



AMERICAN  
BATTLEFIELD  
TRUST ★ ★ ★

## ★ AMERICA'S 250<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY IS COMING ★

This year, America will celebrate  
**250 years of independence** on July 4.

Thanks to you, the land where American patriots beat the British regulars for the first time is **saved forever**. But the job is not done. Help tell the story of how this battle saved the American Revolution.

**We're 89% of the way there. I need your help.**

**Plus, you have a chance to have your name etched into preservation history at the Princeton Battlefield.**

Dear Friend and Fellow Preservationist,

Please travel with me back to the earliest days of 1777. Our Declaration of Independence was not even six months old on the frigid morning of January 3. General George Washington's Patriot troops were tired and hungry as they prepared to face the Redcoats for the second time in just two days and the third time in nine days.

Eager to follow up on his improbable victory at Trenton against the Hessians, Washington and his outnumbered Continental force managed to evade General Lord Charles Cornwallis's main army with a night march. Washington's audacious plan was to attack the British rear guard at Princeton.

But as dawn was breaking and Washington's forces approached the town, the British commander spotted the American vanguard, and fighting erupted. Lines of infantry blazed away at each other, a mere 40 yards apart until, finally, the Redcoats launched a furious bayonet attack. American General Hugh Mercer — fighting off the blows with his sword — was bayoneted and left for dead near a large oak tree, a descendant of which still stands on the field and bears his name.

Under this onslaught, the American line hesitated, wavered, then faltered.

The Continental Army was on the brink of destruction, but into this swirling chaos of the battle came a towering figure atop a magnificent white horse.

Heedless of danger, Washington personally led the advance across Maxwell's Field, to within 30 yards of the British line, urging them forward. Then he ordered them to fire. The British returned the volley.



After the Battle of Princeton on January 3, 1777, wounded soldiers are carried to the nearby Thomas Clarke House, which served as a field hospital during a pivotal victory for George Washington and the Continental Army.



Waysides: Twelve waysides have been placed throughout the park; together, they provide a multi-faceted narrative but may also be approached individually.

Historian W. J. Wood wrote that “*Colonel John Fitzgerald of [Washington’s] staff covered his eyes so that he would not see his commander blasted from the saddle. Yet when the smoke began to clear, there was Washington, standing in his stirrups, calmly waving his men forward.*”

Overwhelmed by Washington’s troops and artillery, the British ranks broke and retreated. The “Ten Crucial Days,” which had begun with the crossing of the Delaware and now concluded at Princeton, would embolden a newly burgeoning nation and change the trajectory of the American Revolutionary War.

I never get tired of telling the story of Washington’s charge at Princeton and America’s first victory over the British regulars. It’s no exaggeration to say that what happened on that ground changed the course of the war — and America!

I have stood on Maxwell’s Field many times, and every time I do, I think about how it was very nearly lost — not to cannon fire, but to modern development. As you may recall, a number of years ago, Maxwell’s Field was on the verge of being developed into faculty housing by an international organization.

Only through the tenacious dedication of a handful of local champions, a series of court challenges, a nationwide public relations blitz, and your generous support, were we able to keep the bulldozers at bay. At the last possible minute, the Trust was able to arrange the terms to purchase the 15 acres of sacred land.

Now, nearly a decade later, it’s time to finish the job and turn this hallowed ground into a fully restored Revolutionary War battlefield park. I’m pleased to tell you that 89% of the funds needed have been raised, and now, all we need is your help to raise the last 11%!

Our goal is to return the site to its 1777 appearance, so that if George Washington himself were to visit the battlefield (which he did a few years later, on the way to New York to assume the office of president), he would recognize it.

We’re getting very close — out of the original cost of \$2.2 million, all we have left to raise is the final \$250,000. And if we can raise the last amount before July 4, we’ll be one step closer to completing the park’s restoration in time for the 250th anniversary of Washington’s victory next January.

You have stood with me and the Trust time and again, and now I'm asking you to please **make your best gift today to honor those who fought at Princeton by ensuring that their story can never be forgotten!**

**If you're able to give \$77 or more today — in honor of that wonderful day in 1777 — I'll send you our newly updated Revolutionary War map book,** complete with troop movements, colorful maps, and fascinating stories. (Some longtime supporters may have an older version, but this new release commemorates America's 250th birthday and includes preservation updates, historical discoveries, and more.) You won't want to miss it!

**For your donation of \$250 or more, I will add your name to a special donor recognition sign at the Princeton battlefield to honor your commitment.**

Imagine visiting this fully-restored battlefield, taking in all the history, and then seeing your name displayed as one of the patriots who helped make it all happen!

Any amount you can contribute to this effort will mean a great deal. I truly can't think of a better way to honor the ground where Washington proved that independence was possible than to ensure our American story is fully told. Thank you in advance for giving as generously as you can. This will be a true gift to our nation and all the generations that follow.

If you look to the booklet I've enclosed, you'll see what we have planned for Princeton — the historic orchard will be replanted, the rediscovered fence lines and original roads will reappear, and new interpretive markers will teach visitors about the battlefield as it was on that frigid January morning in 1777.

Do you recall that famous line from the movie *Field of Dreams*: "If you build it, they will come." Well, I've been thinking about that line a lot lately in connection with Princeton. And it's not about a baseball diamond in the cornfield. It's about creating a true battlefield park where people will be able to come learn about this crucial chapter of America's history as never before.

*If we restore it — they will come.*

For years, the annual January battle commemoration at Princeton drew a few hundred dedicated attendees, bundled up in the cold to honor what Washington and his men achieved there — their first victory over British regulars.

This year, as word began to spread about the restoration work already underway, more than 3,700 people came. Next year, during the 250th anniversary of the battle, we expect attendance will double or triple, as more Americans become inspired to learn about and protect our history.



Interpretive signs help tell the story of this pivotal point in our shared history. © American Battlefield Trust

**I know you agree that, as our nation turns 250, our history must be remembered and honored.**

Just imagine if the Continental Army had been destroyed — or if Washington had been killed on that day in Princeton — how very different our country (assuming there was one) might be today.

Just as Washington was relentless in the fight that led to victory, we must be equally determined in raising **the final \$250,000 before July 4** to complete this restoration ahead of the battle anniversary next year.

When we succeed — and with your help, I know we will — this battlefield will teach about how our new nation survived the Ten Crucial Days for generations to come. What began with a remarkable, improbable land acquisition effort will culminate in 97 acres of a fully revived, integrated historic landscape and park. Families and schoolchildren will walk in the footsteps of those who sacrificed everything for the sake of our fledgling nation and understand why it matters so much. I sincerely hope you will, too, someday.

**Please, I need your help to finish this work.**

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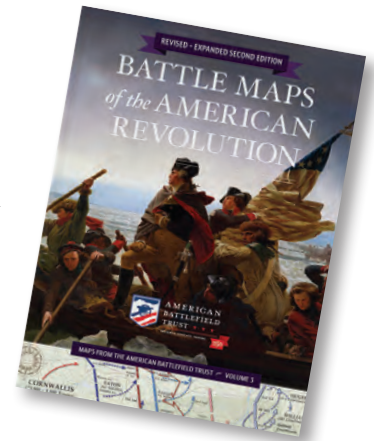


'Til the battle is won!

*David N. Duncan*

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President

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P.P.S. Also, something to keep in mind: with the recent change in tax law, charitable gifts are now tax deductible for single non-itemizers up to \$1,000, and up to \$2,000 if you're married. It may be worth checking with your tax professional to see if you qualify. Thank you again!

*Thanks for honoring our nation, and the brave men who fought and died for it, by giving what you can now.*



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**BATTLEFIELDS.ORG**



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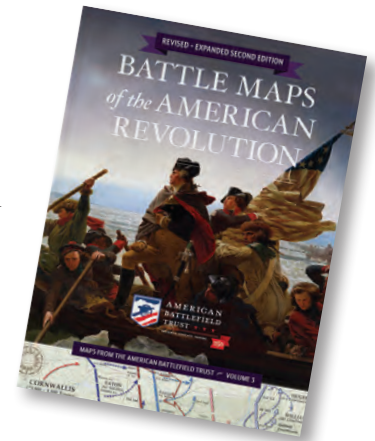


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