

General Washington in 1782: Traveling the Rondout Valley, Visiting Kingston

By [A. J. Schenkman](#) on [January 23, 2014](#)



In early spring 1782, General George Washington arrived at the Hasbrouck House in Newburgh, New York for his longest stay – 16-1/2 months. Washington's time at the Hasbrouck House was one of watchful waiting, followed by a cessation of hostilities, and finally an end to the war.

From the Hasbrouck House Washington made a short trip through the scenic Roundout Valley, stopping at Stone Ridge (or Stoney Ridge), on his way to Kingston, which the British had burned in 1777. En route to his destination, Washington stopped to dine and sleep at the home of Major Cornelius Evert Wynkoop.

In 1782, as Washington was preparing for this trip. He invited then Governor of New York State George Clinton to join him. Clinton had been in office when the British torched Kingston. Washington wrote:

Dear Sir: I wish to take a ride as far as Kingston, and if your Excellency should be disengaged, and can accompany me, I will do myself the pleasure to call upon you on Thursday, and go up on Friday. I would wish to return on this side the River by the Wall Kiln [Walkill]. I shall be glad of an answer by return of the Bearer. I have the honor etc.

In a letter dated November 14, Washington informed General Horatio Gates that "he was setting out for Kingston, by way of Poughkeepsy (sic); possibly I may not return before Sunday.... The orders of this day are issued and I will thank you for a pointed attention to them. I am etc." Washington's expense account reveals that he took a tour of Poughkeepsie to Esopus and "along the western frontier of New York State."

Accompanied by other officers, Washington eventually made his way from Newburgh up the Kingston Road or King's Highway. He was heading toward the home of Wynkoop, who was a prominent merchant and farmer in

Stone Ridge. According to numerous sources, he was a major of the Minute Men in Ulster County as well as a commissioner of the Committee to Detect and Defeat Conspiracies. Wynkoop's home was situated along the highway. This is the road which led Washington to his destination – the Dutch Reformed Church in Kingston.

According to Benjamin Meyers Brink, founder and publisher of *Olde Ulster*, a genealogical magazine published in the early 1900s, Washington arrived at Wynkoop's home in the afternoon of November 15. The major invited the general to spend the night; the general lodged on the second floor. Some sources believe he stayed in a southwest bedroom, while others purport that he slumbered in a northwest bedroom. Tradition states that his officers lodged directly across the highway, at the Tock (Tack) Tavern.

The next day, on November 16, Washington departed from Wynkoop's house. When he neared the outskirts of Hurley, he was met by excited citizens. The Trustees of the Freeholders and Inhabitants of Hurley, led by Matthew Ten Eyck, read a short speech praising Washington saying, in part:

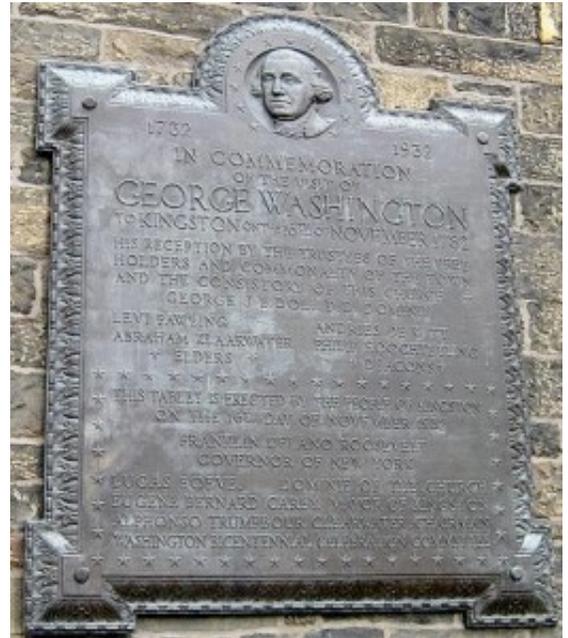
Silence must muse our gratitude (for the power of language cannot display it) to the Supreme Being who has been graciously pleased to appoint a person of your Excellency's virtue and ability, to be his happy instrument of rescuing these United States from the many dangers with which they have been threatened by a cruel and powerful enemy.

According to Washington's papers, the following is a portion of his response:

Gentlemen – I return you my thanks for this very flattering mark of your esteem, and exceedingly regret that the duties of my station will permit me to make but so short a stay among a people, from whom I have received the warmest proofs of regard, and for whose character I entertain the highest respect.

Washington continued to the outskirts of Kingston; more specifically, the area which had been burned by the British five years prior. Washington was met again by more grateful town residents. They thanked him for his service to the country and praised him. Clearly touched with the outpouring of affection, Washington addressed the crowd assembled before him; an excerpt of his speech is as follows:

Your polite and friendly reception of me proves your sincerity. While I view with indignation the marks of a wanton and cruel enemy, I perceive with the highest satisfaction that the heavy calamity which befell this flourishing settlement, seems but to have added to the patriotic spirit of its inhabitants; and that a new town is fast rising out of the ashes of the old.



According to a history of Dutch Reformed Church, as Washington arrived there, he was welcomed by Domine George Doll. The speech below illustrates the additional praises which were heaped upon him at the church:

We the Minister, Elders and Deacons of the Protestant Reformed Dutch Church in Kingston participated in it, and now beg leave with the greatest respect and esteem to hail your arrival. The experience of a number of years past has convinced us, that your wisdom, integrity and fortitude have been adequate to the arduous task your country has imposed upon you; never have we in the most perilous of times known your Excellency to despond, nor in the most prosperous to slacken in activity, but with the utmost resolution persevere until by the aid of the Almighty you have brought us this year to Independence Freedom and Peace.

Afterwards, Washington dined at Wynkoop's brother's house and later attended a reception at the Bogardus Tavern. According to *Olde Ulster*, Washington stayed at the home of Christopher Tappen, the brother of the wife of Governor Clinton. Alternately, other accounts by local historians claim that he lodged at the Bogardus Tavern. Regardless of where he slept that night, soon after Washington made his way back to his headquarters in Newburgh.

Washington would embark on one more long journey, while quartered in Newburgh, in the summer of 1783. He viewed Lakes George and Champlain and traveled as far as Crown Point. He then headed to Schenectady, affirming:

I proceeded up the Mohawk river to Fort Schuyler (formerly Fort Stanwix), and crossed over to the Wood Creek which empties into the Oneida Lake, and affords the water communication with Ontario. I then traversed the country to the head of the Eastern Branch of the Susquehanna and viewed the Lake Otsego, and the portage be-

tween that lake and the Mohawk River at Canajohario.

Washington then returned to the Hasbrouck House in Newburgh for the final time. He departed from there in August 1783 and landed in Rockingham, New Jersey. This was his last headquarters of the Revolutionary War.

Illustrations: Above, miniature of George Washington by Robert Field (1800), held by the Yale University Art Gallery; below, a plaque commemorating Washington's visit to Kingston on exterior of the Dutch Reformed Church in the Stockade Historic District.



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A.J. Schenkman teaches history in the Lower Hudson Valley and writes about the history of Ulster and Orange counties. Including a new book with co-author Elizabeth Werlau Murder and Mayhem in Ulster County.(History Press,August 2013) He also writes a monthly column for the *Shawangunk Journal* and is the author of *Wicked Ulster County: Tales of Desperadoes, Gangs & More (History Press, 2012).*

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