



**DELAWARE PUBLIC ARCHIVES
HALL OF RECORDS
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901**

**TELEPHONE: (302) 739 - 5318
FAX: (302) 739 - 2578**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARKER TO BE PLACED NEAR BOYHOOD HOME OF CAESAR RODNEY

On Thursday, May 1, the Delaware Public Archives and the Caesar Rodney Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution will dedicate a State of Delaware historical marker commemorating the site of Byfield, boyhood home and burial place of Declaration of Independence signer Caesar Rodney. A noon ceremony is planned at the location, near the intersection of Route 9 and Bergold Road, just north of the DAFB Museum gate. An ensemble of the Caesar Rodney High School band will perform. The public is encouraged to attend.

Byfield was originally settled in the early 1680's by Daniel Jones, Rodney's great-grandfather. Following Jones' death, Byfield became the family seat for three generations of the Rodney family. Caesar Rodney spent his formative years there, acquiring ownership of the property after the death of his mother. Upon entering public life in 1764, Rodney moved to the town of Dover. Although the property was occupied by tenants, Rodney retained ownership until his death in 1784. He is buried in an unmarked family cemetery on the property.

All related inquiries may be referred to Russ McCabe, Administrator of the Delaware Historical Markers Program, by calling the Public Archives at 739-5318.

CAESAR RODNEY HISTORIC MARKER PROJECT

Possible Sites

1. Byfield - St. Jones Neck - Secondary Road Connecting Neck Rd. with Rt. 9
 - Rodney family seat/Inherited from Rodney ancestor Daniel Jones.
 - Was boyhood home of Caesar Rodney - but was not his birthplace (he was born at the home of his maternal grandparents (Crawford)).
 - Caesar retained ownership throughout his life.
 - Place of his burial.
2. Corner of Bank Lane & The Green - Dover
 - Purchased by Caesar Rodney when he began his public service in the 1760's/Sold by him approximately 1773.
 - Present structure may contain part or all of Rodney's home.
3. Site of the Chew House (Location of Del. Supreme Court) - The Green - Dover
 - Resided here as a tenant approximately 1771-73.
4. Lefevre House - State Street - Dover
 - Resided here as tenant approximately 1773-75.
 - Structure is still standing.
5. Poplar Grove - Alternate US113 - South of Dover
 - Purchased by Caesar Rodney approximately 1774.
 - Home constructed by him circa 1780.
 - Site of proposed community of "Rodneysburg".
 - Session of Delaware House of Assembly held there in 1784 - two months before Rodney's death.
 - Residence at time of death.
 - Located in the Caesar Rodney School District.

Caesar Rodney Roadside Plaque Dedicated



Standing next to the permanent roadside plaque commemorating Byfield as the boyhood home of the man Caesar Rodney are: (L-R): the honor guard of the Caesar Rodney High School Air Force JROTC, James B. Jackson (a decendent of Caesar Rodney and historian), State Representative Gerald Buckworth, and Dr. William J. Bach, Superintendent of Schools.

Caesar Rodney, a signer of the Declaration of Independence for whom the Caesar Rodney District is named, has always been a much-studied individual in terms of his life and accomplishments. On a breezy spring day in May, approximately 60 people gathered along Route 9 behind the Dover Air Force Base in an area named Byfield to participate in a dedicatory program as a permanent roadside plaque was unveiled and dedicated. The Delaware Archives and a number of historical groups have worked for several years to make this plaque a reality. On hand for the ceremonies were a number of dignitaries, including Lieutenant Governor Ruth Ann Minner and State Representative Gerald Buckworth. A brass ensemble from Caesar Rodney High School and the honor guard unit of the Caesar Rodney High School Air Force JROTC program also participated in this historical

event.

The roadside plaque is a permanent reminder that the Byfield area was the boyhood home of the man Caesar Rodney. The plaque is worded as follows:

Byfield

Near this site stood the boyhood home of Caesar Rodney, signer of the Declaration of Independence. Byfield was originally settled in the early 1680's by Daniel Jones, Rodney's great-grandfather. Following Jones' death, it became the family seat for three generations of the Rodney family, Caesar Rodney spent his formative years here and eventually acquired ownership of the property after the death of his mother in 1763. Upon entering public life in 1764, Rodney moved to the town of Dover. Although the property was occupied by tenant farmers, Rodney retained Byfield until his death in 1784. He is buried in an unmarked family cemetery on the property.

DOVER POST

Vol. 23, No. 3

P.O. Box 664 • Dover, DE • 19903

50¢

Wednesday, May 7, 1997

Keeping Up

ONE MORE YEAR

Thomas More Academy won't open until next year - 3a.

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS

Capital, Caesar Rodney and Lake Forest school districts to go to polls May 13 - 4.6a.

MAKING A DECISION

Capital School Board grapples over graduation requirements - 8a.

ON THE MOVE

Stokes students, faculty will move into new school for last week of class - 11a.

Look for Capital Happenings 19b



WEATHER

Mostly sunny, pleasant.
High 62 to 68.



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TUG: Students in Erica Caldwell's fourth grade class at Hartly Elementary enjoyed a fun and educational 1890s pioneer day at the Delaware Agricultural Museum and Village last week. The students, who had just finished a unit on the Old West, wore pioneer style costumes and tried out a variety of old-time activities, including a tug of war. More photos are on 1b. Photo by Joanna Wilson.

In search of Caesar Rodney

Marker erected on site most often associated with famous patriot

By Joanna Wilson
Staff writer

Caesar Rodney.

Delawareans learn about him from an early age — Kent County's own Revolutionary War patriot who traveled 80 miles to Philadelphia on July 2, 1776 to cast his vote for the resolution that led to the Declaration of Independence. Roads, schools and even a square in Wilmington — where a statue depicting that famous ride stands — bear his name.

Rodney's well-documented public life began in 1755 at

the age of 27 when he was elected high sheriff of Kent County, the first of many public offices that included serving as president of Delaware and several stints as speaker of Delaware's General Assembly.

But his personal life remains elusive, except for the sparsest of details: born Oct. 7, 1728 in a house on St. Jones Neck near Dover; never married, though one love letter to a Mary Vining of Dover survives; suffered from asthma and disfiguring facial cancer, likely the reason why no known portraits of him exist; died June 26, 1784 at the age of 55.

Yet where Rodney lived — and where he's buried — has been the subject of almost as much speculation as where Washington slept.

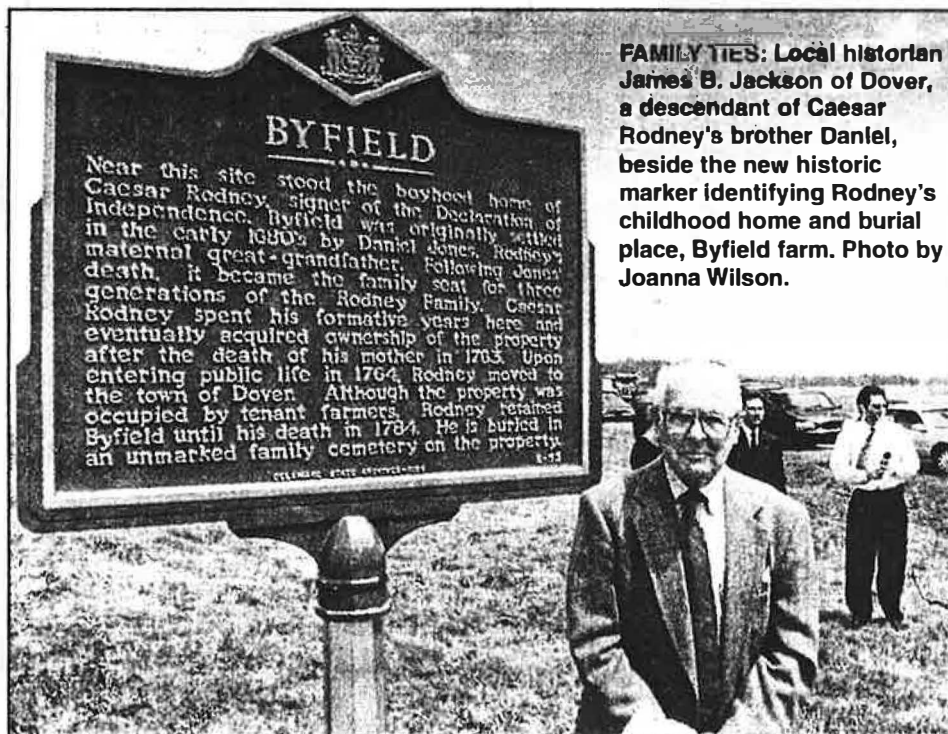
WHAT IS KNOWN

For certain: Rodney grew up on a farm called Byfield, 800 acres stretching from just off Route 9 south of Dover Air Force Base to the edge of the marsh and the Delaware Bay.

For many years, no house has stood on the quiet tract of farmland, and no stone marks Rodney's grave in his family cemetery.

But last week, a new historic marker was erected there to recognize where Rodney was born and raised.

Several locations for the marker were considered, according to Russ McCabe, coordinator of the Delaware Historic Markers program, including a site near Huntly Circle, once the site of Poplar



FAMILY TIES: Local historian James B. Jackson of Dover, a descendant of Caesar Rodney's brother Daniel, beside the new historic marker identifying Rodney's childhood home and burial place, Byfield farm. Photo by Joanna Wilson.

Continued on page 3

In search of Caesar Rodney



RESTING PLACE FOR A PATRIOT? This monument to Caesar Rodney in Christ Episcopal Churchyard in Dover was unveiled in 1889. Rodney's remains were supposedly moved to the churchyard from the Rodney family cemetery at Byfield about the same time. Historians now say Rodney's remains were never moved. Photo by Joanna Wilson.

Continued from page 1

Grove, the farm where Rodney lived his later years till his death.

"But most people identify him with Byfield," said McCabe.

For years, photos believed to be the long-demolished Byfield farmhouse have circulated. Are any of them real? And what about the graveyard?

The answer only seems easy. Two sepia-toned photos in the Delaware State Archives show a grove of trees sheltering a small group of overgrown graves and a low, ramshackle frame house — according to the graceful unknown hand, they are Rodney's grave and home respectively.

But another photo of the same house dated 1902 and labeled "dwelling house of Caesar Rodney/Jones Neck, Kent Co./Delaware" has an archivist's note attached, identifying the house as Burton's Delight, an adjoining property which Rodney owned but never lived in. The information is credited to Dover historian James B. Jackson — a Rodney descendant who other local historians refer to as "the expert" on Rodney.

AT THE DEDICATION, Jackson joined a large group including Caesar Rodney High School students and the members of the Wilmington-based Caesar Rodney Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution who helped get the marker erected.

Jackson tried to answer the big questions about Rodney and clear up a few common misconceptions, which he said are the result of over a century of myth and hearsay backed by little historical fact, since no serious research about Rodney was done till this century.

Much information comes from Rodney's brother Thomas, a prolific writer who described the frame house and orchards at Byfield, as well as the family cemetery. As the executor of Caesar's will, however, he was "not a very good manager," Jackson said.

A brick burial vault and the construction of a wall around the family cemetery are among the will's provisions; the vault was constructed, but due to financial problems with the estate, the wall was not, Jackson said.

But the wall proved to be the clue to the cemetery's location.

In 1977, the state office of Historic Preservation received a call from a farmer on the Byfield tract, according to historic archaeologist Alice Guerrant. An area in the field had collapsed under his tractor, revealing a brick burial vault. Archaeologists investigated, and were somewhat disappointed to discover the grave's occupant was a 19th century woman, but further investigation revealed a trench dug for the wall that was never built, as well as numerous other graves.

The other graves were not excavated, but "no reasonable doubt" exists that one of them is Rodney's, Jackson said, adding that the cemetery remains unmarked because its isolation would invite vandalism. "We decided we should let sleeping bodies lie," Jackson added.

AND THE GRAVE in Christ Episcopal churchyard where Rodney's body was supposedly moved in the 1880s? "A letter from Sen. James A. Hughes at the time clearly states they did not find remains, but they went through with the charade anyway," Jackson said.

As far as where Rodney lived, Jackson feels relatively certain no images of Byfield are preserved. A drawing of the ruins of Poplar Grove is believed to be authentic, but, like Byfield, the house is gone.

Two houses associated with Rodney still stand in Dover, where Rodney moved when he entered public life. One, greatly altered from Rodney's day, is a law office on the northwest corner of the Green; the other is the 1723 Richard Wilson House on the corner of State and Water streets. That residence, where Rodney lived for two years, has also been the home of Constitution signer Richard Bassett and, more recently, of World War I veteran John LeFevre.

ONE BIG MISCONCEPTION Jackson would like to see cleared up: Rodney's famous ride. In the 1790s, Thomas recalled that, upon receiving the summons from Thomas McKean, Rodney "sent for his carriage and set off for Philadelphia."

No fast and furious ride on horseback? "Men of [Rodney's] status simply did not make an 80-mile trip on horseback," Jackson said, adding that Rodney likely would not have gone alone either — his Philadelphia apartment had a room for the servant who accompanied him on his trips.

"But it's difficult to blast myths like that," Jackson said.

Who's buried in Rodney's tomb?

Monday News 5/24/78

Tomb—

Continued from Page One

Assembly appropriated \$500 for a large granite monument, to be placed in the church's graveyard. Sally Morris, a collateral descendant of Rodney, contributed another \$500.

Jackson believes that the chief justice mistakenly led the members of the Rodney Club to a grave in another tract, Burton's Delight, which though owned by Rodney was not part of the original family plantation.

On Oct. 30, 1889, U.S. Secretary of State Thomas F. Bayard Sr., of Delaware, was the orator at the monument dedication ceremony.

Recently, Dr. Harold B. Hancock of Dover, a Delaware historian who was preparing an article about Rodney, asked Jackson about the Rodney cemetery.

Familiar with colonial land grants and acquisitions in the 18th century, Jackson did some research and discovered the 100-square-foot Rodney family burial site at Byfield. He was assisted in his search by his sons, C. Terry Jackson II and Thomas C. Jackson.

The property is now owned by Island Farm Inc., represented by Harry Bonk, who gave his permission for the investigation.

Jackson said he and his sons also found 14 other grave sites which have not been opened.

Jackson said yesterday he doesn't know what will happen if and when investigations prove Rodney's remains are still in the vault at Byfield.

"There's certain to be some discussions about this with the officials of Christ Church," he said.

Remains are questioned, and the question remains

By WILLIAM P. FRANK

For nearly 90 years, a massive monument in the graveyard of Christ Episcopal Church in Dover has marked what everyone thought was the final resting place of Delaware's leading Revolutionary War hero, Caesar Rodney.

Now a Delaware businessman and amateur historian says Rodney's body may not be there at all. Instead, he believes, Rodney remains where he was buried in 1784 — in an old-now-abandoned family cemetery near St. Jones Creek south of Dover.

In 1887 a Dover club decided to honor the Delaware statesman by moving his body to Dover.

Chief Justice Joseph P. Comegys had pointed out to its members what he thought was Rodney's grave. But when they dug, it was reported, they found only "some dark dirt and bits of metal, but no bones." They put it all in a coffin anyway, and buried it in the Christ Church yard.

"With all due respect to Chief Justice Comegys, I believe he unintentionally pointed out the wrong grave, James B. Jackson said yesterday.

Jackson, executive vice president of the Delaware Bankers Association as well as a Delaware historian and map collector, outlined the preliminary investigation that led him to suspect Rodney's remains were never moved.

He reported finding a brick

vault in the old cemetery on what was known as Byfield, the Rodney ancestral property.

The Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs is investigating Jackson's find. Its archaeologists say they found in the vault the skull of "a middle-aged man of delicate features." Rodney died when he was 56.

Jackson said all the contents of the vault will be examined, and if no negative evidence is found, then it would seem to me that there is where Rodney was buried 184 years ago and his remains are still there — not in the Christ Church graveyard."

Jackson, a collateral descendant of Caesar Rodney, discussed his findings last night at a meeting of the Friends of Old Dover.

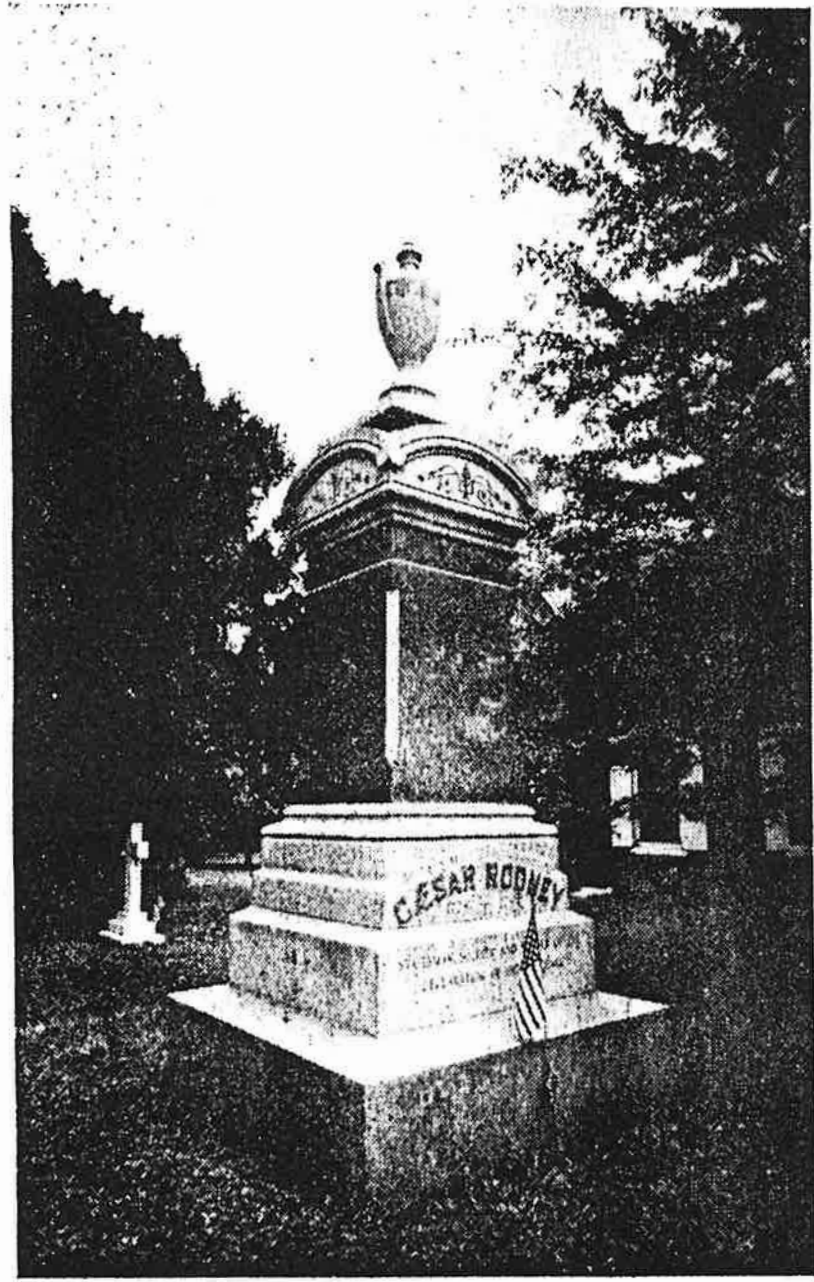
Rodney, who held many Delaware offices before and during the revolution was Delaware's first chief executive and a delegate to the Continental Congress. He made history when he rode from near Dover to Philadelphia July 1 and 2, 1776, to vote for the Declaration of Independence. His vote secured Delaware's support for freedom from Great Britain.

Jackson said records show Rodney was buried in the family graveyard at Byfield.

In 1887, however, a group of young men in Dover organized the Rodney Club and were encouraged by the chief justice to dig up Rodney and re-bury him in Christ Episcopal Church yard.

A year later the General

See TOMB—Page 2, Col. 6



The Rodney monument is in Christ Church yard, Dover, but are Caesar Rodney's remains under it?

**Dedication of the Historical Marker for
"Byfield Plantation", Home of Caesar Rodney**

May 1, 1997 12 Noon

Prelude: Brass Quintet, Caesar Rodney High School

Welcome: Mary Jane Hammond Matthewson

Regent, Caesar Rodney Chapter, National Society,
Daughters of the American Revolution

C. Russell McCabe, Archivist, Delaware Division of
Historical & Cultural Affairs

Invocation: Harriet McNemar Esham, Chaplain, Caesar
Rodney NSDAR

Order to Present the Colors

Color Guard Caesar Rodney High School AFROTC

The National Anthem

Salute to the Flag

Greetings from Distinguished Guests

The Honorable Ruth Ann Minner

Lieutenant Governor of Delaware

The Honorable Gerald Buckworth, Representative

The Honorable Jane Maroney, Representative

Ruth Ramsdell Holden, Past Governor, Delaware Society
of Mayflower Descendants

John C. Lewis, Sons of the American Revolution, Vice
President for Kent County, Caesar Rodney Chapter

Patricia Thistlewood Marshall State Regent, NSDAR,
Captain Jonathan Caldwell Chapter, Milford

Joyce Jones Franks, State Vice Regent NSDAR, Captain
William McKennan Chapter

Mary Neifert Revels, State Historian NSDAR,
Colonel Haslet Chapter,

H. Elizabeth Hancock, Honorary State Regent,
NSDAR, Cooch's Bridge Chapter

Caroline Simpler Abbott, Regent NSDAR,
Colonel Haslet Chapter,

"Remembrances of Caesar Rodney"

James Jackson, Historian and
Descendent of Daniel Rodney

Unveiling of the Marker

Remarks: C. Russell McCabe

Dedication of the Marker: Regent Matthewson

Order to Retire the Colors

Benediction: Chaplain Esham

Closing Song: "My Country Tis of Thee"

* * * * *

Lunch follows at the Dover AFB Officers Club

NSDAR chapters joining with us today:

**Colonel Haslet, Dover: Caroline Simpler Abbott,
Nancy Grant Lewis Virginia Obrinski
Mary Niefert Revels Brigitte van den Hove Smith
Cooch's Bridge, Wilmington: H. Elizabeth Hancock
Captain Jonathan Caldwell, Milford:
Patricia Thistlewood Marshall
Captain William McKennan, Rockessin:
Joyce Jones Franks**

Our special thanks to the:

**AFROTC Color Guard of Caesar Rodney High School
Cadets: Adam Gillespie Nancy Harrison
Gregory Hisey David McGuinness
Chief Master Sergeant Eisenhower
Colonel George Findlay, Commander**

**Brass Quintet of Caesar Rodney High School
Andre Hitchens Diane McDonald
Ryan Tracy Albert Schmidt
Lauren Sulecki
Dwayne Sandlin, Director
Diane McMorris, Assistant**



"Byfield"

Near this site stood the boyhood home of Caesar Rodney, signer of the Declaration of Independence. "Byfield" was originally settled in the early 1680's by Daniel Jones, Rodney's maternal great-grandfather. Following Jones' death, it became the family seat for three generations of the Rodney family. Caesar Rodney spent his formative years here and eventually acquired ownership of the property after the death of his mother in 1763. Upon entering public life in 1764, Rodney moved to the town of Dover. Although the property was occupied by tenant farmers, Rodney retained "Byfield" until his death in 1784. He is buried in an unmarked family cemetery on the property.

The Filson Club

INCORPORATED

ORGANIZED MAY 15, 1884, FOR COLLECTING, PRESERVING, AND PUBLISHING
HISTORICAL MATERIAL, ESPECIALLY THAT PERTAINING TO KENTUCKY

118 WEST BRECKINRIDGE STREET

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY 40203

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
JAMES R. BENTLEY

July 18, 1984

Mr. Richard R. Cooch
16 East Third Street
New Castle, Delaware 19720

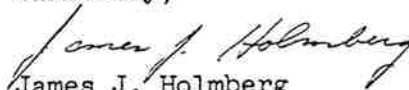
Dear Mr. Cooch:

Enclosed are xeroxes of the material regarding Caesar Rodney that you requested. I copied the information (especially the burial material) which I thought you may not have or was not available at other institutions. The other institutions from which Mr. Thruston made photographs of Rodney letters and will are the Delaware State Archives at Dover and the Maine Historical Society, Fogg Collection. The remainder of the material doesn't relate to Rodney's burial site, home, etc. but to his ride on July 3, 1776 to Philadelphia to cast his vote for the Declaration of Independence. Also, as I briefly mentioned, his will.

Mr. Thruston made this research trip in 1920, being in Delaware in mid September. He compiled his research, photographs, and other information he gathered in ten volumes. Volume 6 contains data on the Signers from Delaware and Maryland. The title of Mr. Thruston's work is Signers of the Declaration of Independence.

I hope this is helpful to you. The total for xeroxes and postage comes to \$2.96. I have enclosed an itemized invoice. Please make your check payable to The Filson Club and direct it to my attention. Good luck with your research and if The Filson Club can be of further assistance do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



James J. Holmberg
Acting Head of Manuscripts

The Filson Club

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
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July 3, 1984

Mr. Richard R. Cooch
16 East Third Street
New Castle, Delaware 19720

Dear Mr. Cooch:

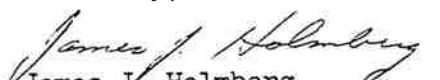
Mr. Bentley referred your letter of June 18 regarding the grave of Caesar Rodney to me. The Thruston papers are voluminous and as yet uncataloged. They are however arranged in files in filing cabinets. I checked these files under every heading I could think of that may have related to the information you seek but found nothing.

In a cataloged miscellaneous Thruston correspondence file I found two letters written in 1925 from Thruston to his secretary Miss Ludie Kinkead, that mention Caesar Rodney (as well as other Signers). No mention is made though of his grave or anything else of interest.

The only other information I could find was a compilation of research, transcripts and photographs R. C. Ballard Thruston did on the Signers of the Declaration of Independence. While very informative regarding Caesar Rodney not much more is brought to light that isn't contained in Thruston's letter to Richard S. Rodney of September 18, 1920. Some names are mentioned that do not appear in the aforementioned letter. Thruston also draws the conclusion using the information he had heard and collected following his visit to Dover, Delaware on Sept. 14, 1920 that the correct grave was not exhumed. Whether or not he changed his mind later I do not know. There is one confusing statement in his report of his trip to the Rodney grave site or sites about the exhuming of the graves. Thruston took photographs, or "Kodaks" as he refers to them of the grave sites, Rodney's home, a few household items, his will, some correspondence, etc. If you would like this information xeroxed let me know. The charge is 25¢ per copy plus postage.

I hope this information is of help to you. If The Filson Club can be of further assistance do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,


James J. Holmberg
Acting Head of Manuscripts

P.S. In reading my letter it occurs to me that my sentence regarding Thruston's confusing statements about Rodney's grave is itself confusing. To hopefully clarify it, Thruston says that the grave was exhumed and bits of a sabre, uniform, button and bone were found. It was marked and when reexhumed only a few rusty nails were found. No date is given for this first exhumation but it must have been at some earlier date. The question is did the committee exhume the right resting place.

June 18, 1984

Mr. James Bentley
Director
The Filson Club
118 West Breckinridge St.
Louisville, KY 40203

Dear Mr. Bentley:

Thank you very much for speaking with me today about Mr. R. C. Ballard Thruston who was president of the Filson Club for many years.

I enclose for you a copy of a letter written September 18, 1920, from Mr. Thruston to my grandfather Richard S. Rodney. Much of the letter concerns a matter of interest to Delawareans: the location of the original grave of Caesar Rodney, signer of the Declaration of Independence from Delaware. My grandfather was very interested in Rodney family history and Delaware history. However, we have not been able to find any other correspondence between him and Ballard Thruston on this topic.

You indicated to me that Ballard Thruston had left considerable papers to the Filson Club at his death. You indicated to me that your organization could do a preliminary check for me to see if there were any letters or papers, presumably around 1920, dealing with the topic of the location of Caesar Rodney's grave. I am very appreciative of your willingness to help me in this respect.

For your further information, I enclose a 1978 newspaper article that explains the issue.

Again, I thank you for your assistance. If you should have any questions, I may be reached during the day at (302) 652-3641 or in the evening at (302) 328-7608.

Sincerely yours,

Richard R. Cooch

mjr
Enclosure

bcc Mr James B Jackson w/enc
bcc - EWG, Jr.

June 18, 1984

Mr. James Bentley
Director
The Filson Club
118 West Breckinridge St.
Louisville, KY 40203

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Sincerely yours,

Richard R. Cooch

mjr
Enclosure

January 24, 1979

Mr. James B. Jackson
149 Hazel Road
Dover, Delaware 19901

Re: Byfield Farm

Dear Mr. Jackson:

In going through some of grandfather Rodney's papers we noted a letter from him to Doctor George H. Ryden dated December 13, 1937 whereby grandfather related what he knew about the burial site of Ceasar Rodney. I enclose also a copy of Doctor Ryden's reply to grandfather of October 4, 1938.

Apparently, grandfather wrote also to his sister-in-law, Julia Brinckle Rodney (Mrs. Dorsey R. Rodney) on this topic, for she responded January 4, 1938. I enclose also a copy of her letter.

I thought you might want to have copies of these letters for your file. I hope all has been well with you lately. My best to Mrs. Jackson.

Sincerely,

RICHARD R. COOCH

RRC/afc
Enclosures

October 24, 1963

Mrs. H. Clay Reed
Old Town Hall
Wilmington, Delaware

My dear Mrs. Reed:

The following is what I read to you this morning.
I think it is taken from a paper in the Library of Congress, as
my note is on a letterhead of a Washington hotel.

June 26, 1784

Between 6 and 7 o'clock this evening my beloved brother
Caesar Rodney, Esq., late President of the Delaware
State departed this life after a long and painful illness
arising from a cancer which spread over his nose and eyes
and took away his sight and at last his life after a
progress of twenty years.

He was buried the 28th at the family burying ground at
Byfield which burying ground I mean to wall in with brick
and raise a monument of stone to my brother's memory if
Providence permits. My brother was 56 years of age when
he died just the same age that Julius Caesar was at his
death.

June 28

Paid old negro Glasgo for his trouble in showing where
our ancestors were buried.

Very truly yours,

Richard S. Rodney

MRS. HENRY RIDGELY, PRESIDENT
DOVER
MRS. FRANCIS DE H. JANVIER, VICE-PRES.
NEW CASTLE
GEORGE S. WILLIAMS, SECRETARY
MILLSBORO
S. WARREN HALL
DOVER
MISS LAURA S. RICHARDS
GEORGETOWN
J. ERNEST SMITH
WILMINGTON

State of Delaware



GEORGE H. RYDEN, PH. D.
STATE ARCHIVIST

LEON DEVALINGER, JR.
ASSISTANT STATE ARCHIVIST

The Public Archives Commission Dover, Delaware

October 4, 1938.

Honorable Richard S. Rodney,
Supreme Court of the State of Delaware,
Wilmington, Delaware.

My dear Judge Rodney:

Your letter of December 13, inquiring about my authority for the statement in my biographical sketch of Caesar Rodney in Letters To And From Caesar Rodney that he was buried on his "Poplar Grove" farm, has remained entirely too long unanswered. In extenuation of my apparent dilatoriness I can only explain that your letter was misplaced in a pile of papers on my desk here in Dover which I had not examined for many months until the other day.

My only authority for making the statement that Caesar Rodney's remains were buried at "Poplar Grove" was the statement in The History of the Monument (which includes Thomas F. Bayard's address in 1839), that "His place of interment was on the estate where he spent his days, and was

unmarked save by a stone placed there recently by the Justice of the Superior Court of Delaware." The preceding sentence is as follows: "The home of Caesar Rodney was at 'Poplar Grove', St. Jones Neck, Kent County, Delaware, where he died on the 29th (sic) of June, 1784." I assumed, of course, that the person who wrote the sketch was familiar with the place from which the remains were removed to Christ Church yard in Dover, for on page 8 he stated "Anterior to the passage of the above resolution, the 'Rodney Club' had removed the remains of Caesar Rodney from the old homestead in St. Jones' Neck and had them deposited in the above mentioned Episcopal Cemetery in Dover."

On page 441 of the Letters Thomas Rodney says that his brother died at "Poplar Grove," "his then place of residence". Now, of course, Caesar in all probability during his last illness lived for a long while with his brother at "Poplar Grove"; but I may have taken this statement of Thomas's to mean that "Poplar Grove" was Caesar's home, not for the moment recalling that it was Thomas's home to which Thomas must have returned with his family after his residence in Wilmington from 1780 to 1782.

Caesar Rodney's will (probated August 14, 1784) moreover mentions "Byfield", and not "Poplar Grove", Caesar having bequeathed that property to his nephew, Caesar Augustus.

It is therefore quite clear that I was in error in saying that Caesar Rodney was buried at "Poplar Grove."

Caesar bought his property on The Green here in Dover shortly after his removing to this town, the deed being given by John Banning and dated February 4, 1765. Since Caesar sold the property to Dr. James Tilton on March 30, 1774, he probably made "Byfield" his home after that.

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Geo. H. Tyden". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed closing.

GER:h

December 13, 1937.

Dr. George H. Ryden,
University of Delaware,
Newark, Delaware.

My dear Dr. Ryden:

George Thouron asked me the other day as to the circumstances of the death and burial of Caesar Rodney. I noticed in your preface to the "Letters of Caesar Rodney" that you say that he died and was buried at "Poplar Grove." I had not heretofore noticed this, and wonder if you would mind giving me the authority for it. My information, based upon the written statement of Thomas Rodney, was that he died at Poplar Grove where he then lived, and was buried on the farm called "Byfield," which had been the place of burial of a very considerable number of the members of the family. The only information that I have of "Byfield" is that it had belonged to the Jones family, and evidently came to the first William Rodney through his marriage. In 1731 Daniel Rodney sold it to Caesar Rodney (father of the Signer). The older Caesar probably lived there after 1731. After the death of the elder Caesar Rodney, the widow, Elizabeth Crawford, married one Thomas Wilson, and in 1762 this Thomas Wilson and Elizabeth Crawford Rodney Wilson were living at "Byfield" and Caesar Rodney (the Signer) was then living on what was known as the "Lebanon Farm." Both Thomas Wilson and Elizabeth, his wife, seem to have died in 1763. In 1764 Caesar Rodney moved into Dover, but how long he lived there I do not know. Of course, my information may be an error, and I wonder if your notes would show where you got the statement that he was buried at "Poplar Grove."

With sincere personal regards and best wishes for the coming season, I am

Yours very truly,

RSR:T

R. C. BALLARD THRUSTON
1000 COLUMBIA BUILDING
LOUISVILLE, KY.

September 18, 1920

Mr. Richard S. Rodney,
New Castle, Del.

Dear Sir:-

I am enclosing herewith the little compilation I made by having photostated certain portions of "Old London Silver" by Montague Howard, in order that I might have the information in compact form to carry in my pocket while on trips. You will note that the marks on your tankard of the lion and the leopard head - the latter crowned and bearded, snow date from 1756 to 1775 inclusive and the letter G shows it as 1762.

Whilst at Dover I visited the old ^{house} ~~houses~~ of Caesar Rodney of which nothing is left but a few timbers, shutters, hinges, nails, &c; then to the burial ground probably 150 yards distant in a small circular clump of trees probably 40 or 50 yards in diameter and was shown the spot from which the Signess remains were removed. The hole has not been filled up and in it is a quartz boulder a foot or so in diameter to mark the place. There were no headstones there at the time of my visit.

After returning to Dover I called on Miss Jettie Cowgill and was told by her Mr. Nicholas Loockerman about 70 years ago stated he was then the only person living who had been present at the burial of Caesar Rodney and therefore took Ezekiel Cowgill and others to the spot showing it to them. I think Judge Comegys was one of them. At any rate the Judge took the Committee to the spot from which the remains (?) were removed.

She further claims that she - Miss Cowgill - knows the correct location of the grave that the Committee did not excavate there and that Caesar Rodney's remains are still in that clump of trees! She also stated that the grave was brick lined and that some member of the family in Wilmington has the old receipts for this work.

In reply to my query as to why the family (Cowgill) objected to the removal it developed that they felt the proper consideration had not been shown them in the matter.

R.S.R.#2
Sept. 13, 1920

I called on Mr. James H. Hughes, whom I learned was one of the Committee from him I learned that Judge Comegys stated that upon learning the location of the grave he had erected a grave mound over it and placed the quartz boulder there in addition and he thus identified the spot. Mr. Hughes also stated that beyond a few old badly rusted-nails and pieces of wood they found nothing, the body having entirely disintegrated so they took about a bushel and a half of earth from where they thought the body had rested together with the old nails and that that earth and those nails now rest under the granite monument in the Church yard.

I asked him about the brick lining and he said they found none and saw no bricks there.

If Miss Cowgill's statement regarding this brick lining and the receipts is correct, you would probably know who has those papers and could obtain access to them to settle that question. If this brick lining was there it could certainly be located and this controversy settled.

May I ask you to quietly investigate unless you have already done so and let me know the results.

I am writing this from Washington, D.C., whilst the points I gleaned are still fresh in my mind, but am having my secretary write you so I may have the data in my files at home.

I wish to express my appreciation of your courtesies and hope to see more of and hear more from you in the future.

Very sincerely,

R. C. Ballard

CAESAR RODNEY

Burial Place of Caesar Rodney....

The home of Caesar Rodney was at "Poplar Grove", St. John's Neck, Kenty County, Delaware, where he died on the 29th of June, 1784. He was interred on the estate and the grave was unmarked, save by a stone placed there recently by the Hon. Joseph P. Consygs, Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Delaware. In this neglected condition the grave of this distinguished states man and lawyer remained until the year 1887. In November of that year, an organization was formed of young men of Dover to put a fitting monument over Caesar Rodney's remains. The organization thus formed took the name of the Caesar Rodney Club. The officers originally chosen were President William G. Kerbin; Secretary, Henry Ridgely, Jr.; Treasurer, Robert R. B. Bradford. In September 1889, Henry Ridgely was elected President of the Club and W. Lee Cannon, Secretary. Soon after, the Senate and House of Representatives of Delaware appointed a Committee to erect a suitable monument over the remains. "Anterior to the passage of this resolution, the Rodney Club had removed the remains of Caesar Rodney from the old homestead place in St. John's Neck and had them deposited in the Episcopal Church yard in Dover about 1867". October 30, 1889, was the day fixed for the unveiling of the Monument and Hon. Thomas F. Bayard was chosen orator. From "Proceedings on the unveiling of the Monument to Caesar Rodney" by Thomas F. Bayard, October 31, 1889. Oration delivered on that occasion and the pamphlet now in the possession of Mrs. Paul Andersen, The Portsmouth Apt., New Hampshire Ave., Washington, D.C., she is a great-niece of Caesar Rodney. (Have seen the pamphlet Alice H. Clark)

from Mr.
Jackson

VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF THOMAS RODNEY'S
RECOLLECTION OF "BYFIELD"

My great Grandfather Dan'l Jones took up a tract of land called Byfield in Jones's Neck (that is the neck between Jones's Creek & Little Creek). This tract of land Byfield lays between two branches, one called Jones's branch, which falls into the Bay through the Sand ditch; the other, hog pen branch which falls into the Bay through the black bank or Meadow ditch. He settled on this land and planted an orchard near the house which stood N.W. of the family burying ground some little distance. My grandfather William Rodney married his daughter who became his heir, and settled on the same farm near the branch a little west of the old orchard yet standing. There were many trees in the first of these orchards when I was grown, and the second was there not much past its prime & used to produce 50 & 60 (?) of cider a year, but the first is intirely gone now, and the second mostly gone except for young trees added on the west side by Wilson. This orchard stood on the branch side and was chiefly the finest Grieson fruit. The buildings at both these places were gone before my memory. I just recollect part of the roof of my grandfather's house laying on the ground. When the farm came into my father's hands he built up at the Cherry Walk. That is he planted a cherry walk and the house stood thus in respect to the branch - (see sketch). This Cherry Walk was in prime and beautiful when I grew up & full of fine fruit every season, but now it is nearly gone, and the house is quite gone and a new house built to the north of where it stood; perhaps 200 yards. This mansion plantation was sold by my persecutors on the fourth of July 1791, while I was in prison, in a most vilanous & most urgent manner. My grandfather died in 1708 - and my father Caesar Rodney in 1745, when I was about one year old These and most of my unkles & brothers are buried on Byfield farm.

Journal, Jan. 23, 1797. HSP
MF R.R. 118. DA

KEY REFERENCES FROM ORIGINAL RODNEY SOURCES

From Caesar Rodney's will, written January 20, 1784:

"It is my Will and desire that all my Lands and Tenements, Hereditaments and real Estate situate lying and being in Jones's Neck in the said Kent County consisting of a large tract called Byfield part of a large tract called Burton's Delight part of a large tract called Great Pipe Elm and three new Surveys one on Hog-Pen Branch and two on the Great Branch and also all of the Marshes between the Ditches running from the Mouths of the said Branches from the main Woodlands down to Delaware Bay shall hereafter be stiled and denominated called and known by the Name Byfield, a Part of Burton's Delight called Hartsfield consisting of One Hundred and Seven Acres or thereabouts being always first thereout excepted"

From the codicil to the will, written March 27, 1784:

"... And I do order and direct my Brother Thomas Rodney to erect a good substantial brick Wall properly capd so as to inclose the Family Burial Ground at the old Byfield Farm in the same Manner as Burial Grounds are usually enclosed.----- within Twenty Four Months after my decease and raise the money for erecting it out of the Rents and Profits of my real Estate which I have directed to be called by the Name of Byfield"

From Thomas Rodney's "Commonplace Book" begun in 1773:

Chronology:

"1762. "Having lived chiefly with my Mother and father-in-law til this year, I moved from them to my brother Caesars, who then lived at Lebenon Farm. My mother on Byfield. I took care of this farm until we moved to Dover."

"1764. "In February this year my brother having got the Offices moved to Dover, and I with him . . ."

"1784 "My brother being on the decline desired my Company, so I moved to his House then at Poplar Grove. He died in June..."

Undated recollection:

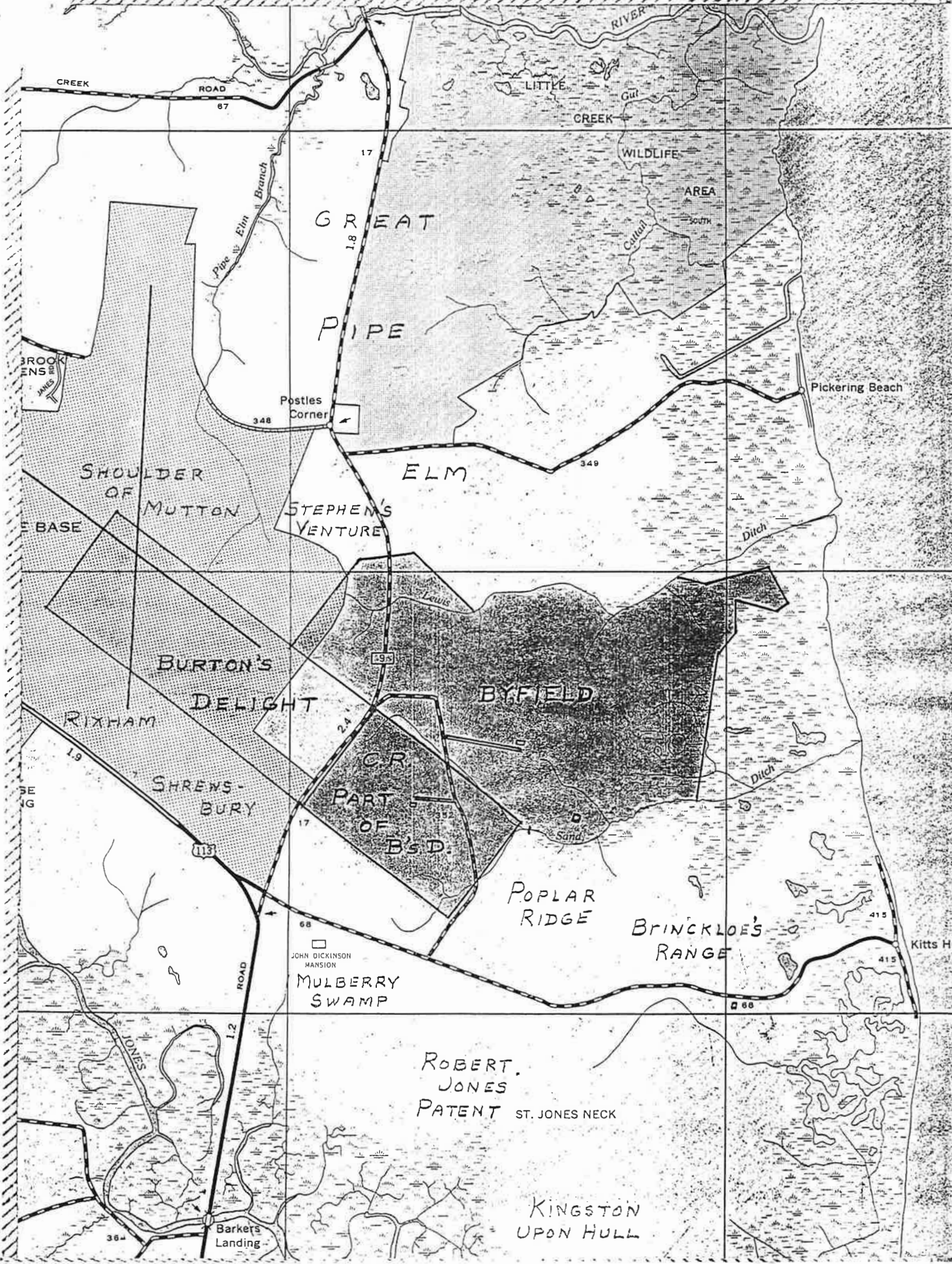
"Soon after I went to the Bastile in 1791, Byfield Farm the Mansion Plantation of the Rodney family where my brother Caesar and our Ancestors are buried, was Sold by the Sheriff of this County at Public Sale on the 4th of July. . . ."

From Thomas Rodney's Account Book as executor of Caesar Rodney's estate:

"To bricks for C. Rodney's grave L 1: 8:3:"

From Caesar Rodeney's (Sr.) "Journal 1727 - 1729"

June 6, 1727 ".... I made a foot bridg over ye branch between Mr. Crawford's and our house:...."



CREEK ROAD 67

LITTLE CREEK RIVER

GREAT PIPE

WILDLIFE AREA

BROOKENS JAMES

Postles Corner

Pickering Beach

SHOULDER OF MUTTON

ELM

STEPHEN'S VENTURE

BURTON'S DELIGHT

BYFIELD

RIXHAM

SHREWSBURY

PART OF B.S.D.

POPLAR RIDGE

BRINCKLOE'S RANGE

JOHN DICKINSON MANSION MULBERRY SWAMP

ROBERT JONES PATENT ST. JONES NECK

KINGSTON UPON HULL

Barkers Landing

Kitts H

364

17

1.8

348

349

19

24

17

68

1.2

66

415

415

July 27, 1984

Mr. James J. Jackson
148 Hazel Road
Dover, DE 19901

Re: Burial Ground of Caesar Rodney

Dear Jim:

I have followed through with my inquiry to the Filson Club in Louisville, Kentucky, and have been provided with certain interesting materials relating to the burial ground of Caesar Rodney. I enclose copies of these documents (which they photocopied for me) for your information. They are:

1. Brief biography of Caesar Rodney from notes of a Mrs. A. Howard Clark and compiled by Rogers Clark Ballard Thruston.
2. Notes on a portrait of Caesar Rodney.
3. Notes of R. C. Ballard Thruston of an interview with my grandfather Richard S. Rodney.
4. Letter from my Grandfather Rodney to R. C. Ballard Thruston of June 8, 1926.
5. Notes of R. C. Ballard Thruston on "Burial Place of Caesar Rodney" (undated).
6. Various photographs made by (apparently) R. C. Ballard Thruston; and
7. (Most Significant) Notes of R. C. Ballard Thruston made September 14, 1920, about his visit to Dover in 1920 and his investigation about the burial site of Caesar Rodney. These notes tend to shed further doubt to me that the "Rodney Club" identified and removed the correct remains of Caesar Rodney to Christ Church, Dover.

I thought you would find this information useful and I am sending Bill Frank a copy of it as well because of his interest.

I hope to see you soon and hope that you are having a good summer.

Sincerely,

Richard R. Cooch

cc: Mrs. Sarah Rodney Cooch, w/enc. (FYI)

cc: Mr. William P. Frank, w/enc.

CAESAR RODNEY

Del.

Notes made by Mr. R. C. Ballard Thruston, September 14, 1920, when he kodaked the Rodney family burial ground, etc.,

Kodak 1a shows the family burial ground at Poplar Grove, four miles southeast of Dover, Del., where Caesar Rodney was buried in 1784.

Kodak No. 2 shows the spot in the old burial ground from which Caesar Rodney's remains were removed in 1889 to Dover.

Mr. Valentine Massey of Dover was with me, we were guided to the spot by David Moore who lives in or near the old house. His statement was to the effect that the stone shown in kodak No. 2 shows the spot from which Caesar Rodney's remains were removed. They were located in a clump of trees making a circle some fifty yards in diameter and 150 yards or so from the house; location of the grave was shown him by Jake Cowgill and in removing the remains they found a part of the sabre, uniform, bone and button, and David Moore was responsible for placing the stone on the site of the old grave, which is near the center of this clump of trees. There were three or four sunken places from which remains may have been removed, the entire burial ground being now matted with a mass of vines, weeds, etc.

Learning that the Cowgills were offended at some of the acts of the Committee who had undertaken the removal of the remains of Caesar Rodney, and that they claimed the correct grave was not opened, I called on Miss Jettie Cowgill, who lives in the suburbs of Dover, from whom I obtained the following information,-

That one Nicholas Loeckerman was present at the burial of Caesar Rodney, and about 1850 he told Ezekiel Cowgill and others of the location of the grave at a certain persimmon tree. Judge Comegys was one of those present, placed the stone in kodak No. 2 at the site of the grave, and after the removal of the remains about 1890, this stone was placed at the hole from which the remains were supposed to have been removed. Miss Cowgill says that the grave was brick lined, that it was not touched by the committee in their attempted removal and that she knows the location of the grave.

Learning that Mr. James H. Hughes of Dover was a prominent member of the committee that had charge of the removal of the remains, I called on him. He told me that when he was a young man and went to Dover to practice law, he and others similarly situated, feeling that the remains of Caesar Rodney ought not to be left in the neglected condition in which they then were, organized the Caesar Rodney Club. They took up the raising of funds for the removing of the remains, etc.; that Judge Comegys had been shown the location of the grave many years before, and had raised a mound over it at the time; he took the committee to the spot; if the grave which they opened was not brick lined; they did not find any sabre, uniform, buttons nor even bones; all they found was a few rusty nails (if this were the Rodney grave even the bones had entirely disintegrated) and from the

Caesar Rodney #2

depth where they supposed the body would probably have lain, they removed about one and a half bushels of earth to the cemetery in Dever, and this was placed under the present granite monument bearing Caesar Rodney's name.

Note: In that type of soil when it was desired to place a slab over the grave of the departed, it was customary to brick line the grave, which lining would act as a foundation for holding the stone slab in place. There is nothing that I have seen to show that there was ever a slab over Rodney's grave, but I think it very probable that the grave was so lined, and I am inclined to think that the remains still lie in the old family burial ground.

Mr. Richard S. Rodney, 915 Market St., Wilmington, Del., has a pamphlet on the unveiling of the monument to Caesar Rodney, 1726-1784, by Thos. S. Bayard, published by the Delaware Historical Society.

Mr. Richard Rodney also has a George III coffee pot that formerly belonged to George Read, containing hall marks, - the first the makers mark, difficult to read; second lion passant guardant; third leopards head crowned and whiskered (period of 1756-1775); and fourth, the letter G in the black letters in capital showing the date 1762.

Judge Henry C. Conrad has written a history of Delaware. He told me that Caesar Rodney was born Oct. 7, 1728, and on page 864, Vol. 3, of that State History states he obtained that date from the family Bible of Rodney's sister, now owned by Mrs. Hitter, Philadelphia (John P. Niel in Wilmington has access to these papers).

Thomas Rodney, brother of Caesar Rodney the Signer, had a daughter Lavina who married Judge John Fisher when he was 23 - see sketch of Fisher in Conrad's History, also published by the Historical Society of Delaware, publication No. 25, p. 16.

Mr Cowgill bought the Rodney place, and I think his family still own it. His daughter is Miss Jettie Cowgill, above referred to and quoted.



R.C. Ballard Thurston.

See note book No. LXXVIII used by R.C.B.T. on this trip, 1920.

Caesar Rodney

Unfinished sketch by Mrs. A. Howard Clark.

Delaware

Caesar Rodney derived his name from his great-grandmother Alice Caesar; daughter of Sir Thomas Caesar of England; who married William Rodney. Owing to financial reverses they emigrated to Philadelphia and moved to Kent County, Delaware. William Rodney died in 1708, leaving eight children and a large fortune. Since most of the children died without issue, the greater portion of the estates descended to the youngest son Caesar who married the daughter of Thomas Crawford, the first minister of the gospel in that region.

There were eight children from this marriage, Caesar Rodney, the Signer, being the eldest. He was born in Dover, Delaware, on October 7, 1728. He was well educated, studying and then practicing law. In 1758 he was chosen High Sheriff for Kent County and immediately after the expiration of his term of office, was made Justice of the Peace and Judge of all the lower Courts.

Having been made a member of Assembly, which convened at Newcastle, October 20, 1762, he at once became most active in the prominent questions of the day. He was chosen, with Mr. McKean, to draught a response to the address of the Governor at the opening of the Assembly, as well as to transact other important business which might arise. The session of the Legislature having adjourned on the 13th of September, 1763, Rodney was authorized to affix the seal to the various laws which had been passed.

In the meantime, the agitation in regard to the Stamp Act having arisen, Mr. Rodney was appointed, together with Thomas McKean and the Speaker of the Assembly, Mr. Kollock, to meet the delegates from other provinces at a General Assembly at New York to consider the latest measures imposed upon the Colonies by Great Britain. This Committee received the unanimous thanks of the House for the faithful and judicious discharge of their duties, and on the repeal of the Stamp Act, Rodney and McKean were appointed to frame an address to the King expressing the feelings of the Legislature of Delaware upon the subject.

Mr. Rodney continued as a member of the Legislature from 1766 to 1768, being one of the most active members. A certain Committee having presented a bill, regulating slavery, to the House, Rodney submitted an amendment which totally prohibited the importation of slaves into the Province. This amendment created much discussion and was lost by only two votes. About this time Mr. Rodney was obliged to remain for a period in Philadelphia for treatment of cancer which had formed upon his face, and which, later on, caused his death. It was his intention to go to England for treatment, but the impending revolution prevented his leaving the country.

When the Assembly met in October, 1769, Mr. Rodney was chosen Speaker, retaining the office for several years. Having been elected Chairman of the Committee of Correspondence he held a constant communication with the leading men of all parts of the country, and by his influence and activities did much to promote a unity of sentiment which he saw was becoming more necessary each day.

On June 21, 1774, Mr. Rodney was urged by his friend, George Read, to call a general public meeting of citizens to be held at Newcastle to consider the aggressions of the mother country. This meeting was held on August 1, 1774, and a great number of delegates being present and Caesar Rodney was unanimously elected Chairman. At this meeting Rodney, together with Thomas McKean and George Read, was elected a delegate to a General Continental Congress to be held at Philadelphia, on the first Monday in September. Rodney, therefore, took his seat in Congress on September 5, 1774. During his stay in Congress, he was obliged to hold constant active intercourse with his own Province, war having been declared and as he had, in 1756, served as Captain of Militia for Dover, he was ap-

Caesar Rodney

pointed Colonel and then Brigadier-General of the Delaware Militia in 1776-77, and it was no doubt due to his activities that the Delaware Troops became known for their good discipline and faithfulness which they displayed during the entire war.

Finding at one time that much discontent existed, particularly in the County of Sussex, Rodney secured leave of absence and returned to Delaware to use his personal influence with the people, in order that Congress might have the unanimous support of his State, if possible.

The question of the Declaration of Independence having been presented to Congress during his absence Mr. McKean, knowing Rodney's views on the subject, and anxious that the vote on the Declaration should be carried unanimously by the States, sent a special messenger to him and Rodney, anxious to be present in time to cast his vote, rode all night, reaching Philadelphia just in time and later in the day transmitting to Dover on account of what had taken place. The Committee of Safety, on receipt of the news, proceeded to the Court House where the Declaration was read and great enthusiasm aroused.

Rodney remained with the Army for a couple of months when his services as Brigadier-General were of the most arduous character. The British Army having landed on the shores of Chesapeake Bay soon after this, General Washington placed his head-quarters in the Northern part of Delaware where Rodney was in constant communication with him. On December 17, Mr. Rodney was again called to his seat in Congress, but he did not retain it very long as he was soon after elected to be President of the State of Delaware, serving until 1782, when he declined reelection. During his term of Governor, he used every means possible to assist the faltering Army.

Rodney was noted for his strong sense of humor, was extremely popular and his well known patriotism gave him great power over the people. He died at Dover, June 29, 1784 and was first buried on his farm, "Poplar Grove", a few miles east of Dover; but in 1889, his remains were removed from there and re-buried in the graveyard adjoining Christ Protestant Episcopal Church in Dover, Delaware.

CAESAR RODNEYPortrait of Caesar Rodney

It has been said that owing to a disfigurement from
wound of a side of Rodney's face, that no portrait was ever made
of him. Miss Ida Tarbell in an article in McClure's Magazine
for July 1, 1901, shows a collection of portraits of fifty-four
of the Signers. She was unable to obtain portraits of John Morton
and Caesar Rodney. Miss Wilmette Gale, sister to Mrs. Anderson,
says that she has seen a miniature of her great-uncle Caesar
Rodney, and that it is in the possession of Rodney Booth of
Bethlehem, Pa. Miss Gale says that Memlap, the artist, made
a pen sketch of Rodney. The "Conroe Courier" of Conroe, Texas,
for Friday, June 29, 1900, has a collection of portraits of
the "Signers" among which is one in profile of Caesar Rodney.
(I have seen this article. Alice M. Clark)

Note: Miss Gale attended the unveiling of the Caesar Rodney
monument in Wilmington, Del. last July 4, and is photographed
by the side of the monument.

Caesar Rodney was a bachelor and therefore left no direct
descendants. He was wealthy and owned, at one time, nearly all
of Kent County. (Miss Gale's statement)

VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF THOMAS RODNEY'S
RECOLLECTION OF "BYFIELD".

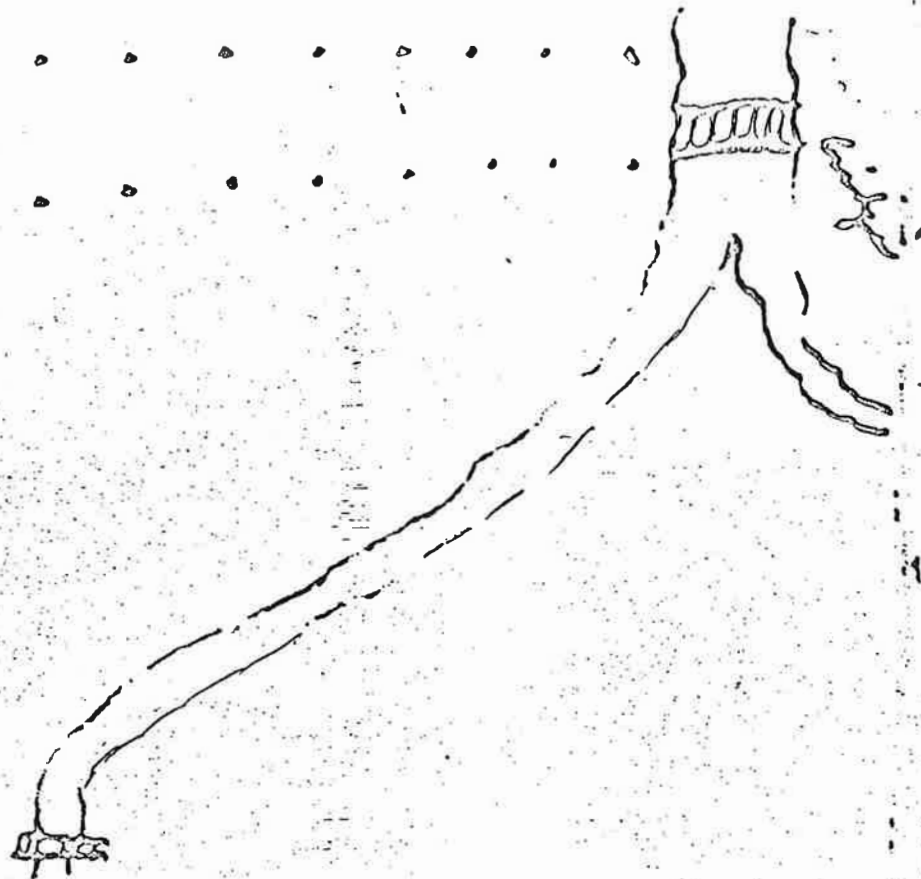
My great Grandfather Dan'l Jones took up a tract of land called Byfield in Jones's Neck (that is the neck between Jones's Creek & Little Creek). This tract of land Byfield lays between two branches, one called Jones's branch, which falls into the Bay through the Sand ditch; the other, hog pen branch which falls into the Bay through the black bank or Meadow ditch. He settled on this land and planted an orchard near the house which stood N.W. of the family burying ground some little distance. My grandfather William Rodney married his daughter who became his heir, and settled on the same farm near the branch a little west of the old orchard yet standing. There were many trees in the first of these orchards when I was grown, and the second was there not much past its prime & used to produce 50 & 60 (?) of cider a year, but the first is intirely gone now, and the second mostly gone except for young trees added on the west side by Wilson. This orchard stood on the branch side and was chiefly the finest Grieson fruit. The buildings at both these places were gone before my memory. I just recollect part of the roof of my grandfather's house laying on the ground. When the farm came into my father's hands he built up at the Cherry Walk. That is he planted a cherry walk and the house stood thus in respect to the branch - (see sketch). This Cherry Walk was in prime and beautiful when I grew up & full of fine fruit every season, but now it is nearly gone, and the house is quite gone and a new house built to the north of where it stood, perhaps 200 yards. This mansion plantation was sold by my persecutors on the fourth of July 1791, while I was in prison, in a most vilanous & most urgent manner. My grandfather died in 1708 - and my father Caesar Rodney in 1745, when I was about one year old These and most of my uncles & brothers are buried on Byfield farm.

Journal, Jan. 23, 1797. HSP
MF R.R. 118. DA

To the branch



This cherry walk
was in prime and
beautiful when I
grew up & full of
fine fruit every season
but now it is nearly
gone - and the house



is quite gone and a new house built to the
north of where it ^{stood} - perhaps 200 yards - This Mas-
sachusetts plantation was sold by my father to
the French in July 1791. While I was in prison
in a most villainous & most unjust Massachusetts

Caesar Rodney



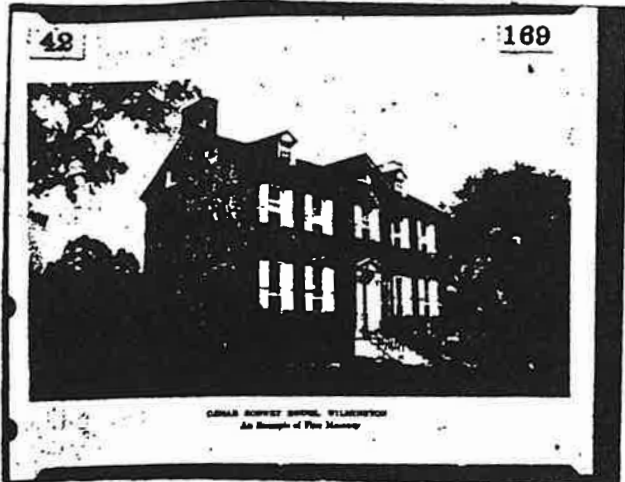
In an interview with Judge Richard C. Rodney, New Castle, Del., on February 9, 1925, he told me that Caesar Rodney died a bachelor, that he had a cancer on the left side of his face and wore a patch over his left eye, therefore would never allow a portrait to be painted.

Below is quotation from letter from Hon. Henry C. Conrad, State Archivist, The Public Archives Commission of Delaware, Dover, Del., December 29, 1924, to Mr. Charles A. Rudolph, 900 Van Buren St., Wilmington, Delaware,-

"There is no portrait of Caesar Rodney and I never heard of anybody being painted as representing him. There are oil portraits of Caesar Augustus Rodney, nephew of the signer, and I have known his portrait to be used as a portrait of the signer."

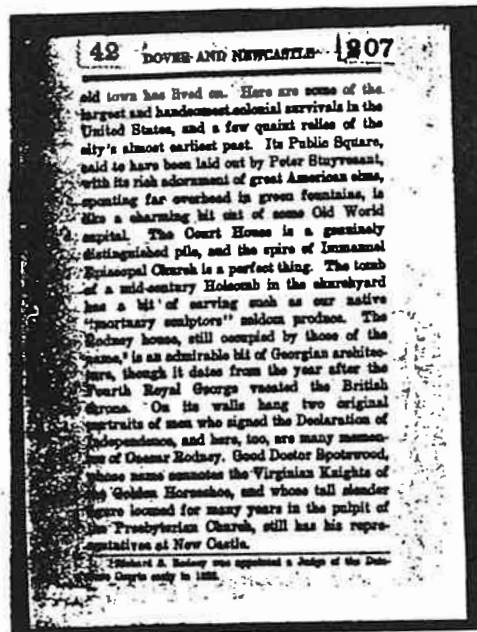
From "Autographs of Signers of the Declaration of Independence, and of the Constitution" by Lyman C. Draper, in Collections of the State Hist. Societ. of Wisconsin, Vol. X, 1909, from Mr. Dimmet's statement, p 394:-

"The Rodney was the only 'make-up' of the whole set issued by Burns. It was done by St. Memin, from the portrait of the signer's nephew, Caesar A. Rodney, whose profile bore a remarkable resemblance to his uncle, as I had been informed by different members of his family."



SUPREME COURT
of the
STATE OF DELAWARE

Judges Chambers
Richard S. Rodney
Associate Judge



Wilmington
June 8, 1926.

R.C. Ballard Thruston, Esq.,
1000 Columbia Building,
Louisville, Ky.

My dear Mr. Thruston:

I beg to acknowledge your letter relative to the Rodney house in Wilmington which you read of in Mr. Vallandigham's book.

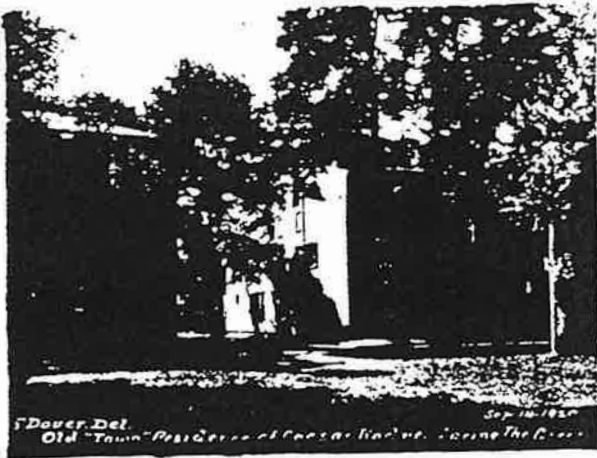
This house was the residence of Caesar A. Rodney, Attorney-General of the United States, member of Congress and Senator, who died in South America while Ambassador there. He was a son of Thomas Rodney, who was the brother of Caesar Rodney, the signer.

At the time the book was written, the house was probably occupied by John M. C. Rodney, a descendant of Caesar A. Rodney. After the death of John M. C. Rodney, the house was sold, torn down, and the contents entirely scattered.

With best regards, I am,

Yours very truly,

(Signed) Richard S. Rodney.



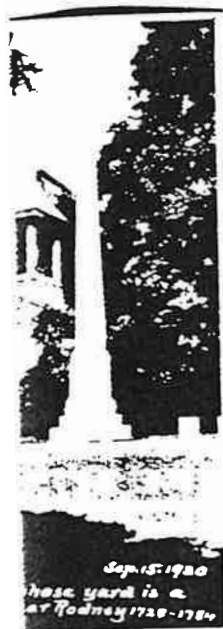
Dover, Del. Old "Town" Pass Office at Caesar Rodney's. Spring 1920



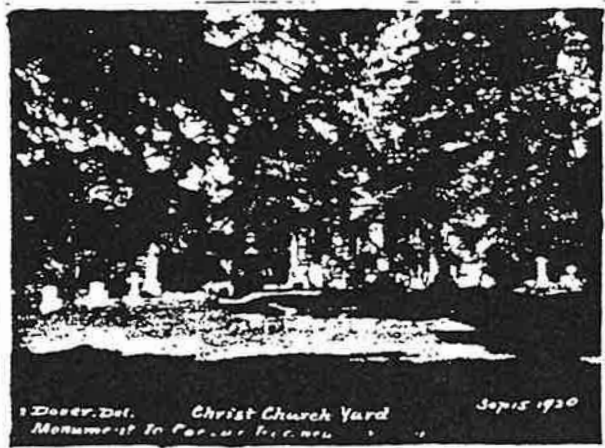
4 miles S.E. of Dover, Del. Spot where Rodney was buried in 1794. Sep. 1920



The old home of Caesar Rodney, 4 miles S.E. of Dover, Del. from which his remains were removed in 1849. Sep. 1920



Sep. 15, 1920
This yard is a
at Rodney 1720-1784



Dover, Del. Christ Church Yard
Monument to Caesar Rodney
Sep. 15, 1920



Dover, Del. Christ Church Yard Sep. 15, 1920

Christ Church in whose yard is a monument to Caesar Rodney 1720-1784

Caesar A. Rodney's home "Cool Spring" which fronted on Franklin Street was built in 1814. His wife Susan occupied it until the 1830's. Finally razed in the 1920's, the site is now the Cool Spring Reservoir.

Susan died in 1839 and was buried eventually in what was to become the burial plot for several of Caesar A.'s family, the Wilmington-Brandywine Cemetery. Unlike Caesar and Thomas, Caesar A. did have substantial family survive him but it is highly unlikely that anyone of his immediate family ever went back to visit his grave in Buenos Aires due to the enormous distance. Yet there is a plot in Wilmington that still awaits Caesar A. Rodney.

Excerpt from *Tales of Delaware*, 1991 Roger A. Martin

Caesar A. Rodney's home "Cool Spring" which fronted on Franklin Street was built in 1814. His wife Susan occupied it until the 1830's. Finally razed in the 1920's, the site is now the Cool Spring Reservoir.

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Excerpt from *Tales of Delaware*, 1991 Roger A. Martin

IN THE NAME OF GOD AMEN the twenty first day of August in the year one thousand six hundred and ninety four, I Daniel Jones of the County of Kent in the Territories of the Province of Pennsylvania being weak and feeble of Body, and calling to mind the uncertainty of this life, and being of good and perfect memory praised be almighty God for it, Revoking all former Wills heretofore by me made, do constitute and ordain this my last Will and Testament in manner and form following. First I Bequeath my Soul into the Hands of Almighty God that gave it, through the Riches of his mercies I verily believe to be saved and my Body I commit to the Earth, therein to be decently buried in Christian manner at the Discretion of my Executors hereafter named, and after all my just Debts and Funeral Charges are paid, I dispose of my outward estate as followeth. Secondly I do give and Bequeath unto my Daughter Sarah all that Tract of Land and Plantation belonging to me called Denbigh Situate lying and being at the Head of Jones's Creek in the aforesaid County of Kent to her and the Heirs lawfully begotten of her Body forever, and if it should fortune that she should die without Issue lawfully begotten of her Body, Then I will all the said Tract of Land and Plantation to my son Daniel Jones and his heirs forever, Thirdly I do give unto my said Son Daniel Jones one Negro Boy called Jack to him and the heirs lawfully begotten of his Body, but if he should die without lawfull issue, then I will the said Negro Boy to my Daughter Sarah and the lawfull heirs of her Body, Fourthly I do give and Bequeath unto my Daughter Sarah one Negro Girl called Maria to her and the lawfull heirs of her Body, together with the future increase of the said Negro Girl, and if it should fortune that my Daughter Sarah should Die without issue lawfully begotten of her Body then I will the said Negro Girl with the increase of her Body to my Son Daniel Jones and the lawfull heirs of his Body, Fifthly I will and Bequeath unto my loving wife Mary Jones If it please God she survive me one Negro Man named Sambo and one Negro Woman named Hagar during her natural life or widowhood, but if she should marry after my decease or die before my Son Daniel Jones and my Daughter Sarah, then it is my Will that the said Negro Man and Negro Woman be equally divided between my said Son Daniel and Daughter Sarah. Sixthly I do give and Bequeath unto my Son Daniel Jones all the Remaining part of Land that can properly be called mine Situate lying and being in the aforesaid County of Kent to him and the heirs lawfully begotten of his Body forever, but if it fortune that he should Die without lawfull Issue then I will the said Land to my Daughter Sarah and the Lawfull heirs of her Body forever, Seventhly Whereas in the second and sixth Articles of this my last Will and Testament, I have given and Bequeathed unto my Son Daniel Jones, and my Daughter Sarah and to the lawfull heirs of their Bodies forever all the Lands and Plantations with their appurtenances that Properly belongeth or in any wise appertaineth situate and being in the aforesaid County of Kent, Now my will is that if it should fortune that both my Son Daniel and my Daughter Sarah should die without Issue of their Bodies lawfully begotten or if it should so happen that there can be none of the lawfull Issue proceeding from them neither Male nor female found remaining alive then I will yt. the said Lands and Plantations with the appurtenances thereunto belonging shall be for the relief of the poor People of the aforesaid County of Kent, and that the Magistrates of the said County do diligently look after the same, that they may not be converted to any other use but for the maintating of an Hospital or free School in the said County, Eighthly I will that my Son Daniel Jones after my decease shall have all my wearing Cloaths and all my Carpenters and Coopers Tools, and all my Guns and one yoke of Oxen, Together with Plough and Plough Irons thereunto belonging Ninthly I give and Bequeath unto my wife Mary Jones my Cart and Cart Horse, Tenthly I do give unto my Daughter Sarah one Breeding Mare, Eleventhly, I do will that all the Negroes both young and Old male and female that I am possessed of at the day of my Death, except the above named Sambo, Hagar Jack and Maria and also all other servants whatsoever shall be equally divided between my son Daniel Jones and my Daughter Sarah and if it should fortune that either of my said Children should decease before the other without lawfull Issue of their Bodies then I will their part of the said Negroes to the other that shall survive, Twelfthly I will that all the remaining part of my Estate shall be divided into three equal parts, one part whereof, I will that my wife Mary Jones shall have to her own proper use the second equal part I Bequeath to my son Daniel Jones, and the third equal part I do give and Bequeath to my Daughter Sarah, Lastly I do appoint

and ordain my loving wife Mary Jones and my Son Daniel Jones to be the Executors of this my last Will and Testament In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and fixed my Seal the day and year above written Daniel D J Jones his mark Seal, Signed published and declared in the presence of us John Clayton, the mark of Joseph J O Osburne Arthur Meston.

John Brinckloe John Curtis William Freeland and Robert French Esquires By authority derived unto us from the Honble, William Markham Esq. Lieutenant Gov. of the Province of Pennsylvania County of New Castle and the Territories and Tracts of Land depending thereon in America, with full power unto us, or any two of us the said John Brinckloe being one, to take the Examination of witnesses upon Oath to any will within the County of Kent, and if we or any two of us as afsd. should see cause to grant Probate thereof, as also to grant Administration upon Intestates Estate to such as we as afsd. shall see meet taking good and sufficient security of the Adm. for the true and just performance thereof, the which Probates or Letters of Adm. so granted being to be signed and sealed by at least two of us the said John Brinckloe being one.
To all to whom these Presents shall come Sendeth Greeting.

Whereas Daniel Jones senior late of the County of Kent aforesaid decd. by his last Will and Testament in writing bearing date the Twenty first day of August Anno Domini 1694 did make and ordain Mary Jones his now Widow and Relect Exec. of his last Will and Testament as by the said will Relation being thereunto had may appear, and the said Mary Jones not being willing to take upon her the burden and care of her said Executorship but for her greater ease hath assigned and committed all her right of Executorship unto her Son in law William Rodeney of the County aforesaid by himself and his assigns to do all and every thing and things concerning the Execution of the said last Will and Testament, So and in such manner as she the said Mary Jones should not intermeddle with the Administration of any part of the goods and Chattles of the said decd. without License and consent of the said William Rodeney first had and obtained, as by and Instrument of writing for that purpose made from under the hand and Seal of the said Mary Jones bearing Date the nineteenth Day of December Anno Domini 1694, duly perfected doth more fully and at Large appear, and Whereas the said William Rodeney craved Adm. upon all and singular the goods Chattles and Credits of the said Daniel Jones decd. by virtue of the power and Authority to him assigned as aforesaid, as also in Right of Sarah his wife, the only Daughter and Child now left alive of and belonging to the said decd. Wherefore Know ye that the 19th day of this Instant month march before us the said John Brinckloe and William Freeland the last Will and Testament afsd. of the afsd. Daniel Jones decd. annexed to these presents was proved approved and insinuated, having while he lived and at the Time of his Death Goods Rights and Credits, in divers places within the said Province and Country. We do by these presents give and commit unto the said William Rodeney, full power and lawfull Authority well and truly according to Law to Administer upon all and singular the goods Rights and Credits of the said decd. in any manner of way to him belonging or his said last Will and Testament concerning being and remaining within the said Province and Country the said William Rodeney having given Bond with sufficient security in the sum of five hundred pounds Currant money of this Government not only well and truly to Execute the said last Will and Testament according to Law, and to pay the Debts as right is and to make and Exhibit into the Registry in the said County of Kent a full true Inventory of all and singular the goods Rights and Credits of the said decd. within the said Province and County from time to time as the same shall come to his knowledge and Possession which is to be delivered at or before the Tenth day of August next ensuing the date hereof but also a plain and true account to render of his doings in the said Adm. at or upon the first day of May which shall be in the year 1696, or when ever after he shall be thereunto required by the Register General for the Time being given under our hands and Seals in Kent County aforesaid the one and twentieth day of March Anno Domini 1694/5.
John Brinckloe, Wm. Freeland, Ro. French,

O. K. III-73 J.
Relat.

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KC Will, Daniel Jones 1694