



Volume 24, Issue 4 **The Raritan-Millstone Heritage Alliance** Fall, 2020

WELCOME TO THE NEW REALITY

On behalf of the Board of Directors we wish all of our individual members and historic, educational and environmental sites in the greater Raritan and Millstone River Systems much good health and safety during this time of the COVID 19 pandemic. We miss seeing all of our friends. Until further notice, the board has agreed not to hold any public meetings or to invite our members to attend our quarterly board meetings with a program/speaker.

We had a successful board meeting in September, with all of the safety precautions. New board members and officers were elected and the annual budget passed. All Standing and Ad Hoc committees were reconstituted and we are off and running again for the next season!

ANOTHER WAY TO LOOK AT HALLOWEEN

By Donald J. Peck

Halloween may look and feel a little different this year as people decide how they will celebrate. Young families and those who remember their childhood days of trick-or-treating may look forward to Halloween to add some normalcy and joy to what has been a very serious and uncertain time because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Enjoying chocolate and candy are appreciated by the public of all ages because of their uncanny ability to boost one's mood and lighten one's perspective.

Have you ever wondered how Halloween originated and spread up and down the valleys of the Raritan and Millstone River systems? We know that Halloween's origins sprang from the Celtic festival of Samhain which predates Christianity. It was all about remembering the dead and confronting death with humor and ridicule to keep that "other world" at bay.

We in old East Jersey can thank the Scots who arrived here to find freedom from religious and political persecution, between 1683 and 1685, for bringing their Halloween tradition with them from Scotland. During the years following the restoration of the monarchy from 1660 to 1688, Scottish Presbyterians and Quakers were hunted down, thrown into prison or sold as slaves.

Many sought a safe haven in East Jersey under the protection of a new government of Twenty-Four Proprietors. These Scots had no problem selling their Halloween traditions to the founding New England and Long Island Puritans who had established a charter for the Township of Woodbridge on June 1, 1669. They were all well acquainted with witches, evil spirits and the Devil.

Those living in the seventeenth century were part of a world where the spirit of modern scientific inquiry, research and invention was almost unknown. Early Puritan laws in East Jersey (1668) required that death would be the penalty for those who practiced witchcraft. A law passed by the East Jersey Assembly meeting in Woodbridge, December 9, 1675, stated "if any Person be found to be a witch, either male or female, they shall be put to Death." The subject of witchcraft and witches has existed in every succeeding generation. The hunting and punishment of witches was very often a form of scapegoating – individuals blamed for the misfortunes of others or whole communities. Irrational belief in the Devil and his power led to individual fears that witches had made a pact with the Devil.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Saturday, November 21, 2020

At 10:00 a.m.

Fellowship Hall

The Hillsborough Reformed
Church

1 Amwell Road

Millstone. NJ 08844

www.hillsboroughreformedchurch.org

To be excused call Don Peck at

732-738-5522 or Fred Mueller

At 908-359-3391

RARITAN-MILLSTONE HERITAGE ALLIANCE

P.O. Box 5583, Somerset, NJ 08875-5583
www.raritanmillstone.org

*An organization of individuals,
organizations, and sites working to promote
preservation and understanding of the rich, event-
ful, and cultural heritage of significant historical,
educational, environmental and cultural sites
located in Central New Jersey.*

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

The Executive Committee meets in January and June

WHY ARE THESE TWO RIVER VALLEYS

SO IMPORTANT TO PROMOTE?

These rivers run through valleys rich in the unique heritage and culture of Central New Jersey, an area that has continually contributed to the strength of the United States. Our Guide serves to encourage interest in history and scenic tourism of these significant sites.

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:

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European colonists associated indigenous sacred places with the worship of the Devil, a pejorative association of the Native American Indians' "Great Spirit" with the evil power of Christian belief.

In England of the sixteenth century, witchcraft and witch hunting had become a marginal activity as opposed to Scotland. In 1590 James VI of Scotland (later James I of England) became intensely interested in continental witchcraft ideas while he was in Denmark. He wrote a treatise on witchcraft entitled *Daemonologie*, which further promoted the idea of witch hunting.

English Puritans and Scottish Presbyterian Calvinists were particularly fond of their King James I Bible, which for the first time Christians were legally allowed to read and possess circa 1611. The Shakespeare play "Macbeth" (C. 1606) added to the public belief about witchcraft as well.



Macbeth – The Riddles of The Witches

By 1600, over a period of two hundred and fifty years, Christian society came to believe in a diabolical enemy. Puritanical Christians were fond of quoting the admonishment in Exodus 22:18 of the King James I Bible – "*Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.*" Witch hunting would dominate the first half of the seventeenth century, especially in Europe and England. English Puritans coming to the Massachusetts Bay Colony, including the Newbury Plantation settlers who later came to Woodbridge, East Jersey, were well aware of these witch hunts and a belief in the Devil.

Belief in witches and evil spirits was not confined to the uneducated. Clergy in both Protestant and Roman Catholic churches were haunted by fear of "devil's disciples," and at least four popes issued Bulls against witches with the dawning of the Renaissance.

While it is tempting to conclude that witchcraft and witch hunting belong to a remote and barbarous age, superstition and irrational beliefs can still exact a powerful hold on the human mind. Witch hunting in Europe was probably at its height during the second half of the sixteenth century. England and Scotland witnessed periodic witch hunts but these resulted in a low level of executions for witchcraft.

The seventeenth century saw the regularity and intensity of witch hunting start to decline. As late as 1679, Newbury, Massachusetts, home for many Woodbridge, East Jersey settlers, had its own witch trial tradition and a witch trial was held there. Arguably the last major event of witch hunting in the English-speaking world, and the last in the wider European world, was the outburst in colonial America which occurred at Salem, Massachusetts, in January, 1692.

Salem was a community with an intensely Puritan ethic, which meant that the whole phenomenon of witches and witchcraft was taken seriously. But cultural and legal attitudes about witchcraft had begun to change, as well as a growing reluctance to prosecute and convict.

The East Jersey Assembly in November of 1668 had ordered towns to establish taverns "In consideration of the inconveniences that do arise from the want of an ordinary in every town." Samuel Moore, who was among the earliest known Quakers to arrive in North America, established it in Woodbridge in 1683.

As late as 1730, Ann Campyon, reportedly sharing a cup of tea with her mother at their home near New Jersey's first tavern, Moore's Tavern, was summoned to a rain-sloshed window by an eerie scratching sound. It was as if frozen fingers were drumming on the glass.

Quickly looking out the window, Ann thought she had seen the figure of a witch's long and spiny finger nail. She repeated telling this story in subsequent conversations. Oddly enough, as late as the twentieth century, the appearance of a witch was reported to have been seen at a residence on Fulton Street, one of the oldest neighborhoods in the town of Woodbridge.

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: _____

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State: _____ Zip: _____

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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

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.