



# The Link

*joining the sites along the rivers*

Volume 9, Issue 3

**The Raritan-Millstone Heritage Alliance**

Winter 2008



## THE SUNDAY SERIES LECTURE & RECEPTION

Conference Room, NASSAU PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 61 Nassau Street, Princeton, NJ, Sunday, February 17, 2008 at 3 pm. Reservations are not required. Suggested Donation is \$10.00 to benefit the **GUIDE BOOK**. Area parking— Please arrive early. Celebrating the 225th Anniversary of the Treaty of Paris ending the American Revolutionary War and the final meetings of the Continental Congress at Nassau Hall with General George Washington. Come and celebrate Princeton with us.

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# CELEBRATE PRINCETON

**1783 Princeton Borough De facto Capital of the United States of America**

By: Donald Johnstone Peck

In the spring of 1783, the Continental Congress, struggling with problems of war debts, was driven from Philadelphia by the threats of soldiers mutinous for not receiving their back pay, rations, or sufficient clothing. On June 26, 1783, Continental Congress made Princeton the de facto capital of the new nation until it adjourned in early November.

As peace negotiations dragged on into 1783, the army, quartered at Newburgh on the Hudson River, had grown restive. With Princeton full of marauders, spies, and officials hanging about, Congress summoned George Washington from his Newburgh, New York headquarters on August 12. As there was no residence large enough to accommodate Washington in Princeton, Rockingham became Washington's last wartime headquarters from August 23 to November 10, 1783.

During this time Congress met in the Library Room of Nassau Hall in Princeton. Sessions were presided over by Elias Boudinot, one of New Jersey's most distinguished statesmen. It was during this time that Washington thanked Congress in person for his conduct in the war. The highlight of this 1783 session was the ten-week visit of General Washington, who consulted with Congress on the final arrangements for the demobilization of the army.

Elias Boudinot IV, President of the Continental Congress, the brother of Annis Boudinot Stockton, resided with his sister at historic Morven during the Princeton session. Annis Stockton was the widow of Judge Richard Stockton III, signer of the Declaration of Independence and an ardent patriot, poet and friend of George Washington. Annis Stockton's poem "Addressed to General George Washington, in 1777, after the Battles of Trenton and Princeton" invokes a tone of mythic prophecy still uncommon in military tributes today.

Nassau Hall, at the College of New Jersey, the name by which it was known for 150 years, (it later became Princeton University) was also where the New Jersey legislators had convened on August 30, 1776 to choose a chief executive, William Livingston. Chartered in 1746, Princeton University was the fourth oldest institution of higher education in British North America and the oldest in New Jersey.

When Sir William Howe's forces under Major General Lord Charles Cornwallis arrived in Princeton, December 7, 1776, soldiers stripped the pews and galleries of the Nassau Presbyterian Church for firewood, which they burned in the sanctuary. Nassau Presbyterian Church as well as Nassau Hall, after the Battle of Princeton, January 3, 1777, served as barracks and hospital at different times for both the Continental and British troops.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Alliance Sites are encouraged  
To send their Representative

**MARCH 20, 2008 From 1:30-3:00 pm**

**METLAR/BODINE HOUSE MUSEUM**

**1281 River Road, Piscataway, NJ**

**Phone 732-463-8363**

*(Parking lot for cars on Logan lane.*

*Access to the museum is from*

*River Road via Hillcrest Drive.)*

The Metlar/Bodine House Museum, circa 1728 with two 19<sup>th</sup> century additions, functions as Piscataway Township's historical and cultural museum. A rare survivor from "Raritan landing," a colonial river port, it has also survived a devastating fire in 2003. Now remarkably restored, it is again available to the public. The RMHA program will include a progress report of the remarkable fundraising and restoration that has occurred since 2003 and a tour of this house museum. Visit [www.metlarbodine.org](http://www.metlarbodine.org)

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**THE ANNUAL MEETING**

**Thursday, April 17, 2008**

**Between 1 and 4 pm**

**WILLIE'S TAVERNE**

**Route 202 and Hillside Avenue**

**Bedminster, NJ / Phone 908-234-1596**

In the tradition and spirit of hospitality the Annual Meeting will be preceded by a luncheon. The main order of business will be the election of new directors. The guest speaker will be the distinguished Executive Director of the **Crossroads of the American Revolution**, Princeton, NJ, Catherine R. Litvack. All proceeds benefit the **GUIDE BOOK**.

**Raritan-Millstone Heritage  
Alliance**

P. O. Box 5583

Somerset, N.J. 08875-5583

*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 cultural sites  
located in Central New Jersey*

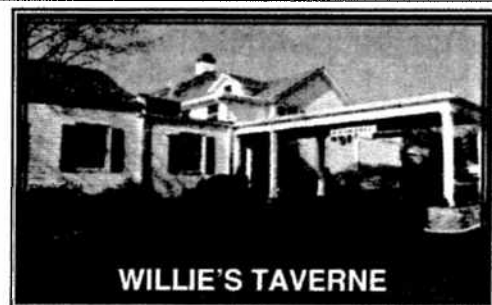
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The Board of Directors meets the third Thursday of March,  
May, September, October and November at  
Designated historic and museum  
member sites in the region.



**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 address below. Any questions, please contact: Donald J. Peck, Editor, The Clausen Company, P. O. Box 140, Fords, NJ 08863 or phone 732-738-1165, fax 732-738-1618, or E-mail [clausenco@aol.com](mailto:clausenco@aol.com).

Nassau Hall, built in 1756, the large stone building of Princeton's college, was named at the request of Royal Governor Jonathan Belcher in memory of King William III, Prince of Orange-Nassau. The king was from Nassau, a former duchy in Western Germany, now included in Hesse. Nassau Hall was the scene in the Battle of Princeton of the last stand of some 200 British garrisoned there until an artillery battery led by young Captain Alexander Hamilton dislodged them. A cannonball fired by Hamilton neatly decapitated the painting of King George II, convincing the Redcoats inside to surrender.



Elected to the Continental Congress in 1776, the Reverend John Witherspoon, along with Richard Stockton of the Princeton Presbyterian congregation, signed the Declaration of Independence. Witherspoon served as President of the College of New Jersey and as the Pastor of the Nassau Presbyterian Church for a quarter of a century.

Unquestionably the leading Presbyterian statesman in America in the eighteenth century, Witherspoon gave leadership to the movement for the organization of the national Presbyterian Church. But the greatest impact of his leadership of the patriot cause was vividly evidenced by the testimony of John Adams, a visitor to Morven on August 24, 1774, who described Witherspoon as "high a Son of Liberty as any man in America." His strong

advocacy of civil and religious liberty provided the intellectual foundation for his support of American independence.

John Adams could vividly describe the Monday of July 1, 1776, at the Pennsylvania State House, about four o'clock in the afternoon. While he was speaking, the door of the hallway flung open and three men entered, booted, spurred, rain dripping from their coats. It was the radical members from Jersey, come to vote for independence.

Judge Richard Stockton, speaking for New Jersey, asked to hear the affirmative argument before the vote should be taken in Committee of the whole. John Adams got up, went patiently through the argument again as briefly as he could. The opposition, including Alsop of New York, then brought forth two more speakers, both vehement and abusive.

President Witherspoon stepped boldly forward, his coat still streaked with rain and his clergyman's bib lying wilted against his chest. He then said, "The distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts remarked as we came in that the colonies are ripe for independence. I would like to add that some colonies (looking pointedly at Alsop) are rotten for the want of it!"

The deliberate, agonizing debate that preceded the decision of the thirteen colonies to declare their independence probably typified the genuine feeling of most people more than the rhetoric of John Witherspoon or Patrick Henry. It was as if all the passionate oratory of Virginia and all the overt rebellion of the New Englanders had merged in the persons of Stockton and Witherspoon.

Imagine how Witherspoon and the Princeton patriots felt in 1781, as they watched General Washington and his French ally, the Comte de Rochambeau, lead a force of 7,000 American and French soldiers through Princeton southward to Yorktown, Virginia to trap the British army of Lord Cornwallis on the Yorktown peninsula. Cornwallis would surrender his army of some 7,000 soldiers and some 900 seamen during a ceremony of capitulation, October 19, 1781, with their bands playing "The World Turned Upside Down." British Prime Minister, Lord North, on hearing the news November 25, 1781, would exclaim, "Oh God! It's all over."

The war continued for some more months but by March 1782, a new ministry in England was ready to yield to American demands. The provisional draft of a peace treaty was signed at Paris on November 30, 1782. However it was not until September 3, 1783 that the final documents, the Treaty of Paris, were signed freeing the thirteen states from the bonds of Great Britain.

On November 1, 1783 the news reached Princeton that the war for independence had finally been won. On November 2, General Henry Knox read Washington's "Farewell Orders" to the army, written at Rockingham, to the troops at Newburgh, New York. The last British troops finally left American soil on November 25, 1783, seven years and five days after the British invaded New Jersey on November 20, 1776. New Jersey church bells rang out, calling congregations together in thanksgiving. The entire nation rejoiced that the United States of America had taken its rightful place among the nations of the world.

The pride of his country and the terror of Great Britain, it was George Washington alone who could pull together both the diversity and the vastness of the new nation. He had kept the military obedient to him and Congress. He had helped bring about a transformation of the American government from the Articles of Confederation to the United States Constitution. His leadership and character still have the power to inspire

## **FILL 'ER UP with unleaded And visit Central New Jersey**

At the November 15, 2007 meeting of the Board of Directors the featured speaker was Christopher J. Phelan, President of the Middlesex Regional Chamber of Commerce. Phelan announced that the MCRCC has launched the area's first Convention & Visitors Bureau to serve as the front door to Central New Jersey for visitors and residents to discover and use regional attractions, resources and amenities.

A revolutionary idea, the need to tell the important role that Central New Jersey played in the American Revolution, Phelan described the Chamber's vision to establish a Crossroad of the American Revolution Center. This new facility would serve as a starting access point to the other Revolutionary War Sites of the new federally designated Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area and display an extensive collection of Revolutionary period artifacts in Central New Jersey. The center has the potential to bring in hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. The potential economic impact of a nationally significant facility would be to literally cash in on history.

The New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism recently launched its latest promotional campaign designated to bring tourism to the state. The Middlesex County Regional Chamber of Commerce Convention and Visitors Bureau is working with the state division to promote tourism locally.

The New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism Web site – [www.visitnj.org](http://www.visitnj.org) - is a source of information for planning day trips in and around New Jersey. The site has a link, "Where to Go" (Jersey Shore, casinos, outdoor activities, arts and culture, historical attractions, shopping, sports venues) and "101 Fun Things to Do." There is also a link to the [www.gocentraljersey.com](http://www.gocentraljersey.com) web site on the home page of the [www.visitnj.org](http://www.visitnj.org) site.

## **IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE A WORLD WITHOUT 'TREES'**

So said Elias Holtzman in his feature article in the Thursday, November 29, 2007 issue of *The Home News Tribune*. The large attendance of RMHA officers, directors, members and guests at the Sunday Series Luncheon/Lecture Program "FOR THE KILMERS" couldn't have agreed more. This event was held November 18 in the Livingston Ballroom of the Heldrich Hotel and Conference Center in New Brunswick.

Speakers included John Covell, author of *Joyce Kilmer: A Literary Biography*, George Dawson, RMHA Director and New Brunswick City Historian, and distinguished Master of Ceremonies, Dr. Harvey J. Brudner, RMHA Director, Curator of the Joyce Kilmer House, 17 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, New Brunswick and Head of the Joyce Kilmer Centennial Commission. The entire program was video taped and will be available to the public.

Noted guests included Hugh Kilmer, Joyce Kilmer's grandson, and his wife, Beth Kilmer. The Reverend Robert L. Councilman of Trinity Church, Woodbridge, gave the invocation. Program Committee members responsible for this pace setting event included John Allen, Vice Chair, Jan ten Broeke, Dr. Harvey J. Brudner, George Dawson, Marie DeFabritis, Kathleen M. DePow, Elyce M. Jennings, Susan C. Keating, William F. Lynch, Donald J. Peck, Chair and Ann M. Suydam.

Close to award-winning restaurants, several art galleries including the Rutgers Zimmerli Art Museum, The Heldrich is a \$120 – million New Brunswick-based 248-guestroom hotel that offers 25,000 square feet of meeting space. The nearby renown State Theatre and George Street playhouse deliver a very metropolitan New York-theatre district feel to The Heldrich.



## WE REMEMBER BETTY SCOTT (1930-2006)

Inspired by her father who worked in the Broadway theater as a property manager, and who worked with Antoinette Perry for whom the "Tony" Award was named, Betty's life ambition was to become an actress. Although accepted into the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in 1948, Betty met and married her first husband and later that year began a family in New Jersey.

As a young widow, Betty then married William Scott on New Year's Eve, 1960-61 and had many long and happy years together. Having an avid interest in travel and history, Betty and Bill (between 1976 to 1981) traveled to all 50 states in the USA.

Betty's interest in local history was broadened by her acquaintance as an eye patient of Joseph Henry Kler, M.D., F.A.C.S. humanitarian, community leader, philanthropist and local historian. Dr. Kler introduced Betty to East Jersey Olde Towne, Inc., originally a non-profit organization that he founded in 1974. It was created to give a permanent home to the Indian Queen Tavern in New Brunswick, which Dr. Kler worked to save from destruction in 1971. It would become the first piece in a mosaic that would preserve the visual image of New Jersey culture today known as East Jersey Olde Towne, in Johnson Park, Piscataway.

At the East Jersey Olde Towne village, Dr. Kler involved Betty in running the gift shop and arranging tours. Here she researched and wrote an early Guide Book for the historic structures of the village, copies of which she donated and sold in the gift shop to benefit the village. Betty continued to work here until the subsequent owner, the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission, closed the village in 1991 for renovations.

Betty always enjoyed reading historical fiction. However, her focus changed to researching and writing local history. This became part of Betty's passion in life and she acquired an extensive library of research material for the many articles she continued to write on a regular basis. Betty gave her energies not only to the Raritan-Millstone Heritage Alliance, but also to the Meadows Foundation, the Metlar/Bodine House Museum and the Piscataway Historic & Heritage Society.

"Betty gave her energies not only to the Raritan-Millstone Heritage Alliance, but also to the Meadows Foundation, the Metlar/Bodine House Museum and the Piscataway Historic & Heritage Society."

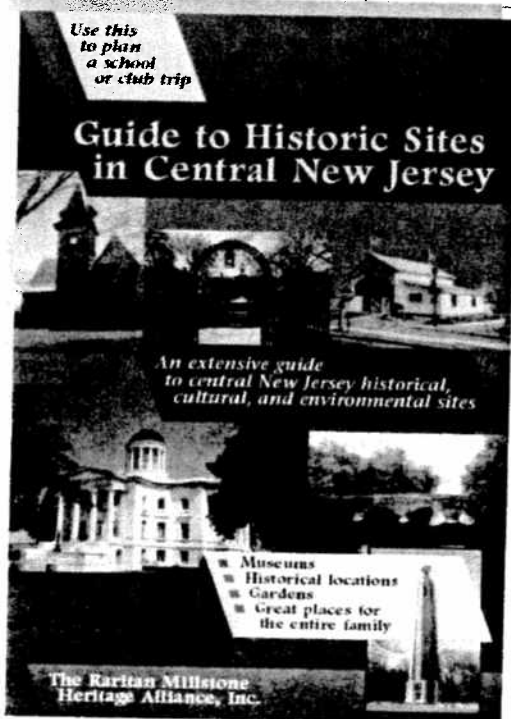
The Piscataway Historical and Heritage Society has produced and distributed "*Historic Piscataway it Happened Here*", a new 50 page booklet edited by Constance M. O'Grady, Society President & RMHA Secretary.

## IRISH TENORS CHRISTMAS SHOW

An impressive number of Alliance members and guests joined together to attend the RMHA first annual year-end Gala to benefit the work of publishing the **GUIDE BOOK TO HISTORIC SITES IN CENTRAL NEW JERSEY**, Sunday, December 9, 2007 at the State Theatre, New Brunswick.

Ireland's most famous singing trio, "The Irish Tenors," Anthony Kearns, Finbar Wright and Karl Scully, presented a show filled with songs synonymous with Ireland and old world Christmas tradition, songs which lent an aura of inspiration and beauty to compliment the holiday season. The Irish Tenors Christmas Show has proven to be the most popular entertainment event of the season. Our new Director, William F. Lynch, chaired this year's event.

As a foundation of cultural life in New Brunswick, the State Theatre stands as a testament of excellence in programming that is indicative of the institutions that call New Brunswick home. It is a premier nonprofit venue for the performing arts and entertainment. This 1921 vaudeville proscenium theater found new life when a group of visionary leaders restored it to health between 1986 and 1988. Today it serves more than 300,000 patrons annually. For more information telephone 732-246-SHOW.



## THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

In 2008 the City of Perth Amboy will be celebrating the 325<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its founding in 1683. Among the many lost treasures of this old city is the now invisible Raritan Bay Union, a mid-nineteenth century utopian cooperative community that once stood on 225 acres. Cooperative communities, which developed in the nineteenth century in America and elsewhere, sought to reform among themselves the social order. The Raritan Bay Union drew many famous antebellum abolitionists, artists and intellectuals like Henry David Thoreau, William Cullen Bryant, Horace Greeley, Louis Comfort Tiffany, Ralph Waldo Emerson as well as many others.

From 1861-1876, the Raritan Bay Union became an art center and residence of George Inness, one of America's leading painters. The Inness House, a stone house on the grounds, was destroyed only in the late twentieth century. A great loss, it was the last remaining vestige of this cultural utopia. The Union was reminiscent of other well-known utopias such as Ripley's "Brook Farm" and Alcott's "Fruitlands" in New England and the North American Phalanx in Colts Neck, New Jersey.

It was Ralph Waldo Emerson who said, "What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us." As we begin a new year, I submit it would be helpful for us to consider Emerson's wisdom carefully.

When we are not worrying about the future, we may fall into regrets about the past. Most of us have lived long enough to know that each day brings its own surprises. Being too cautious, we may fail to see the possibilities. Either way, we are distracted from our only opportunity to make a real difference, to give of ourselves to a worthwhile cause. Images cost us nothing and are so enriching, images of what might be. So in this New Year, let us live with hope and dream of the possibilities; let us look for ways to cultivate a generous spirit within us.

The dream of the Raritan-Millstone Heritage Alliance is to serve as a model for other areas of the United States. Have you felt there is little you can do to promote, protect and preserve our historic and cultural sites or to raise awareness of the vast resources we have to educate the public, and especially our young people, about the key role Central New Jersey has played in continually contributing to the strength of the United States?

For some, visiting far away places along the great Yangtze, Nile or Amazon Rivers is exciting. But for those who don't have far to go, a world of fascinating museums, historic sites, cultural and educational institutions await them along the Raritan and Millstone Rivers. When you contribute support to the RMHA and its work of publishing the **GUIDE BOOK** through your membership, attendance at our various educational site-supporting programs, the Annual Appeal, or serving on a committee, **you are** making a real difference.

### GARDEN STATE HARVEST:

## NEW JERSEY'S AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE EXHIBITION OPENING RECEPTION

*Wednesday, February 13, 2008 \* 5:00 pm*

*Remigio U. Pane Room, First Floor*

*ARCHIBALD S. ALEXANDER LIBRARY*

*College Avenue Campus*

### **The exhibition will run from February 13 – April 30, 2008**

New Jersey's dynamic agricultural heritage from pre-colonial times to the present will be highlighted in this exhibition. The display will feature diaries, letters, journals, broadsides, trade catalogs, photographs and museum objects illustrating agriculture's broad impact on our state's history and culture. The guest speaker will be Charles Hampton Harrison, author of *Tending the Garden State: Preserving New Jersey's Farming Legacy* (Rivergate Books, 2006).

This exhibit is organized and curated by Special Collections and University Archives of the Rutgers University Libraries. To RSVP, call 732/932-7505, or email: [events@rutgers.edu](mailto:events@rutgers.edu), before February 7<sup>th</sup>.

## INDIVIDUAL 2006-2007 RARITAN-MILLSTONE HERITAGE ALLIANCE MEMBERS

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