

# Notes, News & Nostalgia...

From *M.A.R.C.H.*

Montague Association for the Restoration of Community History  
November, 2025



## *President's Letter*

Autumn is here with a variety colors in the tree leaves and color temperatures at night and day time. The NPS fiscal year has ended and a new one has begun. Despite the closing of many Federal Facilities, we have been permitted to keep our activities going and are able to open the two houses to the public.

We had fewer visitors this year but those who came were very impressed with the way the volunteers prepared the houses and our exhibits. Our dedicated volunteers did a fantastic job and should be commended by all of the membership. We are now looking forward to another year and hoping for more visitors. We will start with the Holiday tours in December and continue 2026 in late April.

The NPS staff added a temporary ramp to allow wheelchair users and others with physical challenges to access the Foster- Armstrong House through the front Dutch door. This will be replaced once a report is accepted to build a more permanent access facility for the house. Of course, this process is on hold until Congress reestablishes government operations through a budget. We will also continue our responsibilities to maintain the two houses in accordance with an agreement with them.

I cannot send you a message as President without reminding all of you to send in your dues, not only for this year, but also for 2026. Many of you have been very diligent and have sent your 2025 dues, and we are thankful, but some have not. Please take a few minutes and do so. We need to keep both houses sparkling clean and ready for visitors.

October is our month to elect officers and trustees for the upcoming year. All of our present officers agreed to continue next year as well as the two trustees up for re-election. I am pleased that they agreed for I have had a good working relationship with them.

My little bit of news is about the membership reception that is held in November each year. At our last meeting in September, we agreed to have the reception November 23 between 2 and 4 PM at the Foster-Armstrong House. If you have a friend interested in MARCH invite them to come along. Remember, this is a member-only event. MARCH will provide the drinks and paper goods. You do not need to RSVP, but we just ask that you bring a plate of appetizers or dessert to share. It's always a special time catching up with friends!

Thank you for your support and I wish all a great rest of 2025. Hope to see many of you during the Holiday Tours in December. We still need a few more volunteers in December, so let us know if you can help!

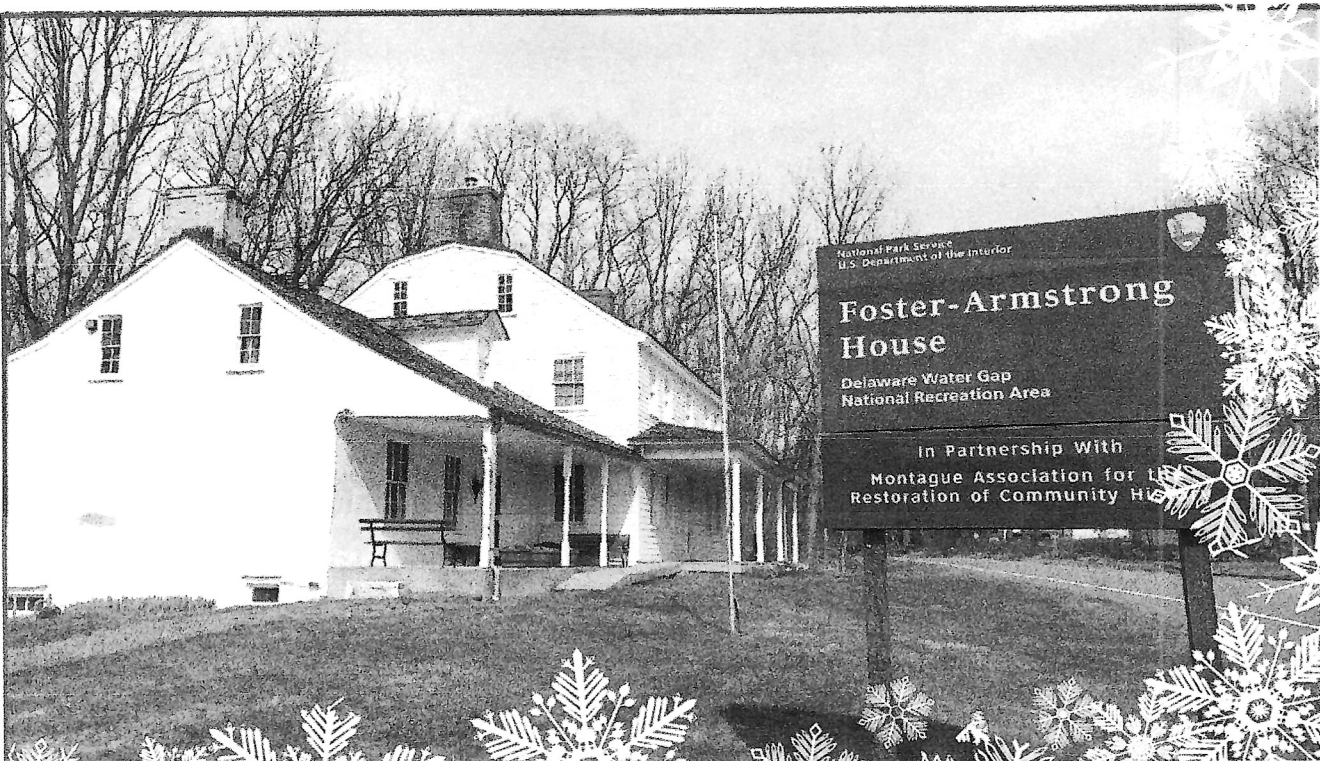
Richard J. Jones. President

## *Curators Corner*

Our new 2026 Indian and Revolutionary War display is ready in the Cole Room. Thanks to Monica Higbie for loaning us her Indian artifacts. It is one of the best displays MARCH has ever had. Holiday trees and decorations will be coming out of the attic this week. This year's themes include a colonial tree, a miniature train tree, A Snowy Day in the hallway, and a new Victorian display. We've attached the Holiday Weekend flyer to this newsletter. Mark your calendars! We will have music for three of the days in December.

As an early prelude, here are the dates we'll be open in 2026: 4/18, 4/25, 5/16, 5/23, 6/20, 6/27, 7/18, 7/25, 8/15, 8/22, 10/10, and December 5, 6, 12, 13, 19. It is the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday from 1-4pm from April through August.

We had many people asking about the Old Mine Road, and roads throughout Montague Township this year. I found the included two articles in old newsletters written by Alicia Batko that I thought you'd be interested in. As for the dates when the Old Mine Road opened, Herbert C. Kraft listed on his map the following: Esopus (Kingston) to Napanock and Ellenville, c. 1652-c.1700; Ellenville to Port Jervis and Minisink Island, c.1700-1719; Minisink Island to Walpack Bend, c.1750; Pahaquary to Walpack Bend, c. 1790; road through Delaware Water Gap to Pahaquarry, 1830. As with many parts of history, information and dates change as more things are discovered.



# Old Fashioned Holiday Weekends

Hosted by the Montague Association for the  
Restoration of Community History (MARCH)

Get into the holiday spirit this year by visiting the Foster-Armstrong House in Montague, New Jersey for their annual holiday open house tours!

Decorated trees sparkle amongst historical displays and museum items. Enjoy learning about the history of the house, area, and more this holiday season!

## Foster-Armstrong House and Museum Open Dates:

❄ Saturday, December 6 - Harmony in Motion at 2pm

❄ Sunday, December 7 -

❄ Saturday, December 13 - DJ Bill

❄ Sunday, December 14 -

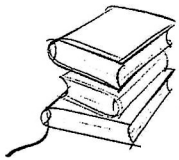
❄ Saturday, December 20 - Skyland Dulcimer String Band at 1pm

Open 1 pm to 4 pm

Last tour at 3pm

The Foster Armstrong House, circa 1790, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This site is open to the public on select days throughout the year.

320 River Rd, CR521, Montague, NJ,  
about 1 mile north of Route 206 and the  
Milford/Montague Bridge.



## Historian's Corner

Since we are focusing on the township's beginning and its evolution since 1759, it seems appropriate to give an overview about the roads and transportation routes. It is known that the Delaware River and the streams that flowed into it attracted the Lenape people to establish camps or villages near those water sources. European traders and explorers stumbled onto this rich river valley by following mountain ranges and Lenape trails in search of minerals and opportunities for trade.

The Great Minisink Trail ran from our Minisink Island in the Delaware (the township's southern border begins at that island's lower tip) southeast to Elizabeth and to the tidal areas and followed along where Route 206 later evolved. Another, known as the Pomptom Trail, went from Minisink Island to Hackensack and within our township is believed to have been replaced by the original Paterson-Hamburg Turnpike extension which started near the earliest river crossings, followed over Rubin Hill Road, then veered and went up a portion of Birch Tree Road and continued on the original turnpike's route. The western end nearest the river was later realigned for better access to the bridge and to the Brick House Hotel.

These rather narrow pathways and well-worn areas of constant travel were used predominantly for trade. It was over such that the Dutch traversed when they sent men capable of communicating in the native language such as early settlers Solomon Davis and Jurian Kuykendal, noted Indian traders. They would acquire large land parcels by 1720 that later evolved into the Millville area and Minisink Village. Davis' deed of two thousand acres dates to 1712 and included land along Shimer's Brook extending from the river to what now lies within the country club.

Most township roads began as early routes between large homesteads or mills. They were modified to make them most convenient for more constant travel when they become adopted as public roads. The best known was Old Mine Road, a route paralleling the river, which was traversed by General Gates' regiment in 1776 in their attempt to meet up with General Washington's forces for the famed crossing of the Delaware.

Parts of Clove Road, which ran almost parallel to it inland, and other roads nearer the Delaware River were among our earliest. Mountain Road became Mashipacong Road and New Mashipacong Road as it's realigned section over part of what was previously Cole Road. Such renaming of a road is common in our history. Deeds into the 20<sup>th</sup> century identify streets by varied names such as "road from Brick house to

Carpenter's Point" for the Jersey or River Road; "Shaytown to Deckertown Road" later became Greuber and now Fox Hollow Road, etc. Birch Tree likely received its name from a large birch tree which sat in the corner with Clove Road. Chubby Lane got its name from developer, John Chubby DiMeo who had the initial subdivision near Long Meadow Swamp.

Turnpikes were established by the 1800's as a means of state controlled travel. Morris turnpike in 1801 came from Elizabethtown, through Morristown and Newton, over the Minisink Mountain at Culver's Gap to the Delaware and opposite to Milford. The Union, begun in 1804 from Morristown to Sparta, was extended in 1806 from Sparta through Culver's Gap to the Delaware. In 1809, the Paterson and Hamburg continued from Deckertown over the Blue Mountain to the Delaware opposite to Milford. The state of NJ also held stock in 1843 over PA's Milford-Owego Turnpike, encouraging inland goods to be transported to NJ ports. Isaac Bonnell, whose homestead sat near Millville Road, served in the state Legislature about this time and on the Delaware Bridge Company that benefited from the junction of the major routes in helping get a bridge built. At one point, that road was even referred to as Deckertown-Owego turnpike (1922 NJHS Proceedings). It was during this period that the Brick House area saw a boom period as the spokes of the transportation wheel intersected near the hotel. The significance of all these routes is understood by a description of Milford written in 1843. "The Milford and Owego turnpike passes westward from this place, and a line of stages from New York, by way of Newark in New Jersey, runs on this route to Owego and other places in the west".

The Delaware and Hudson Canal that opened in 1828 as well as the Erie Railroad that ran from 1851 began to replace roads as large commerce movers. These attracted our businessmen who moved their stores nearer the new routes. It is after this time that a downward shift in population and related commerce occurred. We evolved into pursuing more agricultural venues and welcomed summer visitors to the Rock View, the Pine Ridge, High Point Inn, and small and large summer boarding homes. By the early 1900's, road improvements were being planned and River Road almost became a highway connecting Trenton to Port Jervis called Delaware River Drive. The 1851 the "Rutherford Turnpike", incorporated as the Colesville and Carpenter's Turnpike, was later turned over to the county in 1909. Called High Point Road by locals, it later evolved into Route 23. The turnpikes on our southern end became State Route 31 in 1920's and Highway 206 in 1953.

On July 1, 1971, the four lane I-84 was completed west from Newburgh to the Delaware River, providing a limited access route from Connecticut to Pennsylvania and bypassing NJ by 50 feet. With our new developments came new roadways connecting homes to our principal arteries—most of which are now county roads: Delaware Mine Road (below the Bridge) and River Road in 1932; Clove Road as of 1933,  
A.B.

River Road has been called "Old Mine Rd.", also, Jersey Rd. or Jersey River Rd. In early town deeds, it was called "the road to Esopus". A lower section was also known as "the Public Road leading from Brick House to Millville" with the entirety being "the Hainesville to Carpenter's Point", or later the "Port Jervis Road".

US Route 206 actually terminates within PA at its intersection of US 209. Sections are known as the Disabled American Veterans Highway. Locally, it was "the Public Road leading from Brick House to Branchville". The portion north of Newton was designated as S31 in 1929, until 1953 when that concurrent state highway designation was removed. It appears to have closely followed the path of the Morris Turnpike from 1801, which was the earliest New Jersey turnpike and connected Newark with Morristown where it later met up with the Union Turnpike in 1804 and continued along an extension to Milford, Pennsylvania. The Morris Turnpike company had been authorized to build a road from Elizabethtown, Essex County, through Morristown, Morris County and then into Sussex County. Notes appear that at times this turnpike was also called the *Morris & Sussex Turnpike* and the *Morris and Essex Turnpike*. The part of the turnpike that extended into Montague was called the *Third District*.

Deckertown Turnpike was also "the old road from Sussex to Milford" and was a realigned portion of the Paterson and Hamburg Turnpike in 1806, an extension from Paterson to Milford, PA. This extension had first veered onto Birch Tree Rd. and then continued over present-day Rubin Hill Rd. It accessed the early ferry and bridge connections over *Old Bridge Rd.* to cross to the NJ-controlled "Milford to Oswego Tpk" into PA in 1816. The present-day Deckertown Turnpike between Clove and River roads was also known as "the Road leading from the Clove Rd. to Brick House".

It is believed that Birch Tree Rd. was designated after the Hamburg-Deckertown Turnpike, running over it, was realigned; was named for the many white birch trees that were numerous at its corner with Clove Rd.

The origin for name of Rubin Hill Road remains unknown at this time.

Route 23 is a roadway between Verona, NJ and Port Jervis, NY. A portion of it replaced the Cole(s)ville-Carpenters Point Turnpike in 1851. Further south and east, Route 23 followed parts of the Paterson-Hamburg Turnpike. Its local section in Montague was sometimes referred to as the High Point Road.

Clove Rd. likely has its origins from the word "*kloof*", a Dutch word for ravine or valley. It falls between the ridges of the Shawangunk - Kittatinny Ridge. It was also called "the Public road in the Clove."

Red Hill Road shows up as Red Hill Road in early deeds and its name origin is uncertain.

Millville Road was also called the "Road leading from the Mills to the Clove Rd."

Mashipacong Road had paralleled or was along the former Mountain Road. Old Mashipacong Road has remained much as it was. New Mashipacong Road, between Clove Road and River Road, is an altered route, and that's why the two roads do not currently intersect. Its' name is likely connected to an earlier designation for Montague. "Metshippeckonk", was noted in early deeds, and spelled as "Masheepycunk" on a 1779 map, and for its proximity to the island in the Delaware River.

Crigger Road is an early road that once extended farther west into town, but the remaining portion exists off Deckertown Turnpike heading towards Sunrise Mountain.

Fox Hollow Road, formerly Gruber Road, was previously known as "the Deckertown and Milford Turnpike to Shaytown Road". Gruber had owned a tract of 94 acres and the road was renamed in the late 1980's.

New Road was once called "New Clove Road".

Steeny Kill Road was also known as Karp Hill Road, most likely named for Max Karp who acquired tracts from Jacob Nearpass in 1928. It was also called "the old road from Clove Rd. to High Point".

Reinhardt Road was also called Thomson Road as shown on earlier tax maps. It was probably named for the landowner's August or Goyn Reinhardt.

Weider Road was probably named for the landowner Sylvanus Weider.

#### Some later town roads:

Overlook Drive, which paralleled portions of an old farm lane on the original Armstrong farm, was later developed as the Armstrong track. The road overlooked the Armstrong farm along the Delaware River.

Myrtle Drive was named while it was part of the Benz tract owned by William and Myrtle Benz. Piney Road, my guess is for its pine trees; Bills Lane - possibly named for William Benz; Doremus Road, probably named for landowners Harvey and Madge Doremus; Chubby Lane for its developer, Chubby DiMeo of Chubby Material & Supply Co; Coss Lane for the Coss family who subdivided that section off their larger farm; Brookhaven Way was likely named for Brookhaven Estates, Inc. of Newark, NJ that partnered with Holiday Lake, Inc. to develop that area.

Forgotten roads: Gregory Road was possibly located in High Point Park; Snake Hill Road was possibly a lower part of Deckertown Turnpike or Rubin Hill Road; Tappan Road once connected River Road to Old Bridge Road and the origin of its name is unknown.

Alicia Batko, Historian

## *From the History Corner*

With the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1776 Declaration of Independence coming up in 2026, Maureen Kaman, our township historian and MARCH secretary, has gotten me doing lots of research about Montague veterans of the American Revolution, Montague Township, and NJ's role in the American Revolution. So far, we have documented 6 Montague residents that fought in the war, and I will be sharing that with you next year. It will also be on display at the FAH for 2026. I have been concentrating my reading on the State of NJ, and wow, have I learned a lot, and I have been a Jersey Girl for most of my life! We can all be really proud of NJ's role in the American Revolution. By the way, MARCH has an exceptional library collection of NJ history books which you are welcome to borrow. For those of you that have missed it, Maureen has done a spectacular slide presentation "Montague, Then and Now", which has been presented both at the FAH and the Montague Grange. She will be doing it again next year, so really try to see it! And if you have any relatives that were involved or fought in the American Revolution, we would love you to share that information with us.

## *Newsletter Notes*

Thank you for being patient with the lack of newsletters over the last 18 months. I am finally beginning to get back into the swing of things and am catching up on unfinished projects. Thanks for understanding. BEJ

## *A Special Thanks to...*

Montague Township for keeping our lawns mowed this year at both the FAH and NRS. The mowing team kept it nice and short - a great job with much thanks!

Montague DPW for helping to move some new furniture donations for us at the FAH and for their prompt assistance when we discovered 2 yellowjacket nests in the FAH lawn (with a program planned the next day!).

## *Our Sincere Condolences to the families and friends of ...*

Elaine Cooper, Kathy Space, Emmy Masset, Tom Brislin and Art Aeberli.

## *The Crafters*

Our dedicated crafters continue to make some beautiful crafts which they donated to MARCH. Come visit our store and check out some traditional and some brand-new items! Remember to shop from our exceptional collection of local history books, as well as the popular Gently Used History book shelf!

## **2026 Dues**

Individual	\$10.00	Old Mine Road Supporter	\$100.00
Couples (2 people)	\$15.00	Millville Contributing Supporter	\$250.00
Family	\$20.00	Foster-Armstrong Patron	\$500.00
Tappantown Supporter	\$50.00	Brick House Village Sponsor	\$1,000.00

If you are a renewing member, or if you want to be a new member, please make out your check to M.A.R.C.H., and mail to M.A.R.C.H., PO Box 1101, Montague, N.J. 07827. And of course, you can always contribute more than the suggested amounts to help offset our utility and maintenance bills! Thank you in advance.

## **MARCH 2026 Trustees, Officers and Committee Chairs**

President & Executive Coordinator	Richard Jones	973-293-3949			
Vice President		richhojones@hotmail.com			
Buildings & Grounds	Peg Soracco	973-293-7283	Historian	Kathy Hankins	845-856-5065
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	Maureen Kaman	Peggy Brahm		Lou Avenatti	Kathy Hankins (Oct. 2027)
				Gene Crawford	Gerry Mahon (Oct. 2028)

## *Library Books ... on New Jersey and the Revolutionary War*

Here are some of the books MARCH has in our reference library: *The Long Retreat, The Day is Ours!, Stories of New Jersey, Fifty Years on the Frontier with the Dutch congregation at Maghagkamik, Outrageous Women of Colonial America, Crossroads of the American Revolution, A Guide to New Jersey's Revolutionary War Trail, New Jersey and the Revolutionary War, New Jersey in the American Revolution: 1763-1783 A Chronology, The Forgotten Victory: The Battle for New Jersey-1780, New Jersey from Colony to State 1609-1789, The Crossing, Raid! The Tory Raid on Closter May 9, 1779 and New Jersey Quilts 1777-1950.*

## *Share your Memories and Photos*

We would love to hear from you about the people you have known, the changes you have seen, and the spots you most enjoy in Montague. Please share those special thoughts and memories with us so that others will have a better sense of how special our community is. Thanks! We look forward to hearing from you and being able to include you in our Mailbag column. Montague has sooo much history to share, and that's what MARCH is all about!

*Notes, News, & Nostalgia* is generally published quarterly.

**Distribution:** Copies are mailed to current members, as well as many non-profit organizations.

**Meeting Schedule:** Business Meetings generally are held at 1:00 on the last Thursday of the months of January through October. Programs are on a Saturday at 2:00pm, when the FAH is open. Elections of officers, trustees, and the budget are held in October. Dues are owed for the current year in January. All meetings and programs are usually held at the Foster-Armstrong House, 320 River Road (Route 521) in Montague, NJ.

**Directions:** From Route 206 North: make a right onto Route 521 (River Road); the Foster-Armstrong House is approx.  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile ahead on left. From Milford: Cross the Milford-Montague Bridge and turn left onto Route 521. FAH is  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile on left. From Port Jervis: Take Maple Avenue South (turns into Route 521), Foster-Armstrong House is 5 miles ahead on your right. Visitors are always welcome ... and bring a friend!

**PLEASE PAY YOUR 2026 DUES, DONATIONS ARE ALWAYS WELCOMED AND APPRECIATED!**

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Community History (MARCH)  
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