



A Newsletter from the Princeton Battlefield Society - Winter 2021

MICHAEL RUSSELL ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE ★★★★ PRINCETON BATTLEFIELD SOCIETY ★★★★★

Michael Russell was elected President of the Princeton Battlefield Society at its meeting on February 23. Russell has been a teacher in New Jersey for the past 22 years and a Society trustee since 2018. He has served as chair of the Site Committee, as chair of its annual Clean Up Day, a Mercer Oak Award Committee member, and as co-director of the successful 2019 Experience the Battle of Princeton.



Michael Russell

He steps into the role of president with praises for Jerry Hurwitz, who served as president for the past twenty years. "Jerry was synonymous with the Princeton Battlefield Society," stated Russell. "He guided our Society through difficult years of re-organization coupled with a multi-year struggle to protect the battlefield from real estate encroachment. His role in the recruitment of support from the American Battlefield Trust led to the purchase of almost 15 acres of land on which George Washington rallied his troops to defeat British Regulars. He was instrumental in preserving the history of the Princeton Battlefield."

The Board conferred on Hurwitz the title of President Emeritus. Reelected earlier were Ben Strong as Vice President, Tom Pyle as Treasurer, and Rosemary Kelley as Secretary.

Kim Gallagher was also elected as a new trustee.

The Princeton Battlefield Society is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2021. "In celebration," explained Russell, "we have embarked on a Spirit of American Campaign that will focus visitors, members, and partners on our Revolutionary War history and the importance of Washington's victory at Princeton in the cause of independence. It will also

help us in developing plans to contribute to the celebration of our nation's 250th anniversary."

"My roadmap for our future," explained Russell, "will be based on inclusiveness and outreach, with our trustees and volunteers, the State's DEP, members, donors and friends as our partners. Education will take center stage as will the preservation of the Clarke House and the battlefield. I invite anyone who is interested in supporting or working with us to reach out. We need you."



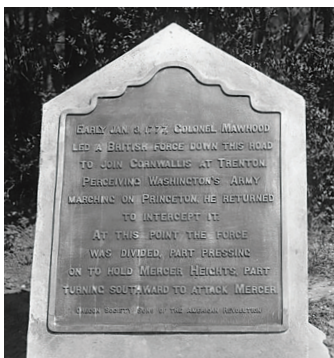
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★★★★ FINDING OUR PAST ★★★★★

BY RAND MIRANTE

The Battle of Princeton as well as its lead-up and aftermath are memorialized by the 51'-high Princeton Battle Monument - the work of Frederick MacMonnies based upon a panel on the Arc de Triomphe - and by numerous smaller markers: the twelve granite obelisks denoting Washington's night movement from Trenton to Princeton and plinths on Nassau Street and in Rocky Hill, Griggstown and beyond, commemorating the Continental Army's post-combat withdrawal to Morristown. There is another plinth at the site of "Washington's Spring" on Route 206, and three others to the immediate left of the MacMonnies work: a memorial to Colonel John Haslet of Delaware, a tribute to the Continental Marines, and a third featuring the French Army's 1781 encampment in "Prince Town" *en route* to Yorktown.

My perusal of the Historical Society of Princeton's (HSP) photo archives on their website - <https://princeton.pastperfectonline.com> reveals two more substantial plinths, which have either gone missing or conceivably are still somewhere, perhaps completely obscured by overgrowth. Here is how their descriptions, accompanied by seemingly old photographs in the HSP's online photo catalogue, read:



■ Battle monument marking the point where British forces divided during the Battle of Princeton. Text reads: "Early Jan. 3, 1777, Colonel Mawhood led a British Force down this road to join Cornwallis at Trenton. Perceiving Washington's Army marching on Princeton, he returned to intercept it. At this point the force was divided, part pressing on to hold Mercer Heights, part turning southward to attack Mercer. - Oregon Society Sons of the American Revolution"

Trenton. Perceiving Washington's Army marching on Princeton, he returned to intercept it. At this point the force was divided, part pressing on to hold Mercer Heights, part turning southward to attack Mercer. - Oregon Society Sons of the American Revolution"

■ Battle monument marking the point where General Mercer headed towards the Stoney Brook bridge during the Battle of Princeton. Text reads: "At sunrise Jan. 3, 1777, General Mercer led a detachment down this road to destroy the wood-



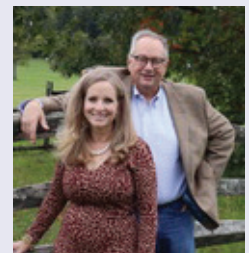
en bridge over Stoney Brook. Finding that the British were marching toward Princeton on the main road (Stockton Street) he ascended the declivity to the left, hoping to intercept them, but was attacked and defeated. - Oregon Society Sons of the American Revolution"

So the question is: Where are they? Are they somehow hiding in plain sight? Or have they totally vanished like the cannon and the stack of cannonballs surmounted by an eagle which once graced the Battlefield and which can also be seen in the HSP's photo archive?

Can any member or friend of the Princeton Battlefield Society shed any light whatsoever on the disposition or location of these apparently missing markers? Let us hear from you – info@pbs1777.org.

MERCER OAK AWARD RECEPTION RE-SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 23

After a year of re-scheduling the 2020-21 reception, we invite you to help us honor Mark & Rachel Herr with the Mercer Oak Award on Thursday, September 23 at The Nassau Inn. We invite your participation with a silent auction item, a message for our evening's program, and, of course, attending the reception. Please mark your calendar and plan to join us.



NJ SOCIETY OF SAR COMMEMORATES BATTLE OF PRINCETON & PRESENTS CHECK TO PBS

The NJ Society of the Sons of the American Revolution laid a wreath at the Mercer Oak on January 3, commemorating the Battle of Princeton, and presented a \$2,500 check to the Princeton Battlefield Society for its History & Heritage Fund. On

hand for the commemorative ceremony were State Assemblyman Roy Freiman, newly elected mayor of Princeton, Mark Freda, Robert Meyer, State SAR president, Roger Williams, president of the



Check Presentation to PBS' Tom Pyle (right) by NJSSAR president Robert Meyer (left).

SAR's Princeton-Cranbury Chapter, and PBS trustees, Rosemary Kelley and Tom Pyle.

As a national SAR event over 35 Color Guard representatives from more than 20 states laid "virtual wreaths" at local ceremonies.



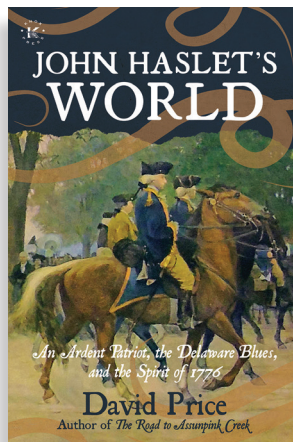
Wreath laying at the Mercer Oak. (left to right) Tom Pyle, Rosemary Kelley, Assemblyman Roy Freiman and Mayor Mark Freda.

BOOK REVIEW: A TRIBUTE TO COLONEL JOHN HASLET

David Price's newest book, *John Haslet's World* (Knox Press, 2020), is the story of Colonel John Haslet, an Irish immigrant to the American colonies who made the ultimate sacrifice while fighting for his adopted country at a pivotal moment in the War of Independence. Haslet tried to rally General Hugh Mercer's brigade at the Battle of Princeton, after Mercer was wounded, and was himself shot in the head and killed instantly.

The book chronicles the inspirational leadership and service of the Delaware Regiment that Haslet formed and guided, told as part of a more wide-ranging narrative about the 1776 campaign of Washington's Continental army. His death occurs when Washington's battered but resilient force faces the prospect of total defeat in the winter of 1776-1777 and the quest for American independence hangs in the balance.

Price notes that Haslet fashioned and inspired the



Delaware Continental Regiment, known as the "Delaware Blues," and proved to be one of the most daring, competent, and reliable Continental officers. His regiment fought valiantly and inspired others, and their identity and historical reputation became forever intertwined with their colonel's. Haslet led and inspired his young soldiers, who regarded him as something of a father figure, in a way that instilled pride in them and earned the admiration of others. In the end, he left his regiment, the army, and his country an unsurpassed example of unyielding devotion to the cause of American independence.

John Haslet's World is a great addition to your American Revolution library. Future reviews will include Jerry Hurwitz's *Alamo of the Revolution: Benedict Arnold and the Massacre at Fort Griswold* and Larry Kidder's *Revolutionary Princeton 1774-1783: The Biography of an American Town in the Heart of a Civil War*.

★★★★★ WE'RE BACK! ★★★★★

Planning ahead has been impossible in the past year, but with anticipated lifting of restrictions, as well as COVID protocols in place, we tentatively plan to initiate activities this Spring!

■ **PARK CLEAN UP DAY** - April 17 (raindate, the 24th) – A limited number of participants and restrictions

■ **BATTLEFIELD TOUR PROGRAM** - We are awaiting a confirmation date to begin tours of the Battlefield

■ **MEMORIAL DAY** – In conjunction with Pride of Princeton activities

We encourage you to check our website (www.pbs1777.org) to confirm dates and to secure more information.

UPDATES

Volunteer Your Skills and Time as a part of our “Spirit of America” Team

PBS continually welcomes members and friends as volunteers to support its ongoing plans for programs and services. While the list of skills and experiences continually grows, we would like to talk with you if you are interested in volunteering, especially with marketing, social media, website, photography, and archival support. Of course, we are always eager to explore your interests. Let us hear from you: info@pbs1777.org.

Mercer County Cultural & Heritage Commission Grant

PBS has received another General Operating Support grant from the Mercer County Cultural & Heritage Commission through funding from the New Jersey Historical Commission and the Mercer County Board of Chosen Freeholders, to help us renew our growth and development after a year of cancellations and postponements. This appreciated support will be invested in 2021 programs and services.

A Personal Scavenger Hunt

Take advantage of a personal Battlefield scavenger hunt at your leisure. With guidance and narrative support from Larry Kidder and Will Krakower, scavenger hunts for adults and kids will be available on our website by early April. Print out a scavenger hunt and plan a great day in the out-of-doors.

Luminarium Dance Company's 2021 Cultural Community Outreach Project

PBS and Jerry Hurwitz supported Merli V. Guerra, Artistic Director of Luminarium Dance Company, by sharing Battle of Princeton history and costuming (uniform) details to create a reality dance film bringing life to American history. Luminarium, an award-winning contemporary dance company from Boston (satellite company in Princeton), “custom-tailors annual events that integrate history, choreography, and the arts to celebrate a town’s cultural and historical landmarks.” Guerra’s work on this project doubled as her thesis research for an MFA in Dance at Rutgers. Mr. Hurwitz’ active involvement, she stated, helped to “enliven the memories of these fallen heroes as we set their stories into motion through dance.” The project’s public release is planned for April 2021. Visit luminariumdance.org/events.

Spirit of America Membership Campaign

If you have not renewed your 2021 membership or if you’ve been waiting for an opportunity to join us, now is the time to respond. Use the membership renewal envelope you received or go to www.pbs1777.org (click “Support”) and become a part of the “Spirit of America.”

“Remembering the Princeton Battlefield”

Thank you to members and friends who have already shared their “remembrances” of the Princeton Battlefield, which appear on our website (www.pbs1777.org). Your sharing helps us celebrate our 50th Anniversary. Everyone is invited to provide a personal “remembrance.”