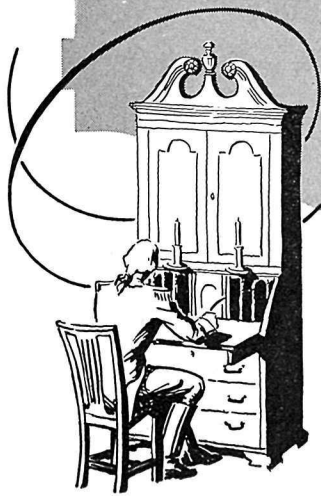


Morristown



National Historical Park

NEW JERSEY

Morristown

NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fred A. Seaton, *Secretary*

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, Conrad L. Wirth, *Director*

Site of Washington's military headquarters and the main encampment of his Continental Army during the winters of 1777 and 1779-80

During two winters of the Revolutionary War, 1777 and 1779-80, the rugged hill country around Morristown, N. J., sheltered the main encampments of the Continental Army, while Morristown was the headquarters of its Commander in Chief, George Washington. At Loantaka Valley, a few miles from the present Morristown National Historical Park, in January 1777, and at Jockey Hollow within the park area, during the winter of 1779-80, Washington systematically reorganized his weary and depleted forces not far from the strong British lines at New York. Here, in May 1780, came Lafayette with welcome news of the second French expedition sent to aid the Americans; and here also was maintained and developed, in the face of bitter cold, hunger, hardship, and disease, the Nation's will to independence and freedom. Thus for a time this small New Jersey village became the military capital of the United States, the testing ground of a great people in its heroic fight for "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

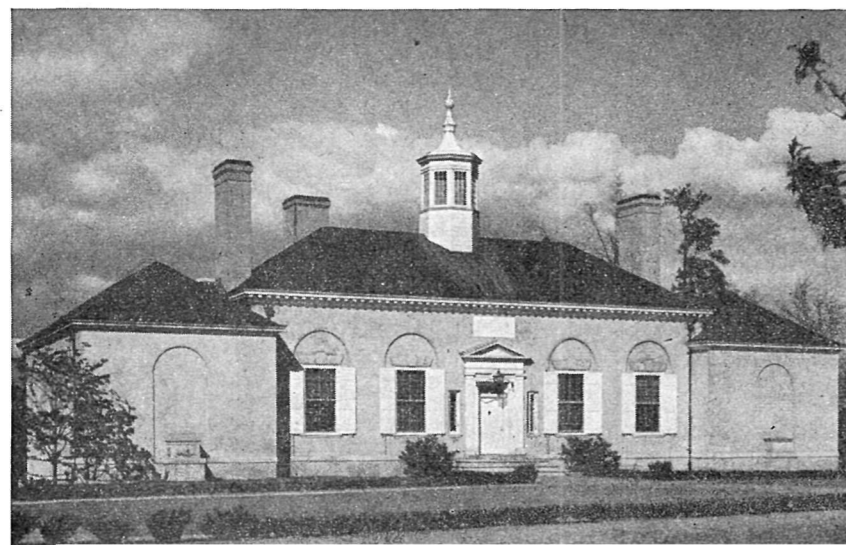
Morristown National Historical Park was established to commemorate the men and events associated with this phase of Revolutionary War history and to preserve for the inspiration and benefit of all Americans the remaining physical evidences of that momentous time and place.

Morristown During the Revolutionary War

When the Revolutionary War began, Morristown was a small, rural community with about 50 houses, a few churches, and some other buildings. Most of its people were descendants of New Englanders who had come into the region early in the

18th century, making their living by farming or by working in the many iron mines, forges, and furnaces of the locality. As the war moved southward into New Jersey, however, the town suddenly found itself in the midst of important military operations. This came about mainly because of its geographical position in relation to New York, which from 1776 on was the principal British stronghold in the North. While only 30 miles from the enemy lines on Manhattan and Staten Islands, Morristown was protected on the east by the Watchung Mountains, a range of parallel ridges stretching from the Raritan River on the south toward the northern boundary of the State. Keeping his lines of communication safely behind these hill barriers, Washington could watch the British movements in New York, guard the

The Historical Museum



roads connecting New England and Pennsylvania, and hold himself in readiness to move troops with great rapidity to any threatened point. Morristown thus became the scene of almost continuous American military activity from 1776 to 1782.

The Ford Mansion

In 1779-80, during the worst winter of the Revolutionary War, General Washington used as his headquarters the mansion built by Col. Jacob Ford, Jr., landowner, iron manufacturer, and ardent patriot of Morris County. This house, built just before the conflict began, is typical of the fine homes occupied by wealthy Americans in the mid-18th century. Architecturally, it illustrates many principles of the symmetrical Palladian design, particularly in the beautiful main doorway. The building was partially restored by the National Park Service in 1939 and is now furnished with authentic pieces of the 1780 period or earlier, thus showing the general appearance of the mansion when Washington occupied it. Part of the original furniture remains in the house, among which is the tall secretary desk at which the Commander in Chief penned some of the most important letters of his career.

The Historical Museum

Directly behind the Ford Mansion is the Historical Museum, a modern, fireproof

structure built by the National Park Service in 1935 for the display and safe storage of historical material. Exhibits in this building illustrate the story of the main Continental Army encampments in the winters of 1777 and 1779-80, the inspiring leadership of Washington, and the relations of these two subjects to the important local and national problems of that time. Original objects of many kinds, supplemented by paintings, photographs, and old prints, are used in this connection. For those interested in special fields, considerable space is devoted to the display of large study collections, such as arms of the Colonial and Revolutionary War periods, household furnishings, and costumes. Natural color slides of the park are shown on the screen in the museum auditorium.

Fort Nonsense

Soon after the American troops took up winter quarters near Morristown, in January 1777, Washington began the almost herculean task of gathering wagons, grain, and other military supplies for the coming spring campaign. Most of these supplies were concentrated in Morristown, and their protection became essential. On May 28, therefore, the Commander in Chief issued orders for one detachment to remain in the town "to Strengthen the Works already begun upon the Hill near this place, and erect such others as are nec-

Reconstructed Continental Army officers' hut in Jockey Hollow



The Wick House, quarters of Maj. Gen. Arthur St. Clair, winter of 1779-80

essary for the better defending it, that it may be a safe retreat in case of Necessity." How the works came to be called Fort Nonsense is not yet known. There is some evidence to show the name was of Revolutionary War origin, but no foundation for the story that Washington ordered the fort built just to keep his men busy, and that he was personally responsible for it. The fort was reconstructed by the National Park Service in 1937 on the basis of historical research and archeological investigation.

Jockey Hollow and Environs

The main Continental Army, numbering up to 10,000 men, was encamped in Jockey Hollow during "the hard winter" of 1779-80. About 925 acres of this land, including all but three units of the military campsite, are within the present park boundaries. In its general wooded and rural appearance, Jockey Hollow today closely resembles the conditions existing when the Continental troops arrived there in December 1779. Many of the campgrounds have remained relatively undisturbed, and physical evidences of army occupation can still be seen. Careful historical and archeological research by the National Park Service has led to the reconstruction of several log huts, typical of hundreds once used in Jockey Hollow as quarters for officers and men. Such investigation has also resulted in the recovery

of many interesting military objects for museum display.

The Revolutionary Camp Hospital, Burying Ground, and Bettin Oak

A representative camp hospital building has been reconstructed from plans and descriptions prepared by Dr. James Tilton, Hospital Surgeon at Morristown in 1779-80.

Across from this is an old burying ground where lie the remains of about 100 Continental soldiers who did not survive that bitter winter.

Capt. Adam Bettin, who was killed in the mutiny of the Pennsylvania Line on January 1, 1781, is said to be buried under a massive oak tree on the Jockey Hollow Road.

The Wick House and Farm

The Wick House was built by Henry Wick, a settler from Long Island, about 1750. It served as military quarters for Maj. Gen. Arthur St. Clair during the Continental Army encampment of 1779-80. This old farmhouse has been restored and furnished in period fashion as part of the plan to re-create colonial atmosphere in the area.

How To Reach the Park

Only about 30 miles west of New York City, the park may be reached by automo-



Reconstructed Continental Army hospital hut

bile from the east via New Jersey Route 24, from the south and north via New Jersey Route 32 (U. S. 202), and from the west via New Jersey Routes 6, 10, 53, and 32. Regional and transcontinental bus lines serve Morristown from all main points. The town is also on the D. L. & W. Railroad, whose trains stop at Morris Street, hardly more than 5 minutes' walk from the Ford Mansion and the Historical Museum.

About Your Visit

You may visit the Wick House from 1 p. m. to 5 p. m., Tuesday through Saturday, and on Sunday from 10 a. m. to 5 p. m. Other park buildings are open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a. m. to 5 p. m. The park is closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. Those who plan to visit in a group may receive special service if advance arrangements are made with the superintendent.

There is a single admission charge of 25 cents for both the Ford Mansion and the Historical Museum. Children under 12 years of age, or groups of school children 18 years of age or under, are admitted free when accompanied by adults assuming

responsibility for their safety and orderly conduct.

Picnic grounds are available in Jockey Hollow for those who wish to bring lunches, but no fires are permitted anywhere in the park. It is also unlawful to hunt or trap wildlife, to injure shrubs or trees, to pick flowers or ferns, or to deface or remove other Government property. You must leave the park by 8 p. m.

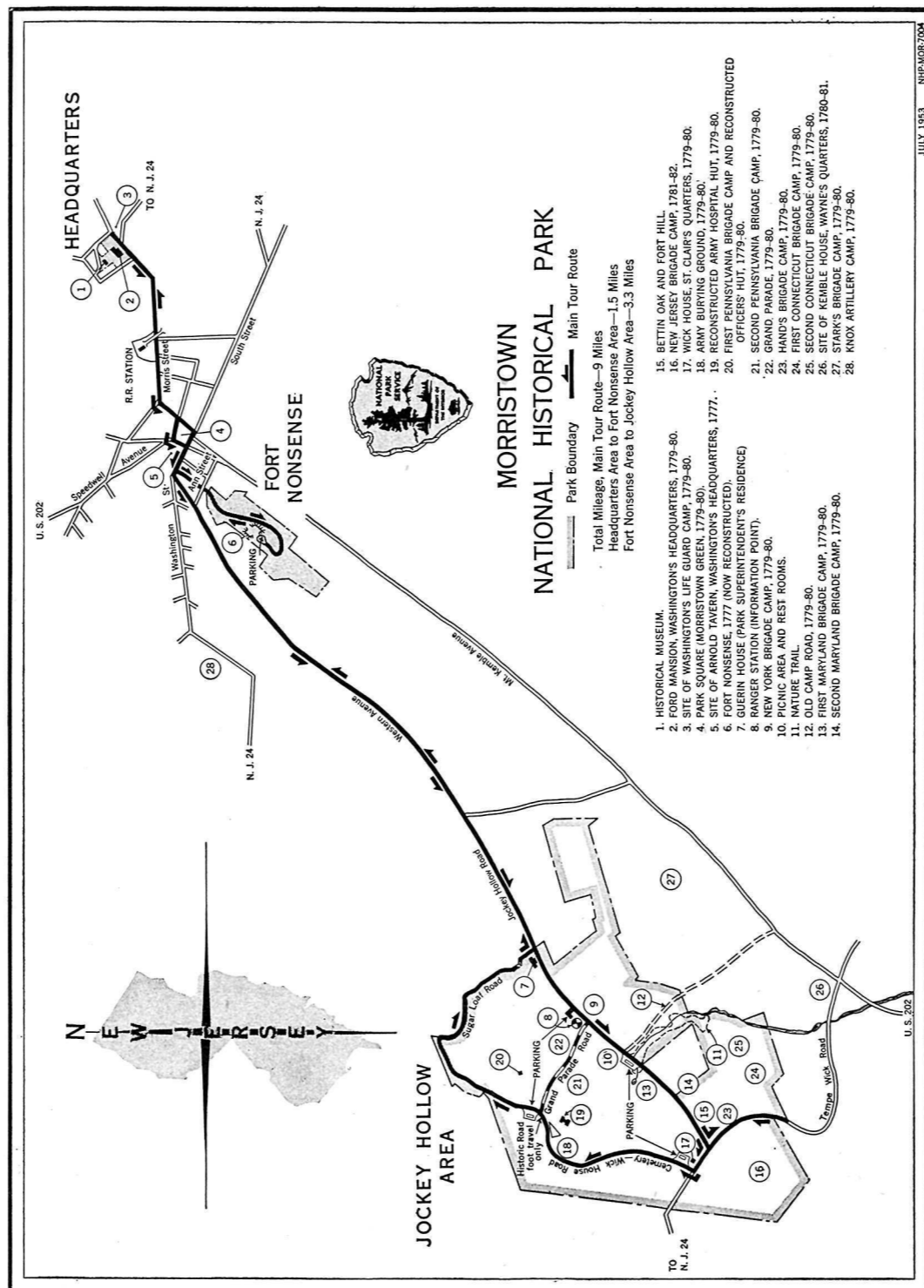
Related Areas Nearby

Other areas of the National Park System commemorating phases of the Revolutionary War, which are nearby, are: Saratoga National Historical Park, Federal Hall Memorial National Historic Site, and Statue of Liberty National Monument, N. Y.; and Independence National Historical Park Project, Pa.

Administration

Morristown National Historical Park is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. It was established in 1933 and contains 957.96 acres. A superintendent, whose address is Morristown, N. J., is in immediate charge.

The National Park System, of which this area is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of its people.



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