

You've heard the phrase:  
***Company's coming, we need to be ready!***

Well, my friend, America's 250<sup>TH</sup> birthday is next year,  
and we have a lot to do to be ready.

Help us save 218 acres of Revolutionary War battlefield  
and make the stories and history available to the millions of people  
who will be visiting the places where our independence was won.



AMERICAN  
BATTLEFIELD  
TRUST ★ 250

Dear Fellow Preservationist and Patriot,

What makes a *battlefield* a ***battlefield***?

For many years it may be a farm, a field, a quiet grove of trees, or a riverbank. *Suddenly, for hours or days, it is ravaged by bullets and blood, sanctified by valor and honor.*

***Then***, it goes quiet again. It returns to being a farm, field, woodlot, or riverbank. But what happened here ... the blood that was shed ... the lives taken ... the courage displayed ... the new nation founded ... is embedded in the very soil. The land becomes part of American history and is forever hallowed.

But as we know, despite its significance, this land is often very far from secured.

The preservationist movement didn't start until years after the Civil War. That means, unfortunately, that many of our nation's Revolutionary War battlefields have long been lost to development — roads, industry, commerce.

That's why it's truly extraordinary that we have this opportunity to preserve 218 acres of Revolutionary War battlefield — and just in time to celebrate America's 250th.

As an organization, we have set an ambitious goal to save 2,500 acres of Revolutionary War battlefield land as a permanent legacy of the 250th. These 218 acres represent an important step in achieving this momentous objective — but we can't do so without your help!

The total cost to acquire this hallowed ground is nearly \$1.5 million. I know that's a tremendous amount, but I have some good news: We are expecting to secure all but the last \$30,000 from state and federal grants, putting these historic acres almost within our reach.

In addition to preserving these hallowed acres for all future generations, we're also hoping to raise \$50,000 to add necessary interpretive signage and expand the online tools to ensure visitors know what happened on these fields of battle.

There are many places in our country that are crucial to telling America's story — but unless you had a guide or one of our maps, you might never know a significant battle took place there ... that American heroes secured victory ... that many gave their lives.

Each year, millions of Americans travel from South Carolina to New England, passing by battlefields, but never realizing that battles fought just yards or a few miles from the road changed the course of our nation's history. It's crucial not only to protect these lands from inappropriate development, but also to mark the places where history unfolded, to provide signage and online resources so our battlefields and our history are not forgotten.

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That's why I'm thrilled to share a very special announcement with you today. To celebrate America's 250th anniversary, we've launched an expansion of something we call The Liberty Trail.

Picture this: a remarkable journey from Florida to New England, stretching west into Ohio and Arkansas — guided by interpretive signs, interactive mobile apps, and robust online resources. It will allow anyone, anywhere, to deeply experience our nation's history. Every sign, every story we tell, makes our history come alive — just as if you had a personal battlefield guide right there with you.

***Please make your gift today. You'll save these Revolutionary War battlefields and help provide the signage and digital experience that will enable Americans to immerse themselves in history during America's 250th.***

Now let me return to the two amazing battlefields we have the chance to preserve today:

**First is a parcel at Johnstown, New York.** You may have thought the war ended in Yorktown, Virginia, when General Charles Cornwallis' army famously surrendered in October 1781. But fighting continued on. Johnstown is known locally as "the last battle of the Revolution."

Imagine it's late October 1781. The autumn air is crisp. Major John Ross and Captain Walter Butler entered the Mohawk Valley leading a combined force of British Regulars, Provincial Loyalists, and Haudenosaunee (Six Nations) allies, striking farms and hamlets as they went.



A weathered monument and sign mark the Battle of Johnstown. Often overlooked, this land witnessed one of the final clashes of the Revolution, where local militia and Haudenosaunee allies defended their homes with resolve. © Lawrence Swiader, American Battlefield Trust

Colonel Marinus Willett, responding to alarms, dispatched scouts and pursued them across the valley with his force of Tryon Co. militia. In the late afternoon, outnumbered, Willett fiercely engaged Ross' force in the woods and open pastures around Johnson Hall. As darkness began to fall, Ross, unable to sustain a protracted engagement, withdrew his exhausted forces and retired to Canada.

Of the eight hundred men that fought that day, many on both sides were defending their homes, avenging their losses ... family, former friends, and neighbors. The Battle of Johnstown marked the end of the large destructive raids of the Mohawk and Schoharie Valleys. Remarkably, this land has remained virtually unchanged since those fateful days.

The 58 acres of land we are striving to save have remained undeveloped except for agricultural purposes since the mid-1750s.

We can consider ourselves truly fortunate that the land has survived as a farm all these years, instead of falling prey to development or destruction. *And we are grateful to generations of families in Johnstown who have kept this rich history alive.*

Now at last, with your help, we can ensure that the land is not only preserved in perpetuity, but that historical signs are erected so that anyone can visit, learn about the history, and understand how and where America came to be. Located next to Johnson Hall, a New York State historic site with a visitor center and parking lot, the land we are working to preserve now will make it possible to appreciate this history even more!

*Perhaps, you will put Johnstown in your road trip plans for next year, as you set out on a pilgrimage to celebrate America's 250th!*

But today, it's at risk unless we act now.



**The second is 160 acres at Hanging Rock, South Carolina.** I love telling this story because it always surprises folks: a 13-year-old boy named Andrew Jackson — yes, the future president — stood at the edge of this battlefield. While the soldiers were charging and fighting, young Andrew was tending horses. Can you imagine how that day must have shaped him?

Following the fall of Charleston to the British in May 1780, the American forces were boldly attempting to reclaim southern colonies and dislodge the British. On August 6, 1780, several hundred troops commanded by Patriot General Thomas Sumter launched a surprise sunrise assault against British and Loyalist forces camped at Hanging Rock. This battle was a crucial turning point for the Patriots in the South.

With your help today, we'll nearly double the size of the protected area here, ensuring this historic ground remains forever preserved and honored.

**Now, let us continue to make history!**

I am deeply proud of the work we have done together, and I am grateful to you. You are helping to save American battlefields ... and you are helping to tell their story!

Which brings me back to **The Liberty Trail**. You may already be familiar with some of our work on this phenomenal project. Launched a few years ago in South Carolina, The Liberty Trail connects battlefields across the state to help tell the captivating story of this crucial chapter of the American Revolution. Now, we are thrilled to continue this effort throughout the eastern seaboard and beyond. The Liberty Trail is going to transform the way Americans — and visitors from all over — experience and understand the Revolutionary War.

Once completed, it will provide an informative and inspiring driving and walking tour that will allow anyone to witness history with their family and friends by following the steps of those who secured our freedom so many years ago.

Informative and thoughtfully created signs will coordinate with robust digital resources that will put expert battlefield history right “*in your pocket*.” Visitors can easily explore and learn the stories of the land that would otherwise be inaccessible and uninterpreted without a human guide. With your help today, we will be able to add as many as ten new interpretive signs to these two Revolutionary War battlefields, reaching visitors in time for the 250th celebration and beyond.

We have already taken significant steps in bringing The Liberty Trail to life. **But there is much more to do!** That is why, if we can achieve the funding goal of \$80,000 to secure these 218 Revolutionary War battlefield acres and help expand The Liberty Trail, we'll make the 250th celebration that much better for all.

**As I often say: “Company’s coming, and we’ve got to be ready.”**



Illustration of a young Andrew Jackson.  
© American Battlefield Trust



Hanging Rock Battlefield signage featuring Patriot General Thomas Sumter. © American Battlefield Trust



A wayfinder sign as part of The Liberty Trail.  
© American Battlefield Trust

We're expecting an enormous boost in Revolutionary War tourism next year, as the nation celebrates America's 250th birthday. The more we can do now, the more **ready we will be** for the history enthusiasts, families, school groups, and all visitors who will come seeking an opportunity to commemorate our past. With your help, they will be able to stand on preserved battlefields with valuable interpretation and online resources to help them understand what otherwise might have been lost.

But my friend, none of this can happen without you. The land doesn't save itself. The signs and stories don't just appear on the battlefield. We're so close, but we need your help to reach this final goal. The incredible news is that your gift right now will be matched nearly \$50-to-\$1! That's a generous match that honestly doesn't come around often!

Now, I know you don't give just because of matches and numbers. You give because you love history. Because you care deeply about our nation's heritage. Because you believe that future generations deserve to walk on the same ground where brave Patriots made the ultimate sacrifice for liberty. *Our history shapes who we are as Americans.*

Your gift today isn't just a gift — it's a legacy.

I asked earlier, ***what makes a battlefield a battlefield?*** *More than sod and stream, it is made of courage and character, of lives lost and freedoms won.*

Think of your gift as a birthday gift to our nation — part of an ambitious goal to save 2,500 acres of Revolutionary War history for future generations — and a way to say thank you to the Patriots who fought, and to inspire the Patriots yet to come.

From my heart, thank you for everything you do. Together, we're making history.



Warmest regards,

*David N. Duncan*

David N. Duncan  
President

P.S. America's 250th birthday is sure to be an extraordinary year. Help us get ready by raising \$80,000 — \$30,000 to secure these 218 acres of Revolutionary War land and \$50,000 to expand The Liberty Trail. Your gift today, matched nearly \$50-to-\$1, will make it happen in time for the greatest celebration of our nation yet — our 250th anniversary of independence and freedom!

Plus, as a thank-you gift for all you do to help preserve our nation's history in time for America's 250th birthday, I've enclosed our specially-designed 250th Celebration decal for you! I hope you'll display it with pride.

