

In early May 1778 the Hudson River Valley once again enjoyed the payoffs from the American victory in the Saratoga Campaign the previous October. In the May 14<sup>th</sup> edition of Fishkill's *New-York Packet and the American Advertiser*, residents of the Valley learned that Silas Deane, one of the three signatories to the American-French treaties of alliance, had delivered them to the President of the Continental Congress in York, Pennsylvania, on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. He had braved a 35-day voyage across the Atlantic Ocean aboard the French frigate *Sensible* and a journey from Falmouth (Maine) after his arrival there on April 13<sup>th</sup>. He reported that when the word of the British defeat at Saratoga and "the captivity of General Burgoyne" had reached France in December, it "was received with as much joy as if a victory by their own troops had been announced." On the 4<sup>th</sup> of May, Congress ratified the treaties with the following declaration: "Now know ye, that we, the said Congress, have unanimously ratified and confirmed, and by these presents do ratify and confirm the said treaty, and every part, article, and clause thereof, on our part concluded and signed as aforesaid; and further do authorize and direct our commissioners at the court of France, or any of them, to deliver this our act of ratification in exchange for the ratification of the said treaty on the part of his most Christian majesty the king of France and Navarre." With this act the balance of power in the war had shifted against the British.

On May 18<sup>th</sup>, Fishkill also received Major General Horatio Gates and his family; the hero of Saratoga assumed command of the Northern and Highlands Departments from Major General Alexander McDougall on the 20th. In only two months, with the able assistance of the garrison commander, Brigadier Samuel Parsons, McDougall had harnessed the genius of fellow officers Thomas Machin, Louis de la Radière, Rufus Putnam, and Thaddeus Kosciuszko, to lay a solid foundation upon which Gates could build. For the first time, the West Point of the Hudson was prepared to give Sir Henry Clinton a real fight should he choose to challenge its defenses.

Congress's approval of the treaty will be remembered at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, on May 3-4 with a "Grand Military Formation" (see <http://www.valleyforge.org/VF-PatCalendar03.asp>) and at Constitution Island on Chaining the Hudson Day, May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Additionally, re-enactors from the Brigade of the American Revolution and the sloop *Clearwater* will put a section of a replica chain in Chain Cove near the remains of Fort Constitution and salute the ratification of the treaties. (See <http://hudsonrivervalley.net/calendar.php?currMonth=5&currYear=2003#> for details of the event.)

On February 6, 2003, the New York City Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), French Consul General Richard Duqué, and Monsieur Jean René Gehan hosted a reception at the Whitney Mansion, the residence of the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, for some ninety guests to celebrate the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Alliance Day. Regent Barbara Brinkley presided over a short program that included remarks by Monsieur Duqué, the presentation by Executive Director Richard White-Smith, Heritage New York, of a proclamation signed by Governor George E. Pataki proclaiming February 6, 2003, "as a day on which we officially commemorate the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the French-American

Treaties of Amity and Commerce and Alliance.” Mr. Roland Rogers, President, New York City’s 350th Anniversary Committee, read a proclamation from Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg designating February 6<sup>th</sup> as Alliance Day. Dr. Jacques Bossière, Chairman of the Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route (W3R) Committee, characterized joint American-French efforts to develop a W3R National Historic Trail as “the New Alliance” of 2003. New Yorkers continue to “Light Freedom’s Flame” for the 225<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the American Revolution. Huzzah from the Hudson Highlands.