



*A hub for the  
History and Culture  
of Somerset County & NJ*

## FLASHBACK

*75 years ago: V-J DAY, September 2, 1945*



The war in the Pacific ended and the world was joyful. But Raritan was still mourning the loss of one of their own, Gunnery Sgt. John Basilone, USMC. The Medal of Honor and Navy Cross recipient for action at Guadalcanal returned home briefly in the fall of 1943. Raritan and the County proudly honored him with a “Welcome Home” parade fit for the hero that he was. He voluntarily returned to active duty but lost his life in the initial assault on Iwo Jima in February of ‘45. Raritan erected a memorial to their hero in 1948 at the western gateway into the town. The fall parade in his honor that became our local World War II commemoration was re-booted in 1981 by the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class of Joann Liptak, future Mayor of Raritan and then Mayor Del Rocco, Basilone’s boyhood friend. How ironic that in this year, the parade has been cancelled due to the pandemic. May we see its return next year! Read more about it here: [raritan-online.com/parade-history.htm](http://raritan-online.com/parade-history.htm) [marineswwii.com/john\\_basilone.php](http://marineswwii.com/john_basilone.php)

### *100 years ago: On the eve of prohibition—1920*

Local newspapers were encouraging consumption of a healthful beverage: *PRIVATE SEAL [Beer] invigorates, strengthens, and nourishes. For family use – and for all needing a food tonic.* (from the pages of Somerset County’s *Unionist Gazette*)

### *250 years ago: Rolling Toward Revolution----- --- September 1770*

Six months after British soldiers fired into a crowd of Boston protesters, there was little good news from Boston. Anti-British feeling continued to fester especially in port cities like Boston, New York, Newark, and Perth Amboy. By royal decree, the hated Townsend Revenue Acts were repealed in April but not the tea tax. The soldiers responsible for the so-called “Boston Massacre” had not yet been arraigned for murder. A Boston lawyer, John Adams, concerned that the defendants receive a fair trial, was considering defending them.