

CAESAR RODNEY HISTORICAL TRAIL



Sponsored by Nentego Lodge 20
Order of the Arrow

Administered by
Del-Mar-Va Council, Inc. BSA
1910 Baden Powell Way
Dover DE 19904
302-622-3300

(revised 10/23/02) by Edward I. Wedman Jr. and Jeffrey L. Sheraton

(revised 10/26/13) by Liam P. O'Connor

We would like to welcome you to the Caesar Rodney Historical Trail. We ask your cooperation with the following:

Every Scout should realize that his conduct is being observed. The trail runs through public and private areas, and each hiker is a guest. Every Scout and leader should maintain a high standard of courtesy and friendly consideration for the property and feelings of others. Please be quiet when touring the buildings and private properties in and around Dover. It is recommended that Scouts wear their full Scout uniform while hiking the trail.

We would suggest that your unit eat lunch on the Green, being careful not to leave any litter when you leave. Fires may not be built anywhere on the trail. It is suggested that each hiker carry a picnic lunch. There are restaurants along the trail for any Scouts that want to buy food.

It is best that hikers start at Akridge Scout Reservation and cars can be parked either in Camp Akridge's front maintenance parking lot or in the back main parking lot. Be sure to ask for permission before starting your hike.

There are camping facilities at Camp Akridge if you make arrangements through Del-Mar-Va Council. Accommodations at Dover Air Force Base are available depending on military constraints. For permission to tour the base, eat or stay there must be secured directly from Dover Air Force Base, please contact the Public Information Officer.

The Biggs Museum on Court and Federal Streets in Dover has public restrooms and souvenirs. The Delaware Public Archives, on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard North, also has bathrooms.

The owners of the "Byfield" have given permission for Scouts to approach their home in order to see the marker where Caesar Rodney's house once stood, just north of the present house. Please respect their privacy, and don't wander off the driveway when inspecting the site.

Hours of operation:

Biggs Museum— Federal Street 8:30 am - 4:30 pm Monday - Saturday.
1:30 pm - 4:30 pm Sunday Closed State holidays

Johnson Victrola Museum – Bank Lane and New Street. 10:00 am - 3:30 pm Tuesday - Saturday
Closed Sunday, Monday and State holidays

Legislative Hall – Legislative Avenue 8:00 am - 4:30 pm Monday - Friday

Old State House – The Green 10 am - 4:30 pm Tuesday - Saturday 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm Sunday
Closed Monday and State holidays

Woodburn (Governor's House) – Kings Highway 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm Saturday except holidays

Christ Episcopal Church – Water and State Streets. 8:00 am - 6:00 pm seven days a week

Caesar Rodney, Patriot
By Earl Schenck Miers

Ride on! Brave soul through night forlorn,
Ride on! 'though weary, weak and worn,
Ride on! 'tis Freedom's glorious morn,
Ride on! Today a Nation's born

These lines, penned by Thomas Irons, honor Caesar Rodney who stands in marbled dignity in the Rotunda of the United States Capitol, but who in life was a pitiful figure to behold. Whereas John Adams recognized Rodney's "sense and fire, spirit, wit and humor," he also called this celebrated patriot "the oddest looking man in the world".

To Adams, Rodney was tall, thin, and "slender as a reed, with a "pale face... not bigger than a large apple". Actually, Rodney's countenance in the years of his greatness was scarred by a cancerous growth that he attempted to disguise by wearing "a green silk veil or screen". But physical disability was no measure of the size of Caesar Rodney's heart and courage. He was a perfect exception to the myth that on a frontier only the strong survive. Those who did survive, by that fact alone, constituted the fittest.

His background was superb and the Crown had knighted 13 of the 17 generations that preceded him. One had been a British Admiral. Another had married a sister of the third wife of King Henry VIII. The original member of the family in America, Caesar's grandfather William Rodney, reached the colonies in 1681. His father, also named Caesar, claimed at least one distinction. He had married the daughter of the Reverend Thomas Crawford, who had established in the vicinity of Dover the first Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

Possibly the Three Lower Counties of Pennsylvania, that in 1776 became the State of Delaware, could well be considered "foreign parts" when Caesar Rodney arrived on earth October 7, 1728. Certainly, his baby howls were heard by few on the family farm near Dover. It is doubtful if he ever received any formal education. Occasionally an itinerant teacher may have tried to prod a little knowledge into his head, but his supposition is the sheerest conjecture. Caesar's father died when the lad was 17. Luckily, the youth had taken the fancy, and won the guardianship, of Nicholas Ridgely, prothonotary in Kent County (the title applied to the clerk of any of a variety of courts).

Caesar abounded with intelligence. Home folk trusted him. It is not by accident that today a bronze tablet in the wall of the cemetery adjoining Dover's Christ Episcopal Church commemorates his greatness, or that he is honored by a magnificent stature in Wilmington, or that he is interwoven still into the legends of Lewes, Delaware (pronounced Lewis). "One of Delaware's greatest sons", proclaimed Prof. George H. Ryden in unveiling Rodney's marble figure in the Rotunda of the Capitol. There had to be a reason for all this latter day adulation.

In those days of Rodney's youth, when Delaware was still the Three Lower Counties of Pennsylvania, an odd mixture of personalities comprised the population. There were Swedes, Finns, Dutch, French, English, Irish, Scots, Negroes, Germans, Italians, and Poles. A more mercuric melting pot could not be imagined. Ambition counted. Drive. Leadership.

Nicholas Ridgely, taking Caesar under his wing, recognized the qualities that in 10 years would emerge in the coming man. By then Caesar was High Sheriff of Kent County. Later he would become Registrar of Wills, Clerk of Orphans' Court, Justice of the Peace, co-trustee of the Kent Company loan office, and Lesser Justice of the Supreme Court of the Three Lower Counties. Then would come higher offices: Representative for Kent County in the Colonial Legislature of the Three Lower Counties at New Castle, speaker of the Assembly in 1769, and 1773 through 1776. And finally would come national reputation in teaming up with that "fighting Irishman" Thomas McKean, to oppose the Stamp Act, and in walking the streets of Philadelphia with John Adams as a delegate to the First Continental Congress.

Rodney was no wild-eyed radical. The ultimate repeal of the Stamp Act led to the composition of an address by Rodney so polite and tactful that the King "read it twice." But George III mistook the situation. Other acts of tyranny followed resulting in such abuses to freemen as closing the port of Boston. Thereafter, the Revolution became inevitable.

"We cannot be happy without being Freemen", wrote Rodney's fellow Delawarean, John Dickinson. Rodney thought so too. By the time the Minute Men clashed with the Redcoats at Lexington and Concord he had become a colonel of the "Upper" regiment and would advance to the post of brigadier general of Kent and Sussex Counties.

Rodney was back in Philadelphia for the Second Continental Congress though he felt uncomfortable knowing well that a strong Tory sentiment existed in Kent and Sussex Counties. Only the sizable Ulster-Scotch population in New Castle, with their intense Presbyterian leanings, could be trusted to revere personal independence. The Tories, on the other hand, gave unyielding allegiance to the Established Church of England and therefore, to the Crown. Thomas McKean gave Rodney no comfort in this uneasiness. There was no question, this fighting Irishmen declared, that a majority of those at home were unquestionably against the independence of America.

On June 7, 1776 Richard Henry Lee of Virginia introduced his famous resolution that would lead to the drafting of the Declaration of Independence. The debate over the resolution became intense. Delaware was not alone in its agony over whether its people would accept separation from the mother country. New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, and South Carolina also were torn by similar doubts. While Rodney and McKean never wavered in their support of Lee, George Read, the other Delaware delegate, hedged to the point of opposition. The movement for a free America was clearly touch and go. Wise minds decided to delay the debate until July 1.

Meanwhile at Cedar Creek, about 18 miles north of Lewes, hostilities erupted. By the time news of this Delaware devilry reached Caesar Rodney in Philadelphia the date was June 13, 1776. A thousand Tories armed with guns, pitchforks, and clubs, were reported in violent revolt,

intelligence that likely heightened the color on Rodney's "pale as ashes" countenance. Rodney in action belied his sickness. Orders crackled like rifle fire from his Philadelphia quarters. To the major in charge of the militia, he was not satisfied with issuing instructions to seize all arms and ammunition at Lewes, adding, "Seize the most suspected of the ringleaders as hostages for the good behavior of their dependents." And suspecting that the source of "corruption and direction" was centered at Dover, Rodney secured a leave of absence from the Second Continental Congress and took to his horse. Clearly worried, since Rodney placed little faith in the fighting quality of militiamen, he spurred the animal onward.

For once he might have spared his fretfulness. Even Tory sympathizers were not altogether fools. What had they to gain if they were arrested and their property confiscated? Instead of encountering enemies he found himself dealing with neighbors and friends. The entire affair settled most amicably.

If Rodney relaxed, back in Philadelphia his old friend Thomas McKean was anything but joyous. Lee's resolution seeking to declare that "these United Colonies are and of right ought to be free and independent states" was undergoing rough days. Pennsylvania and South Carolina already declared their vote to be on the "nay" side. New York remained neutral. With McKean and Read dividing their votes, Delaware's delegates remained tied. The formal vote, scheduled for July 1, had been postponed for a day, that is how desperate the situation had become.

Legends play tricks with history. There was no question that McKean wrote to Rodney insisting that he was more needed in Philadelphia than Delaware. But was it true that Rodney was then lingering in Lewes because he was infatuated with the Tory daughter of the postmaster? And that his girl snatched McKean's letter from Rodney's view? And that a Negro maid warned the patriotic Delawarean of this trickery? These yarns while appealing to believers in haunted houses, cannot impress the historian who placed Rodney in his home near Dover when McKean's communication arrived. Rodney, whether he mounted a "flying steed" or a "swift horse," was no more reluctant than Paul Revere to start his ride that would win immortality in the American story.

His journey covering more than 80 miles, may as one authority has said, have been pursued "through the long shadows of night, and the heat of July." Rodney offered only one comment. He "was detained by thunder and rain." But even if conjecture is the only source of the story, the flight of "the pale rider" toward Philadelphia determined to save the cause of American freedom never can be disrobed of its romance. Let the thunder roll the lightning flash! Let the rains pour down! Sooner or later the sun will break through and on speeds Rodney, green veil whipping in the breeze, horse's hooves clackety-clacking! Across St Jones Creek, through the rich farmlands surrounding Dover. And on past sights and scents unforgettable, persimmon trees, wild cherry, beach plum, white dogwood, sassafras, and laurel. Gray dawn brightens tingling the horizon with myriad colors. Afternoon brings rolling perspiration across the cheeks. But then the sun begins to sink, the night to cool. And never does the heart of the pale rider waver. On and on. Philadelphia's thoroughfares are drying from the rain when at last Rodney's horse stirs up clouds of dust.

Thirty years later McKean would forget that it was to save Lee's Resolution, and not Jefferson's Declaration of Independence that brought Rodney into the City of Brotherly Love on July 2, 1776. Still in boots and spurs, Rodney met McKean at the City Hall door. Even then the other delegates were assembling for the day's session. Rodney strode into the hall of Congress for the business of the day. The turn came for Delaware to vote on Lee's resolution. Rodney rose. He was dusty and tired and soft-spoken. He said, "As I believe the voice of my constituents and all sensible and honest men are in favor of independence, my own judgement concurs with them. I vote for independence."

One day, not surprisingly, Thomas Jefferson would refer to Delaware as "a jewel among the States." John Adams wrote his wife that Lee's resolution, passing without a dissenting vote had made "the second of July 1776 the most memorable epoch in the history of America."

Joyously, George B. Hynson poetized:

Good-bye kings how we shall miss you.
You were always such an issue;
Though the rabble danced about you,
They can get along without you.

Caesar Rodney's importance on the American scene was far from ended. He rejoiced in the signing of the Declaration of Independence and probably rejoiced even more in the fact that when news of this act reached Dover, patriots removed the portrait of George III from the courthouse and burned it on the town green.

Rodney possessed a precious sense of humor. When during the Revolution British invasion threatened the homeland of George Washington, Rodney speaking for his own little State, advised Virginia to "be of good cheer, Delaware will take her under its protection and insure her safety." He easily beat down loyalists who tried to clip his wings when, in July 1776, Delaware declared her independence as a State. He served on councils of safety to recruit men for the Continental Army. He commanded the post at Trenton during the winter of 1777 after Washington had retreated to Norristown.

Rodney had limitless talents, turning down an appointment to the Supreme Court to serve as a judge of the admiralty. He suppressed an insurrection against the government in Sussex County. By August 1777, he was raising troops to repel a possible British invasion of Delaware. McKean, now acting president of the State of Delaware, named Rodney a major general. Cautiously he watched the British move down toward the head of the Elk River in Maryland. Rodney prepared to cut off the enemy from their fleet. The only battle in Delaware, a foolish battle known as the affair at Cooch's Bridge followed. A segment of General Howe's redcoats cost the Delawareans 40 dead and wounded. The State marker at Cooch's Bridge relates a story open to conflicting interpretations.

"American light infantry under General William Maxwell encountered advance guard of British and Hessian troops under General Cornwallis and Knyphausen in this vicinity September 3, 1777. American troops were expert marksmen drafted by General Washington from the several

brigades of his army then encamped near Wilmington. Only battle of American Revolution on Delaware soil and claimed to have been the first in which the Stars and Stripes were carried.” Rodney did not need to argue the counterclaims. Possibly, as some suggest, the Stars and Stripes were first carried in the battle at Fort Schuyler near Rome New York on April 3, 1777. Why should Rodney care?

That December, he returned as a member of the Continental Congress, and the following spring he became Delaware’s faithful “wartime president”. Rodney served seven months beyond his full term. The cancerous growth on his face worried him sufficiently to relinquish briefly his duties as Delaware’s wartime governor. Several months of medical and surgical treatment in Philadelphia could only restore his hope, but not cure his disability. Caesar Rodney was re-elected to Congress in 1783 but was never able to take his seat. His death came on June 26 of the following year. His body is buried at an unmarked grave on his beloved farm, “Poplar Grove” (known as “Byfield” today). While there is a marker that appears to be a gravestone for Caesar Rodney at Christ Episcopal Church, this is merely a monument. Many sources cite that he is buried there, however most Delaware historians believe that the remains of one of Rodney’s unidentified relatives is buried there instead.

Rodney’s brother Thomas (1744-1811) to whom Caesar once wrote in triumph that “We have got through the whole of the Declaration (of Independence) and ordered it to be printed, so that you will soon have the pleasure of seeing it”. Also won distinction as a jurist and was an important personality with the Continental Army during the Revolution.

Thomas’s son, Caesar Augustus Rodney (1772-1824) likewise rose to great heights of statesmanship serving not only as minister to Mexico’s united provinces of LaPlata, but also as co-author with John Graham of “Reports on the Present State of the United Province of South America” published in London in 1819.

Yet none of the Rodneys outshone the pale rider, who finally died of the cancer that he tried to hide with his green veil. A century and a half following his death, the pale rider’s statue was placed in the Rotunda of the Nation’s Capitol, the historian George H. Ryden, who loved this intimate friend of George Washington, told the assembled crowd “The lesson which Caesar Rodney and his colleagues would teach us today is that human liberty and welfare is the highest object of government and that the people whose constitution remains dynamic will be in no mood to change it radically or destroy it, and therefore will brook no attempt on the part of scatterbrains to do so.” Occasionally, scatterbrains have tried to do so. They never succeed. Could it be that the hoofbeats of the pale rider still echo through the land?

The Caesar Rodney Historical Trail

Delaware was one of the original thirteen colonies and was split on the question of Independence. Caesar Rodney was a delegate to the Second Continental Congress. On June 7, 1776 Richard Henry Lee of Virginia introduced his famous resolution that would lead to the drafting of the Declaration of Independence. Intense debate ensued as a result of this resolution. Caesar Rodney was not in Philadelphia. He had returned home to deal with a threatened Tory rebellion. As the time for voting neared, Delaware's two other delegates were split, with Thomas McKean in favor, and George Reed opposing the resolution. McKean sent a messenger to Dover informing Rodney that he was needed more in Philadelphia than in Delaware.

This message precipitated the famous ride of Caesar Rodney to Philadelphia on July 1, 1776 to cast his vote in favor of Independence. His journey of more than 80 miles along colonial mail routes has been pretty well established.

Rodney's ride is said to have originated at the ancestral plantation "Byfield" Southeast of Dover. Traveling towards Dover, he passed the home of John Dickenson, famous "Penman of the Revolution" who at that time opposed the Declaration of Independence that Rodney was hurrying to support. He proceeded past Dover's Old Christ Church and through the Green with handsome buildings, which still stand today. Following King Street, he passed a field where "Woodburn", the Governor's House was to be built 14 years later. Traveling north on approximately the path of today's U.S. Route 13, he passed through Smyrna, Odessa, New Castle, Wilmington, up Penny Hill to Claymont Delaware, and Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania and on to Philadelphia. This trail originally followed Rodney's route, however it has been rerouted to take a safer path to Downtown Dover.

The trail begins at:

1. AKRIDGE SCOUT RESERVATION (1910 Baden Powell Way Dover, DE 19904) This is Del-Mar-Va Council's newest Scout camp and is the starting point for the trail. Troops can camp here if arrangements are made with the Council.

From Akridge Scout Reservation: Travel $\frac{1}{4}$ mile north on New Burton Road to Webbs Lane. Turn right on to Webbs Lane and hike North for 1.1 miles. Turn left onto South Governors Avenue. Continue North on this street for $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles. Turn right onto Water Street. Straight ahead is Christ Church on the right.

2. OLD CHRIST CHURCH – (SE corner of State and Water Sts.) Founded by the English Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts after a memorial signed by twenty-two inhabitants of Dover was sent to the Bishop of London in 1703. Central portion of the church dates from 1734. The church porch originally the vestry room dates from about 1755. Chancel and choir rooms were added in 1887 and later. In the churchyard (NE corner of the church) is a monument to Caesar Rodney the "Signer" and the Ridgely tombs. The earliest grave is that of Captain Thomas Benson of Whitehaven, England 1748. The Reverend Charles Inglis, a distinguished Church of England clergyman was a missionary here from 1759 to 1766, later became rector of Old Trinity Church in New York, and eventually the first Bishop of Nova

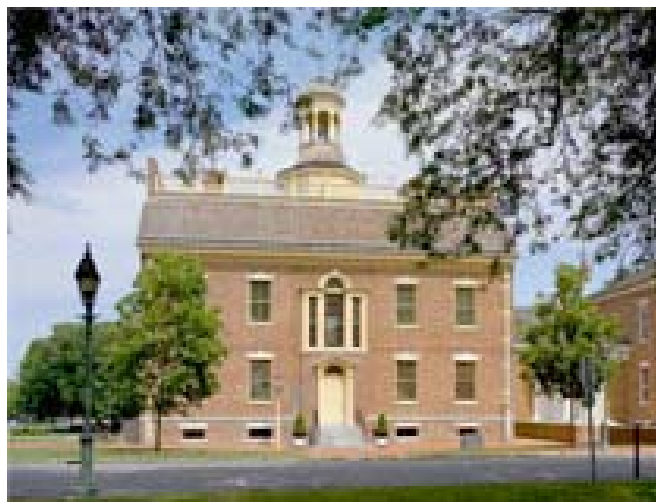
Scotia. The rectory at 502 S State St. (SW corner) was built in 1770 and is still used as the residence of the Rector of Christ Church.

From Christ Church: Turn right onto South State Street. Hike 0.1 mile North until you reach The Green, a large shaded square.

3. THE GREEN – Laid out in 1717 in accordance with William Penn’s order of 1683. Here the early markets and fairs were held, and here, at the time of the Revolution, the First Delaware Regiment was mustered before marching to join Washington’s army in the North. Throughout the history of Delaware, the Green has been the background for many of its important episodes including the reading of the Declaration of Independence, at which time the portrait of King George III was burned in public ceremony. At the close of the Revolution, many of Delaware’s troops were mustered out here. On January 23, 1800 John Vining delivered a eulogy on the death of George Washington.

On the Eastern side of The Green is:

4. OLD STATE HOUSE – The original State House where the Legislature met. Here Delaware ratified the Federal Constitution on December 7, 1878 becoming the first state to enter the Union, hence the slogan “The First State”. Built in 1722 as the Court House of Kent County and rebuilt in 1787-1792. Substantially altered in 1874 after the State acquired sole title and then completely restored to its 18th century appearance in 1975. It now serves for official state functions and ceremonies.



On the Eastern corner of The Green is:

5. SYKES BUILDING – (45 The Green) Notable among the old houses around the Green is the one on the southeast corner built in 1820 by James Sykes, a noted surgeon. Eminent lawyers who have occupied this house were Chief Justice Thomas Clayton, Judge George Fisher, Nathaniel B. Smithers, Dr. Thomas C. Frame, Chancellor John G. Nicholson and the late James M. Satterfield. Between the Sykes House and the Kent County Court House is a small frame building (now occupied as law offices) which is believed to have been Dover’s first post office and the oldest Dover building extant.

6. JOHN BELL HOUSE ()Despite its name, the structure wasn't ever John Bell's house. Historians think the small one-room dwelling, with a shallow basement and a cramped attic, was built as a workshop. The now-tan colored building was standing in 1787 when statesmen ratified the Constitution at the Golden Fleece Tavern, located just across The Green.

On the Southeastern corner of The Green:

7. KENT COUNTY COURT HOUSE – (SE corner of State St and the Green) Built in 1874 on the site of an early court house that in 1691 was order “Burnt to get ye nailles”. It was remodeled in 1918 and 1983. The site occupied in 18th and 19th centuries by a series of inns. There is a fine portrait of John M. Clayton, American statesman and founder of the modern Delaware judiciary system, in the courtroom on the second floor.

On the Southwestern side of The Green:

8. The northwest corner of Bank Lane and The Green where sits a brick house built about 1740 and among whose residents were John Banning, Caesar Rodney, and Dr. James Tilton. On the opposite corner is the Old Farmers Bank where the bank first opened for business in 1807. South of it is the site of the old home of Richard Bassett a Delaware Governor, statesman and large landowner.

9. RIDGELY HOUSE – This house made of brick laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers, was built in 1728 by Thomas Parke. Charles Ridgely bought it in 1767. The family has been in possession since that date. Early 18th century structure with simple paneling and wide board floors. Early Ridgely furniture is still in use. Contains set of tableaus of Commodore Jacob Jones, hero of the Wasp and Frolic naval engagement in 1812. Also a portrait of by Charles Wildon Peale, painted in 1773. One attributed to Gustavus Hesselius, circa 1740, is mentioned in Belknap’s catalog. Lowestoft tea set presented by General (Mad Anthony) Wayne to May Vining in 1790. Notice the old garden with ancient boxwood. This is the private residence of Supreme Court Justice Henry R. Horsey, a descendent of the Ridgelys.

On the Western side of The Green:

10. The late N. Maxon Terry (attorney and brother to the late Charles L. Terry) residence, an example of Victorian modification of an earlier house (1790-1860) built by Joshua Fisher a distinguished attorney and the residence of nephew Judge John Fisher. It later passed to the Clayton family and then to Chief Justice J. P. Comegys who added the front wing about 1860. The Terry garden and cookhouse, the latter of uncertain age, are adjacent with a spring garden and trees of great age.

11. KIRK BUILDING – (15 The Green) This three-storied brick building was the home of some of the areas earliest newspapers. It is assumed that one Augustus M. Shee started Dover’s first newspaper “The Federal Ark” here in 1802. In 1805 “The Record” was published here and later “The Federal Advertiser.” James Kirk began publication of the “The Delawarean” here in 1859 and retained the editorship until 1876 when the Honorable Eli Saulsbury became proprietor. Long recognized as “the voice of the Democratic Party in Delaware,” “The

Delawarean” remained as an influential newspaper until early in the present century. The Attorney General and the State Bank Commissioner now occupy the building.

12. MILLER/SAULSBURY HOUSE The Miller/Saulsbury house (northwest corner) was built in the late eighteenth century by a member of the Miller family, which includes the Reverend John Miller, long pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Dover, his son Reverend Samuel Miller, later distinguished clergyman and one of the founders of Princeton Theological Seminary and a professor there, and his son Dr. Edward Miller, and eminent physician. The State Division of Housing now occupies this building.

On the Northeastern corner of The Green:

13. GOLDEN FLEECE TAVERN (South State Street) The birth of the First State. This was the site of the Golden Fleece Tavern, scene of some of the most important and dramatic events in Delaware history. Built in the 1730s, the Golden Fleece was a center for community and government activities. It was a place of great importance during the American Revolution and the early years of our Nation’s Independence. Also known as Battell’s Tavern, it hosted the meetings of the Committee of Inspection and Observation, and was a vital point for the exchange of wartime communications. With the transfer of state government from New Castle to Dover in 1777, the Golden Fleece became the meeting place of the Assembly’s Upper House, the Legislative Council. It was the home of that body until a State House was completed in 1791. In September 1787, a new framework for our Nation’s government was sent to the states for consideration. Thirty delegates were elected to meet and review the document. The meeting was convened here on December 3rd. Approval was unanimous, and on December 7th, 1787, Delaware became the first state to ratify the Federal Constitution. A fitting climax to its role as Delaware’s “Capitol Tavern” occurred in January 1790, when the Council met to approve the Bill of Rights. The Golden Fleece was demolished circa 1830, and replaced by the Capitol Hotel. The hotel was closed in the 1920s, and renovated to its present appearance by Henry and Mabel Lloyd Ridgely. (Delaware Archives)



Go 0.1 miles North on South State Street until you reach the intersection with North Street. On your right is Constitution Park.

14. CONSTITUTION PARK (corner of North Street and South State Street) This park commemorates Delaware's ratification of the United States Constitution on December 7th, 1787. While many people at the time believed that Pennsylvania would be the first state to do this, Delaware was able to ratify it without the political squabbling. The park consists of a large cube and quill pen. Below it are the Thirteen Original Colonies engraved in stone.

Return to The Green. Go to the western side of The Green and go straight on Bank Lane for 0.2 mile. Turn right on to South New Street and go into the Johnson Victrola Museum.

15. JOHNSON VICTROLA MUSEUM (At the corner of South New Street and Bank Lane) The Johnson Victrola Museum is a tribute to Delaware's native son, Eldridge Reeves Johnson, who founded the Victor Talking Machine Company in 1901. Exhibits include phonographs, recordings, memorabilia, trademarks, objects, and paintings that highlight Mr. Johnson's successful business enterprises and chronicle the development of the sound-recording industry.

From here, go 0.1 mile North on South New Street. Then, turn right onto North Street. Travel 0.2 mile until you reach South State Street. Next, cross the street and turn left onto Kings Highway. Walk 0.2 mile north until you reach the governor's house, Woodburn, on the right.

16. THE GOVERNOR'S HOUSE – Formerly Woodburn (east side of King's Highway) it is a beautiful example of 18th century architecture and is the residence of Delaware's Governor. Built by Charles Hillyard who married the daughter of Chancellor Killen. This was the scene of Patty Cannon's raid as told by G.A. Townsend in the "The Entailed Hat". It was a station on the Underground Railroad. Ancient trees and old boxwoods grow around the yard.

Retrace your footsteps back to the intersection with Kings Highway and South State Street. Turn left onto Lockerman Street and walk 0.1 mile East. Turn right onto Federal Street. Walk 0.1 mile Southeast until you reach the Biggs Museum of Art on the right.

17. BIGGS MUSEUM OF ART (corner of North Street and Federal Street) Established in 1993, the Sewell C. Biggs Museum of American Art Museum houses one of the finest collections of American fine and decorative arts. Special features of the permanent collection include the only comprehensive representational American paintings collection on the Delmarva Peninsula with highlights by the Peale family, Albert Bierstadt, Gilbert Stuart, and Childe Hassam. Experience a variety of art forms such as sculptures by Hiram Powers and images by Brandywine School illustrator, Frank E. Schoonover. View Examples of furniture by early-American cabinetmakers such as, the Javier family of Odessa, and William Savery of Philadelphia. The Museum also houses one of the finest collections of regional silver in the country.

Go Northeast on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard North for 0.15 mile. On your right you will notice Legislative Hall. On your left stands the Delaware Public Archives.

18. LEGISLATIVE HALL (Legislative Ave) Built in 1932-1933 to conform to prevailing style of colonial architecture. This is Delaware's Capitol building and contains the offices of the Governor and both chambers of Delaware's General Assembly. Some excellent portraits of Delaware military heroes may be seen on the second floor.



19. DELAWARE PUBLIC ARCHIVES (corner of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard North and Federal Street) Repository of the Public Archives of Delaware. Important documents are the original royal land grant from King Charles II to James, Duke of York, and a deed from him to William Penn for the Territories on the Delaware River. William Penn's order for the laying out of Dover (1683), the first court record of Kent County (1680), the muster roll of the Kent County militia raised to serve in the French and Indian War and the order for the new Court House built in Dover (1691). Open Saturdays – tours at convenience of staff.



Retrace your footsteps back to Federal Street. Cross the street and hike across the sidewalk between the Biggs Museum and the Old State House. Hike until you reach South State Street, and then hike South for 1.1 mile. Turn right onto Wyoming Avenue and hike for 0.1 mile. Turn left onto Governor's Avenue and hike South for 0.8 mile. Turn right onto Webbs Lane. Continue ahead for 1.0 mile. Turn left onto New Burton Road. Hike for 0.3 mile until you reach Camp Akridge on the left.

To get to Byfield from Camp Akridge:

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|--|--------|
| 1. Head northeast on New Burton Rd toward Webbs Lane | 0.6 mi |
| 2. Turn right onto Webbs Lane | 1.0 mi |
| 3. Turn left onto US-13 northbound | 0.2 mi |
| 4. Slight right onto Puncheon Run Connector | 1.4 mi |
| 5. Take exit 2A for Bay Road south toward Dover AFB | 0.3 mi |
| 6. Merge onto South Bay Rd | 0.1 mi |
| 7. Take the ramp onto DE-1 south | 3.6 mi |
| 8. Take exit 91 for Delaware 9 toward Little Creek/Kitts Hummock | 0.1 mi |
| 9. Turn left onto DE-9/Bayside Drive | 1.0 mi |
| 10. Slight right onto County Rd 352/Bergold Lane | |

Look for a blue and gold marker next to the road.

20. (OPTIONAL) BYFIELD, formerly Poplar Grove. (South of Dover on U.S. 113, just past the Dover Air Force Base. Turn SE on to Rt 68 for .9 mile and turn NE on first road for .7 mile to farm on left.) Ancestral home of Caesar Rodney where he was buried in 1784. For more than a century he rested in a grave on his beloved farm “Poplar Grove”. According to legend, in 1888 the body was disinterred and reburied in the Christ Church cemetery in Dover. However, most historians dismiss this legend and believe that he is still buried somewhere on the family’s property. A stone marker indicates the site of the original home. This is private property. Please be as courteous and quiet as possible.

On the south side of Rt 68 (Kitts Hummock Road) you will note the:

21. (OPTIONAL) DICKINSON MANSION former home of John Dickinson, “Penman of the Revolution” and Governor of Delaware in 1781. It opens at 9 am on Monday-Saturday.



The following questions are to be answered by the group hiking the Trail. Answers may be found in the biography included in this booklet and by observation on the Trail.

1. When did Caesar Rodney's family first reach America?
2. When was Caesar Rodney born?
3. What are some of the nationalities that populated early Delaware?
4. What are some of the political offices that Caesar Rodney held?
5. Caesar Rodney was in Philadelphia as a delegate to what body and opposed what act?
6. What action made the revolution inevitable?
7. What happened in Philadelphia on June 7, 1776 that led to the drafting of the Declaration of Independence and caused intense debate and turmoil?
8. What was the wording of Lee's Resolution that divided the States?
9. Why did McKean call Caesar Rodney to Philadelphia on July 1, 1776?
10. Did Lee's Resolution pass Congress?
11. When did Delaware declare her independence as a State?
12. Who was the first Acting President of Delaware?
13. Where and when was the only Revolutionary battle in Delaware fought?
14. Who was Delaware's wartime Governor?
15. Where was Caesar Rodney originally buried and where is he now buried?
16. What State business is conducted in Legislative Hall?
17. What is written on Caesar Rodney's monument?
18. When was Christ Church founded?
19. What firm now occupies the former office building of Caesar Rodney on the North corner of Bank Lane and the Green?
20. What is the first sentence written on the plaque on the west side of the Governor's House?
21. What was the original purpose of the State Museum buildings?
22. What was the date that Delaware ratified the U.S. Constitution?
23. Who was Eldridge Reeves Johnson?
24. What is held in the Delaware Public Archives?
25. What is etched into the side of the cube at Constitution Park?
26. At Constitution Park, which state is the nib of the quill pen pointing to?

Patches and medals order form

Please send me _____ patches @ \$2.50 each = _____

And _____ medals @ \$12.00 each = _____

Postage and handling add 2.00

Check enclosed for this amount _____

Make checks payable to Del-Mar-Va Council and mail to: 1910 Baden Powell Way, Dover, DE 19904.

Mail patches and medals to: Name _____

Address: _____

City, St. Zip: _____

Caesar Rodney Historical Trail Map

