



Walking In George Washington's Footsteps

Rolling Hills has a new historical patch designed to teach the area's deep involvement in the revolutionary war. Did you know that more battles happened in New Jersey than any other state? We are concentrating on a simple, easily driven visiting tour of Somerset County and Hunterdon County. This will involve a circular tour of historic sites that were involved in aspects of the Revolutionary War. Some sites George Washington stayed at or visited during the war, some sites his officers used and some sites the inhabitants of the houses were great patriots and assisted our troops. It is important to realize some of these sites can only be viewed from outside as they are still private residences, however there are many sites that have curates and specific times where you can visit and be told the importance they played to the revolution.

We live in an area of rich patriotic history and it is important to teach everyone this aspect of where they live. They may or may not learn about these places in school, but may enjoy understanding how important a historic area they live in. During the six years of conflict from Lexington in 1775 to the surrender by British troops at Yorktown in 1781, there were more clashes between opposing forces in New Jersey (296 engagements) than in any other colony. George Washington was in and out of New Jersey from 1776 through 1783 when he wrote his farewell address to his troops at Rockingham in Franklin Township.

** Most of these sites charge no fee for admission, but the troop should make a donation towards the sites' upkeep.

Our tour begins...

Wallace House - 38 Washington Place; Somerville

Constructed in 1777 by John Wallace, a successful Philadelphia merchant, the house was leased by George Washington from December, 1778 to June, 1779 as housing for himself and Martha Washington. He used it as his headquarters while the Continental Army occupied the Middlebrook Encampment. It is one of the largest homes constructed during the revolution in New Jersey. Visitors to the house included the Marquis de Lafayette, Baron von Steuben, Alexander Hamilton and Benedict Arnold.

Guided tours are available Wednesday – Saturday, 10 a.m. – noon & 1 – p.m., Sunday 1 – 4 p.m. Reservations are required for groups of 10 or more, please call 908-725-1015. Admission is free.

Old Dutch Parsonage - 65 Washington Place; Somerville

Constructed in 1751 by John Frelinghuysen who came from Amsterdam to serve as reverend to three congregations of the Dutch Reformed Church of the upper Raritan Valley. It was the birthplace and home of General Frelinghuysen, a member of George Washington's staff.

Guided tours are available Wednesday – Saturday, 10 a.m. – noon & 1 – 4 p.m., Sunday 1 – 4 p.m. Reservations are required for groups of 10 or more, please call 908-725-1015. Admission is free.

Van Veghten House - 9 Van Veghten Road (off Finderne Ave); Bridgewater

Built in 1715 by the Van Veghten family, it was offered to the Continental Army for its use as headquarters for Quartermaster Nathaniel Greene while the army occupied the Middlebrook Encampment from 1778 – 1779. An entire division of American troops was also quartered on the grounds during the second Middlebrook Encampment. The entire family was known as patriots supporting the war effort. George Washington danced at a party given by Kitty Greene, mistress of the house. Open for tours the second Saturday of every month from 12 noon – 4 p.m. Call for appointment – 908-218-1281.

Van Horne House – Main Street, Bridgewater (across from the Commerce Bank Ballpark)

This house was built in the mid 1700s by Phillip Van Horne, a New York merchant and colonel of the colonial militia. It was the headquarters of Lord Stirling during the second Middlebrook Encampment and hosted many including Generals Lincoln, Stirling, Lee and Cornwallis. While General Lincoln was staying in the house, the British and Hessian troops advanced on the Colonial Army on April 14, 1777 during the Battle of Bound Brook. Open Saturday 10 a.m. – 12 noon and Sunday 12 noon – 2 p.m., please call for an appointment 732-356-8856.

The Abraham Staats House – Barber Blvd, South Bound Brook

The home on the right half of the current structure is known as the Abraham Staats house. According to the British Abraham Staats was a spy for the patriots although this is still legend. The lands surrounding the house were used for the Middlebrook Encampments. In 1779, Baron Von Steuben trained nearly 10,000 soldiers at the second Middlebrook Encampment. During this time, he was quartered at the Staats house where he entertained various dignitaries. In May, he reviewed 8 regiments of his troops in honor of George Washington and a visiting French minister. Open by appointment only, but definitely arrangements can be made. Please call curate at: 732-469-5836.

Franklin Inn – 2371 Amwell Road, East Millstone

The Franklin Inn, a former tavern was constructed in 1734 on the stagecoach route from New York to Philadelphia, served as headquarters for British Generals Howe and Cornwallis for 5 days in June 1777. The building was named for the great Patriot Benjamin Franklin and now houses the Blackwells Mills Canal House Association library and serves as a used bookstore. Please call at 732-873-2958

Millstone Area –

Millstone was founded at the junctions of the roads between Princeton and Morristown, and New Brunswick and present-day Lambertville. In 1738, the first Somerset County courthouse and jail located in Franklin Park, was burned to the ground. It was then moved to Millstone. This made the area a focal point for important historic events. Howe and Cornwallis used the local roads for their march on Philadelphia in June 1777. Howe had the British Army encamp here to try and draw Washington down from his secure position at Middlebrook. Following the Battle of Princeton, six months later the Continental Army encamped overnight on its way to Pluckemin. General Washington stayed at the Van Doren house. The French Army encamped here on its march to Yorktown in 1781 and again after their victorious battle on its way back.

Old Millstone Forge (Blacksmith Shop) – North River Road, Millstone

Known as the longest operating blacksmith shop in America, the forge was constructed in 1693. It served as an active blacksmith shop until 1959. Revolutionary officers brought their horses to this blacksmith shop to have horses' shoes put on. The shop is open to the public as a museum featuring smithing demonstrations and the history of blacksmithing. Open Sundays 1:30 p.m. – 4 p.m. April to June & October to November. Please call first – 732-873-2803.

Neshanic Dutch Reformed Church – Amwell Road (CR 514) and CR 567; Neshanic Station

In 1752 the congregation was started and this structure was completed in 1772 and was built out of local Sourland Mountain stone. It is the oldest continuously used church in the state. It is the only Somerset County public building that was not destroyed or burned by the British. The Somerset Militia met and formed here in the church yard in May 1775 to serve George Washington for three years. The Rev. Christiaan F. Foering scoured his parsonage for food to feed Washington's troops during their encampment in the area and preached a resoundingly patriotic sermon which led to the formation of this congregation's militia.

Gen. John Frelinghuysen House/Raritan Library – 54 East Somerset St., Raritan

Constructed in 1750, this is the homestead of one of the branches of the Frelinghuysen family. General John Frelinghuysen was a member of George Washington's staff. This building now houses the Raritan Library. Open Monday & Thursday 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.; Tuesday & Wednesday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Friday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. (closed Saturdays in July & August) Please call 908-725-0413

Allen's Tavern/Jacob Vosseller House – 664 Foothill Road & Allen Road, Bridgewater

The middle portion of this house was built in 1763 and was later enlarged on both ends. It still has its original clapboards and is one of the county's best-preserved buildings. In all likelihood George Washington may have shopped at the Tavern when it was also a general store. **This is a private residence and can only be viewed from outside, although it is well worth the look.**

Jacobus Van Der Veer – Knox House – west side of Route 202/206 North; Pluckemin (area of Bedminster)

This house was the headquarters of Gen. Henry Knox, George Washington's chief of artillery, known as the Continental army's big-gun expert. His job was to train 1600 men in the use of artillery and military tactics. Knox was a great administrator and became the country's first secretary of war after the revolution was won. The housing complex known as The Hills is where the Artillery Park was that was used for his training grounds. **At this time this house is being restored and will be opened as a museum housing artifacts from Artillery Park.**

Washington Route Markers – Route 202/206; Pluckemin

There are 2 route markers in Pluckemin on the route George Washington took to Morristown following the Battle of Princeton. The first is at the intersection of Route 202/206 and Washington Valley Road. The marker is on a boulder in front of the A&P parking lot. The second marker is just north on Route 202/206 and stands near the Fenner House, where George Washington wrote to Congress describing his victories at Princeton and Trenton in January 1777.

Liberty Pole Marker – Liberty Corner Road; Liberty Corners

The town's center is marked by a green with a boulder with a bronze plaque commemorating the site of the original "liberty pole" from which the village is named. The town's patriots raised the original pole. The French army camped nearby on its way to Yorktown in 1781.

Vealtown Tavern/Old Bernardsville Library – 2 Morristown Road (Route 202); Bernardsville

This building is also known as the John Parker Tavern and was built in the 1700s. Captain John Parker of the 1st Battalion of Somerset County owned the tavern and it was a favorite spot of Continental army officers. There is a stone tablet in front of the library commemorating the route Washington took to Morristown following the battles at Trenton and Princeton in January 1777. Please call 908-766-0118.

Kirsch-Ford House –1 Reinman Road; Warren

Built in the early 1700s, the white house on the left side is known as the Kirsch-Ford house. It is a fine example of a colonial residence with narrow staircases, a massive fireplace, and a working "beehive" oven. This house appears on Washington's army's maps. It can be visited by appointment, 2nd Sunday of the month between March – November, 2 – 5 p.m. Call 908-753-5875

Washington Valley Crossroads – intersection of Mt. Bethel & Washington Valley Roads

The 2 flags at the intersection of these roads measure 30 x 60 feet and commemorate the passage of Washington's troops during the Revolutionary War. Acting on marching orders to reinforce General Maxwell's troops they held the line not allowing the British under Cornwallis to enter the Watchung Mountains from the east.

Washington Rock State Park – Washington Avenue, Greenbrook

High up on the first ridge of the Watchung Mountains is Washington Rock, where George Washington spied on the British troops in New Brunswick especially during the first encampment at Middlebrook. The park has panoramic views and Washington could see to New Brunswick because there wasn't as many trees then since people used more trees to build their houses and as fuel for cooking and keeping warm. In 1912, the Daughters of the American Revolution placed a fieldstone monument at the lookout site with the words "Lest We Forget". Open dusk to dawn, all year.

Washington Campgrounds/Middlebrook Encampment – Middlebrook Ave; Bridgewater

During the first encampment at Middlebrook, Washington billeted 8,000 troops from May 28, 1777 to June 2, 1777 as a tactical maneuver against General Howe's forces moving from New Brunswick through to the Delaware River. The second encampment of Middlebrook of several thousand men lasted from December 1778 until June 1779. This site was used due to its strategic location to observe British troop movement. When Congress officially adopted the Stars and Stripes as our national flag on June 14, 1777, Washington was here at Middlebrook. Although there is no exact record of the first time the 13 star flag designed by Betsy Ross was flown, it is assumed it was delivered to Washington at Middlebrook and raised there. Every July 4th, the Declaration of Independence is read at Middlebrook along with a flag raising ceremony.

Washington's Route Marker – East Main St, Somerville

A large boulder holding a metal route marker sits on the corner of the Somerset Courthouse green opposite Main Street and Warren Street in downtown Somerville. Another boulder marker is at the corner of Main Street and Hamilton Street.

Tunison's Tavern/Hotel Somerset – corner of East Main St. & Grove St; Somerville

There has been a tavern on this site since 1771. Washington billeted some of his officers in the tavern while he was occupying the Wallace during the winter of 1778 – 1779. When George Washington first met the innkeeper, they raised a glass and toasted "to victory". **This site is still an operating tavern and should be viewed as a private establishment.**

Our tour of Somerset County ends here... but there are still sites which have not yet been restored and are not yet ready for the public to come to see. One is Rockingham in Rocky Hill.

Rockingham – 84 Laurel Ave. (Route 603); Kingston

Built in 1710, the house was the headquarters of George Washington in 1783 while he attended the Continental Congress when it met in Princeton, just prior to the signing of the peace treaty with Great Britain to end the Revolutionary War. He wrote his "Farewell Orders to the Armies of the United States" from this house. His wife and staff accompanied him, along with his troops, who camped out on the lawn. The building is not in its original location since it has been moved three times to save it from destruction. It is presently being restored to the way it was when George and Martha Washington were its residents. **It is not yet open to the public but may be ready for tours as early as late Fall 2003.** Call 609-921-8835 for further information.

In Hunterdon County we visit these sites...

Holcombe – Jimison Farmstead - 260 North Main Street (Route 29); Lambertville

Washington stayed here on two occasions from July 28 to August 1, 1776 and on June 21 – 22, 1778 as his troops were crossing into New Jersey from Pennsylvania in the days before the Battle of Monmouth. The house was owned by Richard and Mary Holcombe at the time. **This is a private residence, please call for an appointment.** Open Sundays, 1 to 4 PM from the first weekend in May through the end of October. Please call - 908-782-6653.

Coryell's Ferry Sites – End of Ferry Street and the vicinity of Coryell Street and Lambert Lane, Lambertville

There were two spots on each side of the Delaware River for ferry landings and departures. Coryell's Ferry was used four times by the Continental Army and Washington considered it a base camp for his Mid-Atlantic campaigns. Three skirmishes occurred here: on December 9, 1776, Washington completed his retreat across New Jersey; on February 28, 1778, the British stopped American suppliers from bringing supplies and cattle into Pennsylvania to Washington's troops; and on April 4, 1778, shots were exchanged across the river between the sides. During the Revolutionary War, Coryell's Ferry served as an outpost for Washington's troops and the Continental Army camped out in the nearby orchard at the corner of Bridge and Union Streets before the Battle of Monmouth.

Washington's Route Marker – Village Road (off Old York Road) and Mt. Airy – Harbourton Road; West Amwell Township Between Lambertville and Ringoes is the small village of Mount Airy. A historical marker points out the way the Continental Army passed through in June 1778 on its way to the Battle of Monmouth.

Ringo's Tavern – 1084 Old York Road; Ringoes

The tavern of John Ringo was a busy place in colonial times. It was a natural stopping place on the road between Philadelphia and New York and about 4 miles from Coryell's Ferry. As early as 1766, the tavern was a meeting place for the Sons of Liberty, a secret faction who wanted to rid the colonies of the British. **The house is a private residence now and has a historical marker in the front.**

The Landis House – 1064 Old York Road; Ringoes

A historical marker outside this stone house says the Marquis de Lafayette was treated there by Dr. Gerson Craven. Not far from the house on December 14, 1776, a British soldier was killed in a skirmish. **This is a private residence.**

Fleming Castle – 5 Bonnell Street; Flemington

Samuel Fleming built this colonial building in 1756. It was a tavern, home and stagecoach stop. The Castle was visited by George Washington and other revolutionary heroes. This building is maintained by a chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution who give tours by appointment. Please call 908-735-8557

Taylor's Mill – Corner of Rockaway Road and Taylor's Mill Road; Pottersville

In 1760 the mill and the miller's house were built by Colonel John Taylor, commanding officer of the 4th Hunterdon militia. Grain for the use of the Continental Army was ground in this little mill. This site is scheduled for restoration by the Museums of Hunterdon County organization.

Solitude House & Union Forge– 7 River Road; High Bridge

The house was built in 1725 by William Allen and Joseph Turner. Although Allen and Turner held allegiance to the English, Robert Taylor, bookkeeper and superintendent, was an ardent patriot. During the Revolutionary War, the foundry cast cannonballs for the Continental Army. In the original portion of the homestead known as "Solitude", Robert Taylor was given the responsibility of holding John Penn, the last colonial Governor of Pennsylvania and his attorney-general Mr. Chew. They were sent there as prisoners of war by the American Government. Tours available by appointment May through December. Saturdays 10 AM – 12 Noon; Sundays 2 PM - 4 PM Donation \$2.00. Call prior to visit – 908-638-0504

David Reynolds Tavern – Charlestown Road & Norton Road; Bethlehem Township

The stone tavern opened in 1763. It was where the workers from Union Forge went to eat, sleep and socialize. After the British Parliament passed the Stamp Act in 1765, which meant the colonists would have to pay more taxes, the local farmers in Bethlehem Township formed the "Sons of Liberty". Their meetings were held in the tavern. David Reynolds was so angry about the taxes being levied he started to print counterfeit money to give to the British. He hid the printing press on the third floor of his tavern. The British eventually caught him and in those days counterfeiting meant death.

Hunt's Mills/Red Mill & Hunterdon Museum of Art – Main Street; Clinton

The mills were established and working since the mid-1700s and were sold to Daniel Hunt in 1782. The Hunt family was engaged in the operation of both mills and the area became known as "Hunt's Mills". At full operation there was a grist mill, a fulling mill, a flaxseed mill, a plaster mill, a woolen mill and a saw mill. The Red Mill was actually rebuilt on the site of the older mills in 1810. The Hunterdon Historical Museum gives tours of the site and schedules special events. 908-735-4101 for more information.

Bonnell Tavern - West End Avenue; Clinton

Abraham Bonnell opened his tavern in 1767. He was prominent landowner in the area and devoted much of his time to political affairs. In 1770, the Bonnell Tavern became the meeting and voting place for the northern section of the county. In 1775 a regiment of the "minute men" was organized, said to be the first of its kind in the colony of New Jersey. This was the regiment that was ordered to march on the British in New York in 1776. Abraham Bonnell was made a Lieutenant Colonel of the Second Regiment of the Hunterdon County Militia. By this time, he had taken part in discussions that culminated in the Declaration of Independence and was selected as one of the delegates to the Sons of Liberty meeting at the Ringoes Tavern.

Hoff Mills Inn/Pittstown Inn – 350 Pittstown Rd. (corner of Route 513 & 579), Pittstown

This was the first tavern in the area and was built by Daniel Farnsworth in 1739. It was then owned by Charles Huff, Jr. who sold it in 1762 to Moore Furman who became the Deputy Quartermaster General in the area. He furnished supplies to General Washington and served food and drink to the troops during the war. The area was known as Hoff Mills before Furman purchased most of the town and he changed the name to Pittstown after William Pitts, a British politician who spoke up for the American Colonists during the revolutionary war period. After the war, part of the militia of Hunterdon County assembled in Pittstown once a year in June for a parade, inspection and review. **The Inn operates today as a restaurant.** 908-735-4666