

Tomorrow we celebrate the birthday of this country's first president. But before becoming president he was a great warrior. And, as a warrior, visited our island in 1781.

We asked the Jamestown Historical Society to tell us about General George Washington's trip to Conanicut Island.

If you had been standing on what is now Narragansett Avenue during the afternoon of March 6, 1781 you would have seen General Washington and his entourage riding horseback from West Ferry to East Ferry.

Conanicut Island figured in his letters as early as December 1775. When on Dec. 10 of that year the British forces stationed in Newport burned Jamestown to the ground destroying most of the buildings between East and West Ferry. At that time, Washington was directing the siege of Boston. In a letter from Cambridge, he condemns "the barbarity" of the action.

From 1776 to 1779, Newport and Jamestown were under British control. Jamestown was deserted except for the occupying British and Hessians and about 20 Tory and Quaker families. Then in July 1780, our French allies with 5,000 troops under the command of Comte de Rochambeau sailed into the bay and established their winter quarters for 1780-1781 in Newport. That March, as he was planning a summer campaign that would involve both American and French forces, General Washington decided to confer personally with the French commanders.

On March 6, General Washington, along with eight officers and



The Walrus Says

By Jim Munro

aides, arrived at Old South Ferry in Saunterstown and boarded the sail ferry for Jamestown. They landed on the island about 2 p.m. and rode along what is now Narragansett Avenue to East Ferry.

A French barge met the General and his party at East Ferry and carried them to the flagship Duc de Bourgogne. There Rochambeau conferred on Washington the office of "Marshall of France," which had the effect of making him Rochambeau's superior. The two generals then continued on to Newport where Rochambeau hosted a gala dinner and dance in Washington's honor. Undoubtedly some Jamestowners crossed the bay to join in the festivities. In any case, they would have seen the candles that illuminated the fleet in the harbor and every house in Newport - "the town council having voted candles to all who were unable to provide them," as reported in W.L. Watson's "History of Jamestown" (1949). They would also have heard the salute from the French batteries.

Washington and the French leaders met for a week, discussing plans for the upcoming summer. On March 13, Washington left Newport to return to his own headquarters. Washington and Rochambeau would meet again in Wethersfield, Conn., in May to

plan an attack on New York and then, with the French fleet, the Virginia Capes campaign that ended at Yorktown on Oct. 19, 1781.

From Newport, Washington rode north, through Providence, and did not return again to Conanicut Island.

In 1932, according to the Newport Daily News, the state placed guideposts along Narragansett Avenue, from the East to the West Ferry, saying, "George Washington traveled along this highway." The posts had a figure of Washington on horseback. The Jamestown Historical Society would very much like a copy or a photograph of the signs.

R.I.P. Bob Healy. A fisherman.

The Jamestown Philomenian Library has come to the rescue of us armchair quarterbacks with empty Sunday afternoons on our hands.

We can use those hands on Sundays knitting and rug hooking at the library from 1 to 3 p.m. The sessions are free and open to all levels of expertise. Bring your own needles, yarn and supplies and cheer each other on. Quilts with team logos?

Lotsa hugs for Helen DeTour who will be 99 on Monday. Her family and many friends send their congratulations and best wishes.

For its first concert of the spring 2008 season, the Jamestown Community Piano Association is teaming up with the URI Music Department.

The association's Rosemary En-

right said that Hiroshi Taguchi, the guest artist at the URI Piano Extravaganza, will preview his URI performance with pieces by Liszt, Stravinsky, and Rachmaninoff on Jamestown's own community piano on Sunday, March 2, at 4 p.m. at St. Matthew's church. He

will be joined for the Stravinsky by URI professor Manabu Takasawa, who has delighted Jamestown audiences in earlier Community Piano series. Admission is free. Donations accepted.

Enjoy!

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The Jamestown Women's Club
and The Jamestown Press
will publish the 2008 local directory this spring.

Listings are taken directly from the Newport Verizon Directory. If you are not listed in that directory, are listed incorrectly, or would like to add a spouse's name, cell phone or fax number, etc., please fill out the form below.

**Additional Information & Corrections must be
submitted by March 14th.**

If you have previously only been listed in the Jamestown book and not the Newport book, you need to notify us again. We do not save updates from previous books and you will not be included in the 2008 issue unless you inform us.

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone Number: _____
Updates: _____

mail corrections to the:

Jamestown Women's Club
P.O. Box 412
Jamestown, RI 02835