**FRIENDS OF MONMOUTH BATTLEFIELD**

**NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2022**

**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 18-19, 2022, and was our first reenactment since 2019. The 2020 event had to be cancelled because of covid-19 concerns, and last year (2021) we held a small scale “living history” program in its stead.

This year we had a full reenactment with all the trimmings: 200+ reenactors, cannons, sutlers, camps, programs for youngsters (cannon and musket drills), and historical presentations, including programs by Molly Pitcher expert Stacy Roth.

The weather was favorable, though a bit windy, more so on Saturday than on Sunday. We are lucky that it did not rain and that the weather was not nearly as hot as the week prior. Attendance was over 3000 on Saturday and almost 3000 on Sunday.

**BATTLE COMMEMORATION WEEKEND**

**HELD JUNE 25-26**

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 25-26. Programming included talks, walking tours, and programs for youngsters (cannon and musket drills). Molly Pitcher expert Stacy Roth spoke each day, and there was also a program on Revolutionary era music each day. The Craig House was open both days.

Many thanks to our members 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 (my apologies if I missed anyone): Caralee Bava-Grygo, George Dawson, Kathy Doherty, Eric Doherty, David Martin, Marilyn Miller, Fran Raleigh, John Resto, Dave Shakespeare, Karen Timper, and Pete Wagner.

**2023 REENACTMENT TO BE A BIG ONE**

Next year marks the 245th anniversary of the battle of Monmouth, which was fought on June 28, 1778. Several major reenactor groups have pledged to be here in force. It may well be the largest reenactment since the 225th in 2013.

Save the date: June 17-18, 2023.

**JULY 4 CELEBRATED AT THE PARK**

Special programming was held at the Park on Monday, July 4, to commemorate the 4th of July.

At 12 noon FOMB President Dr. David Martin gave a short program in the Visitor Center auditorium on the topic “From Monmouth to New Brunswick: The Week after the Battle of Monmouth.” He was followed by FOMB Vice President and New Brunswick town historian George Dawson, who spoke on the topic “New Brunswick in the Revolution.”

At 1:00 there was a presentation and demonstration of Revolutionary War artillery given by Mott’s Artillery. This included cannon firing by a reproduction full sized cannon. Almost 100 visitors attended the artillery program, which was enjoyed by everyone.

**ADDITIONAL TOURS AND TALKS HELD**

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

On Sunday July 10, FOMB President spoke on the role of the 14th New Jersey Regiment at the battle of Monocacy, Maryland, on July 9, 1864. The 14th was one of three Civil War regiments raised at Camp Vredenburg training camp, located within the current boundaries of the Park, near the Cobb House on Route 522.

A driving tour to the Battle of Monmouth monument in Freehold was given on July 17. This monument, located on Court Street, was dedicated in 1883 and is significant both historically and artistically.

Dr. Martin will speak on September 11 on the role of New Jersey troops in the Battle of Monmouth. On September 18 he will speak on the 14th New Jersey regiment at the Battle of Third Winchester, Virginia, in 1864, where the unit’s commander, Major Peter Vredenburg of Freehold, was killed. His final presentation of the year will be on December 14, when he will talk about the role of the 28th New Jersey infantry at the Battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia, on December 13, 1862. The 28th was another of the Civil War regiments raised at Camp Vredenburg in 1862.

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.

**FOMB SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR THE REST OF 2022**

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

**September 4, 2022 (Sun) Walking tour of the battlefield.**

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

**September 11, 2022 (Sun) Program on the role of the New Jersey Troops in the the Battle of Monmouth. 2 PM in the Visitor Center auditorium.**

**September 18, 2020 (Sun) Program on the 14th New Jersey at the Battle of 3rd**

**Winchester, and the death of Major Peter Vredenburg.**

**Held at 2 PM in the Visitor Center Auditorium.**

October 1, 2022 (Sat) Archives and History Day, Brookdale Community College,

9 AM – 1 PM

**October 2, 2022 (Sun) Walking tour of the battlefield.**

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

**November 6, 2022 (Sun) Walking tour of the battlefield.**

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

**December 4, 2022 (Sun) Walking tour of the battlefield.**

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

**December 4, 2022 (Sun) Craig House closes for the season.**

**December 10, 2022 (Sat) Annual meeting, 2 PM, Visitor Center**

**December 11, 2022 (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



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**by the Monmouth County Historical Commmission.**

**ANNUAL MEETING TO BE HELD DECEMBER 10**

**TRUSTEE CANDIDATES NEEDED**

Our 2022 annual meeting will be held this year at 2 PM on Saturday, December 10, 2022, 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 previously, in early November. We will also be voting on our annual plan and budget for 2023.

We regret that Board member Linda Spangle has needed to resign for health reasons. We wish to thank her for her four years of service on the Board.

Anyone who has an interest in serving on the Board should contact our President, David Martin, at [dmartin@peddie.org](mailto:dmartin@peddie.org). To be eligible you must have been an FOMB member in good standing for at least six months. The Board meets 4-6 times a year to plan and direct programs and activities. We have a lot on our plate to get ready for the big 245th annual reenactment in 2023 and the very important 250th anniversary of the battle in 2028.

**SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS AT CRAIG HOUSE**

We are very pleased to report significant progress in renovations at the historic Craig House, the eighteenth century farm house located off of Route 9 in the northeast corner of Monmouth Battlefield State Park. The Friends have made preservation of Craig House one of our primary objectives, and the past several years we have spent considerable funds (with the aid of grants) to replace windows and doors on the building. In the past six months the State DEP has taken the lead and has done extensive work on repairing/replacing the roof and siding and several windows and one door. They also gave the house a new coat of paint.

We will keep you posted on additional progress at Craig. In particular, the doors on the early nineteenth century barn blew off during a recent storm and pose special challenges to repair.

We are greatly thankful to Eric and Kathy Doherty for serving as docents at the Craig House. Without their help the building would not be open to the public, since the park does not have sufficient staff to do so. The Craig House is open to the public on Sundays from 1 to 4 PM, April through end of November.

**NEW PARK HOURS THIS FALL**

Hours at Monmouth Battlefield State Park are currently as follows:

Grounds 8 AM to 6 PM

Visitor Center 9 AM to 4 PM, Wednesday through Sunday

Bathrooms in old Visitor Center and Playground, 9 AM to 4 PM daily

**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. Completion of the James Raleigh Research Library at the Park. Hopefully work will commence in January 2023. 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 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.

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

Caralee Bava-Grygo (2022) Freehold, NJ

Andrew Beagle (2024) South Plainfield, NJ

George Dawson (2022) New Brunswick, NJ

Eric Doherty (2022) Old Bridge, NJ

Kathy Doherty (2022) Old Bridge, NJ

Dr. David Martin (2024) East Windsor, NJ

Marilyn Miller (2024) Toms River, NJ

Fran Raleigh (2022) Colts Neck, NJ

David Shakespeare (2024) Colts Neck, NJ

John Resto (2023) South Plainfield, NJ

Peter Wagner (2024) Englishtown, NJ

**OFFICERS (term ends December 2022)**

President David Martin

Vice President George Dawson

Secretary Frances Raleigh

Treasurer Kathleen Doherty

**WHAT FLAGS DID AMERICAN TROOPS**

**CARRY AT MONMOUTH?**

Determining what flags the American troops carried at Monmouth is a quite difficult subject. Unfortunately, there is no definitive study that we know of on this topic. Years of study off and on leads us to the following conclusions. Note: This discussion is about regimental/battalion flags. Some companies and “grand companies” (divisions of regiments) also carried flags, but this topic is too complex to discuss here.

At the beginning of the war, there was no common “national” flag for the regiments to carry since, frankly, there was no real nation until 1776. Those units that had flags in 1775 carried a bewildering variety of designs and slogans, some lettered with the slogans “LIBERTY,” “JOIN OR DIE,” and so forth. George Washington was so unhappy with the lack of standardization that he pushed for a “common” flag. The result was the “union” flag unveiled on January 1, 1776, which consisted of red and white stripes with the British Union Jack in the corner. This design, though, proved to be unsuccessful. Washington wrote in a letter that he heard that the British in Boston mistook the flag as a signal that the Americans were surrendering. In addition, Americans who wanted independence from Britain objected to the British symbol in the canton (corner).

Consequently, in early 1776 Washington ordered his colonels to fix on Regimental Colours that had some “similitude” to their uniform colors. Here the objective seems to have been simply to get units to carry flags, and not to have standardized patterns for the army. Regiments could still employ any color and design they wanted. For example, the 1st Pennsylvania Continental Regiment made their flag to be green with a red field bearing a hunter and lion. A few regiments apparently carried two flags of the same design but different colors, such as the blue and red flags used by the 2nd South Carolina in 1776.

Quite interestingly, a system of regimental flags was put forward in 1775 by Major General Charles Lee of Monmouth fame. He proposed that each regiment have a standard and that each double sized company within the regiment have plainer “colours.” He also proposed that the word “LIBERTY” be placed on each color. Flags of this pattern were still in use in 1778. Evidence that American regiments were carrying such flags during the New York campaign of 1776 comes from the fact that the British reported capturing eleven “LIBERTY” flags at the battle of Long Island alone.

Analysis of an inventory of flags and equipment in Philadelphia during the summer of 1778 suggests what may have been a pattern then consisting of 13 stars in the canton (either in a circle or more commonly in rows) and a central design featuring a coat of arms or design in whatever pattern the regimental commander wanted. The flags themselves could be any color (red, yellow, green, blue.)

Where does this leave the so-called “Betsy Ross” flag, with 13 stars in a circle in the blue canton and thirteen alternating red and white stripes? This

now-popular design was proposed by a committee of Congress on June 14, 1777,

**AMERICAN FLAGS AT MONMOUTH (continued)**

a date that is now commemorated as “Flag Day.” However, the committee that proposed this thirteen-stars-and-stripes flag was the Marine Committee of the

Continental Congress. Common understanding now is that this flag design was probably intended for naval ships, and may have first been in use by ships of the Pennsylvania navy. Primary intent of the design was to remove the British Union Jack from the canton and replace it with the circle of thirteen stars. Much has been written on this topic, but it appears certain that flags of this design were not carried by any infantry units before 1779, and certainly not at Monmouth. Sorry, Betsy Ross!

The lack of standardized regimental flags was a source of confusion and embarrassment to the American army at the time of Monmouth in June 1778. When the army was encamped at White Plains, New York, six weeks after the Battle of Monmouth, Adjutant General Scammell reported that only 27 of the army’s 50 regiments stationed there had colors, and half of these were in bad condition.

There is only one surviving flag that was possibly an American flag at Monmouth, and it has quite a controversy surrounding it. This is the so-called

“Monckton” flag in the possession of the Monmouth County Historical Association in Freehold. This flag has a plain buff field, with the British Union Jack in the canton. It was reportedly stained with the blood of Colonel Henry Monckton, the highest ranking British officer killed in the battle, and was said to have been captured by Captain William Wilson of the 1st Pennsylvania Regiment. Wilson took the flag home, and it was later donated in 1943 to the Monmouth County Historical Association in Freehold. The flag is thought by some to have been Monckton’s personal flag, since it was not standard British issue, but it may make more sense to view it as an American flag, possibly of the 1st Pennsylvania.

It would appear, then, that the American troops at Monmouth had no standardized flag design; and many units had no flags at all. In addition, none were carrying the now-popular “Betsy Ross” design flag with thirteen white stars in a blue canton and 13 alternating red and white stripes.

What kind of flags did the New Jersey troops carry at Monmouth? We just don’t know. New Jersey adopted its state seal in 1776, and in 1777 its regular troops wore uniforms with red facings. Thus it is possible that some or all of its four regiments of Continental troops at the Battle of Monmouth (the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Regiments, in a brigade commanded by Brigadier General William Maxwell) carried a standard with a red field bearing the state seal as an emblem. There is also a possibility that one of Maxwell’s regiments carried the same flag at Monmouth as was sketched in the summer of 1779. This flag features a white canton with thirteen stars (in rows of 4-5-4), and a light green field with a flat ‘S’ design.

The best reference on this topic is *Standards and Colors of the American Revolution,* by Edward W. Richardson (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982).

**AMERICAN FLAGS AT MONMOUTH (continued)**

(LEFT) The so-called “Union” flag was popular early in the war. It had a British Union Jack in the canton (upper left corner) and 13 alternating red and white stripes. Some flags of this design may have been carried by American troops at Monmouth. (CENTER) The so-called “Liberty” flag popular early in the war. A few of these flags may still have been in use at the time of Monmouth. (RIGHT) No one at Monmouth carried the now-popular “Betsy Ross” flag, with 13 white stars in the blue canton and 13 alternating red and white stripes.

(LEFT) The “Monckton” flag now in the collection of the Monmouth County Historical Association. It has a buff field and a British Union Jack in the canton. It has usually been thought to be the personal flag of Colonel Henry Monckton, the highest ranking British officer killed at Monmouth, which is said to have been captured by Pennsylvania troops during the battle. However, it may well be a regimental flag of the 1st Pennsylvania Continentals. In either case, this may well be the only surviving flag that was actually at the Battle of Monmouth on June 28, 1778. (CENTER) A flag of the so-called “Gostelowe” pattern, a number of which were included in a summer 1778 inventory of supplies in Philadelphia. It is possible that this was the most common flag pattern carried by American troops at Monmouth. The central design could be most anything. (RIGHT) Flag of a regular New Jersey Continental regiment in 1779. It may have been carried at Monmouth.