

In one northeast DeLand neighborhood, the American Revolution isn't confined to textbooks — it's part of the daily drive.

Street signs in the Brandywine community read like a roll call of Revolutionary-era names: Yorktown, Lexington, Concord, Saratoga, Kings Mountain and Trenton. Others — Lafayette, Burgoyne, Shenandoah and Valley Forge — nod to key figures, places and moments tied to the nation's founding.

For residents, those names are more than labels. They're reminders of a defining chapter in American history woven into the fabric of a quiet residential neighborhood.

Developed beginning in 1976, the Brandywine community includes a mix of single-family homes, duplex-style villas and condominiums. The neighborhood is widely believed to have been shaped, in part, by former DeLand City Manager Wayne G. Sanborn, who lived there for decades.

The origin of the street naming theme is not formally documented, but the pattern is unmistakable: Nearly every road references the Revolutionary era, whether through battles, military leaders or historically significant locations.

As the United States approaches its 250th anniversary in 2026, communities across the country are reflecting on the nation's founding — and in Brandywine, that reflection is built into the neighborhood itself.

Some of the names correspond directly to pivotal battles.

The Battle of Lexington and Concord, fought April 19, 1775, marked the opening conflict of the Revolutionary War, as colonial militia confronted British troops sent to seize military supplies. At Concord's North Bridge, colonial forces engaged British soldiers in one of the first organized acts of resistance.

Farther south, the Battle of Kings Mountain on Oct. 7, 1780, proved to be a turning point in the war's Southern campaign. Fought entirely between Patriot militia and Loyalist forces, the decisive Patriot victory weakened British efforts to maintain control in the region.

Other streets reference major milestones in the war's conclusion.

The Siege of Yorktown in 1781 effectively ended the conflict, as British Gen. Charles Cornwallis surrendered his army following a joint American and French campaign. French naval forces, led by Adm. François Joseph Paul de Grasse, played a critical role in cutting off British escape by sea.

Not all of Brandywine's street names are battles, however.

Valley Forge, for example, commemorates the Continental Army's winter encampment of 1777–78, where more than 12,000 soldiers endured disease, supply shortages and harsh conditions. While not the coldest winter of the war, it became a symbol of endurance and transformation for the fledgling army.

Shenandoah reflects the fertile valley that helped supply troops with food, while Lafayette honors the Marquis de Lafayette, the young French officer who became a key ally to George Washington and a prominent figure in the war effort.

Even Burgoyne — a British general — appears among the street names, a curious inclusion given his surrender at Saratoga in 1777 marked a major American victory and helped secure French support for the colonial cause.

Why that name made the list remains unclear.

Despite the mix of references, the overall theme is cohesive enough that residents often find themselves brushing up against history in unexpected ways — whether turning onto Yorktown Road or stopping at the corner of Brandywine and Lexington.

The neighborhood itself remains a relatively small community, but its naming convention offers a distinct sense of place, connecting modern-day DeLand to events that unfolded more than two centuries ago.

And as the nation prepares to mark its semiquincentennial, Brandywine stands as a quiet, everyday reminder that history isn't just something to commemorate — it's something people live alongside.

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— *Sharon Beach is a member and media/public relations chair of the Col. Arthur Erwin Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in DeLand*