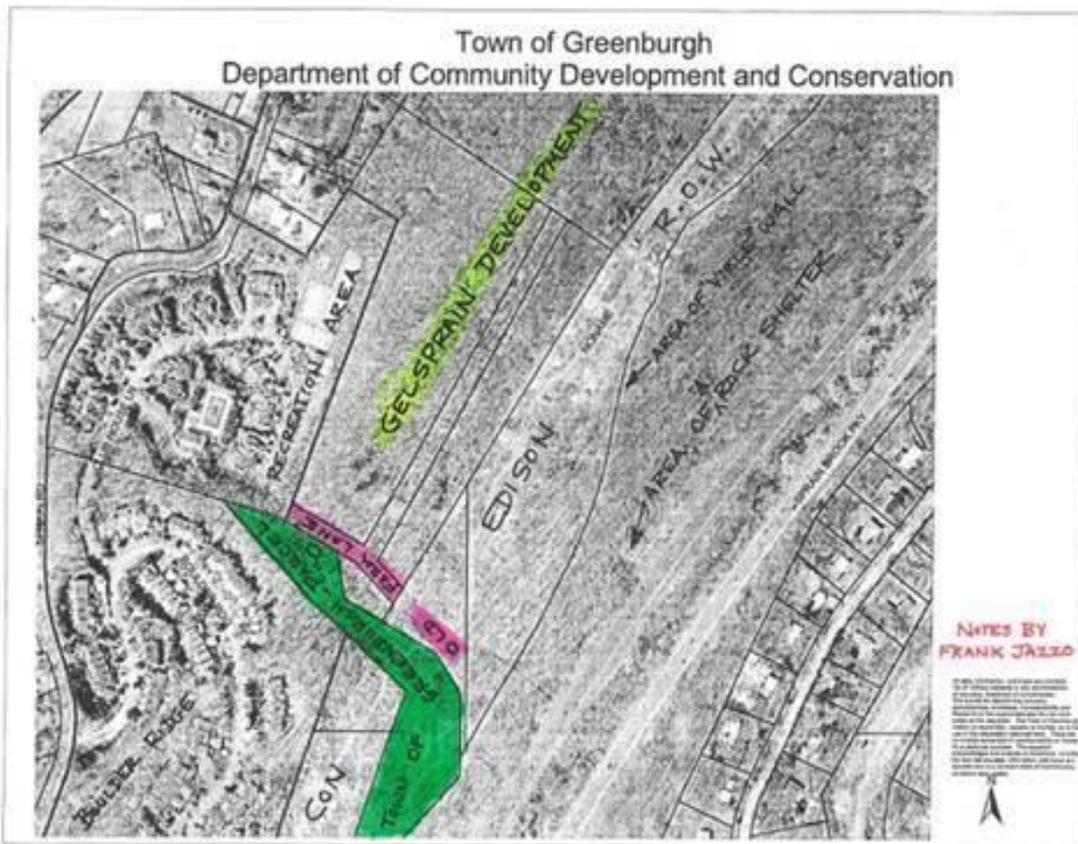
The 1781 American or Continental Encampment was mainly where Ardsley High School is now, at 300 Farm Road in Ardsley, approximately 1 mile away from the Odell House. Some Continental Troops were stationed as far west as the banks of the Hudson (known as the North River at that time). Washington stayed at the Appleby Farm, now the site of WFAS tv tower and marked with a **RED** star on the above map.

The main French forces were located in the area around Odell House. Rochambeau's headquarters was the Odell House located at 425 Ridge Road in Hartsdale (This spot is marked with a number **1** on the map).

His troops and their commanders were camped where the Sunningdale Golf Course is now at 300 Underhill Road Scarsdale, approximately 1 and a half miles from the Odell House, on the land now known as Harts Brook Park, on Ridge Rd. Park and also on other areas surrounding Odell House.

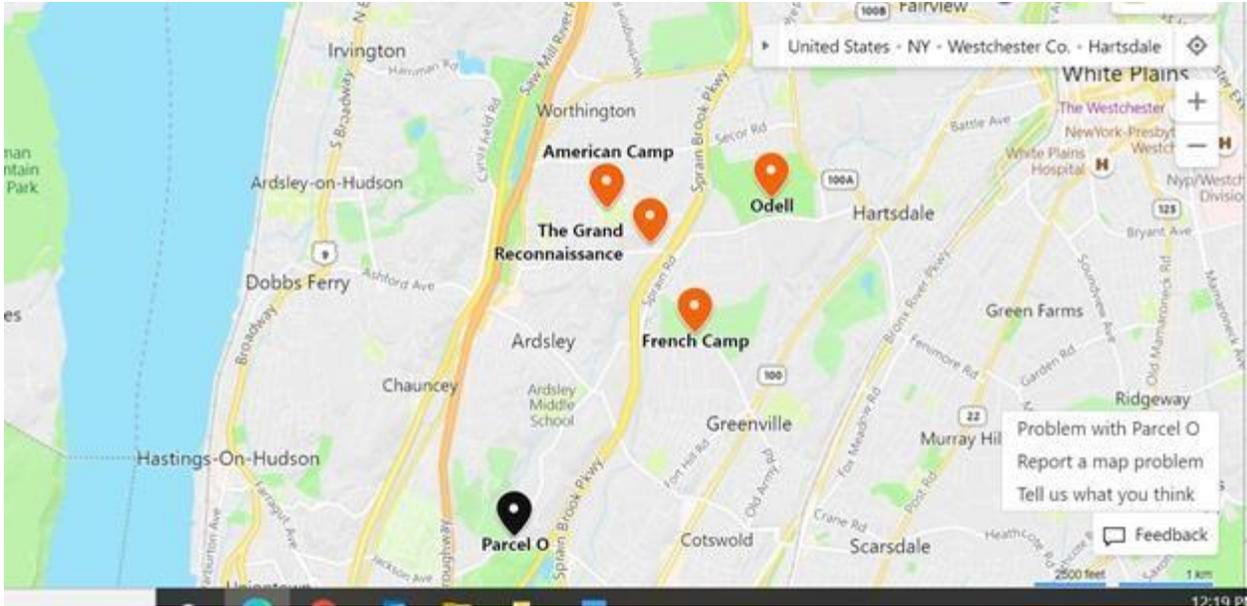
The bus stop at the bottom of Heatherdell Road near the intersection with Saw Mill River Rd. in Ardsley has a sign on it commemorating that it was the starting point for a 4,000-man joint French-American scouting mission known as “The Grand Reconnaissance”. This was planned by the two generals before the date of the Encampment and it was their attempt to evaluate the British strength in order to possibly attack them in Manhattan. It took place from July 21-23, 1781. This spot is marked on the first map with a number 5. This plan was abandoned when Washington received word that the French Navy could not come as far north as New York but could meet the armies in VA instead.

There has sometimes been a discussion about a section of land known as Parcel “O” located off of Boulder Ridge Road. Former Greenburgh Town Historian Frank Jazzo firmly believed this served as the *French Redoubt* - A **redoubt** or a **bivouac** is a temporary defensive position established by soldiers which has no tents but has rudimentary stone walls. It is marked on the second map in **Green**. Mr. Kenneth G. Stahn, President of the Scarsdale Civic Association, agreed with Mr. Frank Jazzo. There was an attempt to link this parcel in a trail that would have joined several park areas in Greenburgh.



(Map Courtesy of Former Greenburgh Town Historian Frank Jazzo)

However, others such as: Dr. Robert A. Selig, the author of the Franco-American Encampment Study recently published on the Town website and the project historian to the National Park Service for the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail Project, Ardsley Historical Society President Peter Marcus, Susan Seal, Former President of the Westchester Historical Society and current President of the Friends of Odell House Rochambeau Headquarters, and Richard Borkow, the Dobbs Ferry Village Historian and the author of *Washington's Westchester Gamble*, do not find any historic evidence that any redoubt or lookout existed. They have examined documents from the French and American armies and cannot find any original source material supporting that claim. It is our conclusion that without such evidence, the significance of Parcel O is unproven.



(Map created by the author after consultation with Commissioner of Urban Planning, Garret Duquesne)

The map above shows where Parcel O is in relation to other significant Revolutionary War landmarks in Greenburgh: The main French camp, Rochambeau's HQ at Odell House, the main American camp and marker of the beginning point for The Grand Reconnaissance. Parcel O is a high point in Greenburgh and it is possible some troops may have gone there to watch for any British approaching forces. That is the only thing that can be said about it.

About the Authors:

We are both Assistant Town Historians at Greenburgh Town Hall and we are engaged to be married and are currently looking for permanent employment.

Riley Wentzler:

I was born and raised in a small rural town in central Pennsylvania. In high school, I took every honors course available including four years of Spanish. I received A's in all of them. I graduated third in my class of 146 students. This brought me to Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. Once there, I continued my trend of academic excellence. I graduated summa cum laude in Political Science with a minor in Spanish and a Master's in Communication Studies, with a G.P.A of 3.94. It was also there that I met my lovely fiancée, Felicia Barber. My Master's in Communication has promoted public speaking, teamwork, and customer service. My Political Science degree has developed my research skills using computerbased tools and provided me with experience using the Microsoft Office products. My minor in Spanish has facilitated my bilingual capabilities. During my internship at Greenburgh, I created the petition for the State Roads project using website tools. My diverse education and areas of interest have provided me with a wide range of skills. I look forward to finding a career opportunity in business or government. **To suggest a topic for next week's article, you can contact me at assistanthistorian@greenburghny.com, or to help me find employment, you can contact me at rjwentzler413@gmail.com**

Felicia Barber:

I was born in New York City and raised in Hartsdale, New York. I graduated from Ardsley High School. I recently earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Graphic Design at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. It was here that I met my fiancé, Riley Wentzler. As a result of my academic excellence, I won a scholarship every year. I learned and applied many graphic design skills to projects during my summer internships and at school. I am proficient in using Adobe graphic design applications including Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign. For my Identity/branding course at Edinboro, I created logos to appear on the tee-shirts of Physical Education majors. For a veteran's upcoming event, I used a typeface to focus the reader to the soldier in the poster. For the State Roads Legislative Campaign project, I created the embedded graphic-photo that accompanied the petition I am looking for a job to utilize my skills as a Graphic Designer in an agency, print shop, company or government **To suggest a topic for next week's article, you can contact me at assistanthistorian@greenburghny.com. To learn more about my artwork or to help me find employment you can contact me at feliciadbarber@gmail.com.**

Two Interviews with the authors:

<https://riverjournalonline.com/around-town/a-love-of-history-and-each-other/13708/>

<https://wcbs880.radio.com/articles/news/stories-main-street-couple-cerebral-palsy-bringsmanytalents-town-greenburgh>

References

Donovan, M. S. (2009- revised 2015). *George Washington at Head Quarters, Dobbs Ferry: July 4 to August 19, 1781*. Bloomington, IN: IUniverse.