



# Morristown Muster

The Official Newsletter  
of Morristown National Historical Park

Spring 2015: March, April, May

## “Set in Stone”: Monuments in the Park

You’ve probably heard the expression, “Set in Stone,” meaning something that will not change. It’s like a tombstone or a monument. It’s something that that will last through the ages.

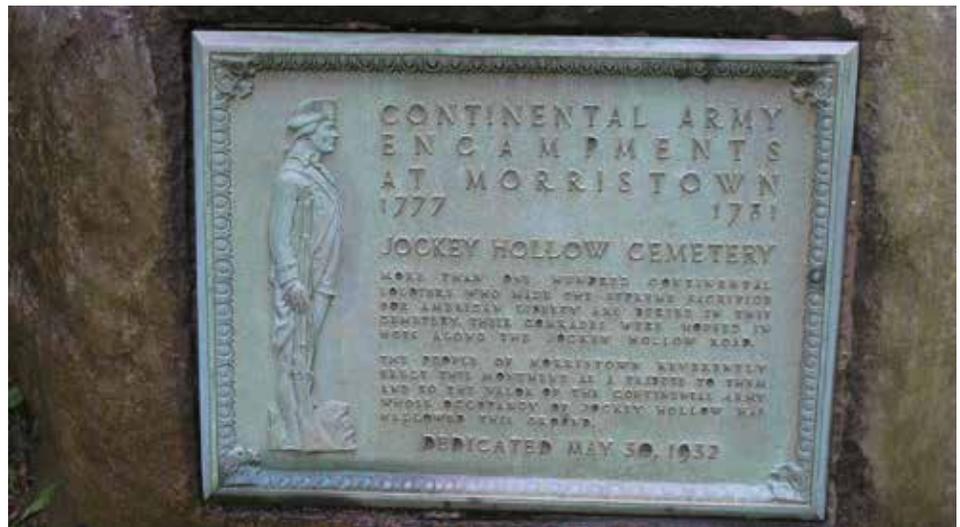
People tend to think of history as being “set in stone.” After all, how can something that already happened, change?

The historical event can’t change, but the way people write about it, or the events they consider important, can change. At one time no one considered the history of Women or African-Americans important; but now historians try to be more inclusive when they write about the past.

Unfortunately, in the case of a monument, history is literally “set in stone.” Once the words are carved into the stone they are very hard to change. As a result, mistakes or misinterpretations of history become permanent and are accepted as fact; after all it is “set in stone”.

Morristown National Historical Park has four monuments within its boundaries. There are three monuments in Jockey Hollow and one at Fort Nonsense. They were all erected prior to the creation of the park by various historic and patriotic organizations.

Regrettably, three of the monuments erected in the park contain historical inaccuracies. At Fort Nonsense a stone monument erected in 1888 states that the fort was erected during the winter of 1779-1780. In reality, the earthen fort was built in the spring of 1777. We have no idea why the wrong date was used.



**Bronze plaque marking the location of the Soldiers Cemetery thought to be located in Jockey Hollow. During the 1930s archaeological excavations took place and no human remains were found.**

In Jockey Hollow, just off the tour road across from the Wick Farm orchard, there is a monument to Captain Adam Bettin who was killed during the mutiny of the Pennsylvania Line in January 1781. But it turns out the name on the monument is wrong. The Captain’s name was actually spelled Bitting, not Bettin. In the 18th century people spelled words the way they sounded and often one person’s name was spelled in several different ways. While some 18th century documents spell the name Bettin, Bittin or Bitting, descendants of the Captain maintain the correct spelling is Bitting.

Finally, in a clearing across from the replica soldier huts there is a large boulder with a bronze plaque that says it is the site of the soldier’s cemetery. However, there is no documentation from the time of the encampment that mentions any military cemetery. The soldiers cemetery appears in two

different 19th century articles and each version places the cemetery in a different location.

In the 1930’s archaeological excavations took place at the site and no human remains were discovered. In fact, in all the archaeology done in the park there never have been any human skeletons found. During the Revolutionary War soldiers normally were not taken to a central cemetery. Traditionally, they were buried in unmarked graves on the parade grounds of their regiments. So potentially there are grave of soldiers in Jockey Hollow, they are just scattered throughout the park.

From historical research using original documents we know that there was: a Fort Nonsense, an officer killed during the Pennsylvania Mutiny and there were soldiers buried in Jockey Hollow. But the “facts” that are “set in stone” in the monuments in the park are not quite accurate.

## Letter from the Superintendent

Spring is a great time for enjoying your national park. With the snow clearing and the days getting warmer what better way than to explore all four areas of the park: Washington HQ Museum/ Ford Mansion; Fort Nonsense; Jockey Hollow; and New Jersey Brigade Area. All four areas offer a different and unique experience. Whether it is the ever changing landscape and wildlife that abounds in the park's 1,700 acres or perhaps the historic structures, remnants from colonial times or perhaps a self-guided tour of the four monuments in the park described in the Muster's cover story: "Set in Stone": Monuments in the Park.

If ranger programs are what you are looking for, be sure to check out the park's website: [www.nps.gov/morr](http://www.nps.gov/morr) and find a program under the calendar section. This spring we will again host our always popular annual Encampment Weekend in partnership with the 2nd New Jersey Regiment, Helm's Company. It is always a fun, family friendly event where you can take a trip back in time to 1780.

In celebration of National Park Week and in recognition of the kick-off of the NPS's Centennial Celebration, we offer a "Fee Free" weekend on April 18-19, so be sure to visit the Washington's Headquarters Museum and sign up for a Ford Mansion tour. Capping off the week, on April 25 is Junior Ranger Day with special programs and activities especially geared for children.

Remember the best way to celebrate the National Park Service's 100th is to visit a National Park! So get out there and enjoy your national park!

Sincerely,  
Thomas E. Ross  
Superintendent  
Morristown National Historical Park

# Behind Closed Doors

In September of 1743, eighteen-year-old Benjamin Ellery entered Harvard College in Cambridge, Massachusetts. At the time, Harvard was already one-hundred and seven years old, making it far and away the oldest institution of higher learning in Colonial North America. Young Benjamin was from Rhode Island, and his father was a graduate of Harvard as well.

Benjamin, as all students, was required to copy out the laws and rules of the College in an exercise designed not only to prove penmanship and writing competency, but also to thoroughly acquaint new students with the expectations of their new role in life. For many, this was their first extended trip away from home. Harvard had its share of mischievous students in 1743 and the administration felt this was one exercise that served to acquaint them with what was expected of their behavior.

In thirty-three pages of neat, tight, script, Benjamin has left us a time capsule of sorts; allowing us to become familiar with the life and times of a young man entering a famous institution of higher

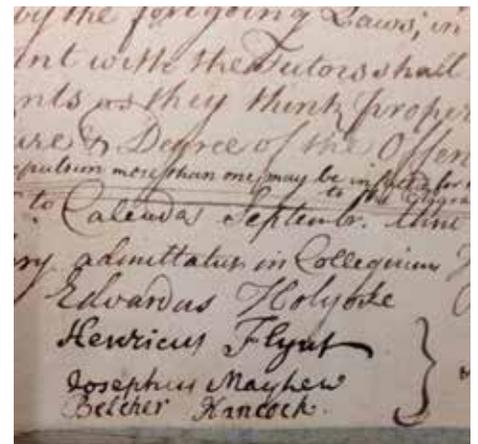
learning. His exercise also enables us to learn some of the problems experienced by Harvard in running a college of young men who might not always want to learn.

Benjamin clearly took great care in preparing his booklet, very similar to an examination book used today, for review by the college president and faculty. The "title page" is prepared with scroll flourishes around his name and the year and purpose of the booklet. The booklet is divided into eight chapters of about twenty clauses each. The chapters cover everything from academic honesty to property damage to living arrangements. Punishments are prescribed, generally a monetary fine but including expulsion for grave offences.

Finally, to prove satisfactory completion, the work was signed by the president of Harvard, Edward Holyoke and several faculty members. Benjamin was the older brother of William Ellery—a signer of the Declaration of Independence and of the Articles of Confederation.



Benjamin Ellery's cover page with scroll flourishes around his name and the year, 1743.



Signature page to prove satisfactory completion. Signatures include Edward Holyoke, President of Harvard College and other faculty members.

# Casimir Pulaski: Father of American Cavalry

Casimir Pulaski is remembered in many ways. In Poland, he is remembered as the “Soldier of Liberty.” In the United States he is the man who provided the colonists with their first true legion on horseback, cementing his place as “The Father of the American Cavalry.”

Pulaski was born on March 6, 1745, in Warsaw, Poland. By age 21, Casimir Pulaski proved to be a true military talent, fighting in battles across the European continent. By 1776, Pulaski learned of America’s struggle for independence and offered his services. Pulaski arrived in Boston in July 1777. Pulaski quickly distinguished himself at Brandywine, where he covered the retreat of Washington’s troops, preventing a total rout. On September 15, 1777, Congress promoted Pulaski to the rank of Brigadier General in command of cavalry as a reward for his actions.

In May, 1778, Pulaski formed an independent cavalry unit known as the



Painting of Casimir Pulaski by Julian Rys, circa 1897, Courtesy of Independence National Historical Park.

Pulaski Legion. Comprised of Americans, German, Frenchmen, Irishmen, and Poles, the legion would see immediate action in October at Little Egg Harbor, NJ. The Pulaski legion would later guard the northern border of Pennsylvania before heading south.

In May 1779, the Pulaski Legion helped defend Charleston, South Carolina against the British. The following months the legion engaged in reconnaissance and guerrilla warfare throughout South Carolina. By the fall of 1779, the Pulaski Legion headed toward Savannah, Georgia in an effort to join other French and American troops in an attempt to retake Savannah from the British. In the attack on October 9, 1779, American and French forces fell short of retaking the city. Pulaski was also mortally wounded by grapeshot and would die two days later aboard the American ship Wasp on route to Charleston. Pulaski was then reported to have been buried at sea near the place where the Savannah River flows into the Atlantic.

One of the most recent accolades Pulaski has received is that Congress passed a joint resolution conferring an honorary U.S. citizenship in 2009, making Pulaski only the seventh person honored in this way.



National  
Park Service  
Centennial

On August 25, 2016, the National Park Service turns 100! The Centennial will kick off a second century of stewardship of America’s national parks and engaging communities through recreation, conservation, and historic preservation programs, and will celebrate achievements of the past 100 years.

2016  
National Park Service.  
CENTENNIAL

## Stretch, Get Outdoors!

Spring is here and as warm weather comes, so does the opportunity to Volunteer. National Volunteer Week is April 12 – 18 and National Arbor Day is April 24th.

We have many opportunities to shake out the winter chill. Our Volunteer team includes individuals, families, scout troops, school groups and corporations. Gardening at the Wick and Cross Estate gardens, maintaining hiking trails, or planting in a historic orchard are some of the opportunities that await you. Whether you are looking to receive credit for school, give back to your community, or seeking a way to improve your resume, Volunteering is a great avenue.

You may either visit our park website [www.nps.gov/morr](http://www.nps.gov/morr) to apply or contact the Volunteer Coordinator by email to [pamela\\_dobben@nps.gov](mailto:pamela_dobben@nps.gov) to learn more.





# Cat Swamp Pond: A Man Made Treasure

Jockey Hollow is blessed by numerous streams, and brooks which flow through the park providing, not only beautiful scenery but also habitats for aquatic and semi-aquatic wildlife. The only pond in the park is Cat Swamp Pond; a small man-made pond. It was once part of the aqueduct system; a now extinct network of trenches used to deliver water to Morristown in late 19th century and into the early 20th century.

Cat Swamp Pond is located about 1/3 of a mile from the comfort station following the New York Brigade Trail and then getting on the Grand Loop Trail for a short distance. The pond gets its name from Cat Swamp which is located nearby. Cat Swamp Pond is not large; it has muddy water and many logs and branches which litter the edge and



The Pickerel Frog see here can be found in and around Cat Swamp Pond. It has skin secretions that can be irritating to people and toxic to other frogs and some predators.

provide important habitat for turtles and frogs. It has been the subject of various scientific studies to ascertain the ecological importance of the water body.

of insects and amphibians can develop to maturity, thus improving mortality rate. Among the frog and salamander species that lay their eggs found in Cat Swamp Pond are bullfrogs, pickerel frogs, wood frogs, red-spotted newt, spotted salamander, northern red salamander, and northern dusky salamander. A snapping turtle has also been spotted skulking under fallen logs. Cat Swamp Pond mainly contains golden shiner, a small fish. It contains a variety of aquatic insects and insect larvae including dragon fly nymphs and water-back swimmers. For these reasons, it is important to value Cat Swamp Pond for its ecological importance to the overall well-being of the flora and fauna of the park. Continued monitoring by park staff and visitors will ensure that Cat Swamp Pond will continue to flourish for years to come.



Become a Morristown National Historical Park Junior Ranger!

Planning a trip to Morristown National Historical Park? Explore our revolutionary past and discover fascinating facts about the events, people, places and things in historic Morristown by asking for a Junior Ranger Handbook. You can get a copy of the handbook at Jockey Hollow or at Washington's Headquarters.

Complete and present the handbook to a park ranger at Jockey Hollow or Washington's Headquarters and receive your Junior Ranger badge for a job well done.

Go to [www.nps.gov/morr/forkids](http://www.nps.gov/morr/forkids) to download a copy of the Junior Ranger booklet and get started today!



Although it is not naturally occurring, Cat Swamp Pond is rich with aquatic and semi-aquatic wildlife. Various kinds of frogs, salamanders, and fish can be observed at the pond. Cat Swamp Pond is important to the Jockey Hollow's ecosystem because it provides a permanent location where the larvae

## Spring Ranger Led Activities



Morristown NHP offers a variety of ranger-guided programs throughout the spring. Hear about Revolutionary War history and everyday life in the 18th century, visit the past in living history presentations, or hike through Jockey Hollow. There are programs for everyone. Ranger programs are free!

For a complete listing of programs and events, visit the park website at [www.nps.gov/morr](http://www.nps.gov/morr). Click the Calendar link on the home page.