

# Millstone Valley Scenic Byway



## A Glimpse into the Past

Close your eyes; is that the wind or the soldiers' whispers as they trudge by? Major troop movements and military campaigns which greatly influenced the outcome of the American Revolution took place along the Millstone Valley Scenic Byway. The entire Byway Corridor is within the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area and the Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route.



Griggstown Bridge Tender's House

Stroll along the Millstone Valley Scenic Byway towpath and other corridor pathways. You will notice a remarkable number of intact historic districts, historic sites, and villages as well as farms and natural areas, reflecting the different time periods in the settlement of the corridor. The Millstone River was a significant element that contributed to settlement of this area. The Lenape were the first residents of this corridor. Early European colonization within the valley started with the Dutch in the 1600s. Later it became part of East Jersey under the proprietorship of Sir George Carteret.

Six historic villages are located directly along the Millstone Valley Scenic Byway route. Some of the villages were sites of Lenape encampments and many of the roads in the corridor had their origins in Lenape trails. The building of the Delaware and Raritan (D&R) Canal, and later railroads, facilitated development of small industries and the Colonial settlements along the river expanded. The need for farm products during the Civil War brought considerable prosperity to the surrounding farms.

## Kingston

Kingston was located on the main road connecting the colonies. As traffic grew, houses, taverns and shops were built along the road on the plateau overlooking the river crossing; by 1723 these buildings had become Kingston Village.

Today Kingston retains its charming character and small-town appeal, with several shops and places to eat. A path leads to the canal area, which includes Lock #8, a lock tender's house, a toll house/telegraph office, and a turning basin. Nearby is the 1798 four-arch stone bridge over the Millstone River and the 1892 Kingston Mill. [www.ksnj.org](http://www.ksnj.org)



Main St Coffeehouse (Rt 27/Lincoln Highway)



Lock Tender's House



1798 four-arch stone bridge

## Griggstown

Griggstown is a well preserved canal village in New Jersey. It has a **bridge tender's house**, which is the Byway's Visitor Center, a small basin, a one-room schoolhouse, and the remains of a mill foundation. The village has a Greek Revival-style Reformed Church and many historic houses.

The Griggstown lock is located 0.7 of a mile south of the Griggstown Causeway on Canal Road.



Bridge Tender's House



Griggstown Lock

## Blackwells Mills

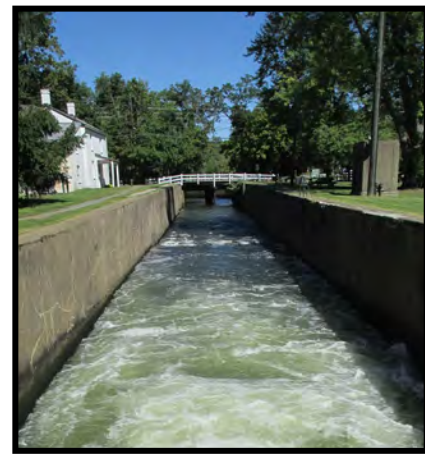
It would be hard to find a 19th century vignette as nicely preserved as Blackwells Mills, with its picturesque bridge tender's house, garden and access to Six Mile Run. [www.dandrcanal.com/friends\\_bwm.html](http://www.dandrcanal.com/friends_bwm.html)



Garden at Blackwells Mills

## D&R Canal State Park

Conceived as a direct transportation shortcut between Philadelphia and New York City, the D&R Canal was begun in 1830 and opened for operation in June of 1834. The waterway stretched 44 miles from the Delaware River at Bordentown to the Raritan at New Brunswick. Unlike other canals that were spanned by **fixed bridges**, the D&R's swing bridges provided an unlimited height restriction allowing boats of various sizes such as military transports, steam-powered ships, yachts and high-masted sailing vessels to ply the waters alongside mule-drawn canal boats. The D&R was a successful canal, in one year carrying more tons of cargo than the more famous Erie Canal. During its years in operation it was an integral part of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, a role it no longer fills. Closed in 1932, the abandoned waterway found new purpose as a water supply for Central New Jersey and now brings Delaware River water to over one million residents.



Lock #1

In 1973 the D&R Canal was placed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places, and the next year it became a state park. It is also designated as a National Recreation Trail and is part of the East Coast Greenway. As a state park, it is a premier recreational destination. Visitors can canoe, kayak, bike, jog, walk, snowshoe, cross-country ski, paint, photograph, ride horses, fish, and bird watch: over 160 bird species have been spotted within the byway corridor. Check the D&R Canal website for information and trail maps. [www.dandrcanal.com/](http://www.dandrcanal.com/) 609-924-5705



Little Valley towpath access

## Rockingham

Rockingham, now a state historic site, served as **General Washington's final Revolutionary War headquarters** in 1783, while the Continental Congress met in nearby Princeton. Here Washington awaited news that the Treaty of Paris had been signed, and the 13 colonies were independent of Great Britain. Check the website for times of opening. [www.rockingham.net/](http://www.rockingham.net/) 609-683-7132



View of the barn from the road



Garden at Rockingham

## East Millstone

The canal and railroad turned the village of East Millstone into a thriving commercial and manufacturing town. The houses and the churches, in many architectural styles, retain the historic character of the village. The **bridge tender's house** and adjacent Franklin Inn are key landmarks of East Millstone. [www.facebook.com/eastmillstone](http://www.facebook.com/eastmillstone)



Bridge Tender's House



Franklin Inn

## Millstone

Millstone Borough, once called Somerset Court House, was established as an important crossroad of north-south and east-west travel. A daring foray by the Loyalist **Queen's Rangers**, led by Lieutenant Colonel John Simcoe, burned the courthouse. The Millstone Forge is said to be the oldest operating blacksmith shop in New Jersey. Indian mortar stones stand in front of the Hillsborough Reformed Church and the blacksmith shop. [www.millstoneforge.org](http://www.millstoneforge.org)



Blacksmith Shop



Hillsborough Reformed Church

## Rocky Hill

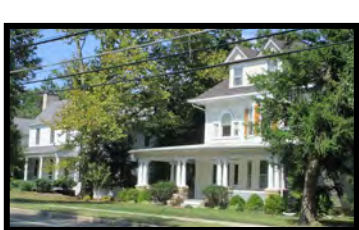
Today Rocky Hill is a charming example of a 19th-century village, where visitors can see many architectural styles, including Federal, Greek Revival, Second Empire, Queen Anne, Carpenter Gothic, Italianate, and Bungalow. Travelers in 1748 called it Rockhill, because it was covered with rocks so big it took three men to roll them! [www.Rockyhill-nj.gov](http://www.Rockyhill-nj.gov)



Rocky Hill Inn



First Reformed Church



Washington Street



General Washington's headquarters at Rockingham

## Further Information:



## Acknowledgments

The Millstone Valley Scenic Byway was designated as a State Scenic Byway on June 27, 2001 and extended through an addendum by 2.5 miles in May 2007. The Byway received National designation by the Federal Highway Administration on October 16, 2009.

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