

REVOLUTIONARY WAR

CROSSING THE PATAPSCO - 1781

April 18, 1781 - The Marquis de Lafayette was making his way toward southwestern Virginia to aid General Washington in leaving British General Cornwallis to starve. The hard march required Major General Lafayette's harrowing regard for the Patapsco River at Elkridge Landing. The spring tides had swollen the river and the ford was wide and deeper than normal. As the troops crossed, one soldier sank and nine soldiers were drowned. Once all troops were on the western shore, they camped within sight of the mouth of the Patapsco Canyon near the village of Elkridge Landing.

General Lafayette wanted to become a soldier of his 12th day army. At his own expense, he purchased shirts, overalls, shoes and hats from local merchants, and issued new outfits to his men. The General then arranged with local farmers and planters for the use of oats and rye to transport his weary soldiers from Elkridge Landing to the Potomac River. This route

enabled the troops to rest and regain strength while they moved toward the fighting that lay ahead. To the men, Lafayette was held in high esteem by his men and tranquility and discipline were restored.

September 12, 1781 - Once again the village of Elkridge Landing saw the passing of soldiers on the march west. This time it was French regulars under the command of General Comte de Rochambeau (1732-1804 seen left) in route to Yorktown, Virginia, to assist General Lafayette and Washington in leaving the surrender of General Cornwallis. Not wanting to subject his soldiers to the hardships of the Potomac River, General Rochambeau insisted on a detour upstream from Elkridge Landing and landed just below the Hockley Forge Dam, about where the Thomas Mathew crosses the river today. Below is a portion of Comte de Rochambeau's 14th camp that noted the danger and difficulty in crossing the Patapsco.



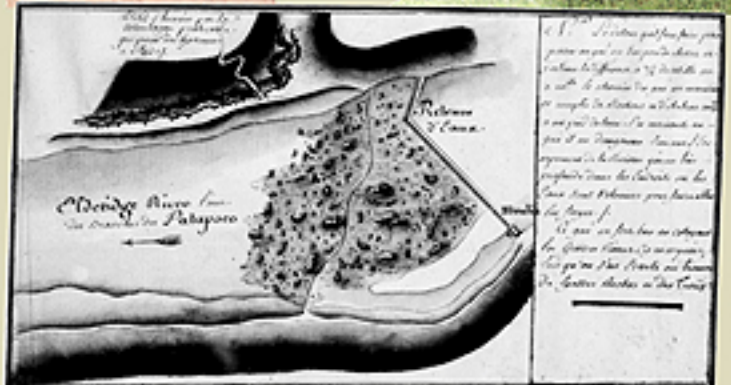
Marquis de Lafayette

Revolutionary War march under the Marquis de Lafayette and Comte de Rochambeau camped within sight of the Patapsco only at the village of Elkridge Landing.



Comte de Rochambeau

From Elkridge Landing, Rochambeau marched to Annapolis and sailed to Virginia. Through the combined efforts of Generals Washington, Lafayette and Rochambeau, the British forces were defeated at Yorktown on October 19, 1781. This battle ended the Revolutionary War.



Map of General Rochambeau's 14th Camp showing his route across the Patapsco River below the Hockley Forge Dam.