



# The Link

joining the sites along the rivers

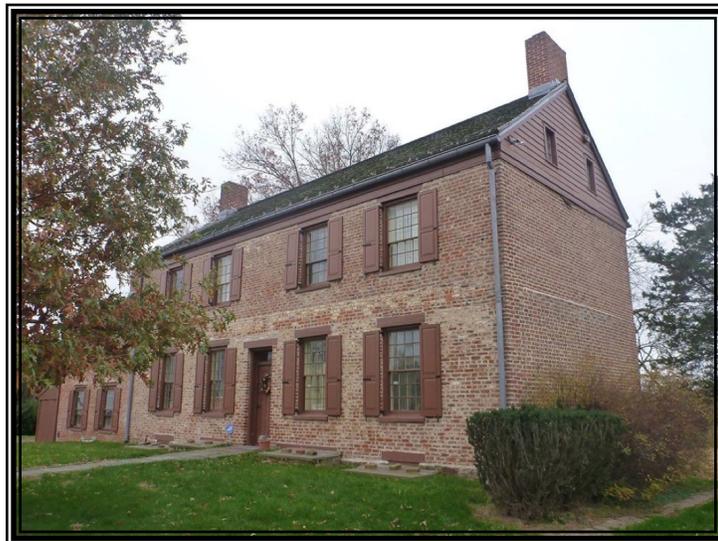
[www.raritanmillstone.org](http://www.raritanmillstone.org)

Volume 27, Issue 2 **The Raritan-Millstone Heritage Alliance**

Spring, 2023

## THE RMHA TO MAKE A RETURN VISIT TO THE VAN VEGHTEN HOUSE FOR THEIR MARCH BOARD AND ANNUAL MEETINGS

The time will have changed, and it will be 'almost' Spring, 2023 on March 18, 2023. The scent of hyacinth and daffodils will be in the air and Spring will be soon rushing all welcomed, riotous, loud, overwhelming, and lush with tree and bush leaves starting to bud out, hinting at the verdure that is to come. And the RMHA March 18, 2023, board meeting at 10:00 a.m. will be combined this year with our Annual Meeting for all individual and site members and will be held this year at the Van Veghten House, 9 Van Veghten Drive in Bridgewater, NJ 08807. It is accessible via County Road 533 (Finderne Avenue), and overlooks a lovely view of the Raritan River. This historic house was built c. 1725 and is on the National and State registers of Historic Places. It is the headquarters for the Somerset County Historical Society founded in 1882. The building houses a research and genealogical library, Somerset County artifacts, early hand tools and Native American stone tools. [www.somersethistorynj.org](http://www.somersethistorynj.org)



### General Nathanael Greene at Van Veghten House

Excerpted from "A Spirited War" by Donald J. Peck

During the Second Middlebrook Encampment in 1778-1779, the Van Veghten House served as headquarters for Quartermaster General Nathanael Greene. Built in 1725 with bricks imported from Holland, it was remodeled in 1840, in a Dutch vernacular style. It stands on its original site on the north bank of the Raritan River. General Greene was thirty-seven when he arrived at Van Veghten House. Born into a Rhode Island Quaker family, he knew little of military life. Beyond his basic training in the local militia, everything Greene knew about strategy and warfare he had taught himself, by reading from his extensive library of more than 200 books.

Since he had grown up in the family's foundry business, hammering iron ship chains, he had far less formal education than some of his genteel counterparts in the Continental Army. However, he had received some tutoring in Latin and mathematics at home, and had been encouraged by Reverend Ezra Stiles, later President of Yale University. Handsome and good-natured, Greene was caught up in the general fervor of resistance in New England, as a relations between England and the thirteen North American colonies deteriorated. He had renounced the Friends' (Quaker) philosophy of nonviolence and was expelled from his congregation in 1773. He joined the local militia in that year in order to aid in resisting British policies.

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### **DIRECTIONS**

The Van Veghten House is located on 9 Van Veghten Drive just west of Finderne Avenue. From 287, Exit 12, take Route 28 west to Finderne Ave. south to Van Veghten Drive on the right. From Somerville take West Main Street (Route 28 east to Finderne Avenue and then south on Finderne Avenue to Van Veghten Drive on the right.

### **PRSERVING THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE**

The Somerset County Historical Society has identified and acquired collections of documents and records; supported research and publications; and sponsored programs and educational efforts. It currently maintains an extensive library and archives containing unpublished documents, periodicals, photographs, newspapers, maps, and genealogies.

### **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

Brian J. Franklin  
Andy & Shirley Nagy  
Richard S. Perry  
Howard Weber

### **SAVE THIS DATE**

Board Meeting May 20, 2023  
Site & speaker to be determined

## **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 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 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: Donald J. Peck, Editor, The Clausen Company  
P.O. Box 140  
Fords, NJ 08863

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Somewhat overweight, Greene walked with a limp and had one eye that was clouded from a bout with smallpox. Despite appearances, his calm demeanor inspired confidence in all those around him, and politics soon offered him a better path. He was elected to the Rhode Island legislature, and then appointed Brigadier General of the state's "Army of Observation," which he led to Boston. There he met George Washington. Within a year Washington would consider Greene the best of his generals, suitable to succeed him in case of his death or capture.

Serving in the Battles of Long Island, Harlem Heights and Fort Lee in 1776, Greene was promoted to the rank of major general. He played a prominent role in the Battles of Trenton, Princeton, Brandywine, and Germantown. On March 2, 1778, Washington appointed Greene the new Quartermaster General of the Continental Army. Later in the campaign in the South that set the stage for the last major battle, at Yorktown, Greene would prove himself the most brilliant American field commander of the war.

He took an active role in three New Jersey battles: the Battle of Monmouth, on June 28, 1778; the engagement at Connecticut Farms on June 7, 1780, where he commanded the front line; and the Second Battle of Springfield on June 23, 1780, (often referred to as the "forgotten victory") in which he led the force that repulsed the British and caused them to retreat from New Jersey for the last time. However it was during the winter and spring of 1779 that Greene found himself with Washington's forces in the heavily Netherland Dutch county of Somerset, New Jersey, where Dutch was the dominant language.

The Dutch phase of New Jersey history roughly dates from 1621 to 1664, with hubs of Dutch settlement in Bergen, Middlesex, Monmouth and Somerset counties. In 1776, a patchwork of different accents and languages could be heard in these counties. In 1655, Governor Petrus Stuyvesant made all of future New Jersey part of his colonial province of *Nieuw Nederland*. But on September 8, 1664, Stuyvesant surrendered the city of Nieuw Amsterdam to the English, officially ending almost fifty years of Dutch domination in North America. Nevertheless, this capitulation did not mark the end of Dutch cultural influence, for the descendants of the original settlers lived as much as they had before and, at least among themselves, continued to speak the Dutch language well into the nineteenth century.

English Puritans had arrived in New Jersey after 1664 from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Long Island. Although the English outnumbered any other particular group, other nationalities were represented. There were also the French and Germans from the Palatinate of the Rhine, and Scots. While English was the common tongue of the area, many residents spoke the language with the very thick accent of their countries of origin. The African Americans spoke the language of their masters, but some of their own unique languages survived in expressions and idioms. "From this promiscuous breed," observed a French settler, "that race now called Americans has arisen."

While in residence here General Greene wrote a letter to Jeremiah Wadsworth describing "a pretty little frisk" held in the main room on March 17, 1779. Throughout the course of the evening, General Washington danced with Mrs. Greene "upwards of three hours without once sitting down" in a rare (and probably more traditional than true) show of endurance. Washington had learned to dance at a youthful age. General Greene's slight limp combined with his admiration and respect for Washington, certainly makes his willingness to allow Washington to dance so long with his wife,

### **IN THE NEWS!!!**

#### **Woodbridge Treasures**

Exhibition at the Barron Arts Center, Rahway Avenue, Woodbridge, NJ March 3-24, 2023

Local history captured in documents, pictures and objects from the Archives at the Woodbridge Public Library

#### **Press, Justice, Celebrity**

Hunterdon County Courthouse—71 Main St., Flemington, NJ

A panel discussion at the site of the 1935 Lindbergh kidnapping trial Saturday April 9, 2023 at 2 PM

#### **Middlesex County History Day**

Saturday, May 13, 2023 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

East Jersey Old Town Village, 1050 River Road, Piscataway, NJ

**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

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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](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.*