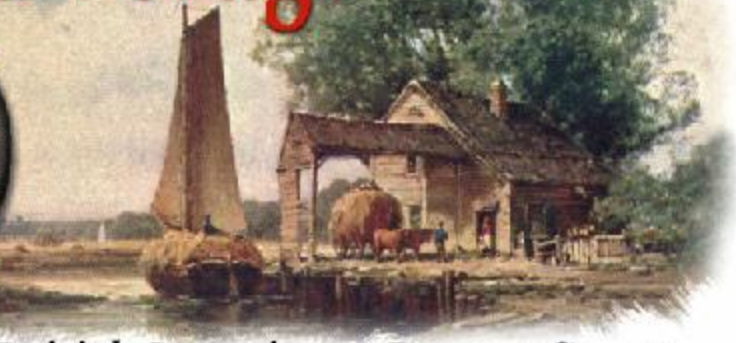


Grand Forage



The 1778 British Invasion of Bergen County

225th Anniversary

The British Grand Forage, Bergen County, New Jersey

October 11 & 12, 2003

This fall will mark the 225th Anniversary of a significant event in the history of the American Revolution, and Bergen County.

1778

On September 22nd, 1778, approximately 5,000 British & Loyalist troops under Lieutenant General Charles Lord Cornwallis entered Bergen County. Facing this threat was a detachment of local militia at the Liberty Pole, and a small regiment of Continental cavalry from Virginia, stationed at Paramus. Over the course of the next three weeks, the British troops would eliminate or scatter both groups, while helping themselves to the harvest of Bergen's farmers.

The primary reason for the British incursion was the acquisition of cattle and forage. With the entry of France into the war, the British needed to protect their distant posts, such as the West Indies, Nova Scotia and West Florida. Consequently large detachments had to be detached from New York to meet the threat. These forces, and those that would remain behind, would need as many supplies of provisions that could with relative ease be secured. Bergen County, adjacent to British-held New York City and Paulus Hook (Jersey City) and containing a large Loyalist population, would provide that need.

The county was defended by a very small force of Continental troops, mostly in the form of the 3rd Continental Light Dragoons, a cavalry regiment. Added to this was a picket of sixty militia at the Liberty Pole in Englewood. These men were the first line of defense in screening Washington's main army in the Highlands from any British surprise.

During the period of September 22 to October 14, four major clashes would occur:

September 23rd a detachment of British cavalry would attack and disperse the Bergen County Militia outpost at Liberty Pole. This initial engagement, while brief and few in casualties, alerted the county to the British presence. Several were killed, while twenty seven were taken prisoner.

September 28th a large British force under Major General Charles Grey in the darkness of early morning attacked and defeated the 3rd Continental Light Dragoons while sleeping in their makeshift quarters in River Vale. This would go down in history as "The Baylor's Massacre" after the commanding officer of the dragoons, Colonel George Baylor. At least fifteen soldiers, plus their major, were killed or mortally wounded in the attack, most being buried in that town. Their remains were discovered and exhumed after an extensive dig in 1967. A park and memorial stands on the site now.

September 28th a second force of British & Loyalist soldiers crosses the Hudson and endeavors to surprise a militia outpost near Tappan. Most of the militia had withdrawn after being alerted by two British deserters from Liberty Pole alerting them to the danger. A few militia under Captain Abraham Blauvelt were somehow not informed of the impending danger and were consequently killed, wounded or taken.

A final engagement occurred near New Bridge when a force of Bergen County & other militia, joined with some Continentals and a piece of artillery, attempted to attack a fort on Brower Hill, apparently garrisoned exclusively by Loyalist troops, including those raised in Bergen County. After judging the fort too strong to be attacked, the troops marched off. This fort was started on September 25th and one of two built by the British during their stay in the county. They were demolished upon their being abandoned.

2003

The Bergen County Historical Society (BCHS) is pleased to host a weekend commemoration of some of these important events in our history. The event will take place the October 11th & 12th (Columbus Day Weekend) and center around Historic New Bridge Landing (HNBL.) The Brigade of the American Revolution (BAR,) an international living history association, will hold an encampment on the site, recreating some of the events that took place during this incursion, including the attack on the Liberty Pole picket, the American attack on Brower Hill, the British Forage (including the use of boats and carts) and a refugee camp.

The Bergen County Historical Society, a non-profit volunteer organization, promotes preservation, study and appreciation of local history. Its museum collections are displayed at the Steuben House, a State Historic Site and the Campbell-Christie House. Public programs include placement of informative roadside historic markers, educational events, museum exhibits, monthly lectures, and a library collection.

New Bridge was a prosperous mill hamlet, centered upon a bridge strategically placed at the narrows of the Hackensack River, Bergen County, New Jersey. The Steuben House, Campbell-Christie House and Demarest House are landmarks of Bergen Dutch sandstone architecture, popularly called "Dutch Colonial" and frequently seen and admired throughout northern NJ. The Steuben House still stands on its original site.

The Brigade of the American Revolution is a non-profit living history association dedicated to recreating the life and times of the common soldier of the American War for Independence, 1775-1783. Members represent elements of all the armies then involved: Continental, Militia, British, Loyalist, German, French, Spanish, and Native American forces plus civilian men, women and children.

Since 1962 the BAR has been recreating a broad spectrum of the 18th Century. Its activities include military encampments, tactical exercises, firelock shooting competitions, craft demonstrations and social activities. The Brigade also conducts annual schools and educational seminars featuring experts from several fields of 18th Century study.

For further event information, contact:

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Original Source Documents

Original Source Documents

[American Newspaper Accounts](#)

[British Newspaper Accounts](#)

[Journal of Major Baurmeister](#)

[Journal of Chaplain Philipp Waldeck](#)

[Journal of an officer in Artillery Regiment](#)

[Journal of Captain John Andre](#)

[Journal of Captain John Peebles](#)

[Journal of Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Kemble](#)

[Grand Forage American Correspondence No. 1](#)

[Grand Forage American Correspondence No. 2](#)

[Grand Forage British Correspondence](#)

[Pension Application of Bartlet Hawkins, 3rd Continental Light Dragoons](#)

[Pension Application of Samuel Vervalen, Bergen County Militia](#)

[Pension Application of William Wright, Loyal American Regiment](#)

[Dr. Griffith on the Baylor Massacre](#)

[OVERKILL: Revolutionary War Reminiscences of River Vale
by Kevin Wright \(On BCHS main webpage\)](#)

[1778 Depositions on the Baylor Massacre](#)

Activities

The event will feature a number of activities and scenarios representative of what was happening in Bergen County 225 years ago, as well as those designed to educate the public.

Starting on Saturday Morning, visitors will have a chance to tour camps of authentically clad American and British troops, view troops drilling, and find out what it was like to be a soldier or civilian in 18th Century Bergen County. There will be demonstrations of artillery, music and a period Fashion Show.

Each day will feature a recreated battle based on a scenario that occurred during the time the British were in the county. Saturday will see the British attack on the small American post at the Liberty Pole. While the original site of the Liberty Pole is some miles away in Englewood, the grounds behind the Steuben House will be utilized for this battle. Sunday will see the British troops and their Loyalist allies building entrenching on the west side of the river, much as it occurred 225 years ago. In the afternoon, these works will be attacked, as it occurred on September 29th, 1778, less than a mile away.

The public is invited to tour the historic houses on the site, see a working out-kitchen, and perhaps come away with a memento from the gift shop. Admission to the event is free. Donations will be greatly appreciated!

Tentative Public Schedule

Saturday, October 11.

10:00 AM Camps open to public.
10:30 AM American Forces formation.
11:00 AM Crown Forces formation.
1:00 PM Music Demonstration, Steuben House.
1:30 PM People of the American Revolution, Steuben House.
2:00 PM Artillery Demonstration, Steuben House (waterside.)
3:00 PM Attack on the Liberty Pole Picket!
5:00 PM Camps closed.

Sunday, October 12.

10:00 AM Camps open to public.
10:15 AM Church call, Steuben House.
10:45 AM Engineers Survey Fort Site.
11:00 AM Construction of Fort commences (Crown Forces.)
11:30 AM Arrival of Refugees/establishment of Refugee Camp at Fort.
1:00 PM Foraging at the Fort.
2:00 PM Militia Rally at Campbell Christie House.
2:30 PM Attack on the Fort!
3:30 PM Camps closed, break camp.

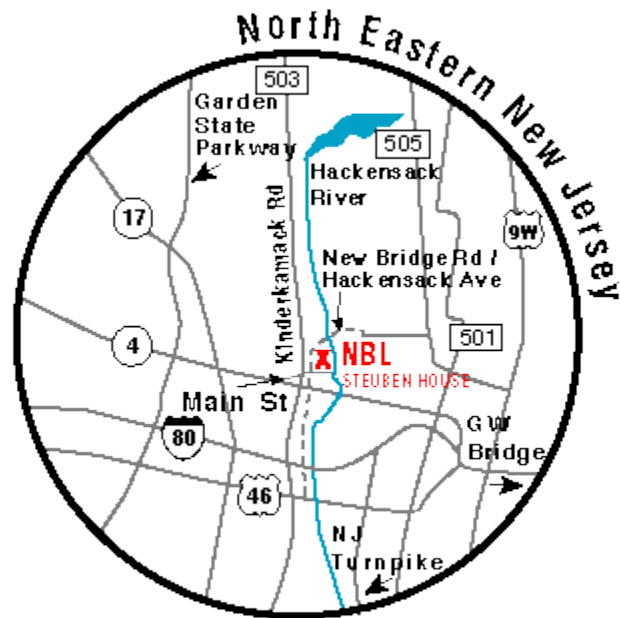
DIRECTIONS to HNBL

Historic New Bridge Landing is located on the west bank of the Hackensack River at the dead-end (east) of Main Street, River Edge, NJ. Nearby streets are marked with brown Historic New Bridge Landing signs.

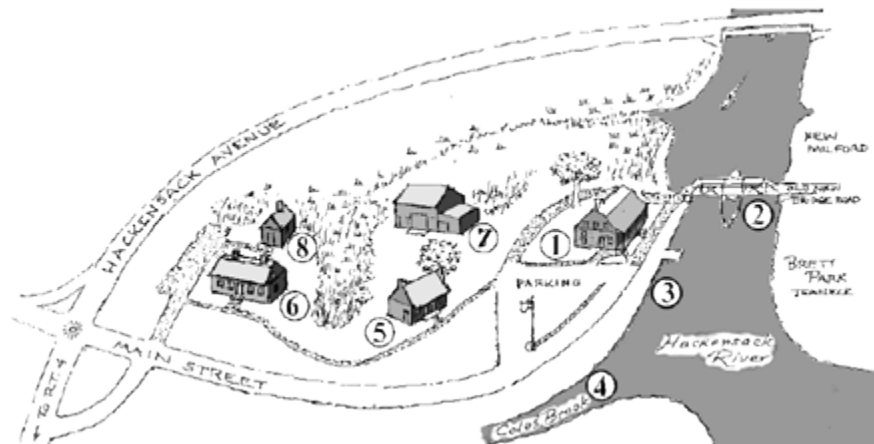
From Exit 161 on the Garden State Parkway North or Rt. 17, travel about 2 miles on Route 4 East, taking the exit for Hackensack Avenue North. Proceed through 2 traffic lights, then take the exit for Main Street, River Edge. Turn right onto Main Street. New Bridge Landing is located on the left side of street.

From Route 4 West, take the exit for River Edge and proceed north on Hackensack Ave through 2 traffic lights and turn right onto Main St, River Edge. New Bridge Landing is located on the left side of street.

From S. Washington Ave / Teaneck Rd, take New Bridge Road West. After crossing the Hackensack River, make a left onto Main Street. New Bridge Landing is located on the left side of street. Close-up view below (Drawing by Claire Tholl).



1. Steuben House
2. New Bridge (1888-89)
3. New Bridge Landing
4. Site of Zabriskie Tidemill
5. Demarest House Museum
6. Campbell-Christie House
7. Westervelt-Thomas Barn
8. Out-kitchen



Steuben House
(201) 487-1739

Campbell-Christie House
(201) 343-9492

The Steuben House is now open. The hours are Wednesday thru Saturday, 10 am to 12 noon and 1 pm to 5 pm and Sunday 2 pm to 5 pm. It is advisable to call ahead to confirm open. 201.487.1739. School groups should make appointments in advance. The Campbell-Christie and Demarest Houses are open for special events. The Campbell-Christie House is open the 2nd Sunday of the month.

Return to Main Page or scroll down to see more information on the above map.

1. Steuben House. Built 1752. Described in 1784 as a "Large Mansion House containing twelve rooms built with

stone, with Outhouses consisting of a Bake House, Smoke House, Coach House, and two large Barns, and a Garden, Forty Acres of Land consisting of Meadow Land and two Orchards."

2. New Bridge. A "New Bridge" with sliding draw was built here in 1744. The present Pratt-type Low Truss Swing Bridge, installed by the King Iron Bridge Co. of Cleveland using channel iron made by the Phoenix Iron Co. of Philadelphia, opened February 2, 1889. Joseph W. Stagg built the sandstone abutments. Closed to automobile traffic in 1956. Listed on NJ and National Registers as the oldest highway swing-bridge in State.

3. New Bridge Landing. A narrow mill landing, built of log cribbing in 1744, could accommodate 50-ton sloops. Iron was brought here from Ringwood and Long Pond for transshipment. Present bulkhead built shortly after completion of present bridge in 1889.

4. Zabriskie's Mills. A gristmill, 40 ft by 20 ft, containing two pairs of grinding stones was constructed in 1744. High tide was trapped in Cole's Brook behind a dam, creating an artificial pond to run the waterwheel during ebb tide. The mill burned down in 1852.

5. Demarest House Museum. 18th-century two-room sandstone dwelling with double front doors and distinctive spring-eave on front. Removed from original site beside French Burial Ground in New Milford in 1955-56. Displays collection of Demarest family and Bergen Dutch artifacts. Open for special events and by appointment. Owned by Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation.

6. Campbell-Christie House. Gambrel, center-hall sandstone dwelling erected on River Road and Henley Avenue, New Milford, by Jacob Campbell, a mason, in 1774. Note paneled reveals and Dutch stoop at front entrance. John Christie, blacksmith, purchased this house in 1795 and continued its operation as a tavern. Moved to River Edge in 1977 by County Freeholders, it is owned by the County of Bergen and operated by the Bergen County Historical Society. Open for special events. Gift shop and rest room.

7. Westervelt-Thomas Barn. Built 1889 by Peter J. Westervelt on his farm on Ridgewood Road, Washington Township. Henry Thomas purchased farm in 1906. Donated to BCHS and relocated in 1958.

8. Out-Kitchen. Authentic out-kitchen built by BCHS in 1990, using antique materials, replicating John R. Demarest Out-Kitchen in Demarest. Includes beehive oven and smoke room.

Parking

Spectator parking will be in two main locations:

For those on the east side of the river,
please use the upper grounds of Brett Park, on River Road in Teaneck.

For those on the west side of the river,
please use the NJ Transit North Hackensack Train Station lot.

Handicap parking will be on site
at the Steuben House.

Parking at both the site and triangle on
Hackensack Avenue is for participants only please.

Acknowledgements

The event committee would like to thank the following organizations & institutions for their generous assistance in producing this event:

Bergen County Historical Society
<http://apollo.carroll.com/bchs/>

Brigade of the American Revolution
<http://www.brigade.org/>

Jim Bellis & the Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation

4th Battalion, New Jersey Volunteers
<http://www.royalprovincial.com/>

Borough of New Milford
<http://www.newmilfordboro.com/>

Borough of River Edge

Township of River Vale
<http://www.rivervalenj.org/>

Township of Teaneck
<http://www.teanecknjgov.org/>

County of Bergen, Dept. of Parks
<http://www.co.bergen.nj.us/parks/>

State of New Jersey, Dept. of Parks & Forestry
<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/>

Grant School, Dumont
<http://www.dumont.us/schools.html>

Boy Scouts of America
<http://www.scouting.org/>

NJ Army National Guard
<http://www.state.nj.us/military/army/>