**FRIENDS OF MONMOUTH BATTLEFIELD**

**NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2016**

**PROGRAM ON GENERAL WAYNE**

**MOVED FROM OCTOBER 5 to OCTOBER 6**

Dr. David Martin’s program on the important role of General Anthony Wayne at the battle of Monmouth has been moved back a night, from Wednesday, October 5 to Wednesday October 6. This was caused by a conflict in scheduling at the main branch of the Monmouth County Library, where the program will be held.

The full name of the program is *He Was Everywhere: General Anthony Wayne at the Battle of Monmouth*. General Wayne was one of Washington’s best and most aggressive commanders at Monmouth. He played a critical role in three major phases of the battle: Lee’s morning fight east of town, the fighting at the Point of Woods at mid-day, and in the last major American counterattack late in the battle. A discussion will also be held on why and when Wayne was called “Mad.”

This program will be given at 7 PM on Thursday, October 6. The library’s address is 125 Symmes Drive, Manalapan, NJ 07726. The presentation is being co-sponsored by Monmouth County Library.

**PRESENTATION GIVEN IN SEPTEMBER ON**

**THE ROLE OF THE NJ MILITIA IN THE BATTLE**

On Sunday, September 11, Dr. Martin gave a talk on the important role of the New Jersey militia in the Monmouth campaign. The militia played a critical role in the opening phase of the campaign by harassing the British line of march and keeping General Washington informed on enemy movements. A number of militia regiments gathered at Tennent Church the day before the battle under the command of General Philemon Dickinson. The night before the battle the Morris militia attacked the British camps north of Freehold. Then on the morning of the battle several militia regiments opened the fight by engaging the British forces at the hedgerow about 8 AM for about half an hour. During and after the battle other militia units operated against the British wagons and line of march from Monmouth Court House to Colts Neck.

Of particular interest is the pension application of a soldier named Richard Lee from the Essex Militia who participated in the Monmouth campaign. He was called to duty at Rahway in May 1778 and marched from there to Maidenhead (now Lawrenceville). In June he marched “to the county of Monmouth and with the militia with which he was connected, remained as a reserve or rear guard during the battle.” This account is of special interest because the Essex militia is not otherwise credited as being present in the campaign. The material was shared with us by a visitor to the Park from Michigan several months ago, and we are most appreciative.

For more information on how the New Jersey militia was raised and organized during the Revolution, we highly recommend the first chapter of the 2015 book *The American Revolution in New Jersey,”* edited by James Gigantino. The chapter is by William Kidder and is entitled “A Disproportionate Burden on the Willing.”

**“BATTLE OF NEW YORK IN NEW JERSEY”**

**EVENT PROVES SUCCESSFUL**

On September 17-18 the Friends of Monmouth Battlefield cosponsored, along with the Park and the reenactors, a major new reenactment at the Park. It was called “The Battle of New York in New Jersey, and was held to commemorate the 240th anniversary of the battle of New York in 1776. The event was held at Monmouth Battlefield State Park because of the excellent location and facilities available.

All together about 450 troops from the British Brigade and the Continental Line participated in the weekend activities. This was the biggest array of reenactors since the 235th reenactment of Monmouth held three years ago. Both armies had large encampments with almost as many tents as there were back in 2003 for the 225th anniversary of Monmouth.

The biggest difference with our usual June reenactment of the Battle of Monmouth was the form and location of the two reenactments. The reenactment on Saturday took place on the northeastern slope of Comb’s Hill (near the Visitor Center, but more towards Route 9 than our June reenactment). It commemorated the Battle of Brooklyn Heights (also known as the Battle of Long Island), fought on August 27, 1776). Sunday’s battle was held in a new area, to the north of the visitor parking area, and recreated the Battle of Harlem Heights (fought on September 16,1776).

There was a large number of sutlers, along with artillery drills, children’s musket drills (using wooden muskets), and demonstrations of cooking, laundry, music, and period medical and hospital practices.

The weekend was successful, though not without issues. Event administrators were anxious for several hours Saturday that the Park might be closed down due to terrorist activities in New York and Seaside. On Sunday, three reenactors collapsed from heat exhaustion, and a traffic accident on Route 33 Business near the Park that knocked out electricity to the Visitor Center for an hour. Though there were a lot of reenactors present, attendance by the public was lower than hoped for, being about half of what our June reenactment of Monmouth usually draws. This was for a number of reasons, including the threat of thunderstorms on Sunday (which never did materialize) and the fact that this was a new event and was not based on a New Jersey battle. Even so, over 2000 visitors attended and we managed to cover expenses and even make a slight amount of money to support our projects at the Park. Our sincere thanks are given to the fifteen or so FOMB members who helped at the front gate, the information table, the gift shop, and the snack and shirts sales tables.

**MONMOUTH COUNTY ARCHIVES DAY SET FOR OCT. 8**

Monmouth County Library will be holding its 22nd annual Archives and History Day on Saturday, October 8, at the library’s main branch on Symmes Drive in Manalapan. Over sixty historical societies and other historical organizations will be having display tables. The event runs from 9 AM to 3 PM. Featured speaker at 1 PM will be Paul Schopp on the topic of the “Blue Come,” the old train service from Jersey City to Atlantic City. There will also be a showing at 10:15 AM of the video “Called to Duty,” which is about Civil War recruiting, the 14th New Jersey Infantry, and the training camp at Camp Vredenburg located within the present bounds of Monmouth Battlefield State Park). FOMB will have a display table, so stop by and see us!

**THE BATTLE FOR NEW YORK**

By David Martin, President, FOMB

The Battle for New York took place 240 years ago, in the summer and fall of 1776. The Revolutionary War had actually not been going too badly for the Americans up until this point. The British had been driven out of Boston in the spring of 1776, and independence had been declared in July. The British, however, were nowhere near giving up the fight. That summer a large British army, led by General Sir William Howe, headed out to attack New York, supported by a huge fleet. They would be unsuccessfully opposed by the American force, led by General George Washington, which was compelled to abandon New York after a series of battles and maneuvers.

The British began landing on Staten Island, unopposed, on July 2, and spent the next six weeks gathering around 30,000 soldiers. Washington, meanwhile, was not sure where the British attack would strike, so he spread out his 25,000 men from northern Manhattan south to Long Island. For all practical purposes, he was facing a most difficult task, to defend two islands (Manhattan and Long Island) against a larger force that had command of the waterways. His wisest move might well have been simply to withdraw, but pride and the political situation would not allow him to give up New York City without a fight.

The fighting part of the campaign finally started up on August 22, when Howe began moving his troop to Long Island. Washington responded by sending a large part of his army to Brooklyn, where he drew up a defensive line east of Gowanus Bay on what is commonly known as Brooklyn Heights but is more properly called the Heights of Guan. Washington hoped to use this strong position to repulse the British. He might well have succeeded had Howe not sent a large force around the American lines through a thinly guarded opening at Jamaica Pass. The Battle of Long Island began at dawn on August 27, 1776, when British troops began attacking Washington’s main line. They successfully distracted the American lines while the main British force marched through Jamaica Pass and struck the American rear. Washington’s line began to crumple, and the Maryland regiment had especially heavy casualties. The Americans soon had to abandon Long Island and retreat to Manhattan. They lost about 1500 men out of 10,000 engaged in the Battle of Long Island, including hundreds of men (and several generals) captured. British loses were less than 500.

Washington’s retreat from Long Island to Manhattan was masterful, conducted in the face of the British army and navy. Once he got there, though, he was not certain what to do. He thought Congress wanted him to hold the town, but several of his generals wanted to evacuate and burn it to the ground. On September 14 he finally received permission to leave the city, and he withdrew to Harlem Heights at the northern end of Manhattan. The British landed on Manhattan at Kips’ Bay the next day, and on September 16 began advancing towards Washington’s position at Harlem Heights. Washington ordered some local counterattacks, and the heaviest fighting took place around noon along what is now West 120th Street between Broadway and Riverside Drive. The British forces were outnumbered and were forced to withdraw until their reserves came up. Washington did not want to bring on a major battle, and directed his troops to pull back around 2 PM. This fight was one of the few American victories during the New York campaign, though it ranks as only a minor battle in terms of size and results. Washington lost around 130 men and the British lost around 180.

**THE BATTLE FOR NEW YORK (continued)**

Nothing much happened for the next month as the British planned their next move. At length they made a landing at Throg’s Neck and Pell’s Point in mid-October, on the eastern side of the Bronx. This maneuver forced Washington to abandon Harlem Heights, and he withdrew north toward White Plains. He did, though, allow himself to be persuaded to leave a large force at Fort Washington on Manhattan (located at the eastern end of the present G.W. Bridge).

The British attacked Washington at White Plains and defeated him there on October 28. When Washington withdrew still farther to the north, General Howe turned back and attacked Fort Washington, which a large but unsupported American force was still holding. He captured 3000 Americans and a large number of cannons and other supplies there on November 16. His next move was to cross the Hudson and capture Fort Lee on November 20.

Washington now had no choice but to withdraw from New York to New Jersey, which he also had to abandon. General Howe had achieved his objective, the capture of New York City, but he several times allowed Washington’s army to get away. Nor was New York City all the prize that Howe had hoped for, since a large part of the city had burned down on the night of September 20-21. Even so, the British would hold New York City until the end of the war. They did not leave until November 1783, two years after the last battle of the war at Yorktown, Virginia

**NEW EXHIBIT ON THE BATTLE OF MONMOUTH**

**AT MCHA MUSEUM IS WELL WORTH SEEING**

The Monmouth County Historical Association museum has a new exhibit that is quite well worth seeing. It is entitled “That Memorable Sabbath Day: The Battle of Monmouth in Drawings, Paintings and Prints.” It features around twenty paintings and drawings of the battle and its participants, including a number of pictures of Molly Pitcher that show how the interpretation of her and her significance developed and then changed over the years. Another exhibit has about twenty-five paintings and drawings of buildings connected with the battle, many by local artists.

The primary exhibit occupies the display room on the second floor of the museum that was formerly devoted to battle artifacts. The interesting collection of cannon balls retrieved from the battlefield has been moved to Covenhoven house, which was British General Clinton’s headquarters during the battle. It is located at 150 West Main Street, Freehold, NJ 08828, and is open from 1-4 PM during season on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Covenhoven House, which was built in 1752, is an upscale version of our own Craig House, and is also well worth seeing if you have not been there yet. The sword that belonged to Lieutenant Colonel Henry Monckton, the highest ranking British officer killed in the battle, that used to be displayed in the museum, is now on loan to the new Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia. It is located at 123 Chestnut Street and is scheduled to open on April 19, 2017. Colonel Monckton’s flag, which also used to be on display at MCHA, is away being repaired.

The Monmouth County Historical Association is located at 70 Court Street, Freehold, NJ 07728. For more information on MCHA and this exhibit, visit their website at [www.monmouthhistory.org](http://www.monmouthhistory.org).

**WALT WHITMAN”s “BATTLE OF BROOKLYN”**

By George Dawson, Vice President, FOMB

Now of the older war days, the defeat at Brooklyn,

Washington stands inside the lines, he stands on the intrench’d hills amid a crowd of officers,

His face is cold and damp, he cannot repress the weeping drops,

The same at last and at last when peace is declared,

He stands in the room of the old tavern, the well belov’d soldiers all pass through,

The officers speechless and slow draw near in their turns,

The chief encircles their necks with his arms and kisses them on the cheek,

He kisses lightly the wet cheeks one after another, he shakes hands and bids good-by to the army.

(extracted stanza, “The Centenarian’s Story,” from Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass)*

Walt Whitman, who was born in central Long Island and grew up and worked in Brooklyn, wrote this poem in the early 1860s, at the beginning of the Civil War. It depicts a 100-year-old Revolutionary War veteran telling the story of the Battle of Brooklyn to a young Civil War recruit.

The good grey American poet, who spent the last 19 years of a long life in Camden, New Jersey, wrote famously of the Battle of Brooklyn in his poetry and his journalism in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, where he served as editor in the 1840s and later. He campaigned in his newspaper for the recognition of August 27 [1776], the day of the battle, as being as pre-eminent in American history as the Fourth of July.

The Americans lost the battle of Brooklyn, the first since declaring national independence, and with it, almost the entire war. We survived through the presence of a covering fog (and the failure of British commander William Howe to encircle the American Army) that allowed Washington to transport 9,500 surviving troops to Manhattan island in fishing boats, unseen by the nearby British Navy.

For Whitman, the battle was an ingrained background and a formative experience. He lost a Whitman patriot great-uncle in the battle and both his paternal and material grandparents lived in central Long Island during the seven-year British occupation which resulted. The bones of shallow-buried American prisoners who died in one of the British prisoner ships on the East River washed up on the Brooklyn shoreline during Whitman’s boyhood and young manhood.

Whitman saw the battle not as a loss, but as a source of American stature. He campaigned in his newspaper for a monument to the 12,000 Americans who died on the prison ships over the course of the war, and for celebration of August 27 as “that sad and yet most glorious Day for American and for human freedom.”

**WHITMAN’S “BATTLE OF BROOKLYN” (continued)**

He was unsuccessful in framing August 27 as a national holiday in appropriate companion-ship with July 4. But a 148-foot Doric column now stands in Brooklyn as the Prison Ship Martyrs Monument.

Whitman saw the Battle of Brooklyn as a time of early glory for young America, when North and South fought together against a common peril, unlike the disunity soon to be shown in a coming Civil War. In his old age in Camden he came to regard the East River prison ships in the Wallabout Bay section as nothing less than a symbol of American culture and strength, writing in a 1888 poem, “The Wallabout Martyrs” of the discovered prison bones as the souvenirs of Once living men – once resolute courage, aspiration, strength,

The stepping stones to thee to-day and here, America.

**INTERESTING STORY ON REVOLUTIONARY WAR**

**FAMILY HEIRLOOM SHARED BY FOMB MEMBER**

Marilyn Miller, longtime FOMB Board member, shares the following story about a family heirloom from Revolutionary War times. The heirloom is a “comfortable,” which is more commonly known these days as a “comforter” or light quilt. It belonged to one of her ancestors in the Read family and helped save the life of an American spy in 1778. Unfortunately, the whereabouts of the “comfortable” is not currently known. Marilyn is also proud of having two ancestors who fought at the battle of Monmouth, one in the Morris militia and one in the Hunterdon militia.

The following article is taken from the *New York Times* around 1915.

MORRISTOWN, N.J. An old fashioned comfortable, which has done duty in one family for 135 years, and has had a remarkable history since the time it shielded a Revolutionary spy in the Winter of 1778, has just been sent to David Read of Anita, Iowa, by his sister, Mrs. Jesse Bilby, of Little Washington.

The Read family lived on Schooley’s Mountain [in north Jersey, near Hackettstown] in Revolutionary War times, and it was there that the comfortable was made. There is a tradition in the family that in the Winter of 1778 a strange man in the uniform of a British soldier walked into the house late one night. Only the women folk were at home. They were badly frightened until the stranger opened his red coat and showed the revolutionary uniform underneath.

He said he was an American spy, and was being closely pursued by the British, from whose camp near Blawenburg he had just fled with valuable information which he was carrying to Gen. Washington at Morristown.

The women could think of no place in the house in which he would be safe, but he walked into an adjoining room and, seeing a pile of bedding, grasped the comfortable in question, and, lying down, proceeded to roll himself up in it and against the side of the room. The women grasped the situation and rolled three or four other comfortable in the same fashion and piled them on top of him.

A few minutes later the British came into the house and began a search of the premises. They merely glanced at the bedding and then made their way up stairs.

While they were searching up stairs the spy crawled out of the comfortable and then through a window. The., stampeding the horses, he took the best one and was off at a fast gallop for Morristown before his pursuers knew what had happened.

**REENACTORS DO SPECIAL MARCH**

**TO THE BATTLEFIELD IN JUNE**

By William P. Michel, Monmouth Battlefield State Park

 On June 24th and 25th the Village Inn in Englishtown was used as the starting point for recreating the movements of the troops under General Charles Lee in what was to become known as the battle of Monmouth. Thirty-six individuals from as far west as Chicago, as far south as North Carolina, and Fort Ticonderoga, New York, four of them women, participated. John Rees was the organizer. Peter Michel was the Village Inn contact. The following is Peter’s recounting of the weekend’s events.

A group of dedicated historians from diverse backgrounds converged on the grounds of the Village Inn on June 24th, 2016, to recreate a company of the 4th Connecticut Regiment, Varnum’s Brigade. They would spend the night camped on the grounds of the Inn, wake early on Saturday and commence their march to Freehold, following in the steps of the Continental Army during the battle of Monmouth.

The 4th Connecticut was part of the advance force of about 5000 troops commanded by general Charles Lee. They arrived with Lee in Englishtown the day before the battle, June 27th, and camped near the town overnight. The next morning they moved to attack the British rear guard near Monmouth Courthouse. Lee’s force was quickly outnumbered and forced to fall back. When General Washington arrived on the scene with reinforcements, there was a series of temporary stands made by Lee’s force, giving Washington time to organize his newly arriving troops.

One of these temporary stands was made at what is known as the “hedgerow,” a fence line that separated two farms, the Rhea farm and the Parsonage farm. It was here that the 4th Connecticut saw their first and last action of the day.

Attacked first by the 16th Light dragoons, then the British Grenadiers, they fired volley after volley into the enemy, holding as long as they possibly could, before being pushed off of the fence and retreating to Washington’s newly formed main line. They were then sent back to Englishtown to rest while the battle continued.

The recreated 4th Connecticut was made up of those who have a passion for history, including members from Monmouth Battlefield State Park, Trenton Old Barracks, the Museum of the American Revolution, and even Fort Ticonderoga staff and volunteers. They all met at the Village Inn to retrace the steps of the Continentals who marched out of Englishtown 238 years ago. They stuck to the original route as close as possible for the almost thirteen mile loop that would lead them from Englishtown into Freehold Borough (the farthest advance of Lee’s troops) and then back to Monmouth Battlefield State Park, where they spent Saturday night encamped on Perrine Ridge. Along the march, the troops would stop at points of interest and learn what happened there, including the Craig House, Tennent Church, the Battle Monument on Court street in Freehold, and of course, the Hedgerow. Three camp followers accompanied the troops on the march and other recreated civilians made the Craig House their home for the weekend, relating to the troops and visitors what life was like for those living in Monmouth County at the time.

The idea of an event like this is to gain an understanding of what the Continental Army endured by retracing heir footsteps and learning about the Battle of Monmouth in a new and exciting way. The staff of the Village Inn was an important part in making this event a reality for those who participated, and their willingness to open the site was much appreciated.

**REENACTORS MARCH (continued)**

*Thanks are owed to Pete Michel, and to the Battleground Historical Society, for sharing this interesting article from their newsletter, the* Matchaponix Journal. *The Battleground Historical Society is a nearby sister organization headquartered at the historic Village Inn Museum in nearby Englishtown. If you are interested in membership or in attending their meetings and programs, contact them at PO Box 62, Tennent, NJ 07763, or visit their website at* [*www.thevillageinn.org*](http://www.thevillageinn.org)*. The Village Inn is open the third Sunday every month, from 1 to 3 PM. Its address is 2 Water Street, Englishtown, NJ 07763. Phone is 732-888-6061.*

**ANNUAL MEETING TO BE HELD DECEMBER 7**

The Friends’ annual business meeting will be held this year at 7 PM on Wednesday, December 7, at the main branch of the Monmouth County Library, located on Symmes Drive in Manalapan Township. Candidates for Trustees and officers will be announced and nominations received at our October 6 general meeting at the Monmouth County Library. Ballots will be sent out approximately November 1. As of the moment, all current officers and eligible board members are standing for reelection.

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR**

**Oct 2, 2016 (Sun) Walking tour of the Battlefield.**

Meet at Visitor Center at 1:30 PM

**Oct 6, 2016 (Thurs)** Program on the role of General "Mad” Anthony Wayne in

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| **Save the date: Our next reenactment of the Battle of Monmouth**  **will be June 17-18, 2017** |  |  |  |

the Battle of Monmouth. Presentation by Dr. David Martin.

Held at 7 PM at the main branch of the Monmouth County Library, Symmes Drive, Manalapan**(moved from Oct 5)**

**Oct. 8, 2016** Archives and History Day programming at the main branch of the Monmouth County Library, Symmes Drive, Manalapan, 9 AM to 3 PM.

**Nov 6, 2016 (Sun) Walking tour of the Battlefield.**

Meet at Visitor Center at 1:30 PM

**Dec 4, 2016 (Sun) Walking tour of the Battlefield.**

Meet at Visitor Center at 1:30 PM

**Dec 7, 2016 (Wed)** Annual business meeting. Meeting held at 7 PM at the main

branch of the Monmouth County Library, Symmes Drive, Manalapan.

**Every Sunday Gift Shop at Visitor Center open 1-4 PM**

**Craig House open 1-4 PM (to December 4)**

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**Every Sunday Gift Shop at Visitor Center open 1-4 PM**

**Every Sunday to Dec 6 Craig House open 1-4 PM**

**GIFT SHOP INFORMATION**

The gift shop, run by the Friends at the Park Visitor Center, is open continuously all year. It is open every Sunday from 1-4 PM. It will also be open September 17 and 18 during the “Battle of New York” reenactment. Stop by and get a book or pamphlet about the battle, or a tricorn hat, wooden musket, toy cannon or thirteen star flag for your kids!

If you live out of state or can’t make it to the gift shop, a listing of books and pamphlets available by mail is available on our website, [www.friendsofmonmouth,org](http://www.friendsofmonmouth,org).

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