



Volume 20, Issue 2 **The Raritan-Millstone Heritage Alliance** Summer 2016

## Monmouth Battlefield State Park now a Raritan-Millstone site

By George B. Dawson

Recent expansion of the geographic scope of the Raritan-Millstone Heritage Alliance has brought its coverage up-stream on the Millstone River into its headwaters region in Monmouth County, and with that its inclusion of Monmouth Battlefield State Park in Manalapan and Freehold townships.



Visitor Center

The park – encompassing about 1,000 acres of the 3,000-acre battle region – was established in 1978, on the bicentennial of the fight between American troops under Continental Army commander George Washington and British troops under Sir Henry Clinton, on June 28, 1778. The episode is the largest and arguably most important battle of the eight-year American Revolutionary War. The heaviest fighting occurred in Manalapan Township, within the boundaries of the park.

The battle is re-enacted at the park in mid-June each year by volunteer artillery and foot troops. The fighting began early in the day in downtown Freehold village (outside park limits), in a clash of advance troops commanded by Major General Charles Lee and the Marquis de Lafayette (also a major general) with the British. It ended in the late afternoon, when frontal and enfilade (right-angle) cannonfire from Perrine and Combs hills forced the British to withdraw.

(Continued page 4)

### RMHA ELECTION OF OFFICERS

May 21, 2016

President – Rev. Dr. Fred Mueller

Vice President – George B. Dawson

Secretary – Christine Retz

Treasurers – John & Karen Keithler

### SAVE THE DATE

November 19, 2016 the Fall Board of Directors meeting will be held at the historic Old Franklin Schoolhouse, 491 Middlesex Avenue, Metuchen, NJ 08840. Metuchen's first one-room school, circa 1807, it is maintained by the Borough Improvement League of Metuchen. Tyreen A. Reuter is hostess and president.

For more information see page 6.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Saturday, September 17 at 10:00 AM**

Historic Dey Farm,  
Old Church Road (off Federal Road)  
Monroe Township, NJ 08831



Historic Dey Farm restoration includes the original farmhouse and barn, several outbuildings, the England House, circa 1740-1810, and an 1850s' Schoolhouse managed by the Monroe Township Historic Preservation Commission, John Katerba, Chairperson., Wendy Kennedy, Commissioner, made the arrangements. For more information, see page 5.

**To be excused call Don Peck  
732-738-5522 or Fred Mueller  
at 908-359-3391.**

**Representatives from Alliance sites  
Are welcomed and encouraged to  
attend.**

**YOUR LINK TO THE PUBLIC:** The Link is on a quarterly publication schedule. News of major upcoming events for possible placement in the newsletter may be mailed, emailed or faxed to the following address. Any questions, please contact: Donald J. Peck, Editor, The Clausen Company, P.O. Box 140, Fords, NJ

## RARITAN-MILLSTONE HERITAGE ALLIANCE

P.O. Box 5583 Somerset, NJ 08875-5583  
[www.raritanmillstone.org](http://www.raritanmillstone.org)

*An organization of individuals,  
organizations, and sites working to  
promote preservation and understanding of  
the rich, eventful, and cultural heritage of  
significant historical, educational, and cul-  
tural sites located in Central New Jersey*

### OFFICERS

President – Rev. Dr. Fred Mueller  
Vice President – George B. Dawson  
Secretary – Christine Retz  
Treasurers– John and Karen Keithler

### DIRECTORS

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**The Board of Directors** meets on the third or fourth Saturday of March, May, September and November at designated historic and museum member sites in the region.

**The Executive Committee** meets in January and June

## WHAT IS THE RARITAN-MILLSTONE HERITAGE ALLIANCE?

We are a group of individuals, organizations and more than 150 historic, environmental and cultural sites in the greater Raritan-Millstone watershed which covers more than 1,000 square miles in Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Somerset and Union counties, and some adjacent areas.

Our website [www.raritanmillstone.org](http://www.raritanmillstone.org) features our Guide to Historic Sites in Central New Jersey, our newsletter, The Link, and provides links to various important sites.

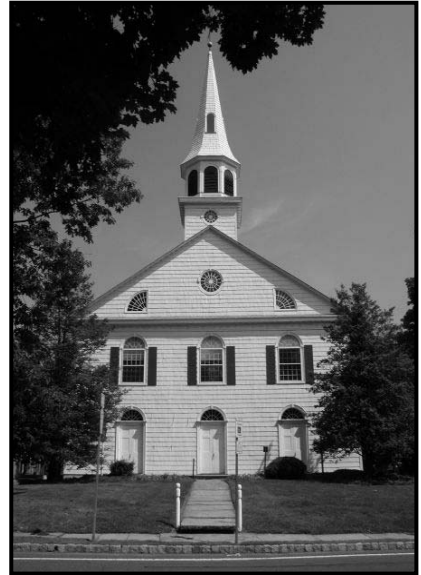
# HILLSBOROUGH REFORMED CHURCH

at Millstone

By Rev. Dr. Fred Mueller, Pastor

The Reformed Church of America is the oldest Protestant domination in the United States of America.

In Adrian Leiby's book, "The Early Dutch and Swedish Settlers of New Jersey," a list of the founding of Reformed churches speaks of places like Hackensack, Acquackanonk, New Brunswick, Six Mile Run, Readington and Neshanic. The last one mentioned, the baby if you will, is Millstone. Well, this young church is 250 years old this year. The church's charter is from the court of King George III, and may be one of the last charters granted in the colonial period. The Hillsborough Reformed Church at Millstone was founded in 1766, the same year as Rutgers University. Rutgers was first named Queens College after Queen Charlotte, Queen Consort of King George, III. The church has a rich history. It has played a prominent role in the birth of our country, the endeavors of New Brunswick Theological Seminary and the Reformed Church in America.



The church's first pastor was a German minister named Christian Foering. Foering was a fierce patriot raising a militia in Millstone and promoting the War for Independence. He so angered the British that they vandalized and severely damaged the church. The British soldiers stripped wood from the church with which to build their huts in a near-by encampment and for their campfires. Adding insult to injury, a well-aimed musket ball left the church's rooster weather vane with a hole! Rev. Foering was driven into hiding as a fugitive. During the war, Foering died of an illness that came upon him during the time of his exile. Foering's inclination to be a rebel seems to have come to him honestly. Foering was born in Hanover, Germany around 1736. His father had been a military leader who died in battle. His mother knew a similar fate awaited her son, so when he was seven years old, his mother strapped Christian to her back and skated across the frozen Rhine River and made passage to New York and the dream of a different fate for her son than a military career.

The church's pastor in the mid-to-late nineteenth century was the estimable Edward Tanjore Corwin, arguably the most respected historian of the reformed church in the nineteenth century and is considered an important source for central Jersey history. Corwin detailed the history of the Reformed Church in America, compiled the Digest of Synodical Legislation, and housed some of the first Asian students to attend Princeton University in the church's parsonage, still in use today. One of those students, Hikoichi Orita, returned to Japan to establish a modern secondary education system. Orita was instrumental in the establishment of the Kyoto Imperial University. A statue on the campus of Kyoto University honors him. Diaries of some of the Japanese students sponsored by Corwin record the kindness and generosity of the pastor at Millstone. The sermon Rev. Corwin preached the Sunday after President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated is still available in print. Corwin, like other Millstone pastors, taught at the seminary in New Brunswick. Corwin is also respected as a New Jersey historian.

The church successfully made the transition from a rural congregation to a suburban one after World War II. Like other Reformed churches in our region the church has a strong and vital ministry in the twenty-first century. The anniversary will be commemorated with a birthday celebration on August 28 at 9:30 AM and with numerous historical events and concerts through the year culminating in a grand celebration on May 7, 2017 at 4:00 PM.

## Monmouth Battlefield State Park (continued from page 1)

The park also includes an elaborate visitors center, opened in 2013 to supplant a smaller version, and the colonial farmhouse, a witness to the battle still standing after about 275 years.

The park is open during daylight hours throughout the year (with the exception of some holidays), and the visitors center itself 9 am to 4 pm. Friends of Monmouth Battlefield, a park support group runs a book and gift shop at the visitors center on 1 to 4 p.m. Sundays. The Friends also opens the Craig House 1 to 4 p.m. Sundays for visitors in April to early December, except during the re-enactment weekend.

Guided walking or driving tours and battle areas within the park and its vicinity are conducted by the Friends on the first Sundays of each month, at 1:30 p.m.

Tennent Church – the Presbyterian meeting house of colonial pastors John and William Tennent – is within the historic-place registration territory approved by the State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service for the park, but is under separate ownership.

The battle is regarded by historians to be a tactical draw, although the Americans held the battlefield, since the British were able to complete their wagon-train march to New York City with no loss of supplies.



A definitive book on the battle was published this spring by New Jersey historians Mark Edward Lender, a retired Kean University professor of history, and Garry Wheeler Stone, retired Monmouth State Park historian. Its authors hold the battle to be successful in establishing George Washington as commander-in-chief of the American army without further challenges.

Washington, in fact, brought the Army to New Brunswick and Piscataway after the battle on July 3-4, 1778, and conducted a *feu de joie* (“fire of joy”) salute maneuver along the Raritan River. The maneuver was a sort-of-military Declaration of Independence, declaring the Army to be now winning the war, after losing most of its battles for the first three years.

## THE ROYAL GARDEN CLUB OF PERTH AMBOY

By Lisa Nanton, President of Perth Amboy City Council, and President of the Royal Garden Club

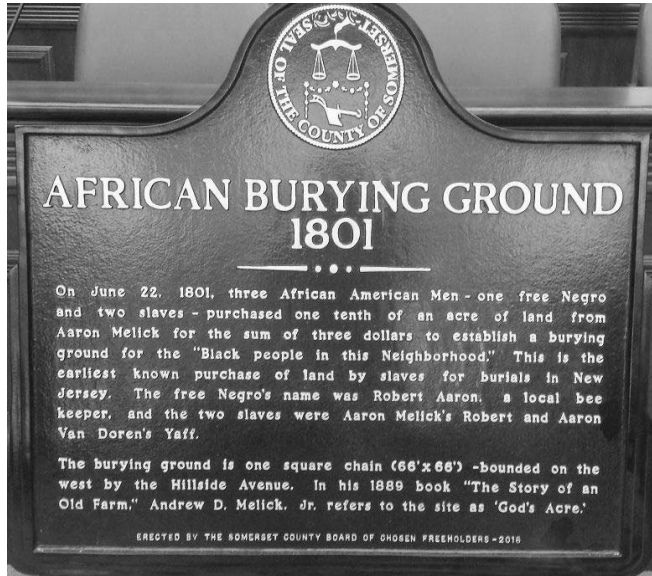


HUMMINGBIRD GARDEN GAZEBO ON SADOWSKI PARKWAY

The Royal Garden Club has received 93 awards to date from the state Garden Club of New Jersey for its gardens and events. Established in its by-laws are: the Home Gardeners Contest; Annual Beautification awards; Garden Tours; House and Garden Tours; Annual Yuletide decorating of the Royal Governor’s Mansion. City gardens include The Sunshine Gardens at the tennis courts, Olive Street Community Center, Bayview Park Bandstand, Arneson Square, Proprietary House Historic Gardens, 1683 Floral display on the slope of Bayview Park, Five Corners Butterfly Garden, Gazebo at the Waterfront, City Hall Market Square, Fragrance Garden at City Hall.

## AFRICAN BURYING GROUND 1801

By Wendy Kennedy, Commissioner, Bedminster Historic Preservation Commission



The Bedminster Township Committee, the township's Historic Commission, and the Somerset County Cultural and Heritage Commission on June 20, 2016 unveiled a marker commemorating the African American Burying Ground, located at 130 Hillside Avenue, Bedminster Township, NJ.

On June 22, 1801, three African American men – one free Negro and two slaves – purchased one-tenth of an acre of land from Aaron Mellick for the sum of three dollars to establish a burying ground for the “Black people in this Neighborhood.” This is the earliest known purchase of land by slaves for burials in New Jersey.

In earlier times, African-Americans burials were not permitted in church burying grounds or cemeteries. Instead, Slaves and Free Blacks were often buried in unmarked graves. Prior to the 1798 revision of the New Jersey slave code of 1714, which prohibited all Blacks from owning property, even freed blacks were unable to own land. This transfer was unusual because two of the men were slaves.

## THE DEY FARM, MONROE TOWNSHIP NJ



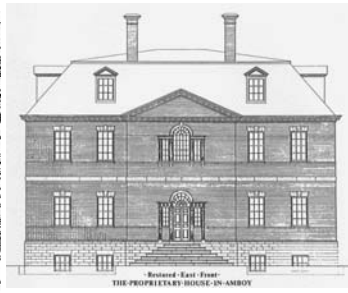
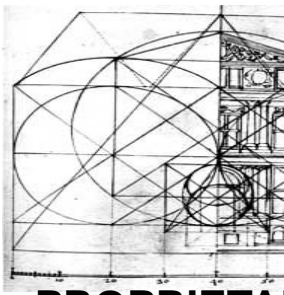
After years of planning and hard work, and after receiving a generous \$1 million grant from Middlesex County and local funds, the Historic Preservation Commission under the chairmanship of John Katerba was enabled to oversee the reconstruction of three buildings on the property including an original Monroe Township 1850's schoolhouse. The schoolhouse restoration employed a combination of reconstruction of original materials that were carefully dismantled, numbered and reassembled in addition to newer materials true to the period. A second large barn dismantled years ago has had its components numbered and is awaiting reconstruction.

Over the years current and former township residents have donated farm implements, school materials, household goods, thousands of photographs and other written memorabilia.

## MIDDLESEX COUNTY CULTURE AND HERITAGE GOES MOBILE

[WWW.CO.MIDDLESEX.NJ.US](http://WWW.CO.MIDDLESEX.NJ.US)

By texting “culture” to 56512 on your smartphone, users can access information on arts, history and cultural events, historic sites, podcasts, and so much more – updates on multicultural, visual arts, music, theatre, craft, history and dance programming presented by non-profit groups throughout 25 municipalities. The mobile service lets users explore local history without making a trip. The county's commitment to art, history and tradition begins with grant funding to more than 100 non-profit cultural organizations. It extends the County's partnership with the NJ department of State Council on the Arts and the State Historical Commission.



## PROPRIETARY HOUSE, THE ROYAL GOVERNOR'S MANSION

ANNOUNCES A SPECIAL EVENT **ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY GUIDED TOUR**

**SUNDAY, 18TH SEPT. 2016 at 2:00 PM**

Purchase your **tickets** in advance for a first-time journey through the centuries. Restoration architect & historian William S. Pavlovsky will guide you through this architectural treasure of the 18th & 19th centuries, listed in both the State & National Registers of Historic Places. In addition to museum rooms, the tour will include Proprietary House's exterior and historic indoor **spaces** never before open for **public viewing** ~ the Royal Governor's Bedroom, the Guestroom in which Benjamin Franklin slept and the 1809 wing's Grand Ballroom.

**SPACE IS LIMITED!!! TICKETS NOW ON SALE**

**ON A FIRST-COME FIRST-SERVED-BASIS**

**Admission: \$30 per Person \$25 for Members**

**TO PURCHASE TICKETS CONTACT ~ PROPRIETARYHOUSEASSOCIATION**

**Phone: (732)826-5527 E-mail: [info@theproprietaryhouse.org](mailto:info@theproprietaryhouse.org)**

**Address: 149 Kearny Avenue, Perth Amboy, NJ, 08861**

*All funds raised will benefit ongoing restoration and operation of Proprietary House's Museum.*

### THE OLD FRANKLIN SCHOOLHOUSE

By Tyreen A. Reuter



In 1902 the Old Franklin Schoolhouse had a close call. Now owned by the Borough Improvement league, when it was slightly less than 100 years old, some considered it obsolete. A "Metuchen Casino Company" had formed and was preparing to demolish it to make way for a gaming hall, with the possible reuse of the existing building as stables. Without a group of pesky preservationists who saw its beauty and use, it would have been lost. Today it is the closest thing the town has to a community and cultural center. Its support continues to grow as is its value as an historic resource representative of the town's past. It could have easily been lost in favor of shortsighted financial gain.

# WHO WAS DINA?

Submitted by Ann M. Suydam

Dina Van Bergh was an important woman in the history of New Brunswick. She came to New Brunswick from Amsterdam with her husband Dr. John Frelinghuysen, the pastor of First Reformed Church, who died shortly after her arrival in 1786. Her strength and spirituality attracted the attention of Dr. Jacob Hardenbergh who courted and later married her. After Hardenbergh's death, Dina continued to be an important spiritual leader in New Brunswick. Her resolve in times of difficulty and service to the community reminds First Reformed Church of its historic roots. Her namesake is an inspiration for the Dina's Dwellings project, which will provide homes for women who fight for a better life for themselves and their families.



In 1971, a man set fire to the sanctuary of the First Reformed Church, angry that the church was providing sanctuary to his partner who was a victim of abuse. The fire destroyed much of the historic sanctuary, including the altar and most of the historic stained glass windows. Over the past few years, the congregation has diminished in number. Though a still vibrant community, they no longer have the resources to maintain an historic building of the church's size. The fire's destruction and dwindling congregation numbers could be seen as signs of a church that is at the end of its days. However, they can also be the catalyst for many new opportunities.

Concerned congregation members and community leaders came up with a creative solution to address their problems in a way which could help solve a greater social issue, one which affected their own church. While some faith-based organizations support and fund affordable housing and adaptive reuse efforts, the Town Clock CDC, with Dina's Dwellings will be the first to integrate affordable housing into a sanctuary space. Though the church was originally destroyed for providing sanctuary for a victim of abuse, its futile rebuilding will ensure that the space is used to permanently provide sanctuary for these victims.

# RARITAN MILLSTONE HERITAGE ALLIANCE

## Membership Contribution

- Membership Fees
- Individual \$35
  - Site \$35
  - Household \$50

- Additional Support Levels
- Benefactor \$1,000
  - Patron \$ 500
  - Sponsor \$ 250
  - Donor \$ 100

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form with your check

To: Raritan Millstone Heritage Alliance  
PO Box 5583  
Somerset, NJ 08875-5583

Thank you!  
Visit our website: [raritanmillstone.org](http://raritanmillstone.org)

*The Raritan-Millstone Heritage Alliance consists of committed individuals and organizations representing sites within the region of Raritan and Millstone systems. In an area that has continually contributed to the strength of the United States, we seek through our programs to promote, protect and preserve an understanding of our rich historical, cultural and educational heritage as we work to be a model for current and future generations by promoting the rich heritage of our American society.*



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