

MILLSTONE VALLEY NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY 2020 DRIVING TOUR
**TOUR MEANT FOR USE BY A PASSENGER, NOT THE OPERATOR OF
A VEHICLE!**

PLEASE DRIVE SAFELY!

START: 1353 Main Street (Route 533/ Millstone River Road)

Start the tour at the 1860 School House, now Millstone Borough Hall. Information will be available under a tent in the parking lot. As you leave, notice the field across the street where thousands of American and French Troops under Generals Rochambeau and Washington camped while marching to final victory in Yorktown, VA. You are following in their footsteps for about half of today's tour.

Near this field Rutgers held classes in a private home when the British captured New Brunswick and the school was forced into exile.

DRIVE: Turn Left (South) on Main Street (Route 533/ Millstone River Road)

Crossing Amwell Road (Rte. 514), you will pass through the village of Millstone Borough, once called Somerset Courthouse and the seat of county government before the village's destruction by British Troops in what is known as Simcoe's Raid in 1777. Here you can find the historic Hillsborough Dutch Reformed Church. Note the Lenape Native American mortar in front. The mortar was used for grinding grains. A Lenape village was located nearby.

Pass by the privately owned Van Doren house (#1488) where George Washington slept on January 3, 1777 after victory at Princeton.

DRIVE: South on Millstone River Road

For the next several miles of the Byway you are traveling the route taken by George Washington, the Continental Troops, and our French allies, as they marched south in late August 1781 to the final victory in Yorktown, VA. The route has now been designated the Washington-Rochambeau

National Heritage Trail, part of the National Park Service. Years earlier, on January 3, 1777, Washington and his troops made the reverse trip as they traveled north following their victory at the Battle of Princeton. Many farms and homes along the way have been here over two centuries.

TURN LEFT: West on the Griggstown Causeway

The Griggstown crossing of the Millstone River (at the time located 100 – 200 yards south of the present causeway) was used many times during the Revolutionary War, including after the Battle of Princeton in January 1777, and on the march to Yorktown in 1781.

STOP: Millstone Valley National Scenic Byway Visitor Center

If you like, stop along the Griggstown Causeway and talk with docents under a tent in front of the Visitor Center. Sadly, the Visitor Center itself is closed due to Covid-19, but please come back and visit when we are open again!

You are now surrounded by landmarks from Central Jersey's canal era, which lasted a nearly a century from the Delaware and Raritan Canal's opening in 1834 until it closed in 1932.

The D&R Canal was constructed between the years 1831 – 1834. Much of the hard labor of digging the trench and removing trees was done by migratory and immigrant workers who were primarily of Irish decent. This work force was supplemented by local laborers and skilled craftsmen.

The main canal is forty four miles long and stretches from the Delaware River at Bulls Island to the Raritan River in New Brunswick. It is seventy five feet wide and eight feet deep. It was built primarily to move cargo such as coal from eastern Pennsylvania, as well as locally grown produce and manufactured goods between Philadelphia and New York, eliminating the hazardous 100 mile route along the Atlantic Coast.

A series of culverts were built during its construction to allow the natural course of local streams to continue their uninterrupted flow beneath the canal thereby eliminating damage to the canal infrastructure. You can see an example of a culvert behind the Visitor's Center.

The Visitor's Center was once the home of the Griggstown Bridge Tender. The Bridge Tender spent much of the work day in the Bridge Tender's Station, the small building across from the Bridge Tender's House. When a boat approached, he would swing the bridge north to let the boat pass.

The Delaware & Raritan Canal is now a State park where canal buildings and locks have been preserved. Take a walk on the historic towpath once used by mules to pull canal boats. The Griggstown lock – lock #9 – is located $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile south of the causeway. Also close to the Visitor's Center you can see the remains of a Grist Mill. Across from the remains is a building that was used to house mill employees and store supplies for the mill. There were several mills located on the Millstone River; mills were needed to grind the wheat and corn from the Valley's many farms into flour. Due to the abundance of its crops, the Valley was called the bread basket of the American Revolution.

Rent a canoe or kayak behind the Visitor Center and enjoy time on the canal.

TURN RIGHT: South on Canal Road

As you drive parallel to the canal, admire the private homes on the opposite side, including the historic Black Horse Tavern (#1101), once visited by the marquis de Chastellux of Rochambeau's Army, Beekman House (# 1121), the Red Horse Tavern (#1135), and the Abraham Van Doren house (#1153) that stood as the Continental Army passed through on multiple occasions.

TURN RIGHT: West on Washington Street (Route 518)

You will cross a bridge over the D&R Canal, and a second bridge over the Millstone River as you enter the historic village of Rocky Hill where all the lines of troops marching to Yorktown converged. Park on the street and take a stroll through this charming village.

Most of the homes on Washington Street are part of a Historic Preservation District as are all of the homes on Crescent Avenue, Grove Street, Park Avenue, Montgomery Avenue and Reeve Road. Note the historic church on the corner of Reeve Road.

TURN LEFT: South on Reeve Road and then turn Left (East) on Crescent Avenue

You will cross Princeton Avenue, the route taken to Princeton by troops headed to Yorktown.

BEAR RIGHT: East onto Kingston Avenue/River Road

For the next several miles you will be following the Millstone River toward Kingston Village. The wilderness to your left has changed little over the centuries.

Left (North) Onto Route 27

The Kingston Mill District features a large 1893 Victorian-style mill, now a private home. Notice the historic 1798 stone quadruple arch bridge next to the mill. Originally a wooden bridge was present on the site. As the Continental troops moved north after the Battle of Princeton they tore up the planks of the bridge to delay pursuit by the British. In retaliation, the British purportedly burned the original mill on the site; its replacement burned in 1888 and was replaced with the current structure a few years later. The wooden bridge was repaired and used heavily in the 18th century eventually being replaced by the current stone bridge.

After crossing the Millstone River Bridge, consider parking so you can further explore the D&R Canal State Park and the Kingston Lock area. Follow the Towpath south for spectacular views of Carnegie Lake, where Princeton University rowers compete. This man-made Lake was a gift from Andrew Carnegie, 19th Century Industrialist, to Princeton University.

DRIVE: Up the Hill into Kingston Village

Notice the cemetery on the left where Washington and his generals held the famous "Conference on Horseback" on January 3, 1777, to decide where to go following victory at Princeton. They could push on to New Brunswick and try to capture much needed British supplies including the Army payroll, or travel to a winter encampment in Morristown. They chose to march the troops, exhausted from fighting in Trenton and Princeton, north through the Millstone Valley to the encampment at Morristown.

Shops and restaurants are available for a lunch in Kingston.

TURN LEFT: North onto Laurel Avenue (Route 603)

This intersection is roughly at the mid-point of the historic King's Highway between New York and Philadelphia. In the Eighteenth Century as many as 100 stagecoaches stopped here every day.

BEAR LEFT: To stay on Route 603 (Kingston-Rocky Hill Road)

Immediately on the left you'll see Rockingham, the farmhouse where George Washington made his final military headquarters at the end of the Revolutionary War as the Continental Congress met in nearby Princeton. Here he wrote his Farewell Orders. Park in the lot and explore the landscape. The House is closed due to the pandemic, but come back and visit when it can once again receive visitors inside.

DRIVE: Continue North (across Route 518) onto Canal Road

You've traveled this leg already, but now take time to notice on the right the remains of a terra cotta plant that manufactured tiles for the Woolworth Building in New York, among others. The remaining building is now a private home (#1532).

After several miles you'll see Copper Mine Road on the right. This area was the site of a copper mine worked during the Revolutionary War. Both Benjamin Franklin and George Washington were visitors here. The mine was staffed by Welsh Miners whose loyalty Washington suspected so they were sent back to England in exchange for American Prisoners of War.

Continuing straight, you'll pass the Griggstown Causeway, after which you are covering new ground.

Notice the Griggstown Reformed Church on the right. There is a restored one-room schoolhouse behind it. It is also the site of the Church Cemetery, where Daniel Blaney, a Griggstown Bridge Tender and member of the Union Army who fought in the Civil War, is buried. Also buried there are eleven unknown canal laborers, possibly of Irish decent, who worked on the canal's construction and died the 1832 cholera outbreak. Their graves are lovingly marked with Irish flags.

As you continue north, you'll pass by farms many of which date back to the original Dutch Settlers.

The private home across from the junction of Bunker Hill Road and Canal Road was the home of John Honeyman, purported Revolutionary War Spy.

A short distance up Bunker Hill Road on the left, is the Griggstown Farm Market. Griggstown Farm produces much of the poultry used in fine area restaurants as well as many in Manhattan.

TURN LEFT: Continue on Canal Rd. by turning left after Water Treatment Plant

Once again, you'll find yourself parallel to the canal. Eventually you'll come to the Six Mile Run Reservoir Site, managed by the D&R State Park. The site is popular with walkers and bicyclists. Enjoy the park, but don't look for the reservoir since it was never built. At the intersection, notice the gardens near the Blackwells Mills Canal House and Bridge Tender's station.

Consider parking and walking along the towpath beyond the wooden bridge.

DRIVE: Continue North (across Blackwells Mills Road) on Canal Road The narrow road takes you along the canal once more headed toward the historic East Millstone Borough.

TURN LEFT: Onto Market Street

As you enter the village, notice the interesting historic houses, shops and the tiny Post Office. There is a deli where food is available for purchases.

TURN LEFT: West on to Route 514 (Amwell Road)

As you make the turn, you'll see the Franklin Inn, which dates back to 1756 when it was built by Cornelius Van Liew as a farm house. It was raided by British General Cornwallis in December 1776 and June 1777. It is reputed to have been used briefly as his headquarters in 1777. A Revolutionary era French map has the house labeled "Pont Caffé" suggesting it provided sustenance to French Troops allied with the Americans on the Washington-Rochambeau march to victory at Yorktown in 1781.

In 1835 a second floor was added and the home converted into a tavern to serve the Canal trade. The tavern was closed in 1916 due to Prohibition. Local efforts are underway to restore and reopen the Inn. See the Historic Franklin Inn on Facebook.

Nearby is the East Millstone Bridge Tender's House and Station, followed by the D&R Canal and Millstone River Bridges. This entry to the towpath has a site for kayak launching.

TURN RIGHT: Onto North River Street (one way)

This last leg of the trip passes by the Millstone Forge, the earliest blacksmith shop still standing in New Jersey. The Forge is currently closed due to the pandemic but hopefully will reopen next summer.

Turn Right: North on Route 533 (Main Street/ Millstone River Road)

You have now returned to Millstone Borough Hall, where you likely began your trip.

We hope you have enjoyed your tour of the Millstone Valley National Scenic Byway. Please visit us again when our historic sites are open.

Meanwhile enjoy our local dining and recreation sites!