

The Great Story (Jockey Hollow)



Reenactors at Jockey Hollow

To understand why it's a great story, walk to the top of the hill in Jockey Hollow that held 200 soldier huts for the Pennsylvania Brigade in early 1780. Walk up one day in January and imagine staying there until it gets warm enough sometime in April to take off your down jacket. Imagine standing there without your shoes on, without even one of the huts on top of the hill for retreat from the incessant cold. Try to conceive of something important enough to keep you on that hill for the rest of the winter. When you get home, imagine what it would be like if 13,000 ragged, homeless men with guns marched into your town. How would you feel if someone in your family caught small pox from the men and died? Would you have sympathy for the soldiers as they foraged in your barnyard, or for the General who headquartered on the other side of the village at Ford's Mansion?

Ask most people what happened in Morristown during the American Revolution and they'll undoubtedly mention Washington's Headquarters. But the untold stories of thousands of Continental soldiers and a few hundred townspeople magnify the American legend at Morristown. Perhaps it is because there were no great battles at Morristown that historical texts often gloss over the events here and focus on more catastrophic circumstances such as those at Valley Forge. The Jockey Hollow encampment of 1779-80 endured a winter more severe, including seven blizzards in December alone, than that at Valley Forge, where thousands died. Yet only about a hundred soldiers at Morristown did not see the spring of 1780.

Wick House at Jockey Hollow

Nine hundred acres of Jockey Hollow timber, notched together and chinked with clay, made the army's winter quarters-- 12 soldiers in each of 1,000 14 x 16 huts-- where the men made do with a trickle of rations and beds of loose straw. A thousand soldiers deserted; most remained. Although there was no great turning point, had the battle waged here to keep the Continental Army intact failed, then Yorktown, the battle where the Continental Army gained final advantage in the War, would have a far different meaning in our lives.

When the Jockey Hollow encampment made Morristown one of the ten largest cities in the Colonies by the spring of 1780, it was only the apex of the tiny village's eight year involvement in the conflict. By late 1779, the consistent military presence for munitions and supplies, constant procession of refugees, and a litany of Loyalist trials, jailings, and hangings gave the Patriot stronghold a war-weary atmosphere we might liken to modern day Bosnia. In fact, the army had wintered there three years before in 1777 following Washington's Christmas Delaware crossing and victories at Trenton and Princeton. Although far fewer troops accompanied the General the first time, the impact on the citizenry was catastrophic as nearly one quarter of the population died from small pox or dysentery. Washington, headquartered at Arnold's Tavern on the town green, billeted three or four men in every house so that it would appear that troop presence was many times more than the few thousand actually there. Needless to say, the attitude was different the second time around, and citizens had by then acquired a lawful right to refuse quartering. A testament to the success of 1779-80 was that, this time, only twenty-five citizens perished from disease, although when it was over, the state of New Jersey read numerous petitions for grievances from Morristownians trespassed against.

Ford's Mansion

After the last Patriot soldier left Morristown in 1782, it was almost one-hundred years until four men rescued the Ford Mansion from a dubious fate at auction. The decision to pool their funds and secure the building and grounds was the genesis of the Washington Association which became the principal caretaker of the property, only the third historic home to be preserved in the United States. Over the next fifty years the Association assembled a remarkable collection of period artifacts, books and manuscripts. To this day the Association plays a critical role in the care and access to one of our national shrines.

On March 2, 1933, Morristown became the third historic park added to Park Service, the first titled a National Historical Park, incorporating Ford's Mansion, Jockey Hollow and the site of Fort Nonsense. Extensive archeological work followed to ascertain specific troop locations and locate huts and outbuildings. The Park served as example for interpretation, training ground that got the Park Service into the history arena. Only one map of the encampment exists, and of 13,000 soldiers there, diaries were written by probably very few. One enlisted man, who later became a sergeant, wrote a memoir when he was in his 70's which mentions Jockey Hollow. Arnold's Tavern is long gone, as are most of the other 18th Century village houses, leaving only gravestones in church cemeteries.

Withstanding misery at Jockey Hollow was a crucial battle for American Independence.

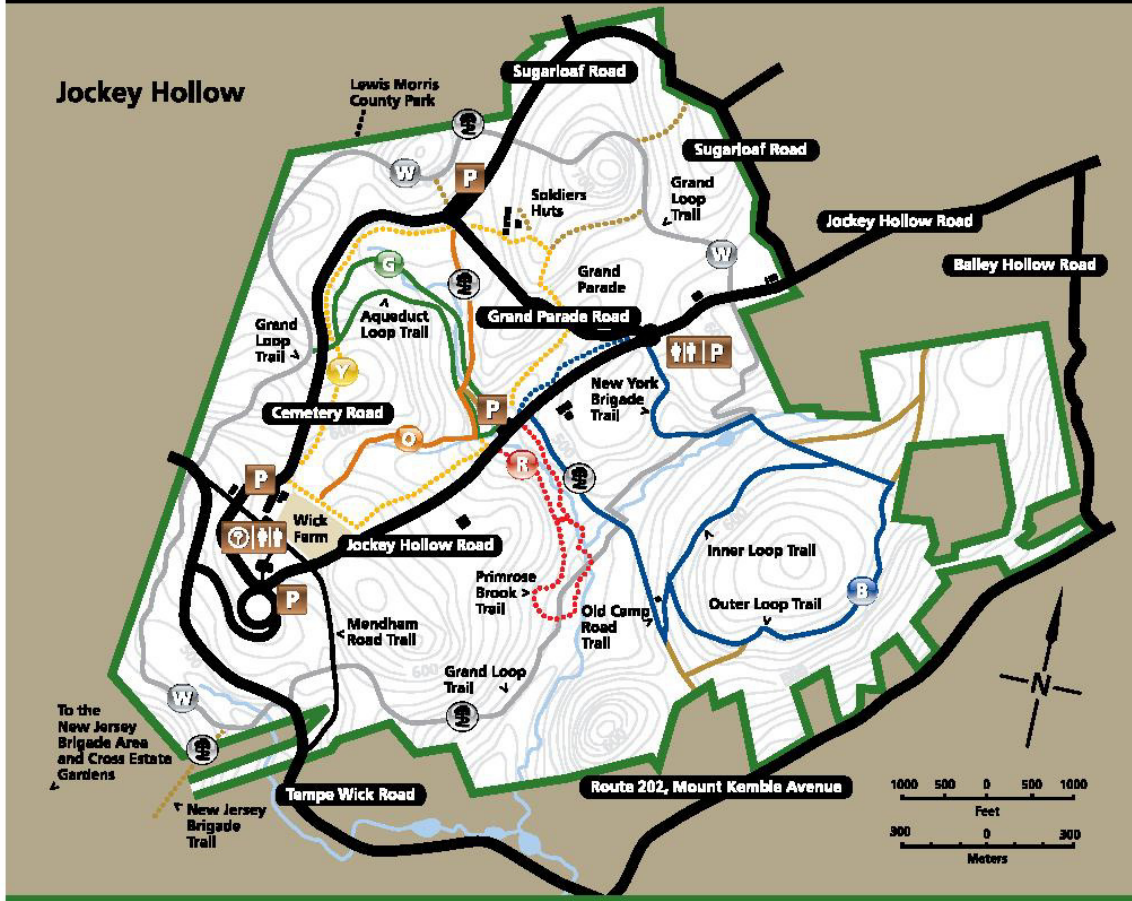
Following is a collage of some pictures from various hikes including a framed picture (upper right corner) that now hangs in the basement office of AU's Hike Leader.



Next, is the Trail Maps from Jockey Hollow ... we hike there at least once per year usually in the winter as it offers us the opportunity to either hike on the snow covered trails or if too much snow then on the miles of plowed roadways.

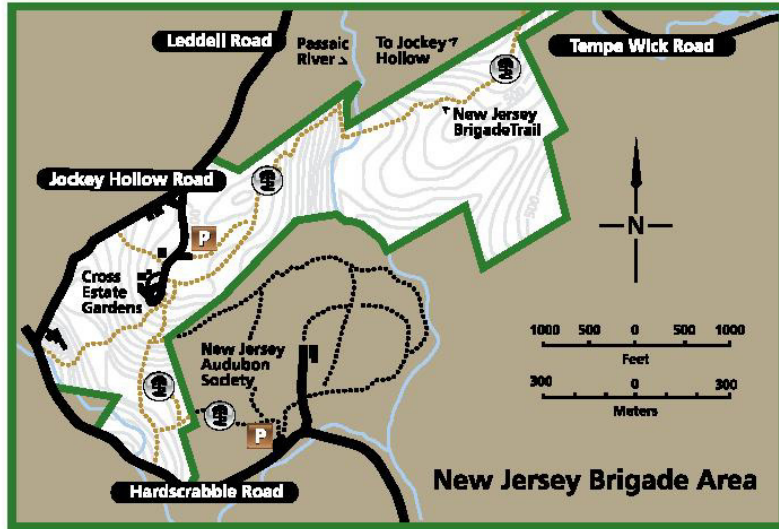
Morristown National Historical Park

Trails Map



Legend	
Blazed Trails*	
White: 6.5 miles	
Red: 1.13 miles	
Blue: 3.0 miles	
Yellow: 2.25 miles	
Green: 1.5 miles	
Orange: 1.0 miles	
Patriot's Path	
Visitor Center	
Restrooms	
Parking	
Paved Roadway	
Foot Trail Only	
Bridle/Foot Trail	
Park Boundary	
Stream/Watercourse	
Building/Structure	

*All distances are approximate.



Emergencies: Call 911

Park Information:

Jockey Hollow Visitor Center
(973) 543-4030
Washington's Headquarters
Museum info desk
(973) 539-2016 Ext 210



Patriot's Path is a cross-county trail system administered by the Morris County Park System. Existing trails in the National Park have been adopted as a spur of Patriot's Path to connect with Morristown National Historical Park and the New Jersey Audubon Society. For a Patriot's Path map, visit www.morrisparks.net



Dogs must be on a leash at all times. The leash cannot be longer than 6'. Please clean up after your dog.



Horses only permitted on designated bridle paths.



Bicycles are not allowed on trails. However, bicycles are allowed on paved roads and parking areas in the park.