

FRIENDS OF MONMOUTH BATTLEFIELD FIVE-YEAR PLAN FOR 2026 - 2030

MISSION STATEMENT

The Friends of Monmouth Battlefield are dedicated to protecting, preserving and interpreting the military and social history of the Monmouth Campaign of 1778 and the cultural landscapes of both the battlefield and associated sites within a broader geographic area beyond the Park. The preservation and interpretation of the Monmouth Campaign is a vital link in commemorating New Jersey's role as the Crossroads of the American Revolution.

INTRODUCTION

The Friends of Monmouth Battlefield, Inc. (FOMB) was formed in 1990 as a 501 (c) (3) not-for profit organization for the purpose of supporting Monmouth Battlefield State Park (the Park) and working to protect, preserve and interpret sites associated with the battle of Monmouth, which was fought on June 28, 1778.

No change is being proposed to the current mission statement [see above].

Trustees

The Board of Trustees is currently set at 9-13 members, which is adequate to get our job done. There have been good recent additions to the Board. A fair amount of turnover is anticipated in the next five years due to resignation, moving out of state, and health issues. We will recruit active, younger trustees to help achieve our mission and especially to help with the upcoming 250th anniversary of the battle in 2028.

A major continuing problem is that the bulk of the organization's work is done by only a handful of Trustees/Officers. The activity level of most current trustees has been good, and additional active trustees have been recruited. Membership has grown to over 150, with new record levels being attained almost every year. However, many members live out of state or are elderly, which affects the number of active members. A major goal continues to be to increase both the number of members and the number of active members.

The current meeting schedule of tri-monthly Trustee meetings seems adequate.

Membership

Membership remains strong and is continuing to grow, both in-state and out-of-state. Membership dues were increased but this has not affected renewals and new signups negatively. The level of monetary contributions by the members when renewing yearly memberships is strong.

Programs and Social Media

Our programs are uniformly excellent. These include guided battlefield tours the first Sunday of each month, the monthly Second Sunday lecture series, special tours, special events on January 1 and July 4, and interpretation by our docents at the historic

Craig House. Thanks to improved use of social media, advertising and email contact with members, attendance has increased 50% at almost all events.

Our newsletter is good, though not professionally done.

Our FOMB website is excellent and well maintained. We have expanded our Social Media presence via Facebook and Instagram with nearly 3,000 followers. We now video our Second Sunday Lecture Series and post them on our new Friends of Monmouth Battlefield YouTube channel.

Bookstore – Office Space - Research Library

FOMB is grateful to the Park for the expanded bookstore, which opened in 2013. However, we still do not have adequate storage for our records or office space per se. This is supposed to be supplied through our Officially Recognized Friends Organization (ORFO) agreement. The effort to use the building on Park property formerly occupied by Owl Haven literally collapsed in our faces in 2006 when the building developed roof and structural problems and the State was unable to repair them. Consequently, the building had to be abandoned before being taken down. Our records were temporarily stored in the old snack bar area of the Visitor center for several years until that building was demolished in 2012. Though the Park still provides us with a meeting space and a nice library, we still do not have an accessible office or storage space.

We were disappointed that the research library we established in the old visitor center area several years ago had to be dismantled due to temperature and humidity issues. We are pleased that these issues have been successfully addressed, and that a new research library with professionally done secure cabinets has been installed. We are thankful that the Park staff took the lead on organizing and cataloging the library collection. Policies for usage are being prepared. We hope to have the library open by 2028.

Support for the Park

FOMB was delighted to have aided in the securing of new exhibits for the Park museum. In particular, the large painting of the battle by Victor Timpanaro, acquired in 2024, and the purchase of items for the new medical exhibit now in preparation (2025).

We are also pleased to continue sponsoring our successful history hike brochures and the descriptive pamphlet of the Craig House.

We will continue to support the Park in its efforts to restore the battlefield to battle era appearance. Specifically, we would like to see the view shed improved from Combs Hill to the Hedgerow/Parsonage area. Historic fence lines also need to be repaired and extended.

We have been able to secure grants for the repair/maintenance of the Craig House. We also provide the docents who keep the Craig House open to visitors. We are thankful to the Park for finally addressing the major structural issues at Craig House. We secured an additional grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission for operating costs.

We are pleased to see the erection of new wayside interpretive displays on the battlefield, the replacement of older damaged waysides and the expansion of the trails system. The FOMB are also in the process of installing three additional waysides at Combs Hill. We will gladly assist the Park in developing additional interpretive displays and in developing a full road tour program.

Advocacy for Monmouth

FOMB continues to play a key role in addressing the issue of a warehouse being planned opposite the main entrance to the park. We will always work to defend and protect the integrity of the Park as these cases arise.

We are a proud Heritage partner of the Crossroads of the American Revolution.

FOMB is interested in interpreting the Monmouth campaign outside the confines of the Park proper. We will be working to interpret the battle in areas not included in the Park, as well as sites associated with the Monmouth campaign. We also take part in a Weekend in Monmouth and Monmouth County's Revolutionary War Days.

We remain greatly disappointed that there has not been a full-time Superintendent at the park for several years. On the other hand, we highly commend Park Historian Michael Timpanaro for his dedication, energy and support. He and his staff are professional, helpful, and friendly.

In Summary

FOMB is proud of our accomplishments at the Park: co-sponsorship with the Park each year of a successful battle reenactment and commemoration every June; help with the History Fair; publication of brochures on the Craig House and two historic walking trails; maintenance of a gift shop at the Visitor Center on Sundays all year; providing docents to keep the Craig House open every Sunday from April to December; a fine schedule of historic programs about the battle; walking tours and interpretive assistance at the Visitor Center. We plan over the next five years to continue these programs, with expansion in the areas indicated, as we continue to assist the Park and help interpret the battle and campaign of Monmouth.

We look forward to playing a key role in the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the battle in June 2028.

FOMB FIVE YEAR PLAN 2025

CONTINUE PROGRAMS

- Walking tours of the battlefield. The First Sunday of the month tours have been quite successful, with occasional extra dates. Driving tours were discontinued for insurance reasons.
- Developing the inventory and manning the Gift Shop at the Visitor Center every Sunday 1-4 PM, with additional dates.
- Historical lectures at the Park in the form of the Second Sunday Lecture Series.
- Co-sponsorship of the commemoration of the Battle of Monmouth, held each year in June, with soldier encampments, battle reenactments, tactical exhibitions, lectures and programs.
- Participation in Monmouth County's Weekend open house every May in and their Revolutionary War Days from June to the 4th of July.
- Continuing the July 4 commemoration held each year at the Park
- Interpreting Craig House, Sundays 1-4 in season, plus special events

- Continue assisting with the physical preservation of Craig House
- Sponsorship of our annual Essay Contest Scholarship for Freehold Regional School District seniors.
- Trimonthly board meetings that are open to the general membership.
- Continue supporting the Park and its administration as needed and requested
- Finish developing James T. Raleigh Memorial Research Library at the Park
- Develop library usage procedures and manual. Secure volunteer “librarians”
- Work closely with Stacy Roth to present Molly Pitcher programming
- Continue to pursue grants for the Craig House and for other projects.
- Support of the Park and its projects
- Support the integrity of the Park vis-à-vis railway projects, highway projects, and housing and commercial development
- Support related county, state and national Revolutionary War and battlefield protection groups
- Support the Crossroads of the Revolution organization, to link and unite Revolutionary War sites in the state
- Support the Park in returning the grounds of the battlefield to their wartime appearance
- Maintain a full and active board of trustees
- Maintain and develop our social media presence.

EXPAND AND IMPROVE PROGRAMS

- Secure, maintain and develop a permanent headquarters for FOMB, including office and storage space
- Help create new walking tours of the Battlefield
- Produce and print tours of sites outside the Park related to the battle and campaign.
- Erect battle and campaign related signage outside the Park, after receiving permission from appropriate towns and townships
- Expand the hours and days that the gift shop at the Visitor Center is open
- Help set up additional displays at the Visitor Center (some for our own material)
- Expand membership beyond 150 members
- Fill openings in the Board of Trustees with active younger members
- Develop projects in additional areas of interest in the Park (nature trails, Native American sites, farming and farm families)
- Continue to expand promote our meetings and projects in local and state wide media to develop a higher profile and increase awareness and attendance
- Support more living history programs at the park, both Revolutionary and Civil War periods
- Assist in the development of the site and development of Camp Vredenburg, the Civil War training camp located inside the Park
- Strive to get a historical preservation study done on the Craig House barn
- Help establish much needed repairs at Craig House

- Assist in the repair/replacement of the electronic battle map
- Work on the repair of the cannon that FOMB put in the museum when it opened.
- Assist with the securing of replacement and new fencing for the Battlefield

LONGER RANGE GOALS

(FOCUSED on 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE IN 2028)

- Create plans for a grand reenactment to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the battle of Monmouth on June 28, 2028
- Create appropriate logos for the 250th anniversary of the battle (shirts, caps, medals, keychains, etc.)
- Create a symposium or lecture series to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the campaign and battle of Monmouth in June 2028
- Define and work to complete a signature project to be completed by 2028, such as:
 - Erect appropriate signage on Combs Hill to summarize the battle and campaign.
 - Replant the Sutphin Orchard
 - Replant the Point of Woods
 - Physically commemorate the Parsonage House site
 - Do archaeological survey work to determine burial sites of the casualties in the battle, specifically between the railroad and Route 522, between the Hedgerow and the western causeway
- Work with our fellow Heritage Partners as part of the Crossroads of the American Revolution organization to promote the Battlefield and the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution.