**FRIENDS OF MONMOUTH BATTLEFIELD**

**NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2023**

**JUNE BATTLE REENACTMENT A SUCCESS**

We are delighted to report that this year’s annual reenactment of the Battle of Monmouth was a great success. It was held on Saturday and Sunday June 17-18, and commemorated the 245th anniversary of the battle. It was a National event for the three major reenactor alliances - the Brigade of the American Revolution (BAR), the British Brigade (BB) and the Continental Line (CL) - and was our biggest event in ten years. There were almost 1000 reenactors and camp followers on hand with their encampments extending far and wide. There were also eleven cannons and almost twenty horsemen, the most of both that we have had present in years. In addition, there were about twenty sutlers marketing their wares.

As in the past, the camps were open to visitors all weekend with a reenactment on Saturday and another on Sunday. The cannon and musket drills for children were well attended as were additional historical programs in the camps.

The weather was tricky, with heavy cloud cover and a constant threat of rain all weekend. In fact, the skies opened up for a brief ten-minute shower at the very beginning of Saturday’s reenactment, just as the troops took position and the cannons began to fire. It was enough to send the crowd scurrying but did not dampen their spirit nor the reenactors’ gun powder. It also rained a few minutes around 6 PM after the day’s events were over. We were very lucky that it did not rain more. Attendance was estimated at over 6000 on Saturday and almost 5000 on Sunday.

**BATTLE COMMEMORATION WEEKEND**

**HELD JUNE 24-25**

Each year we hold special programs to commemorate the Battle of Monmouth on the weekend closest to the battle anniversary. They were held this year on June 24-25. Programming included talks, walking tours, and programs for youngsters (cannon and musket drills). Molly Pitcher expert Stacy Roth gave her program “Over Here Pitcher” both days and there was also a program on Revolutionary era music each day. The Craig House was open both days. Attendance was good, though not as strong as we expected, partly due to the continued threat of rain.

**THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED!!**

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered their time to help with the gate, gift shop, sales tables, information tables, and traffic control at the reenactment and then the commemorative weekend. These included (I apologize if I missed anyone): Caralee Bava-Grygo, Andy Beagle, Bob Davis, George Dawson, Tony DeMonte, Kathy Doherty, Megan Doherty, David Martin, Tracy Martin, Bob McCully, Marilyn Miller, Fran Raleigh, John Resto, Diane Senechal, Victoria Sharp, Karen Timper, and Pete Wagner.

**JULY 4 CELEBRATED AT THE PARK**

This year we again held special programming at the Park to commemorate the 4th of July, which fell on Tuesday this year.

At 1:00 Mott’s Artillery gave a one-hour program on Revolutionary War artillery. This included a full explanation of artillery equipment and gear, as well as an explanation of the duties of each member of the gun crew. The program was highlighted by the firing of a reproduction full sized reproduction cannon (without ammunition).

Despite the heavy cloud cover and threat of rain, almost 100 visitors attended the artillery program, which was a good number for a midweek event. In fact, the rumble of thunder as a storm front approached from the northwest added to the drama of the day. Fortunately, the heavens did not open up until around 3:30 PM, after our program was over.

**ADDITIONAL TOURS AND TALKS HELD**

Additional tours were held this summer as part of our ongoing program to interpret the Park and its surroundings.

FOMB Vice President George Dawson conducted three driving tours in June. On June 10 he followed Lafayette’s route to Rising Sun Tavern two days before the battle, and on July 1 he followed the British route the two days after the battle from Monmouth Court House towards Middletown. On June 11 he and FOMB President David Martin conducted a driving tour to the American campsites the two nights before the battle. These tours were conducted in conjunction with the Cranbury Historical Society.

On Sunday July 9, David Martin spoke on the role of the 14th New Jersey Regiment at the Civil War battle of Monocacy, Maryland, on July 9, 1864. The 14th was one of three Civil War regiments raised and trained at Camp Vredenburg training camp, located within the current boundaries of the Park, near the Cobb House on Route 522.

The driving tour to the Battle of Monmouth Monument on Court Street in Freehold scheduled for July 16 was cancelled due to bad weather.

Dr. Martin will speak on September 10 on the role of New Jersey troops in the Battle of Monmouth.

Programs and tours for the remainder of the year are listed on the enclosed calendar.

All historical lectures are given in the Park auditorium beginning at 2 PM on the date indicated.

Walking tours of the battlefield are given the first Sunday every month at 1:30 PM starting from the Visitor Center. Additional walking and driving tours are given as listed in our newsletter and on our annual plan, which can be seen at [www.friendsofmonmouth.org](http://www.friendsofmonmouth.org) They also start at 1:30 at the Visitor Center.

All our tours and lectures are free of charge.

*Our website is:* [*www.friendsofmonmouth.org*](http://www.friendsofmonmouth.org)

*Our postal address is: PO Box 122, Tennent, NJ 07722*

**FOMB SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR THE REST OF 2023**

Updates will be posted on our website, www.friendsofmonmouth.org

**August 6, 2023 (Sun) Walking tour of the battlefield.**

**Meet at Visitor Center at 1:30 PM.**

**September 3, 2023 (Sun) Walking tour of the battlefield.**

**Meet at Visitor Center at 1:30 PM**

**September 10, 2023 (Sun) Program on the role of the New Jersey Troops in the Battle of Monmouth. 2 PM in the Visitor Center auditorium**

**October 1, 2023 (Sun) Walking tour of the battlefield.**

**Meet at Visitor Center at 1:30 PM**

**November 5, 2023 (Sun) Walking tour of the battlefield.**

**Meet at Visitor Center at 1:30 PM**

**December 3, 2023 (Sun) Walking tour of the battlefield.**

**Meet at Visitor Center at 1:30 PM**

**December 3, 2023 (Sun) Craig House closes for the season.**

**December 9, 2023 (Sat) Annual meeting, 2 PM, Visitor Center**

**December 10, 2023 (Sun) Program on the 28th New Jersey at the battle of Fredericksburg. 2 PM in the Visitor Center Auditorium.**

Craig House open Sundays 1-4 PM, April 5 to December 6

Our Gift Shop in the Park Visitor Center is open Sundays from 1 to 4 PM

**FOMB BOARD OF DIRECTORS** (end of term in parentheses)

Caralee Bava-Grygo (2025) Freehold, NJ

Andrew Beagle (2024) South Plainfield, NJ

George Dawson (2025) New Brunswick, NJ

Kathy Doherty (2025) Old Bridge, NJ

Dr. David Martin (2024) East Windsor, NJ

Marilyn Miller (2024) Toms River, NJ

Fran Raleigh (2025) Colts Neck, NJ

David Shakespeare (2024) Colts Neck, NJ

John Resto (2023) South Plainfield, NJ

Karen Timper (2025) East Brunswick, NJ

Peter Wagner (2024) Englishtown, NJ

**OFFICERS (term ends December 2023)**

President David Martin

Vice President George Dawson

Secretary Frances Raleigh

Treasurer Kathleen Doherty

**LONG TIME BOARD MEMBER ERIC DOHERTY PASSES**

We regret to inform you that long time board member Eric Doherty passed away on July 5, 2023. Eric first joined FOMB in 1992 and served as a Trustee from 1993-2003 and 2013 to the present. He was especially knowledgeable on park buildings, and served as a docent at the Park’s historic Craig House for many years with his wife and fellow board member Kathy. He was well known for his wit and storytelling. Eric was born in Newark and resided in Old Bridge. He is survived by his wife Kathy and daughter Megan. We extend to them our sincerest sympathies.

**TRUCK DEPOT/WAREHOUSE PLANNED NEXT TO PARK**

We have just received word that a truck depot/warehouse is being planned for construction directly opposite the entry to Monmouth Battlefield State Park.

An application to build the facility has been filed by an outfit called “Monmouth Battlefield Flex Company.” They are seeking to consolidate three parcels of land and anticipate serving up to sixty eighteen-wheeler trucks a day. They are asking for variances that include signage 16 feet tall, when current limit is 10 feet, and posting signage for 20 tenant companies, when current limit is 10.

A hearing was held before the Manalapan Township Planning Board on June 22. The planning board will meet at 7:30 PM on August 10 and August 24 in the court room at the town hall.

The concept seems terrible to us on several levels, both aesthetical and practical. It is difficult to conceive the amount of noise and traffic that would be generated by such a project at the very gates of our Park. And reportedly the same company is planning a second truck depot not too far away.

We will certainly keep you updated on this.

Unfortunately, we need to be on the alert constantly for infringements on the Park. About six years ago plans were afoot to build a crematorium in Manalapan near the Park, but local opposition blocked it.

About ten years ago plans were proposed to build a huge communications tower adjacent to Schibanoff Road and Route 9. FOMB and the Park joined in opposition to block it. We are also continually on the alert to oppose periodic plans to upgrade and resurrect the railroad line that runs through the center of the Park.

**ANNUAL MEETING TO BE HELD DECEMBER 9**

Our 2023 annual meeting will be held this year at 2 PM on Saturday, December 9, 2023, in the classroom at Monmouth Battlefield State Park (in the old Visitor Center section). As required by our bylaws, official meeting notice and list of candidates for office for 2023 will be mailed out one month prior, in early November. We will also be voting on our annual plan and budget for 2024.

*The GPS address for Monmouth Battlefield State Park is:*

*20 NJ Business Route 33, Manalapan Twp., NJ 07726*

**DATE SET FOR 2024 REENACTMENT**

The Park has announced that next year’s reenactment, commemorating the 2046th anniversary of the battle will be held on June 15-16, 2024. Put it on your calendar now! The date should be easier to remember because it is Father’s Day weekend.

**GOALS ANNOUNCED FOR OUR**

**250th ANNIVERSARY PROJECTS**

The following projects and goals are in various stages of development towards the 250th anniversary of the battle in 2028. If you wish to help with any, let us know!

1. Setting up special exhibits at the Park museum, including items that

were at the battle in 1778.

1. Completion of the James Raleigh Research Library at the Park. Hopefully work will commence in January 2024. Many thanks to those members who made donations towards this project when Jim passed away in 2013. We also want to thank Robert Berhardt for their recent donation of $400 towards the library.
2. Erection of interpretive markers on Combs Hill overlooking the battlefield. Design work is underway by Victor Pidermann of the Park Staff. We owe thanks to Robert McCully and Diane Senechal for their generous pledge of $15,000 to fund this project.
3. Erection of additional interpretive markers (“wayside”) on the battlefield, in particular development of a “Walking Tour No. 3” in the Point of Woods area east of Wemrock Road, with additional parking there.
4. Erection of a historic marker with information about the battle on Business Route 33 near the entrance to the Park.
5. Assisting the town of Freehold in erecting historic markers and creating walking tours of battle related sites within the Borough of Freehold.
6. Republication of our 1999 reprint of William Stryker’s significant 1927 history of the battle.



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**by the Monmouth County Historical Commmission.**

**LET’S SUPPORT OUR REVOLUTIONARY BATTLEFIELDS!**

*The following op-ed essay advocating additional funding for New Jersey’s historic battlefields was written by Jake Rue, President of the Monmouth Chapter of the New Jersey Society, Sons of the American Revolution, and appeared recently in the online editions of several state newspapers. We thank him for sharing it and allowing us to reprint it here.*

As a Monmouth County native with ancestors who served in the Continental Army, I have a great appreciation for New Jersey’s Revolutionary War history. Rightfully known as the “Crossroads of the American Revolution,” our state played a critical role in that seminal conflict. Ben Franklin called New Jersey “a keg tapped at both ends” with its unique positioning between the nation’s capital in Philadelphia and the British stronghold of New York City. Thus, the Garden State is home to some of the most significant engagements of the Revolution. It was in New Jersey where, against all odds, the heroic actions of General George Washington and the fledgling Continental Army helped turn the tide of the war, leading to an American victory over the mighty British forces.

Recently I attended the Battle of Monmouth’s 245th anniversary reenactment, an annual event sponsored by the Friends of Monmouth Battlefield and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. The commemoration drew some 11,000 people to the state park. Throughout the weekend, hundreds of living historians encamped and recreated the battle, allowing visitors of all ages to be transported through time and witness what life was like during the largest battle ever fought in New Jersey. On a scorching and humid June 28, 1778, 14,000 Continentals under the command of George Washington attacked a 17,000-man British army moving across New Jersey toward safety in New York City. The Battle of Monmouth was a major turning point in the Revolution, demonstrating that American forces could withstand a concentrated attack by the best soldiers in the British army. Given British General Sir Henry Clinton’s

subsequent reluctance to meet the Americans on the field of battle, it also marked the last major engagement in New Jersey.

The ability to have these reenactments and preserve the Garden State’s hallowed grounds is made possible by the steadfast support of dedicated partners such as the Friends of the Monmouth Battlefield, Sons of the American Revolution, Daughters of the American Revolution, Princeton Battlefield Society, Crossroads of the American Revolution, and the American Battlefield Trust among others. As the president of the Sons of the American Revolution, Monmouth Chapter, I am thrilled to hear the news that the Trust is seeking state funding from the New Jersey Legislature to help preserve Revolutionary War battlefields throughout the state — and ecstatic that our own State Sen. Vin Gopal is championing the cause.

While much of the Monmouth Battlefield is preserved as part of Monmouth Battlefield State Park, the American Battlefield Trust, in collaboration with the state park and historians, has identified additional battlefield that could be preserved and added to the park. Additional land preservation opportunities exist at the Princeton Battlefield and elsewhere in New Jersey. In an era of rampant development, acting swiftly prevents these historic treasures from being lost forever.

(continued on next page)

**BATTLEFIELDS ESSAY (continued)**

With America’s 250th commemoration only a few years away in 2026, there is no better time for the state of New Jersey to invest in the battlefields that helped establish and shape our nation. State funding for battlefield protection will create an enduring legacy of preservation that outlives the Semiquincentennial anniversary. It can also be matched with federal battlefield acquisition grants from the National Park Service and private donations from the Trust and other nonprofit groups. This funding will enable the state to accommodate and benefit from the anticipated wave of heritage tourists expected at the Monmouth Battlefield and other Revolutionary War sites throughout the state.

Historic sites like Monmouth, Princeton and our other battlefields serve as economic engines for the state, drawing tourists from throughout the country. Prior to COVID, heritage tourism was drawing 9.9 million visitors to New Jersey each year, generating more than $3.6 billion for the state economy. The influx of

visitors expected for the Semiquincentennial should enable New Jersey to easily eclipse that record, especially given the enthusiasm of the crowds I recently witnessed during the annual event at Monmouth. By preserving these hallowed grounds, New Jersey can highlight the pivotal role that it played in securing our nation’s independence. Serving not only as an invaluable educational tool but also an economic stimulant for the state. I am hopeful that as the budget is being finalized, the legislators in Trenton will recognize the unique opportunity before them to invest in our state’s historic battlefields and preserve the legacy of the brave patriots who sacrificed so much so that we could live here in freedom.

**FOMB OBTAINS REPLICA “MONCKTON” FLAG**

This summer the Friends purchased from a collector a large (approximately 3 by 4 feet) replica of the noted “Monckton” flag. The original flag, which is in the collections of the Monmouth County Historical Association, is thought by some to have been the regimental flag of Colonel Henry Monckton, the highest ranking British officer killed in the Battle of Monmouth. Since it is not standard British issue, others believe it may have been his personal flag. The flag is said to have been captured at the battle by Captain William Wilson of the 1st Pennsylvania Regiment, who also captured what was thought to be Monckton’s sword. Wilson reportedly took the flag home, and it was later donated in 1943 to MCHA in Freehold. Others believe it may be an American flag, possibly of the 1st Pennsylvania. Whatever the case, this may be the only surviving flag that saw action at the Battle of Monmouth on June 28, 1778.

The original flag has a plain buff field, with the British Union Jack in the canton Our plans are to display the replica prominently in the new exhibits being created for the upcoming 250th anniversary of the battle of Monmouth in 2028.

**NEW PARK HOURS THIS FALL**

Hours at Monmouth Battlefield State Park are currently as follows:

Grounds 8 AM to 8 PM

Visitor Center 9 AM to 4 PM, Wednesday through Sunday

**PARK STAFF BROCHURE ON PERRINE RIDGE**

*About three years ago the staff at the Park began preparing a number of illustrated tri-fold brochures on different aspects of the battle and the battlefield. Last issue we gave the text of the brochure on Combs Hill. Here is the one on Perrine Ridge.*

Position:

Perrine Ridge, or Hill, is where General George Washington established the primary American position during the Battle fo Monmouth on June 28, 1778. The ridge is located in the northwestern area of the park between the Sutfin and Perrine farms and almost directly north of Combs Hill (and the Visitor Center today). The site provided a strong defensive advantage with both higher elevation and a clear view of key points such as the Hedgerow, Parsonage and Sutfin Farms. From this position, cannons were able to cover Major General Chares Lee’s retreat from the Hedgerow and stop the British grenadiers’ advancement. The American artillery here dueled with the Royal Artillery for approximately three and a half hours. It was during this cannonade when the events that gave rise to the legend of Molly Pitcher occurred.

The Great Cannonade:

While Brigadier General Anthony Wayne and Lee slowed the British advance at the Point of Woods and Hedgerow, General Washington set up the primary defensive line along Perrine Ridge. An artillery battery of ten guns under the command of Brigadier General Henry Knox was arranged along the ridge. After Lee withdrew from his position at the Hedgerow, the British pursued and encountered the primary American line on Perrine Ridge. The British fell back to the area of the Hedgerow where Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Clinton established his position.

Clinton quickly organized his own artillery battery on the Parsonage Farm. The British had eleven guns commanded by Brigadier General James Pattison. From around 1:30 P.M. to just before 5 P.M., the largest full artillery duel of the war raged. The objective of the duel was not specifically to target the opposing side’s infantry, but to knock their cannons out of commission and weaken their position. However, the haze of the day, along with a thick cloud of smoke from the cannons, made it difficult to see each other’s positions. As a result, very few casualties occurred from the cannonade and neither side lost a cannon.

Once Major General Nathanael Greene arrive on Combs Hill with four additional American cannons, the British were caught in a crossfire. Low on ammunition and caught between the Continental positions, the British were forced to withdraw. While the British fell back, the primary American line on Perrine Ridge watched and cheered as two attacks were made; one by Colonels Cilley and Parker, and another by general Wayne, giving the appearance that the British were being driven off.

Summary:

The primary American position on Perrine Ridge gave the army a tactical advantage over the British. Strategic positioning, combined with the training that the Continental Army received at Valley Forge, allowed the Americans to hold their own against the British in the field, making Monmouth a much needed morale boost for both the army and young nation. The events that took place on the ridge cemented George Washington’s legacy as a Commander-in-Chief and gave rise to new legends such as Molly Pitcher.