

THE BATTLE OF MONMOUTH

photographs by Hannah Smith Allen

we marched, but halted a few minutes in the village, where we were joined by a few other troops, and then proceeded on. We now heard a few reports of cannon ahead. We went in a road running through a deep narrow valley, which was for a considerable way covered with a thick wood; we were some time in passing this defile. While in the wood, we heard a volley or two of musketry, and upon inquiry we found it to be a party of our troops who had fired upon a party of British horse, but there was no fear of horse in the place in which we then were.

It was ten or eleven o'clock before we got through these woods and came out into the open fields. The first cleared land we came to was an Indian cornfield, surrounded on the east, west, and north sides by thick, tall trees. The sun shining full upon the field, the soil of which was sandy, the mouth of a heated oven seemed to me to be but a trifle hotter than this ploughed field; it was almost impossible to breathe. We had to fall back again as soon as we could, into the woods. By the time we had got under the shade of the trees and had taken breath, of which we had been almost deprived, we received orders to retreat, as all the left wing of the army, that part being under the command of General Lee, were retreating. Grating as this order was to our feelings, we were obliged to comply.

We had not retreated far before we came to a defile, a muddy, sloughy brook. While the artillery was passing this place, we sat down by the roadside. In a few minutes the Commander in Chief and suite crossed the road just where we were sitting. I heard him ask our officers "by whose order the troops were retreating," and being answered "by General Lee's" he said something, but as he was moving forward all the time this was passing, he was too far off for me to hear it distinctly. Those that were nearer to him said that his words were "d—n him." Whether he did thus express himself or not I do not know. It was certainly very unlike him, but he seemed at the instant to be in a great passion; his looks if not his words seemed to indicate as much. After passing us, he rode onto the plain field and took an observation of the advancing enemy. — *Private Joseph Plumb Martin*

When we had secured our retreat, the artillery formed a line of pieces

BATTLE OF MONMOUTH, also called the Battle of Monmouth Court House (June 28, 1778), an indecisive engagement in the American Revolution, fought Monmouth, NJ.

Having evacuated Philadelphia, the British under Sir Henry Clinton were marching through New Jersey to Sandy Hook. After a 40-hour halt at Monmouth Court House, the army moved out, leaving a small covering force. In order to strike a vigorous blow at the retreating enemy, American general George Washington ordered Charles Lee, commanding the advance guard, to attack the British rear. When Lee attempted to surround the small force at the courthouse, he was surprised by the arrival of Lord Cornwallis's rear guard, which Clinton had ordered back to resist the attackers. Rather than risk fighting a delaying action on difficult terrain, Lee ordered a retreat but was tardy giving Washington notice. When Washington arrived, he was therefore surprised and indignant to find his Continental forces retreating in much disorder. He immediately rallied the troops

and checked the British advances. Cornwallis fell back and withdrew undetected at night, joining the main British army on safe ground. Washington did not follow.

Having about equal forces, both sides claimed to have won victory, but the British claim seems more valid since Clinton was able to complete his march without molestation. Washington presently marched to the Hudson River to join the Continental Army there, while Clinton's forces returned to New York. The combatants thus resumed the positions held two years before.—*Encyclopedia Britannica*

30 June 1778, The Pennsylvania Evening Post

Extract of a letter from his Excellency gen. Washington to the hon. Gen. Arnold, in this city [Philadelphia], dated Fields near Monmouth courthouse, June 29, 1778.

I have the honor to inform you that about seven o'clock yesterday morning, both armies advanced on each other. About twelve they met on the grounds near Monmouth court-house, when an action commenced. We forced the enemy from the field, and encamped on the ground. They took a strong post in our front, secured on both flanks by morasses and thick woods, where they remained until about twelve at night, and then retreated. I cannot at this time go into a detail of matters. When opportunity permits, I shall take the liberty of transmitting congress a more particular account of the proceedings of the day.

Englishtown, six miles from Monmouth, June 28, 1778, half after 11 A.M.

Sir...I am now here with the main body of the army, and pressing hard to come up with the enemy. They encamped yesterday at Monmouth Court-house, having almost the whole of their front, particularly their left wing, secured by a marsh and thick wood, and their rear by a very difficult defile, from whence they moved very early this morning. Our advance, from the rainy weather, and the intense heat when it was fair, (tho' these may have been equally disadvantageous to them) has been greatly delayed. Several of our men have fallen sick from these causes, and a few unfortunately have fainted and died in a little time after.

Trenton, July 8.

Extract from General Orders.

Head-Quarters, Freehold, June 29, 1778.

The Commander in Chief congratulates the army on the victory obtained over the arms of his Britanic Majesty yesterday, and thanks most sincerely the gallant officers and men who distinguished themselves upon the occasion, and such others as, by their good order and coolness, gave the happiest presage of what might have been expected had they come to action.

General Dickinson, and the Militia of this State, are also thanked for the nobleness in opposing the enemy in their march from Philadelphia, and for the aid which they have given in harassing and impeding their motions, so as to allow the continental troops to come up with them.

It is with peculiar pleasure the Commander in Chief, in addition to the above, can inform General Knox, and the officers of artillery, that the enemy have done them the justice to acknowledge that no artillery could be better served than ours."

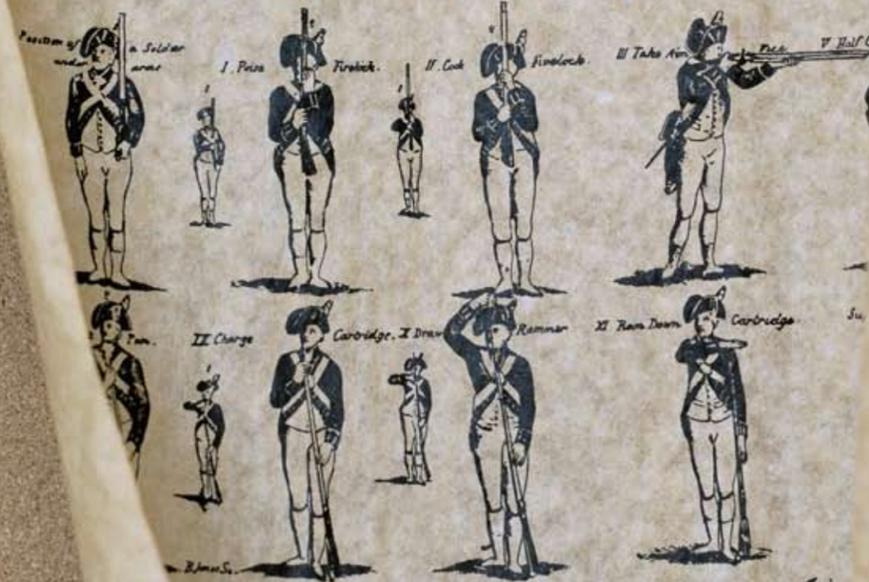
We have a select and strong detachment forward under the command of Major General Lee, with orders to attack their rear if possible. Whether the detachment will be able to come up with it is a matter of question, especially before they get into strong grounds. Besides this, Morgan with his corps and some bodies of militia are on their flanks. I cannot determine yet at what place they intend to embark; some think they will push for Sandy Hook, whilst others think they mean to go to Shoal Harbour. The latter opinion seems to be founded in the greater probability, as, from intelligence, several vessels and craft are lying off that place. We have made a few prisoners and they have lost a good many men by desertion, I cannot ascertain their numbers as they came into our advanced parties and pushed immediately into the country; I think five or six hundred is the least number that have come in in the whole; they are chiefly foreigners.

I have the honour to be, with great respect, Sir, your most obedient servant, G. Washington



TO ALL BRAVE, HEALTHY, ABLE BOY
 DISPOSED YOUNG MEN
 IN THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD, WHO HAVE ANY INCLINATION
 NOW RAISING UNDER
 GENERAL WASHINGTON
 FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE
 LIBERTIES AND INDEPENDENCE
 OF THE UNITED STATES
 Against the hostile designs of foreign enemies,

TAKE NOTICE



Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday

Recruiting with his music and recruiting party of
 the 11th regiment of infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Aar
 as may be willing to enter into this HONOURABLE service.
 at this time, to enlist, is truly liberal and generous, namely,
 handsome cloathing, a daily allowance of a large and ample ration
 account of pay, the whole of which the soldier may lay up for him
 by law, without any expence to him.
 our this recruiting party with their attendance as above, will have
 advantages which these brave men will have, who shall embrace this
 useful continent, in the honourable and truly respectable charact
 his pockets FULL of money and his head COVERED with laurel
 GOD SAVE THE UNITED STATE







The area depicted above is a general view, not by the Continental and British armies, and is not shown in the Battle of Brandywine, and is not shown in the Battle of Brandywine.

On Sept. 26, the British army, consisting of 15,000 men, arrived at the Battle of Brandywine. The British army was victorious, and the Continental Army fled to Lancaster and then to York. The British army then moved on to Philadelphia, and on Sept. 26, they entered the city.

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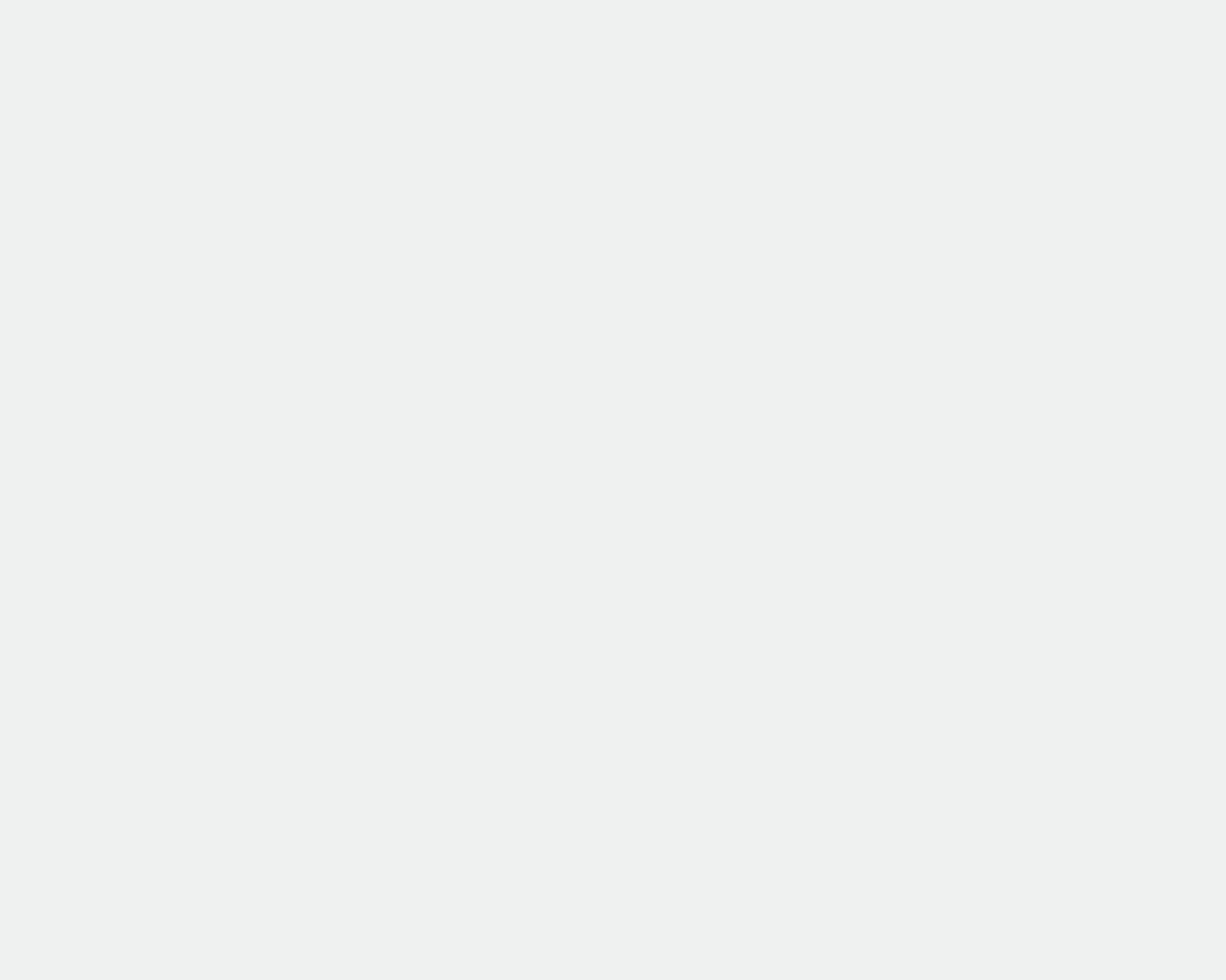
Touring the Battlefield Today

The battlefield is now a park, and is open to the public. The battlefield is now a park, and is open to the public. The battlefield is now a park, and is open to the public.

Nearby Historic Sites

There are several historic sites nearby, including the Independence National Historical Park and the Liberty Bell Center. There are several historic sites nearby, including the Independence National Historical Park and the Liberty Bell Center.



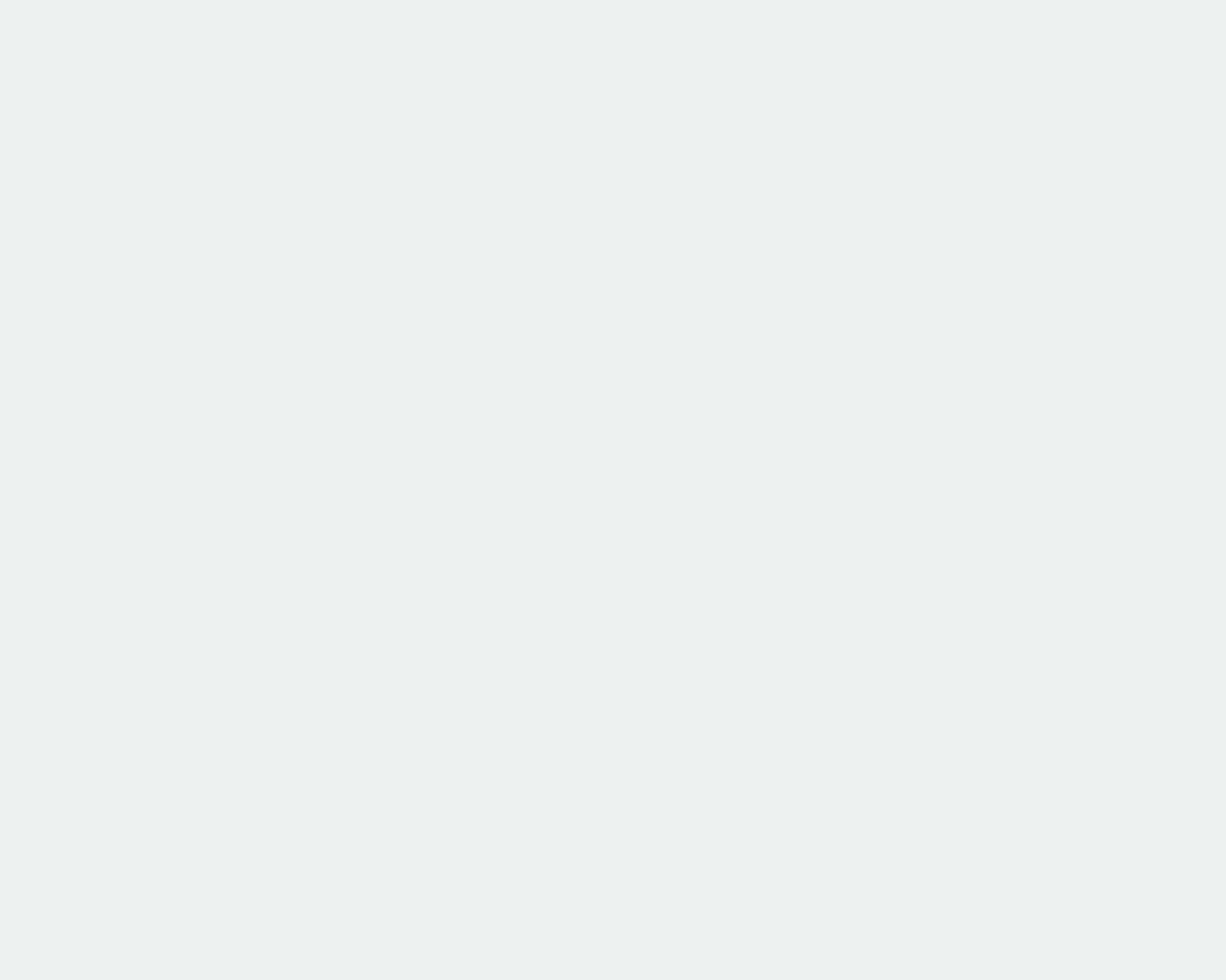








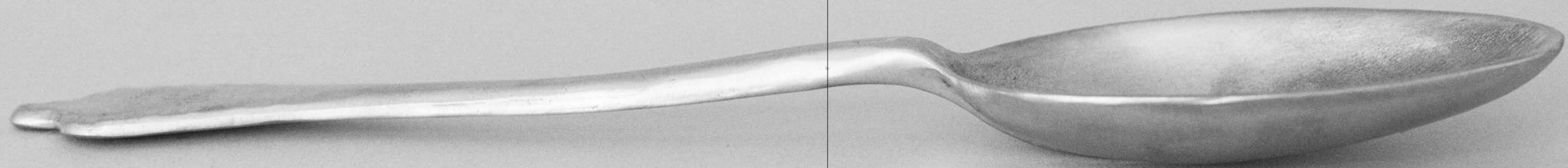


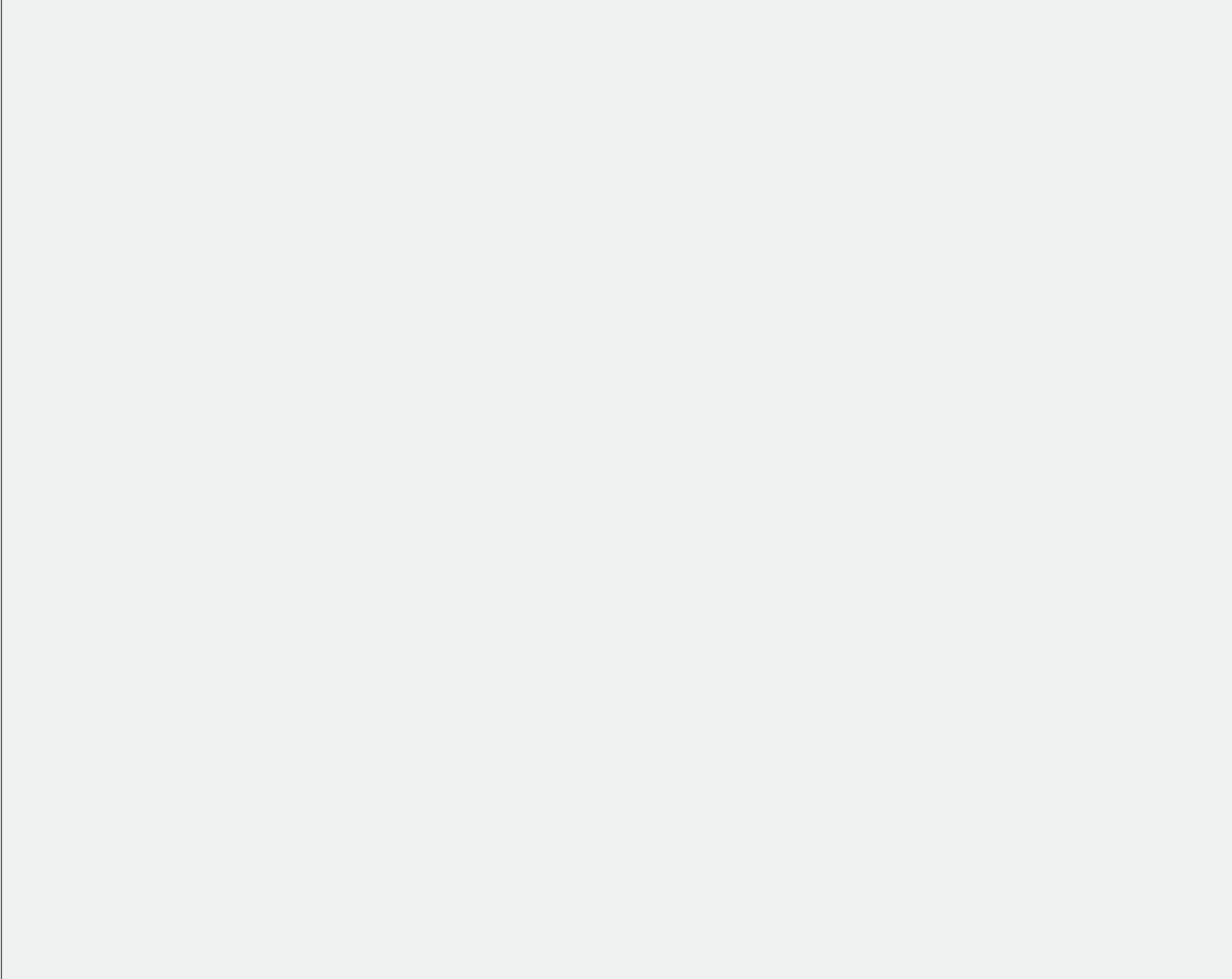


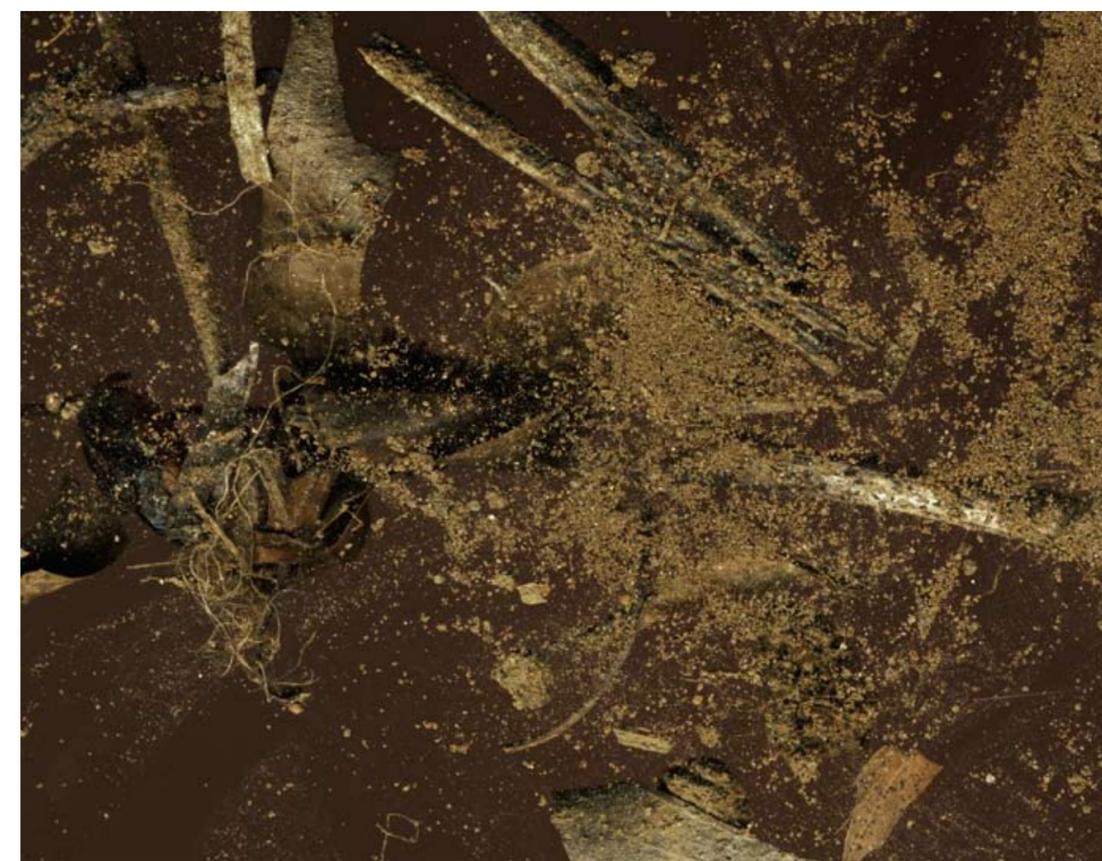


PROGRAM
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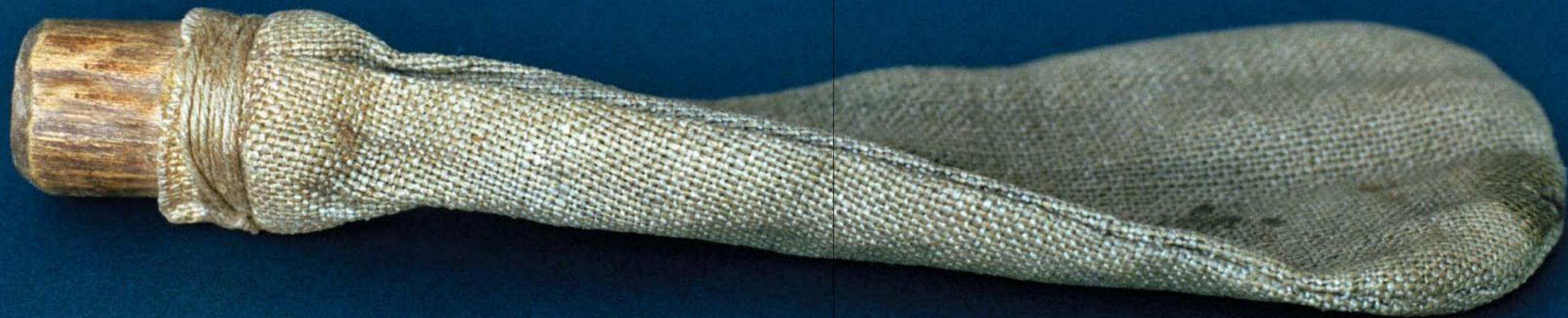








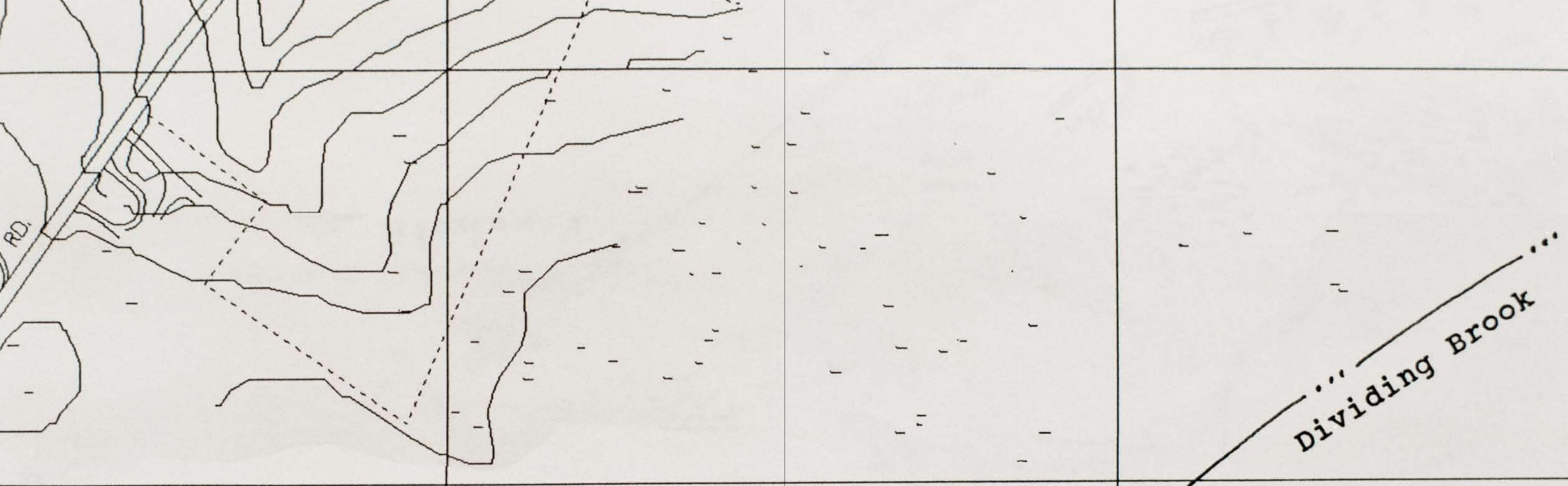






64 The "old country" Three years
his face is restricted
his benign
Portrait by Gilbert Stuart





Dividing Brook

MILITARY ARTIFACTS EXCAVATED
AT BELLE TERRE FARM SITE

HEAD DETAILS OF GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON PORTRAITS
Painted from Life

WASHINGTON THROUGH THE YEARS
By Melissa Vaughan

Washington is American icon hero. Both as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army and as the President who guided us through the early years of independence. He lives in the hearts of the Americans, but through the years many have seen him as a man who Washington looked like.

Washington was known to wear a wig in his portraits. All told, there were 12 portraits from the 1700s including a three-quarter view, some made of hair, the get used of wigs. He said "I am not bothered by the touch of a wig's pencil that I'm sure is often given for a disguise in nature."

Most of the portraits made him appear all of or would show an eye of his appearance. The trouble is that the two portraits gave some the same reason. The more one knows the better, the more one knows how the portrait, some were a better hair and signed several times in order to get the results they wanted. Indeed, Gilbert Stuart actually changed the color of the wig from grey to black, allowing us to believe that the wig would be a "red" color of hair.

Washington's portraits are painted in many different. These reproduced here present the man as the artist saw him through a quarter of a century.

N.Y. Times, Feb. 27, 1940





Appendix

SOLDIERS VOICES

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM HALE
2ND GRENADIER BATTALION
ROYAL BRITISH ARMY

We proceeded five miles in a road composed of nothing but sand which scorched through our shoes with intolerable heat; the sun beating on our heads with a force scarcely to be conceived in Europe, and not a drop of water to assuage our parching thirst; a number of soldiers were unable to support the fatigue, and died on the spot...and the whole road, strewn with miserable wretches wishing for death, exhibited the most shocking scene I ever saw. At length we came within reach of the enemy who cannonaded us very briskly without doing much damage, and afterwards marching through a cornfield saw them drawn up behind a morass on a hill with a rail fence in front and a thick wood on their left filled with their light chosen troops. We rose on a small hill commanded by that on which they were posted in excellent order notwithstanding a heavy fire of Grape[shot], when judge of my inexpressible surprise, General Clinton himself appeared at the head of our left wing accompanied by Lord Cornwallis, and crying out 'Charge, Grenadiers, never heed forming'; we rushed on amidst the heaviest fire I have yet felt. It was no longer a contest for bringing up our respective companies in the best order, but all officers as well as soldiers strove who could be foremost, to my shame I speak it I had the fortune to find

CAPTAIN STEPHEN OLNEY
2ND RHODE ISLAND REGIMENT

After marching two or three miles we arrived on the plains of Monmouth, having a wood near at hand, on our left. The heat of the day was so intense that it required the greatest efforts of the officers to keep their men in the ranks; and several of my company were so overcome and faint in coming, that they said they could go no farther; but by distributing about half a pint of brandy, which I happened to have in my canteen, (which the second sergeant had put there) I made out to get them along. We had not yet seen the enemy, but General Lee came in haste, and ordered Colonel Olney to march his regiment and occupy the woods in our left. We had scarcely reached the woods, when the front of the regiment wheeled, and commenced a retrograde movement. At this instant the enemy appeared and discharged their artillery. The first ball took one of my corporals in his knapsack and back; some one said "Corporal—is killed." I answered "never mind, he has paid the last debt."

We continued our retreat in good order, not faster than a walk. Our artillery seemed to be well screened and kept the enemy in check. When we came to the end of the plain we formed in a line front of a morass, and began a fire with musketry. The enemy came on with such impetuosity that they turned our right flank

ington himself, and commenced a heavy fire with our artillery; and the British found they had got a fresh army to contend with."

We were immediately ordered from our old detachment and joined another, the whole composing a corps of about five hundred men. We instantly marched towards the enemy's right wing, which was in the orchard, and kept concealed from them as long as possible by keeping behind the bushes. When we could no longer keep ourselves concealed, we marched into the open fields and formed our line. The British immediately formed and began to retreat to the main body of their army. Colonel Cilly, finding that we were not likely to overtake the enemy before they reached the main body of the army, on account of fences and other obstructions, ordered three or four platoons from the right of our corps to pursue and attack them, and thus keep them in play till the rest of the detach-

JOSEPH PLUMB MARTIN
CONTINENTAL SOLDIER

ment could come up, I was in this party; we pursued without order. As I passed through the orchard I saw a number of the enemy lying under the trees, killed by our fieldpiece, mentioned before. We overtook the enemy just as they were entering upon the meadow, which was rather bushy. When within about five rods of the rear of the retreating foe, I could distinguish everything about them. They were retreating in line, though in some disorder. I singled out a man and took my aim directly between his shoulders. (They were divested of their packs.) He was a good mark, being a broad-shouldered fellow. What became of him I know not; the fire and smoke hid him from my sight. One thing I know, that is, I took as deliberate aim at him as ever I did at any game in my life. But after all, I hope I did not kill him, although I intended to at the time.

By this time our whole party had arrived, and the British had obtained a position that suited them, as I suppose, for they returned our fire in good earnest, and we played the second part of the same Tue. They occupied a much higher piece of artillery, which the soldiers called a grasshopper. We had no artillery with us. The first shot they gave us from this piece cut off the thigh bone of a captain, just above the knee, and the whole heel of a private in the rear of him

o'clock the General beat; in about an hour afterwards the Troop beat. We fell in & marched off. Went about 4 miles, & made a little halt to search [search] our arms and ammunition. Every man was compleated with 40 rounds apiece. We left all our packs and blankets, and marched on in pursuit of the enemy as far as we could. About 2 o'clock came up with them. Our Division formed a line on the eminence about a half a mile in the front of the enemy, and our artillery in our front. A very smart cannonading ensued from both sides. We stayed here till several of our officers & men were killed and wounded. Seeing that it was of no service to stand here, we went back a little ways into the woods; but the cannonading continued very smart on both sides about two hours, when the enemy retreated and we marched up & took possession of their ground. This place is called Monmouth. It has been very hot all day. Numbers of our men had fainted and given out with the heat before we came up to the enemy. We lay here all night in the field.

29 June. Very warm this morning. We lay still here till 5 o'clock, at which time the General beat, and we marched to the ground where we left our baggage yesterday, and lay there all night without any tents.

30 June. Excessive hot this morning. We lay still here all day.

1 July [1778]. This morning between 1 & 2 o'clock the General was beat. We got up & fell in, & were counted off in order to march; but we were delayed till almost daylight, and then we marched off & went 9 miles without making of any halt, which brought us to a place called Spots Wood. We arrived here about 8 o'clock in the morning, and make a general halt here...."

SERGEANT EBENEZER WILD
1ST MASSACHUSETTS REGIMENT
CONTINENTAL ARMY

S 28. Englishtown/this morn att two oClock we slung our packs/advanc'd towards the enemy about 3 milds from ware lay/part of the militia & light horse that was on the wright engag'd the enemy/then our Division under the Command of Genl Lee advanced towards the enemy/thay form'd in a Sollid Col-lom then fir'd a voley att us/thay being so much Superier to our Num-ber we retreated/thay begun a very heavy Cannading/kil'd a few of our Rijmt. then we form'd again under a fence ware the light horse advanced on us/we began a fire on them very heavy/then the footmen rushed on us/after firing a Number of rounds we was obliged to retreat. a Number of our men died with heat a retreat-ing. A Number of troops form'd in the rear of us and sum artillira wich cover'd our retreat. thay began a fire on the enemy, then thay [the Brit-ish] retreat'd ... we went back to the ground ware we left in the morning att English town ...

SERGEANT JEREMIAH GREENMAN
2ND RHODE ISLAND REGIMENT

M 29. Continuing in English town. this day we buried all the dead/the enemy gone off intirly/very hott indeed so that the men that wan [went] on a march retreating yes-terday throy'd away thay packs & so forth and a Number dyed before ye enemy retreated back.

T 30. Continuing in a field near to English town/water very scarce indeed/Such a Number of Sol-ders that water is almost as scares as Liquor & what is got is very bad indeed ... this afternoon we draw'd two days provision & fit for a march."

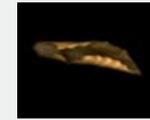
Afterword

Today, the Battle of Monmouth exists in fragments. State boundaries arbitrarily delineate battleground from suburban farmland; obscure texts describe the heat and weather on a day that past more than one hundred years before, and still, some of our history remains buried under years of farming and industrialization. In our attempts to understand the past, we mark the land and create narrative out of experience. Even though history disappears into the present, we try to locate the historic in an empty field, a replicated object, or an illegible text.

We Americans are haunted by our past. It quietly emerges to remind us of former ideologies, defeats, and victories. Photographs often serve as historic reminders. They point to times, locations, and experiences that exist deep in the recesses of our most private and collective memories. And yet there are still times when a place can seem so haunted that light, film, shadow, and mere material cannot embody its presence. Then we must turn to explanation:

One Saturday afternoon in late summer, the battlefield attendant told me to visit the Old Tenant Church, an American landmark just west of the battlefield. Supposedly, Revolutionary War blood stains the church pews. I went to the site and peered in the shuttered windows hoping that I might see some history. Instead, I discovered something different. The church doors were sealed tight. There was no obvious entry. Nobody was around me either. I saw no people coming or going, no cars, no animals, just gravestones. On closer examination, I noticed a small doorbell to the left of the door handle. Below the bell a carefully typed sign read, “Press here for history.” I pressed the button and waited. I half expected old man history to creak open the door and recall his life story, but nobody came. Then, apparently out of nowhere, I heard an audio recording, and I listened to a friendly historian take me away from 2008 and deposit me some two hundred years before. I am not sure

if there is one single meaning to this anecdote. At the very least, it points to our inability to meld the past and the present. It was a humorous, disjointed, ironic, and yet a strangely earnest moment. After all, the doorbell represents a single attempt to illuminate an event that we will never be able to see.—*Hannah Smith Allen*



Photographer's Notes

- Sutfin Farm Cornfield, January 2007. On the afternoon of June 28th, 1778, British and Continental troops met on this ground. General George Washington stood on the far hill and oversaw the conflict.
- Call to Arms (replica), February 2007. The original recruitment poster called upon civilians to enlist in the army and fight for America's independence.
- Powder Horn (replica) on Cream, March 2007. During the Revolutionary War, soldiers and militiamen stored explosive gunpowder in horns like this one.
- First Pennsylvania Soldier (wall graphic), February 2007. The soldier graphic is part of a larger exhibition on display at the Monmouth Battlefield State Park and Visitor Center.
- Cornhusk (extraction), February 2007. The cornhusk was originally extracted from the Sutfin Farm. It was scanned the following year.
- Perrine Ridge, May 2008. General George Washington and the Continental troops held this ground on the afternoon of June 28th, 1778.
- Park Interpretation on Blue Bulletin, May 2008. The laminated pamphlet is stapled to a wooden kiosk due south of Sutfin battle site. The pamphlet includes reenactment photographs as well as maps to help visitors navigate the site and its history.
- Spotswood South Brook, October 2006. South Brook separated the Continental cannons on Comb's Hill from the British forces on Parsonage Farm.
- South Brook Sticks (extraction), November 2006. Six sticks were extracted from Spotswood South Brook. They were scanned later that year.
- Sir Henry Clinton (wall graphic) and Cannon Wheel, January 2007. The Clinton graphic is part of a larger exhibition on display at the Monmouth Battlefield State Park and Visitor Center. Sir Henry Clinton, son of former New York Governor Admiral George Clinton, led the British Army at the Battle of Monmouth.
- Flintlock Pistol (replica) on Cream, March 2007. Both civilians and militiamen carried flintlock pistols during the American Revolutionary War.
- Molly Pitcher Being Presented to George Washington After the Battle of Monmouth (Postcard Reproduction), January 2007. Almost 80 years after the Battle of Monmouth, Dennis Malone Carter painted this representation of legendary war heroine Mary Hayes who fearlessly manned the cannonade when her husband fell dead during action. The original painting can be found at the Monmouth County Historical Society, Freehold, New Jersey.
- Sutfin Grass in Fog, June 2008. On the afternoon of June 28th, 1778, British and Continental troops fought on the grassy surface of the Sutfin farm field.
- Grass (extraction), Combs Farm, November 2006. During the summer 2006, grass was extracted from the Combs Hill battle site. It was scanned later that year.
- Sutfin House, July 2008. The Sutfin House stood in the middle of the Sutfin battle site. On the night of June 28th, 1778 General George Washington and General Alexander Hamilton sought refuge under the nearby tree.
- Battlefield Engraving on Brown Mat Board, July 2008. The original battlefield illustration appeared in a twentieth century American history textbook.
- Historic Houses (wall graphics) and Revolutionary Cannon, March 2007. The Monmouth county colonial farmhouse graphics are part of a larger exhibition on display at the Monmouth Battlefield State Park and Visitor Center.
- Colonial Spoon (replica) on Grey, January 2007. Revolutionary war soldiers often carried one utensil into battle. Archeologists excavated remnants of common household items from many battle sites.
- Sutfin House (faux windows), May 2008. The original Sutfin farmhouse, a shell its former frame, today sits in the middle of the vacant battlefield.
- Battlefield Soil (extraction) on Brown, July 2008. The original battlefield illustration appeared in a twentieth century American history textbook.
- Battlefield Soil (extraction) on Brown II, August 2008. During the summer of 2008, soil was extracted from the battlefield. It was scanned later that year.
- Battlefield Soil (extraction) on Green, August 2008. During the summer of 2008, soil was extracted from the battlefield. It was scanned later that year.
- Sutfin Farm (at dawn), June 2008. On the afternoon of June 28th, 1778, British and Continental troops met on this ground.
- Leaf (extraction), February 2007. During fall 2006, the original leaf was extracted from the Parsonage farm. It was scanned the following year.
- Battle of Monmouth Illustration, August 2007. The original illustration by Adam Hook appeared in Monmouth Courthouse, 1778, an English book written by Brendan Morrissey and published by Osprey Publishing.
- Tricorn Hat (replica) on Cream, April 2008. During the American Revolution, both soldiers and civilians wore tricorn style hats.
- Perrine Ridge, January 2008. General George Washington and the Continental troops held this ground on the afternoon of June 28th, 1778.
- Musket Powder Bag (original) on Blue, May 2008. Many soldiers at Monmouth stored explosive gunpowder in musket bags like this one.
- George Washington (wall graphic), September 2006. The Washington graphic is part of a larger exhibition on display at the Monmouth Battlefield State Park and Visitor Center.
- Belly Box (replica) on Cream, June 2008. At Monmouth, soldiers stored their ammunition in belly boxes strapped to their waists.
- Combs Hill (from the south), July 2006. On this summit, American troops under the direction of General Nathaniel Green positioned four guns during the afternoon of June 28th, 1778.
- Artifact Map, January 2008. The artifact map marks the site of archeological activity on the battlefield. The map is on file at the Monmouth County Historical Society.
- George Washington (wall graphic), Bird Decal, and Jeep, March 2008. The Washington graphics are part of a larger exhibition on display at the Monmouth Battlefield State Park and Visitor Center.
- Interpretive Signs (Perrine Ridge), May 2008. The signs on Perrine ridge face the Sutfin Farm, site of the afternoon conflict between British and Continental troops. These signs describe the actions of General George Washington and Mary Hayes, a woman who took position at the cannon after her husband fell dead in the line of duty.

Acknowledgements

I owe many thanks to all the people who inspired and supported this project. Specifically, I thank Elizabeth Ward for her amazing design, as well as her patience, keen eye and companionship as we ventured together into Jersey history. In addition, I would like to thank Tiana Peterson for her wisdom, Charles Traub and members of SVA MFA Photo Community for their guidance and encouragement, and the Aaron Siskind Foundation for its support.