

The Henry Knox Cannon Trail and the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route celebrate a Boston bookseller and a French general who literally traveled the extra mile for George Washington and the Revolutionary cause. Thanks to Knox’s extraordinary expedition to retrieve artillery pieces, Washington succeeded in driving a British army from Boston at the beginning of the American Revolution. With the Comte de Rochambeau’s critical support, Washington succeeded in forcing the British to surrender at Yorktown, Virginia, in 1781.

Use this guide and the map in the accompanying American Revolution brochure to trace their historic expeditions through the Hudson River Valley.

Henry Knox Cannon Trail

In May of 1775 Colonels Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold captured Ticonderoga and Crown Point, two British forts on Lake Champlain in upstate New York. American Patriots were jubilant. They had foiled the British at Lexington and Concord, besieged Boston, and inflicted heavy casualties on King George III’s troops in the Battle of Bunker (Breed’s) Hill.



On June 19 the Second Continental Congress appointed George Washington commander in chief of the Continental Army besieging Boston. Washington was honored but worried as he assumed command on July 3. The colonists did not have enough gunpowder and heavy artillery to force the British out of Boston.

As the siege dragged on into the fall, General Washington and his officers debated whether to sit tight or attack. Colonel Henry Knox, a 25-year-old Bunker Hill volunteer, promoted a scheme—apparently first suggested by Arnold—that the Patriots transport the guns from Fort Ticonderoga and Crown Point to Boston to help with the siege. Washington liked the idea. He put the bookish, self-taught artillerist in charge of the army’s nearly nonexistent artillery and sent him to New York to bring back the guns.

Knox, accompanied by his 19-year-old brother William and a servant, arrived at Lake Champlain on December 5 and selected 59 artillery pieces for the 250-mile trek to Boston.

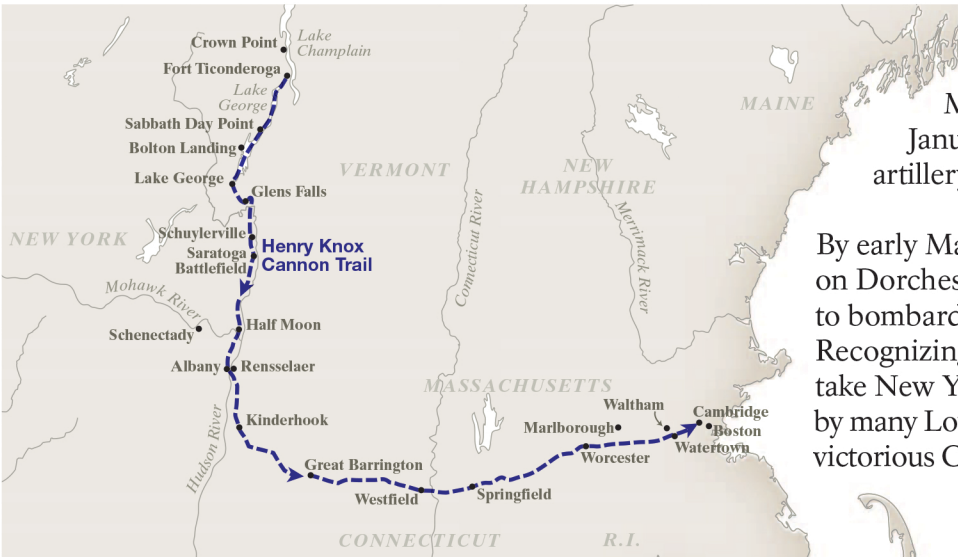


Henry Knox’s “noble train of artillery” pushes on through the deep snow. Tom Lovell, Dixon Ticonderoga Company Collection

After the siege of Boston, Knox (above left) commanded artillery at Trenton, Monmouth, and Yorktown. Gilbert Stuart, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Assisted by the garrison at Ticonderoga, Knox began moving the cannons, which weighed a total of nearly 120,000 pounds, on ox carts, boats, then sleds pulled by oxen—and later horses—down the lake and along the Hudson to Albany where he crossed. Aided at times by slippery ice and snow, hindered at other times by rain and mud, Knox cajoled the weary men and beasts up and down the slopes of the Berkshire Mountains and across Massachusetts. On January 24 the last of Knox’s “noble train of artillery” arrived in Cambridge.

By early March, with Knox’s heavy guns arrayed on Dorchester Heights, Washington was ready to bombard the British entrenched in Boston. Recognizing they were trapped and with plans to take New York, the British troops—accompanied by many Loyalists—began to leave. On March 18 the victorious Continental Army marched into the city.



The Trail Today



The Henry Knox Cannon Trail follows the route that Colonel Henry Knox used to transport 59 cannons from Crown Point and Fort Ticonderoga to Cambridge, Massachusetts, in the winter of 1775-76.

Fifty-six monuments were installed along the route in 1927 to commemorate the arduous 56-day journey. Thirty of the granite monuments and bronze plaques mark the route in New York from Fort Ticonderoga to the Massachusetts border near Hillsdale. Starting near Great Barrington, 26 monuments mark the trail in Massachusetts. The installation of these monuments represents one of the earliest heritage trails created in the United States.

Begin your travels in New York at any place along the route. Besides Crown Point and Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain, key heritage sites to visit in New York include the Schuyler House in Schuylerville and Saratoga National Historical Park in Stillwater. The Henry Knox Cannon Trail Monuments in New York are listed below. They are shown with a symbol on the map in the “The American Revolution in the Hudson River Valley” brochure.

0. Crown Point
1. Fort Ticonderoga, Place of Arms courtyard

2. Fort Ticonderoga, King’s Dock, transfer point from land to water; second marker on entrance road

3. Fort Ticonderoga, village park, transfer point from water to land

4. Fort Ticonderoga, Mossy Point State Boat Launch, transfer point to Lake George vessels

5. Sabbath Day Point, private property

6. Bolton Landing, near public dock, Rogers Memorial Park

7. Lake George Battlefield State Park

8. Halfway Brook, also known as Bloody Brook or Pond, US 9

9. Glens Falls, US 9, Crandall Park

10. Hudson Falls, public library, Main Street, US 4

11. Fort Edward, high school, US 4

11.5 Fort Miller, US 4, near church

12. Stark’s Knob Road, US 4/NY 32
13. Schuylerville, Memorial Park, south end of village
14. Ensign House, Ensign Lane, south of Schuylerville
15. Bemis Heights, triangle, US 4/NY32 south of Saratoga National Historical Park
16. Stillwater, in park opposite library
17. Mechanicville, Post Office, east side of Main Street
18. Waterford, Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Park near bridge on Broad Street
19. Loudon Road, west side of US 9, near Mohawk River
20. Latham, Calvary Methodist Episcopal Church, west side of US 9
21. Albany, Loudonville Road and Northern Boulevard, Loudon Shopping Plaza
22. Albany, Riverside Park
23. Rensselaer, Aiken Avenue and US 9
24. East Greenbush, Dutch Reformed Church, west side of US 9
25. Schodack, triangle at junction of US 9 and US 20
26. Kinderhook village park, US 9
27. Ghent, NY 66 at intersection with Snyder Road
28. Taconic Parkway, Harlemville Road between NY 217 and NY 203 exits
29. Green River, at triangle at junction of NY 22 and NY 71
30. State Line, NY 71

While you are following the trail, consider taking side trips to Peebles Island State Park at Waterford; the Schuyler Mansion and Historic Cherry Hill in Albany; Crailo in Rensselaer; the Luykas Van Alen and Vanderpoel Houses in Kinderhook; the Senate House in Kingston, and other Revolutionary War sites. At Vails Gate, south of Newburgh, visit Knox’s Headquarters, the house where Maj. Gen. Henry Knox stayed at four different times during the war.

The New York State Museum developed a virtual Henry Knox Cannon Trail that can be viewed on the Hudson River Valley Institute’s Digital Library: www.hudsonrivervalley.org/themes/Amrev/KnoxTrail/index.php#top.



Fort Ticonderoga Nathan Farb

Revolutionary War Routes in the Hudson River Valley

Hudson River Valley
National Heritage Area, New York
www.hudsonrivervalley.com

Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route

With the Patriots in control of Boston, the British under the command of General William Howe and Admiral Richard Howe turned their attention in 1776 to New York City. After winning the battle of Brooklyn (Long Island) in August and occupying the city in September, General Howe's forces fought a series of cat-and-mouse battles with George Washington's troops at Harlem Heights and White Plains and captured Forts Washington and Lee.

Then, in October 1777, the Continental Army stunned the world by forcing the British to surrender at the Battles of Saratoga in the Hudson River Valley. The British were humiliated. After abandoning Philadelphia in June 1778, they decided to hunker down in New York City and concentrate on quashing the rebellion in the South.

The Patriots' victory prompted France in February 1778 to join the American cause. At first the French provided much needed loans, supplies, and naval support. Then, on July 11, 1780, Lt. Gen. Jean Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, Comte de Rochambeau, arrived in Newport, R.I., with 5,300 infantry soldiers and artillerymen.

In a series of letters and meetings, Washington and Rochambeau agreed the two armies and the French navy would work together. Washington wanted to attack the British in New York City. Rochambeau wanted to attack in Virginia. They agreed to concentrate their forces in New York.

On June 10, 1781, Rochambeau's troops left Newport by boat to Providence, where they began a three-week march across Connecticut to Ridgebury. They crossed into New York and joined the Americans at Greenburgh



General George Washington and Comte de Rochambeau (pointing) review their plans to besiege the British at Yorktown. Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource

Prior to the American Revolution, Lt. Gen. Rochambeau (left) was already a military hero in France. Ministère de la Defense



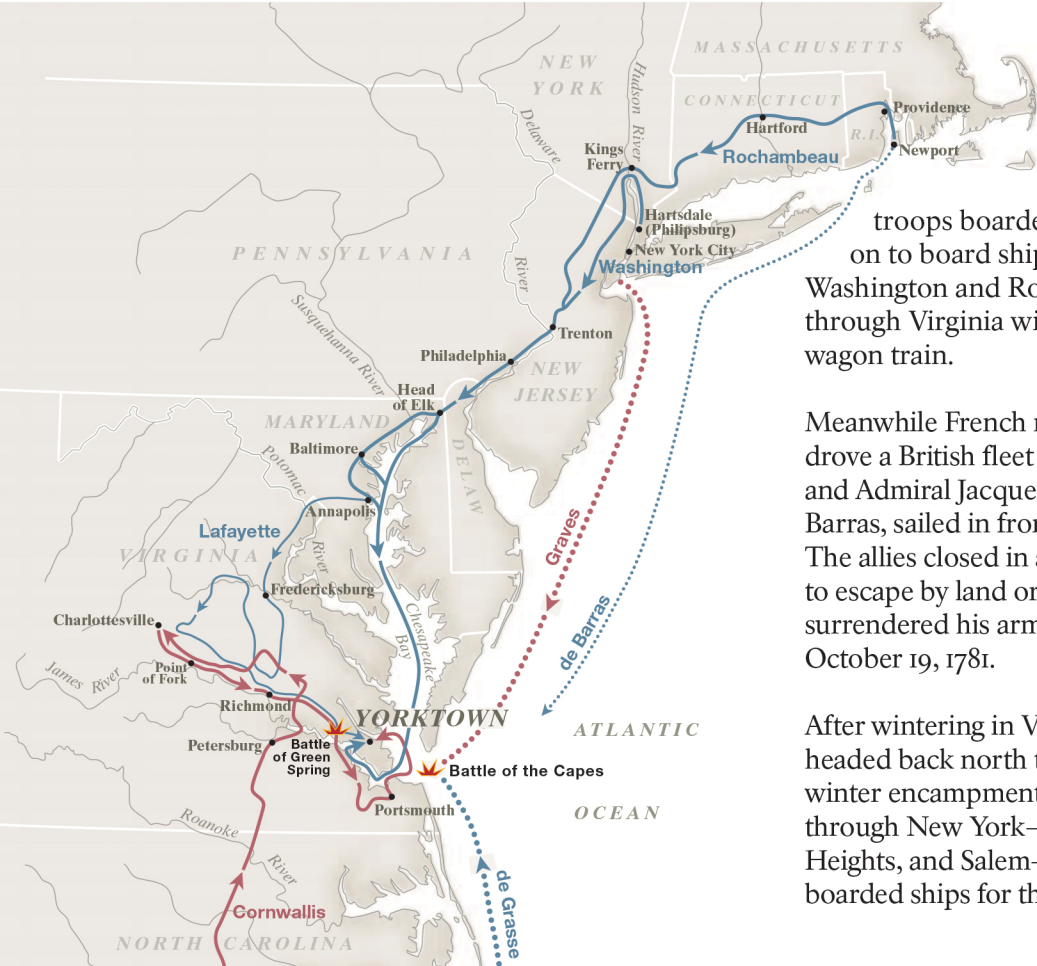
(formerly Philipsburg), where they stayed for six weeks. Rochambeau set up his headquarters at the John Odell House, which still stands on Ridge Road in Hartsdale, and Washington established his headquarters nearby at the Joseph Appleby farm. During the encampment, Washington and Rochambeau reconnoitered the British fortifications protecting Manhattan.

In August, Washington learned that Admiral François Joseph Paul, Comte de Grasse, was sailing with his fleet to the Chesapeake Bay. He left a small force in New York and, with 2,700 Americans and Rochambeau's 4,200 soldiers, headed south toward Yorktown, Va., where the British were massing troops. The allies camped at Mount Kisco (North Castle), Yorktown (Hunt's Tavern), and Verplanck's Point, where they crossed the Hudson and camped near Stony Point at Haverstraw. They then proceeded to Suffern, crossed the Ramapo River, and marched into New Jersey.

The soldiers marched on through Princeton, Trenton, and Philadelphia to the Head of the Elk at the north end of the Chesapeake Bay, where some troops boarded ships for Yorktown. Most trudged on to board ships at Baltimore and Annapolis. Washington and Rochambeau continued overland through Virginia with the artillery horses, cavalry, and wagon train.

Meanwhile French naval forces under Admiral de Grasse drove a British fleet from the mouth of the Chesapeake, and Admiral Jacques-Melchior Saint-Laurent, Comte de Barras, sailed in from Newport with French siege guns. The allies closed in and besieged Yorktown. With no way to escape by land or sea, Lt. Gen. Charles Lord Cornwallis surrendered his army of almost 8,000 to Washington on October 19, 1781.

After wintering in Virginia, Washington and his troops headed back north to New Windsor, N.Y., for their final winter encampment. Rochambeau's forces marched back through New York—camping at Peekskill, Yorktown Heights, and Salem—en route to Boston, where they boarded ships for the Caribbean.



The Route Today



The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route (W3R) marks a series of roads and byways used by George Washington's and the Comte de Rochambeau's troops on their way to Yorktown, Va., in 1781. The route passes through nine states and the District of Columbia between Newport, R.I., and Yorktown.

You may enter the W3R in New York State from Ridgebury or Ridgefield, Connecticut, or from Pompton, N.J., and follow it from French camp to French camp. The camp

locations are shown below and with a symbol on the map in the accompanying brochure, "The American Revolution in the Hudson River Valley."

- Bedford, July 2, 1781
- Mount Kisco (formerly North Castle), July 3-5 and Aug. 20, 1781
- Greenburgh (Philipsburg), July 5-Aug. 19, 1781
- Yorktown (Hunt's Tavern) Aug. 21, 1781; Sept. 24-Oct. 21, 1782
- Verplanck's Point, Aug. 22-24, 1781
- Haverstraw, Aug. 24-25, 1781; Sept. 14-16, 1782
- Peekskill, Sept. 17-23, 1782
- Suffern, Aug. 25-26, 1781; Sept. 13-14, 1782
- Salem, Oct. 22-23, 1782

Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area sites along the trail include the **John Odell House** on Ridge Road in Hartsdale, a village in Greenburgh (open by appointment only; call 914-686-6130); **Kings Ferry**; **Verplanck's Point**; **Stony Point Battlefield**; and **West Point**, which Rochambeau visited.

After the American victory at Yorktown, Washington and his army returned to New York. The general stayed until the end of the Revolutionary War at a farmhouse in Newburgh known today as **Washington's Headquarters** while his officers and soldiers made their final encampment at the **New Windsor Cantonment** in Vails Gate. Nearby is **Knox's Headquarters**, the house where Maj. Gen. Henry Knox stayed at various times during the war and where Maj. Gen. Horatio Gates stayed when he was commandant of the New Windsor Cantonment.

Along the way consider taking a side excursion to one or more of these sites related to the Revolutionary period: **John Jay Homestead** in Katonah; **Van Cortland Manor** in Croton-on-Hudson; **Philipsburg Manor** in Sleepy Hollow; **White Plains Battlefield**, where Colonel Armand-Louis de Gontaut, the Duc de Lauzun's legion camped; and **St. Paul's Church** in Mt. Vernon, which served as a hospital for Hessians after the 1776 Battle of Pell's Point.

For detailed information about the locations of the route in New York State, visit www.hudsonrivervalley.org. Information about current commemorative efforts of the National Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association is available at www.w3r-us.org.



Photo: Marilyn Cole Greene, DAR, Enoch Crosby Chapter

Sybil Ludington's Ride

Sybil Ludington is not as well known as Paul Revere, but she, too, took a midnight ride. On April 26, 1777, the 16-year-old rode a 40-mile circuit in the lower Hudson River Valley to alert members of her father's militia that the British were burning Patriot homes and supplies across the border in Danbury, Connecticut. The militia helped drive the British back to their ships in Long Island Sound. The statue of Sybil Ludington, by Anna Hyatt Huntington, stands in Carmel, N.Y.

Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area



The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area is a federally funded program created by Congress in 1996. The mission of the Heritage Area is to recognize, preserve, protect, and interpret the nationally significant cultural and natural resources of the Hudson River Valley for the benefit of the nation. Since 1999 the Heritage Area has been involved in projects to increase public awareness of the Henry Knox Cannon Trail and the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route. Both routes were designated New York Revolutionary Heritage Trails in 2003. The National Heritage Area and Heritage New York funded the production of this map and guide. Send your comments by fax to 518-473-4518 or by e-mail to hvrnha@hvc.rr.com.