

**Monument Proposal in Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery for
28 Rhode Island Continental Soldiers who died at the Wilmington
Academy in Delaware from late 1781 to early 1782**

By Daniel M. Popek and Tom Mercer

December 2018

The Rhode Island Regiment of the American Continental Army was formed in February 1781 in New York by the consolidation of the veteran, predominantly Caucasian, Second Rhode Island Regiment and the remnants of the “Black Regiment,” or the First Rhode Island Regiment, a small battalion of Continental soldiers of color. The understrength First Rhode Island Regiment was reorganized into two new colored companies of the Rhode Island Regiment, the Sixth and Eighth Companies. The winter quarters for the Rhode Island Continentals had been established in December 1780 at “Rhode Island Village,” or modern-day Mahopac Falls, New York about 10 miles east of West Point. In February 1781, the Light Infantry Company of the Rhode Island Regiment comprised mostly of white veteran soldiers of the old Second Rhode Island Regiment was detached south with Major General Lafayette.

Recruits for the new Rhode Island Regiment continued to arrive from Rhode Island along with fresh supplies and clothing during the spring of 1781. Detachments from the regiment served on the front lines along the Croton River in Westchester County in New York. A company-sized, dispersed detachment of the Rhode Island Regiment was attacked at dawn by DeLancey’s Loyalist Battalion on May 14, 1781 leading to the capture of a Rhode Island platoon at Pines Bridge on the Croton River, and some killed in action and wounded in action Rhode Island casualties at the nearby Davenport House. Rhode Islanders Colonel Christopher Greene and Major Ebenezer Flagg were killed in the attack. The Rhode Island Regiment would be led by Lieutenant Colonel Jeremiah Olney for the remainder of the war.

The French Army marched from Rhode Island on June 18, 1781 to join the Grand American Northern Army near Peekskill, New York. The Rhode Island Regiment served with General Washington’s Grand Northern Army through the summer. In August 1781, General Washington decided to send a large American Continental detachment from his Grand Northern Army along with the French Army under General Rochambeau to Williamsburg, Virginia. The Rhode Island Regiment marched and sailed for Virginia arriving at Williamsburg on September 26, 1781. The Rhode Island Regiment served in the American trenches during the Yorktown, Virginia siege. The Light Infantry Company of the regiment distinguished itself as they were the first American soldiers who entered British Redoubt Number 10 at the points of their bayonets. After the British surrendered on October 19, 1781 at Yorktown, the Rhode Island Regiment was ordered to occupy Gloucester Point across the York River. The regiment was one of the last American units to leave the Yorktown area, and it took 21 days for the Rhode Island soldiers to reach Head of Elk, Maryland by sea.

Sickness, primarily smallpox, broke out amongst the American soldiers at Yorktown, Virginia beginning in October 1781. As the Grand Northern Army regiments returned north towards West Point, New York after the Yorktown victory, American military hospitals were set up from Head of Elk, Maryland to Trenton and Burlington, New Jersey. The Rhode Island Regiment was assigned to winter quarters at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Rhode Island Continental soldiers started to die on the sea voyage up the Chesapeake Bay. Doctor Henry Latimer established an American military hospital in downtown Wilmington, Delaware at the Wilmington Academy in December 1781. Several Rhode Island Regiment soldiers died at the Wilmington Academy beginning in December 1781.

While researching his November 2015 book on Rhode Island’s Continental Line, Daniel M. Popek found a manuscript document at the Rhode Island Historical Society in Providence,

Rhode Island that identified the death locations of over 100 Rhode Island Regiment soldiers from late 1781 to early 1782. Twenty-eight Rhode Island soldiers on this document were listed as having died at Wilmington, Delaware. Additional research by Daniel Popek along with the assistance of Wilmington, Delaware residents Connie Beattie and Connie Cooper showed that Joshua Way's "Strangers Burial Ground" was established in 1754 in downtown Wilmington, bounded by King, French, Tenth, and Eleventh Streets. Connie Beattie's research confirmed there were no soldier burials in the Wilmington Presbyterian Cemetery from 1781 through 1782, so the Strangers Burial Ground would be the logical burial location for the 28 deceased Rhode Island soldiers.

Elizabeth Montgomery in her 1851 book *Reminiscences of Wilmington...* observed that the Strangers and Paupers Burial Grounds were to be removed to Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery in the early 1850s. In August 2018, Daniel Popek contacted the Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery via email to see if any cemetery records could be found that confirmed these burial removals. Tom Mercer, a volunteer with Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery, located some cemetery records that proved the Strangers and Paupers Burial Ground remains were moved to Section U during the early 1850s. A military burial area primarily for Civil War veterans exists close to Section U. In September 2014, a monument was erected by the Sons of the American Revolution in the middle of Main Avenue in Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery that honored several known Wilmington Revolutionary War veteran burials. We propose a similar monument be funded and installed in Section U of Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery to honor the 28 known Rhode Island Continental soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice in Wilmington, Delaware during the American Revolutionary War.



Front Gate of Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery in Wilmington, Delaware.

Return of Non Commissioned officers & Soldiers
In Hospital Since the 1st of Oct^r 1781, together

No	Names	Rank	Months & days When died	Places where
1	Cato Brown	Serjeant	Dec ^r 8 th	Wilmington
2	Abraham Povey	Private	Do 9 th	do
3	Ceasar Rose	Do	9 th	Do
4	Prince Angell	Drum ^m	9 th	Do
5	Dublin Briggs	Private	10 th	Do
6	Eliphalet Shelley	Do	12 th	Do
7	Nathaniel Thompson	Do	10 th	Do
8	Daniel Hammond	Do	11 th	Do
9	Jonathan Fairfield	Do	11 th	Do
10	Benonie Hathaway	Do	12 th	Do
11	James McSherron	Do	12 th	Do
12	Robert Howland	Do	13 th	Do
13	Richard Fowler	Do	14 th	Do
14	Stephen Charles	Do	15 th	Do
15	Joshua Rofs	Do	15 th	Do
16	Samuel Benjamins	Do	18 th	Do
17	John Roberts	Do	17 th	Do
18	John Ralph	Do	Nov ^r 28	Philadelphia
19	James Miles	Do	Dec ^r 25 th	Do

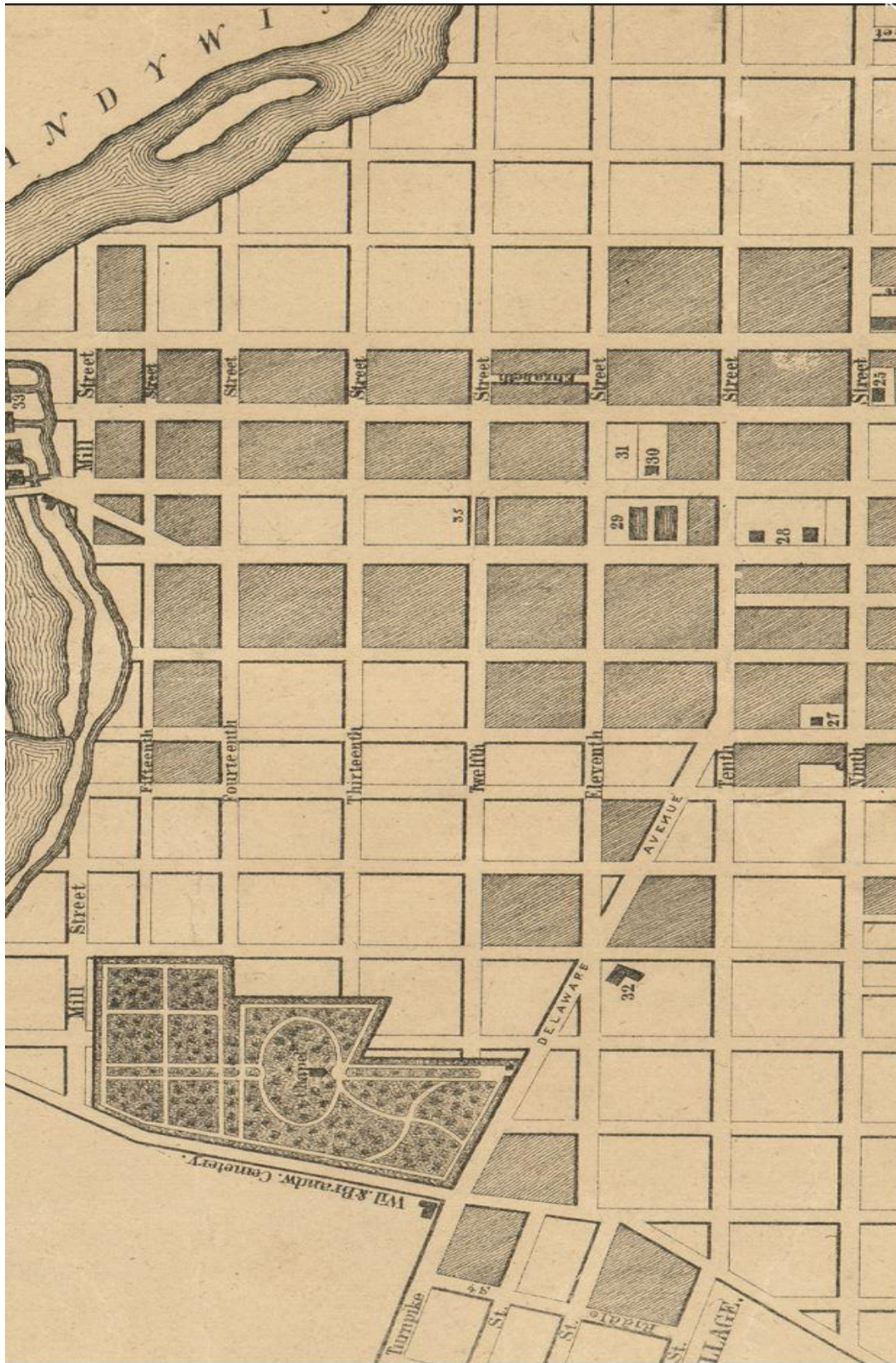
Detail of the Manuscript Document "Return of Non Commissioned officers and Soldiers in the Rhode Island Regiment who have been Killed in Action or Died in Hospital since the 1st of October 1781, together with the Names of the places where such Died" courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, Rhode Island. The first 17 soldiers listed all died at the Wilmington Academy in Delaware.



Detail of 1772 Map of downtown Wilmington, Delaware courtesy of University of Delaware. “D” marks the Wilmington Academy, while the Strangers Burial Ground was near “F,” the First Baptist Church.



Early 1800s Map of downtown Wilmington, Delaware courtesy of University of Delaware. “D” marks the Wilmington Academy again, while the Strangers Burial Ground was in the red rectangle near “F,” the First Baptist Church.



Detail of 1847 Map of downtown Wilmington enclosed on New Castle County Map by Riddle, Rea, and Price (LOC). "31" marks the location of the Strangers Burial Ground; Wilmington & Brandywine Cemetery is to the west.

U-Section Lots $14 = 150 - 15 = 150 + 16 = 150 = 450 \text{ sq ft.} = 1250 \text{ sq ft. all}$
 $36 = 200 - 37 = 200 + 38 = 200 = 600$
 $39 = 200 - 40 = 200 + 41 = 200 = 600$
 The Mayor & Council of Wilmington, Del. Plat Book 171 ✓
 Permit No.
 684 - Remains of persons, Removed from the Poor Burial Ground at
 471850 South East Corner 11th & King Streets,
 1177 - Remains of persons, Removed from Strangers Burial Ground at
 471852 Cor 11th & King Street.
 5817 - Williams, Infant - Sept 2nd - 1873 - Crumplethorn Birth.
 6850 - Smith, Jas. C., - Sept 3 - 1877 - Kidney Disease 70 years

U Section Cemetery Record discovered by Tom Mercer (courtesy of Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery) proving the Poor and Stranger Burial Grounds were moved to Wilmington and Brandywine in the early 1850s.

PERMITS TO BURY.

No. 684. For Remains of Person, Removed, from the Poor Burial Ground, at South East Corner of Eleventh & King Streets, Wilmington, Del

who died _____ Domicil _____
 Aged _____ Native of _____
 Disease _____
 Duration _____
 Attending Physician _____
 Issued April 8th 1850 on application of Special Committee of City Council, vice Geo Read Riddle }
 Lots No. 14, 15, 16, 36, 37, 38 and part of 4039 - Sec. U.
 Charges for ~~Grave~~ Digging Vault Paid to Geo Skinner. Albert M Smith Secretary.

No. 685. For John Sterling of Wilmington, Delaware

who died April 7th 1850 Domicil N. E. Co's Alms House
 Aged 38 Years Native of Ireland
 Disease Mania a Potu
 Duration Unknown
 Attending Physician Jas. F. Wilson
 Issued April 8th 1850, on application of Thomas Smith, a friend of family
 Lot No. 33 Sec. X (X)
 Charges for Grave \$ 2.00 Paid X Albert M Smith Secretary.

No. 686. For Sarah Elizabeth daughter of David & Moody of Wilmington, Del

who died April 12th 1850 Domicil King Street, 3rd & 3rd Sts
 Aged 10 3/12 Years Native of United States
 Disease Tubercular Meningitis
 Duration 16 days
 Attending Physician H. J. Astor
 Issued April 12th 1850, on application of David & Moody father of dec'd.
 Lot No. 11 Sec. D.
 Charges for Grave \$ 2.62 1/2 Paid Albert M Smith Secretary

Number 684 Burial Permit record discovered by Tom Mercer in the Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery Archives. Section U is owned by the City of Wilmington, Delaware.

PERMITS TO BURY.

No. 1177 For Remains from Strangers Burial Ground
(Dotted Field) corner of 11th + King Street.

who died _____ Domicil _____
 Aged _____ Native of _____
 Disease _____
 Duration _____
 Attending Physician _____
 Issued April 8th 1853 on application of George Read Riddle.
 Lot No. 14-15-16-36-37-38-39 Sec. U.
 Charges for Grave \$ - none Paid *Read Henry South* *Ad Smith* Secretary.

No. 1178. For infant female child of Alexander Barney of
Wilmington, Del.

who died April 9th 1853 Domicil 2nd St bet West + Washington Streets
 Aged - 3 days Native of - Wilmington, Del
 Disease - Congestion of Lungs
 Duration - 3 days
 Attending Physician - J. P. Bush
 Issued April 9th 1853 on application of Father of de'd.
 Lot No. 61 Sec. ~~U~~ X
 Charges for Grave \$ 87 Paid *Albert Smith* Secretary.

No. 1179. For Susan daughter of Margaret Murphy of
Wilmington, Del.

who died April 12th 1853 - Domicil Orange St bet 5th + 6th Streets
 Aged - 18 months Native of - Delaware
 Disease - Pneumonia
 Duration _____
 Attending Physician - J. J. Wilson
 Issued April 13th 1853 on application of Daniel McEtain a relative.
 Lot No. - 42 Sec. X (X)
 Charges for Grave \$ 1:50 - Paid *Albert Smith* Secretary

Number 1177 Burial Permit record discovered by Tom Mercer in the Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery Archives. Section U is owned by the City of Wilmington, Delaware.



Grave of Doctor Henry Latimer in the Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery. Dr. Latimer ran the American Military Hospital at the Wilmington Academy in late 1781.



This plaque is dedicated to all Revolutionary War heroes that are buried in Wilmington & Brandywine Cemetery. While there may be others who are known only to their creator, the following Patriots have been identified as being interred here:

James Adams
Benjamin Africh
Jonas Africh
Lucas Africh
Richard Bassett
Gunning Bedford, Jr.
Joseph Boggs
William Clark
Robert Crosby
John Erwin
Samuel Erwin
John Fleming
Henry Geddes
Robert Hamilton
David Harbison
Peter Hendrickson
William Hemphill
Samuel Hogg
John Hunn
William Hutcheson
John James
Richard Keen
Thomas Keen
David Kirkpatrick

Henry Lattimer
James Lattimer
John Long
William McClintock
Samuel McIntire
James McCann
James McKeen
Andrew McKee, Sr.
Andrew McKee, Jr.
James McKee
John McKinley
Valentine McNeil
James Miller
Patrick O'Flinn
Robert Patterson
Thomas Patterson
James Price
Thomas Read
John Robinson
William Robinson
Ebenezer Smith
James Tilton
Thomas Wallace
Robert White



Major Peter Jaquet Chapter,
Sons of the American Revolution
September 2014

September 2014 Sons of the American Revolution Monument to known Wilmington Revolutionary War veterans buried in Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery. The Delaware Sons were not aware of the Rhode Island Regiment deaths.



November 2018 view of Section U in the Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery.



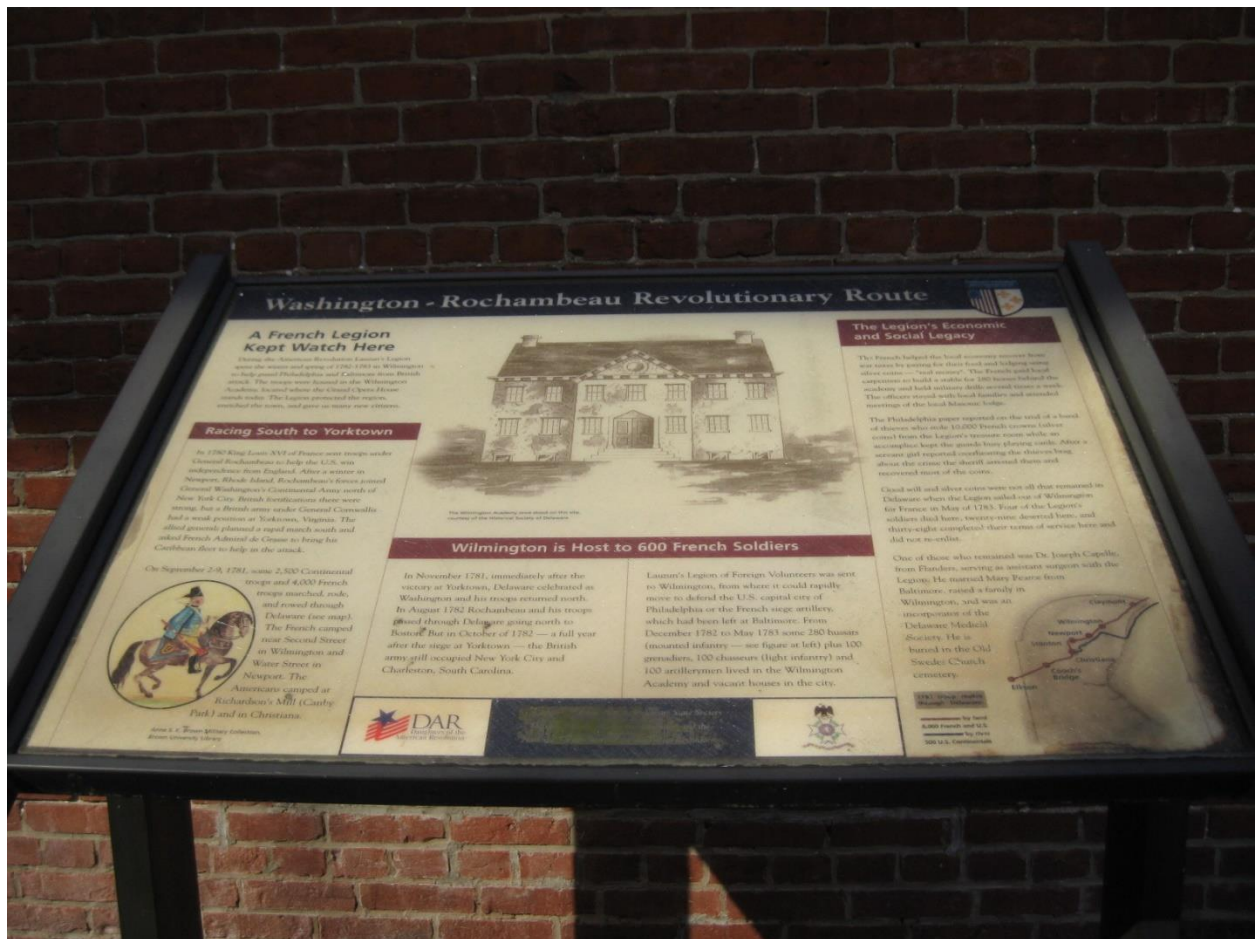
November 2018 view of 11th Street and King Street intersection of downtown Wilmington, Delaware just north of Rodney Square. The red arrow marks the approximate location of the old Strangers Burial Ground, now covered by the 1916 “Public Building” or Daniel L. Herrmann Courthouse.



November 2018 view of the 1916 Public Building from the west in Rodney Square. The red arrow marks the approximate location of the old Strangers Burial Ground, which was removed to Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery in the early 1850s.



Interpretive Sign to the right marking the approximate site of the Wilmington Academy in an alley east of Market Street in downtown Wilmington, Delaware; statue to Wilmington Mayor Thomas C. Maloney [1942-2000] to the left.




Interpretive Sign describing the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route through northern Delaware and how Lauzon's French Legion of Cavalry stayed at the Wilmington Academy from December 1782 to May 1783.

Washington - Rochambeau Revolutionary Route

A French Legion Kept Watch Here

During the American Revolution, Lausun's Legion was the winter and spring of 1782-1783 in Wilmington to help guard Philadelphia and Baltimore from British attack. The troops were housed in the Wilmington Academy, located where the Grand Opera House stands today. The Legion protected the region, chased the news, and gave us many new citizens.



The Wilmington Academy once stood on this site, courtesy of the Historical Society of Delaware.

The Legion's Economy and Social Legacy

The French helped the local economy was taxed by paying for their food and other needs — "real money". The Legionaries compensated by building a stable for 282 horses and held military drills. The officers stayed with local families for meetings of the local Masonic Lodge.


The Philadelphia paper reported of thieves who stole 10,000 (1 coin) from the Legion's treasury. The accomplice kept the guard servant girl reported caught about the crime the sheriff recovered most of the coins.

Good will and silver coins were left in Delaware when the Legionaries for France in May 1783. Thirty-eight companies did not re-enlist.

Wilmington is Host to 600 French Soldiers


In November 1781, immediately after the victory at Yorktown, Delaware celebrated as Washington and his troops returned north. In August 1782 Rochambeau and his troops passed through Delaware going north to Boston. But in October of 1782 — a full year after the siege at Yorktown — the British army still occupied New York City and Charleston, South Carolina.

Lausun's Legion of Foreign Volunteers was sent to Wilmington, from where it could rapidly move to defend the U.S. capital city of Philadelphia or the French siege artillery, which had been left at Baltimore. From December 1782 to May 1783 some 280 hussars (mounted infantry — see figure at left) plus 100 grenadiers, 100 chasseurs (light infantry) and 100 artillerymen lived in the Wilmington Academy and vacant houses in the city.

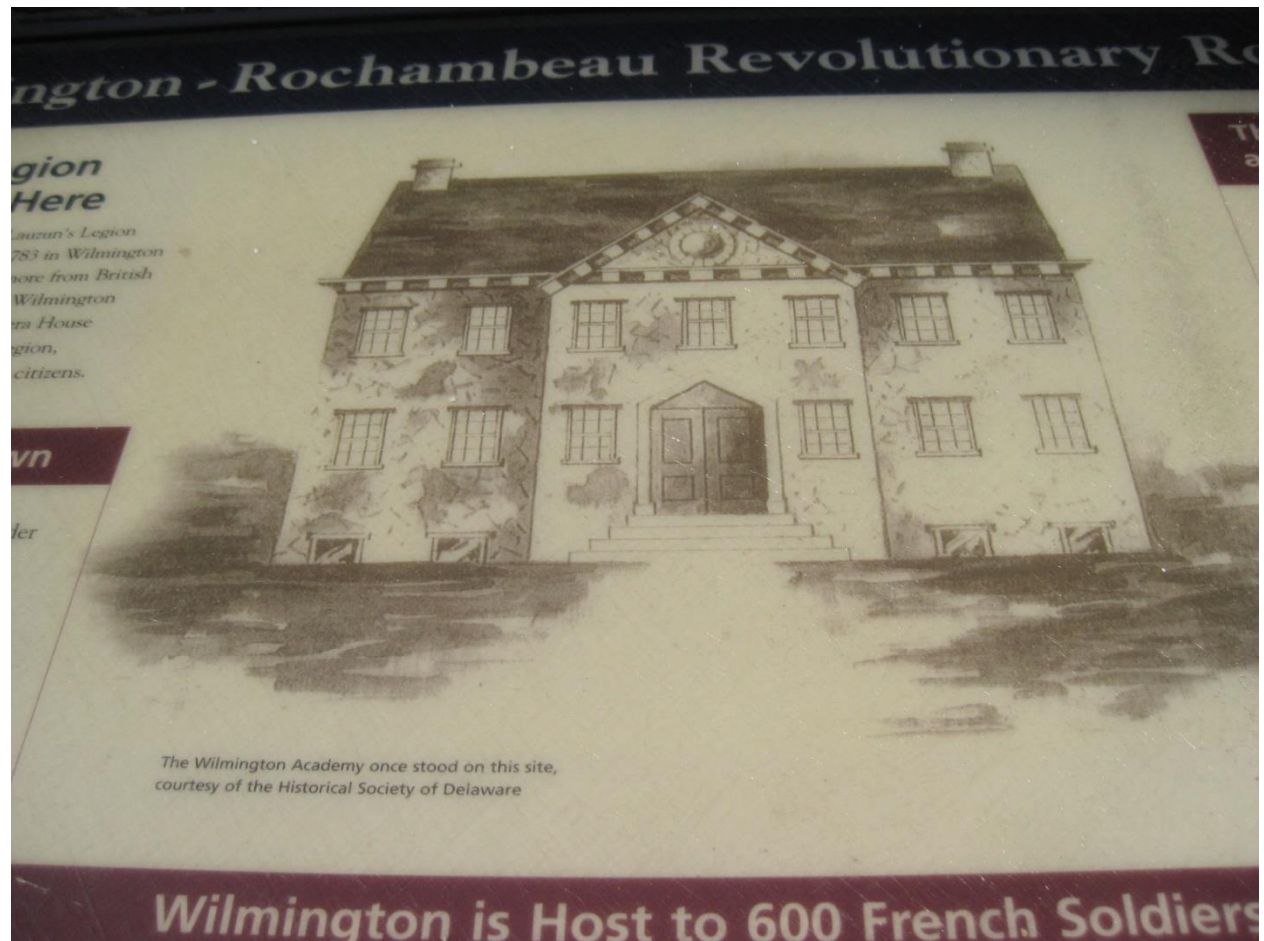


DAR
Daughters of the American Revolution

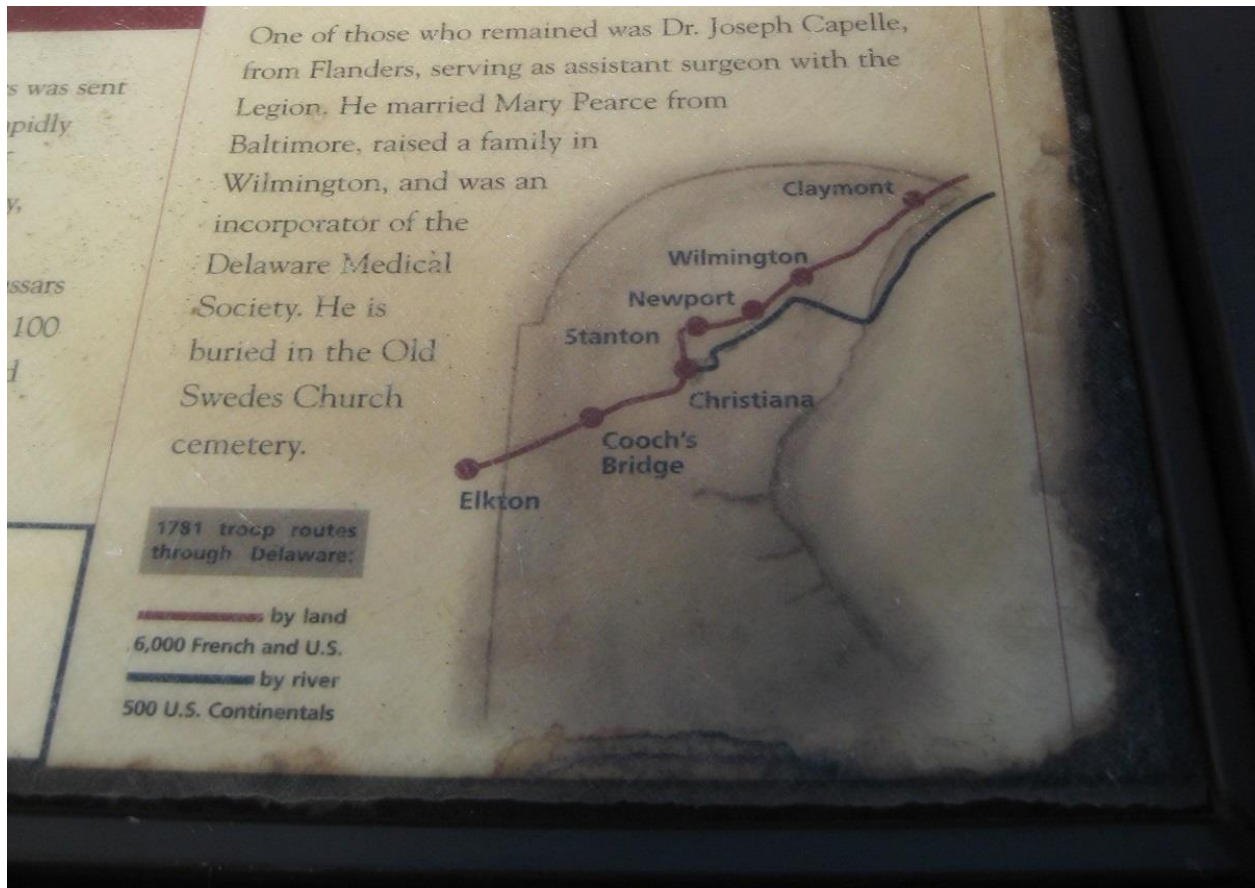
Delaware State Society
of the
Daughters of the American Revolution



Detail of the Wilmington Academy Interpretive Sign.



Close Up illustration from the Interpretive Sign of the former Wilmington Academy that served as an American Hospital during the Revolutionary War.



Map from Interpretive Sign of French and American marching routes through northern Delaware to Head of Elk (Elkton), Maryland.

List of Rhode Island Regiment (Continental) Soldiers who died at Wilmington, Delaware late 1781 to early 1782

1. **Fifer Cato Brown**, Died December 8, 1781, 8th Company (colored)
2. **Private Abraham Perry**, Died December 9, 1781, 8th Company (colored)
3. **Private Ceasar Rose**, Died December 9, 1781, 8th Company (colored)
4. **Drummer Prince Angell**, Died December 9, 1781, 4th Company [a colored drummer in the white 4th Company]
5. **Private Dublin Briggs**, Died December 10, 1781, 7th Company [a colored private in the predominantly white 7th Company]
6. **Private Eliphalet Shelley**, Died December 12, 1781, 8th Company (colored)
7. **Private Nathaniel Thompson**, Died December 10, 1781, 4th Company [white soldier]
8. **Private Daniel Hammond**, Died December 11, 1781, 4th Company [white soldier]
9. **Private Jonathan Fairfield**, Died December 11, 1781, 4th Company [white soldier]
10. **Private Benoni Hathaway**, Died December 12, 1781, 8th Company (colored)
11. **Private James McSparrow**, Died December 12, 1781, 6th Company (colored)
12. **Private Robert (Robin) Howland**, Died December 13, 1781, 6th Company (colored)
13. **Private Richard Fowler**, Died December 14, 1781, 4th Company [white soldier]
14. **Private Stephen Charles**, Died December 15, 1781, 6th Company (colored)
15. **Private Joshua Ross**, Died December 15, 1781, 4th Company [white soldier]
16. **Private Samuel Benjamin**, Died December 18, 1781, 4th Company [white soldier]
17. **Private John Roberts**, Died December 17, 1781, Recruit [unknown race]
18. **Private William Billings**, Died December 1781, Light Infantry Company [white soldier]
19. **Private Solomon Wanton**, Died December 28, 1781, 6th Company (colored)
20. **Private Joseph Smith [Junior]**, Died December 29, 1781, 7th Company [white soldier]
21. **Private Joseph Hall**, Died December 29, 1781, 4th Company [white soldier]

22. **Private James Singleton**, Died January 3, 1782, 4th Company [white soldier]
23. **Private Solomon Matthews**, Died January 5, 1782, 8th Company (colored)
24. **Private William King**, Died January 9, 1782, 4th Company [white soldier]
25. **Private Prime (Primus) Brown**, Died January 10, 1782, 6th Company (colored)
26. **Sergeant Walter Wigner**, Died January 18, 1782, 3rd Company [white soldier]
27. **Private Tibbets F. Hopkins**, Died January 21, 1782, 2nd Company [white soldier]
28. **Private Prime Clark**, Died January 27, 1782, 8th Company (colored)

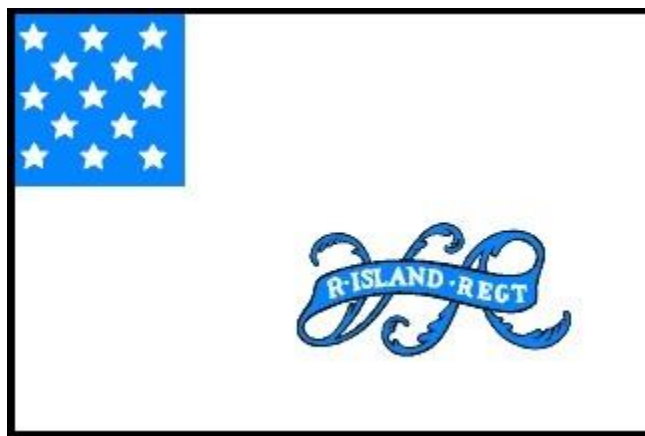
Proposed Monument Inscription:

Rhode Island Regiment – Revolutionary War

In Memory of the 28 soldiers of the Rhode Island Regiment (Continental) who died at the Continental Army Hospital supervised by Doctor Henry Latimer in the Wilmington Academy from late 1781 to early 1782. The Rhode Island Regiment participated in the successful Yorktown, Virginia Campaign in late 1781, and most of these men were returning north to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania when sickness broke out amongst the American Army. These soldiers who died were buried in unmarked graves in the Joshua Way Strangers Burial Ground bounded by King, French, Tenth, and Eleventh Streets in downtown Wilmington. This burial ground was removed here to Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery between 1850 and 1853. An eighteenth-century manuscript document was discovered at the Rhode Island Historical Society in Providence, Rhode Island which identifies these men. It should be noted that several of these American Continental soldiers were men of color.

- 1. Fifer Cato Brown, Died December 8, 1781, 8th Company (colored)**
- 2. Drummer Prince Angell, Died December 9, 1781, 4th Company [a man of color]**
- 3. Private Abraham Perry, Died December 9, 1781, 8th Company (colored)**
- 4. Private Ceasar Rose, Died December 9, 1781, 8th Company (colored)**
- 5. Private Dublin Briggs, Died December 10, 1781, 7th Company [a man of color]**
- 6. Private Nathaniel Thompson, Died December 10, 1781, 4th Company**
- 7. Private Daniel Hammond, Died December 11, 1781, 4th Company**
- 8. Private Jonathan Fairfield, Died December 1781, 4th Company**
- 9. Private Benoni Hathaway, Died December 1781, 8th Company (colored)**
- 10. Private James McSparrow, Died December 12, 1781, 6th Company (colored)**
- 11. Private Eliphalet Shelley, Died December 12, 1781, 8th Company (colored)**
- 12. Private Robert (Robin) Howland, Died December 13, 1781, 6th Company (colored)**
- 13. Private Richard Fowler, Died December 14, 1781, 4th Company**
- 14. Private Stephen Charles, Died December 15, 1781, 6th Company (colored)**

15. Private Joshua Ross, Died December 15, 1781, 4th Company
16. Private John Roberts, Died December 17, 1781, Recruit
17. Private Samuel Benjamin, Died December 18, 1781, 4th Company
18. Private William Billings, Died December 1781, Light Infantry Company
19. Private Solomon Wanton, Died December 28, 1781, 6th Company (colored)
20. Private Joseph Hall, Died December 29, 1781, 4th Company
21. Private Joseph Smith [Junior], Died December 29, 1781, 7th Company
22. Private James Singleton, Died January 3, 1782, 4th Company
23. Private Solomon Matthews, Died January 5, 1782, 8th Company (colored)
24. Private William King, Died January 9, 1782, 4th Company
25. Private Prime (Primus) Brown, Died January 10, 1782, 6th Company (colored)
26. Sergeant Walter Wigner, Died January 18, 1782, 3rd Company
27. Private Tibbets F. Hopkins, Died January 21, 1782, 2nd Company
28. Private Prime Clark, Died January 27, 1782, 8th Company (colored)



[1782 Regimental Flag of the Rhode Island Regiment made by Rebecca Young of Philadelphia]

[Note: Soldiers with death date discrepancies between the R.I.H.S. manuscript document and the Regimental Book of the Rhode Island Regiment at the Rhode Island State Archives were listed with month and year of death only]

Daniel M. Popek, a native of Rhode Island, is the author of a November 2015 book on Rhode Island's Continental Line of the Revolutionary War. Daniel discovered the Rhode Island Regiment manuscript document in the Rhode Island Historical Society in Providence. He is a descendant through his mother's family of a soldier who served six years in Rhode Island's Continental Line. Daniel lives and works in North Carolina.

Tom Mercer, a resident of Delaware, is a volunteer researcher with Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery. Tom found the burial records proving the removal of the Strangers and Poor Burial Grounds from downtown Wilmington to the Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery.