Thank you for coming this evening!

For those attending in person, please grab a seat.
We will pass around a sign in sheet.

If you have a beverage, please take a coaster.

For those online, the presentation will begin soon.

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The Signage is Coming! The Signage is Coming! - Commemorating 1776 in 2026

A South Brunswick Historical Society Presentation
May 2026

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This presentation will highlight the work done to bring greater interpretation to South Brunswick through the creation and installation of signage that offers an understandable yet engaging look at our local history.

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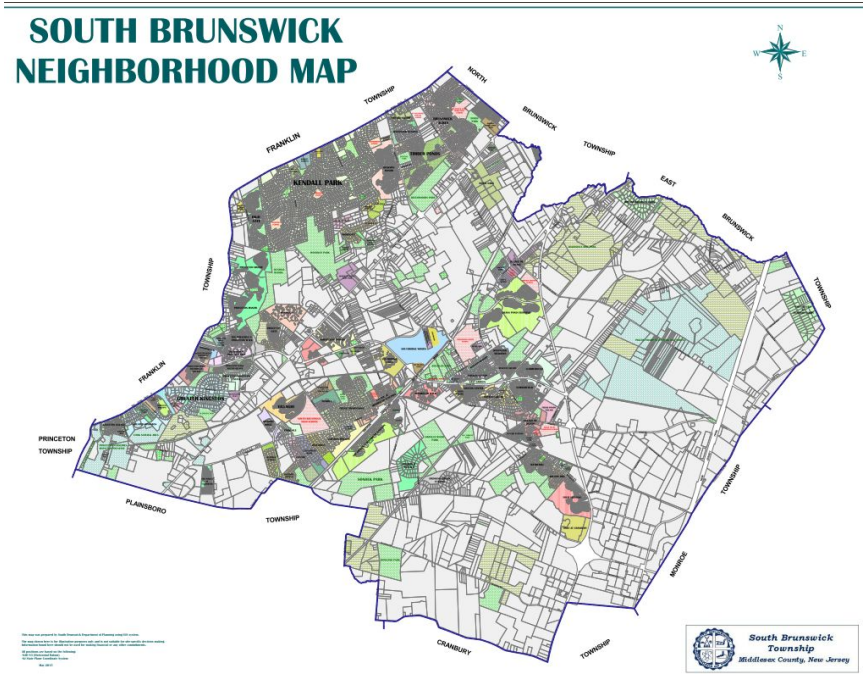
Initial goals

- Recognize our Revolutionary past while celebrating the earliest events in our region that relate to the 250th Anniversary Celebration
- Establish a reasonable amount of signage and events that can be created quickly
- Find an easily accessible location for the community to view and recognize our past that is engaging
- Credit: [SBTWP website]



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Working collaboratively

- This project has been under development by the South Brunswick Township Historic Preservation Commission in partnership with the South Brunswick Public Library
- The text for our initial signage was created by Ed Belding, town historian, and the sign layout, design, and imagery was created by Kelan Amme, Local History Librarian
- We are also thankful to the SB Town Council for their support throughout the process as well as township employees who have helped us accomplish additional tasks in this process

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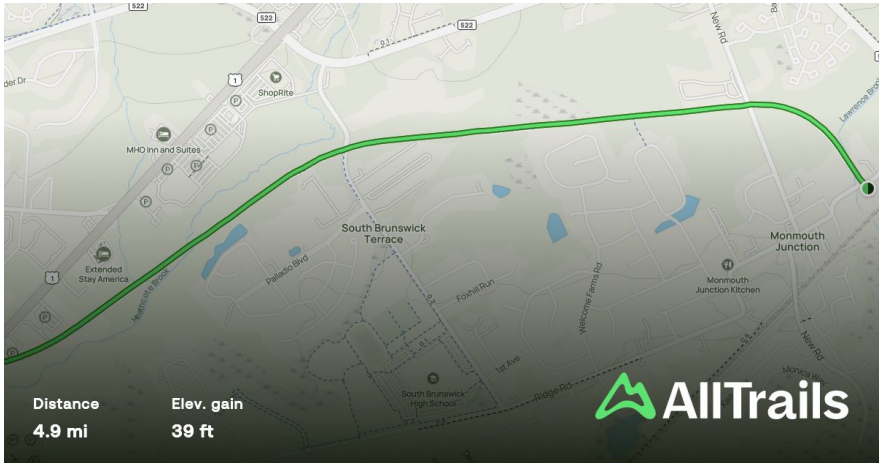
Our starting point

- We chose the Freedom Trail in Monmouth Junction as our starting point for the signs
- Wanted to reflect on the name and historic significance of the piece of land that the trail runs through
- Easily accessible, township property that invites visitors on a set path to follow a story
- Credit: AllTrails



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Our signs

- We came up with 6 signs relating to events from the American Revolutionary period
- We hope to place 4 signs on the Freedom Trail initially, gather feedback, and see if we can complete the story
- These signs are transportable and easy to replicate
- We wanted to create something that is engaging and readable for all audiences

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South Brunswick Historic Preservation Commission

Washington's First March Through South Brunswick - June 23, 1775

Newly appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army, George Washington, passed through what is now South Brunswick Township (formerly the South Ward) on June 23, 1775. He and his entourage, which included Charles Lee, Thomas Mifflin, Philip Schuyler, Joseph Reed, and William Lee, were headed to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to take command of American forces gathering there. A number of delegates to the Continental Congress, who were returning home, also accompanied Washington. Captain Abram Markoe and his Philadelphia Troop of Horse served as escort up to the Connecticut border. They hastened along the King's Highway (presently called Route 27) in order to reach New Brunswick by nightfall.

Section of: Holland, S. & Robert Sayer And John Bennett. (1775) *The provinces of New York, and New Jersey; with part of Pensilvania, and the province of Quebec.* London, Printed for Robt. Sayer & John Bennett. [Map] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/74694272/.

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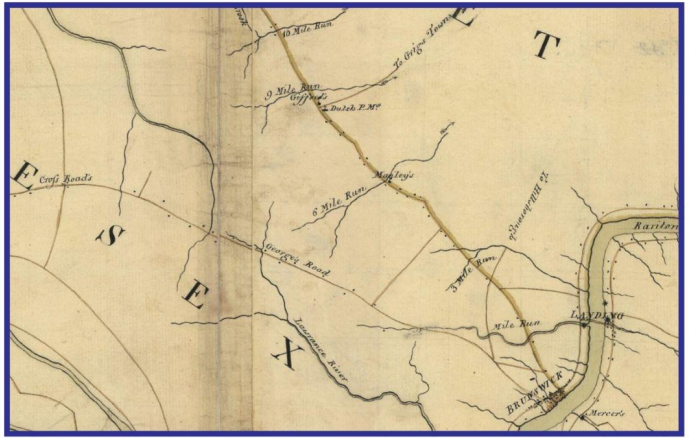
South Brunswick Historic Preservation Commission

The Retreat Campsite - December 1-2, 1776

On December 1, 1776, General George Washington ordered his remaining soldiers to abandon New Brunswick and continue retreating south on the King's Highway (Rte. 27). Enemy forces had arrived on the far bank of the Raritan River and were preparing to cross. A rear guard of artillery was left behind to delay the enemy's crossing and allow the American military to distance itself from British and Hessian forces. Somewhere between Six-Mile-Run and Nine-Mile-Run in a wooded area adjoining farmland, a campsite was established for the night. Notables present included: George Washington, Lord Stirling, Nathanael Greene, Hugh Mercer, Israel Putnam, William S. Livingston, Edward Hand, Nathaniel Heard, James Monroe, Aaron Burr, Thomas Mifflin, Alexander Hamilton, and Thomas Paine. Before dawn, the retreating army continued marching across New Jersey in order to reach safety in Pennsylvania.



Section of: Hills, J., Morgan, B., Dunham, A. & Rue, J. (1781) *A map, Middlesex County*. [Map] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/gm72003603/.

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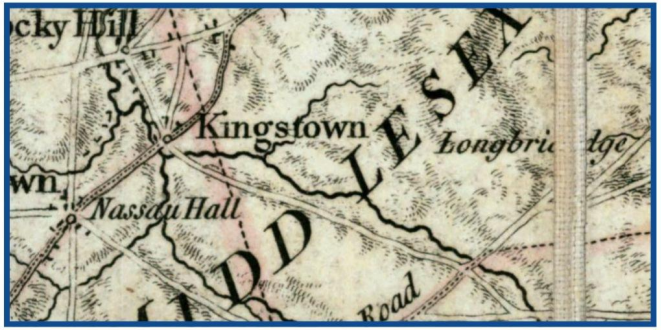
The Council On Horseback - January 3, 1777

After defeating the British at Princeton on January 3, 1777, George Washington marched his exhausted army north to Kingston, New Jersey. From a vantage point on the road above the bridge across the Millstone River, near the Presbyterian Church, the Commander-in-Chief and his top officers— Nathanael Greene, John Sullivan, Arthur St. Clair, Henry Knox, John Cadwalader, Thomas Mifflin, and Joseph Reed—held a council on horseback to quickly consider which option to take. It came down to attacking the British supply base in New Brunswick or removing to secure winter quarters at Morristown. Washington took the advice of the majority, avoided a major conflict against the pursuing force led by General Cornwallis, and headed towards Rocky Hill and then Pluckemin in order to reach the safety of Morristown. Cornwallis abandoned his pursuit and continued north to New Brunswick. Thus, a prolonged war for independence was guaranteed and a chance for victory.



Section of: 1777: William Faden (1749–1836). "*The Province of New Jersey, Divided into East and West, Commonly Called the Jerseys*" ([London]: Wm. Faden, Charing Cross, December 1st, 1777) [Historic Maps Collection, purchased by the Friends of the Princeton University Library]. https://static-prod.lib.princeton.edu/njmaps/background/state_maps.html.

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The Sundering of the Millstone River Bridge - January 3, 1777

At the “halfway” point between Philadelphia and New York, a wooden bridge over the Millstone River was constructed in 1705. A second bridge replaced the first in 1738. It was made of stone with wooden planking. On January 3, 1777, George Washington and his Continentals crossed over the bridge after their victory at Princeton. Upon reaching high ground, the Commander-in-Chief ordered Captain Thomas Rodney of the Dover Light Infantry and a number of carpenters to remove the planking, thereby sundering the bridge. This rendered the span temporarily impassable for pursuing enemy forces led by General Cornwallis. This allowed the American forces to add at least two hours of separation time from the enemy. Without sundering the bridge, the Americans would probably have been overtaken and defeated by a larger, superior force.

Section of: (1777) *Plan of the operations of General Washington against the King's troops in New Jersey, from the 26th of December to the 3rd of January 1777.* [Map] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/gm71000654/.

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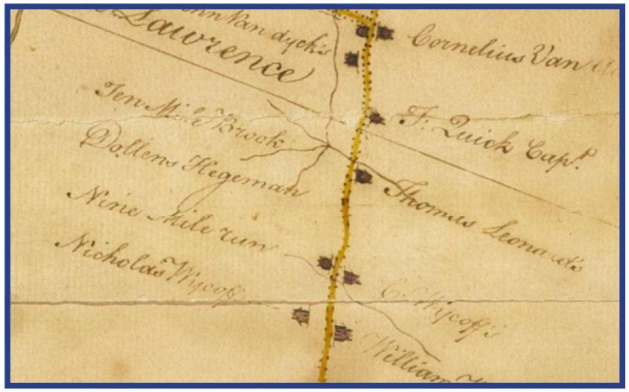
Stryker's Skirmish (aka: Ten-Mile-Run Skirmish) - January 3-4, 1777

On the night of January 3, 1777, Captain John Stryker led a Company of twenty Somerset County Militia Troop of Horse against two hundred British Regulars and wagoners at Ten-Mile-Run along the King's Highway (Rte. 27). A number of General Cornwallis's baggage wagons had broken down here. Under the cover of darkness, Stryker's men dismounted, spread out to form a semi-circle in order to trick the wagon guards. At Stryker's signal, the score of men gave a shout and fired one volley. The British, fearing an ambush by a superior force, abandoned the wagons and fled up the road toward New Brunswick. The captured wagons, containing much-needed woolen clothing, blankets, and other supplies, once repaired, were taken to the Continental Army, which was on its way to Morristown.



Section of: 1762: John Dalley. *"A Map of the Road from Trenton to Amboy Copied (from a Survey Made by John Dalley for James Alexander Esquire) by G. Bancker"* [Manuscripts Division], Princeton University. https://static-prod.lib.princeton.edu/njmaps/background/road_maps.html.

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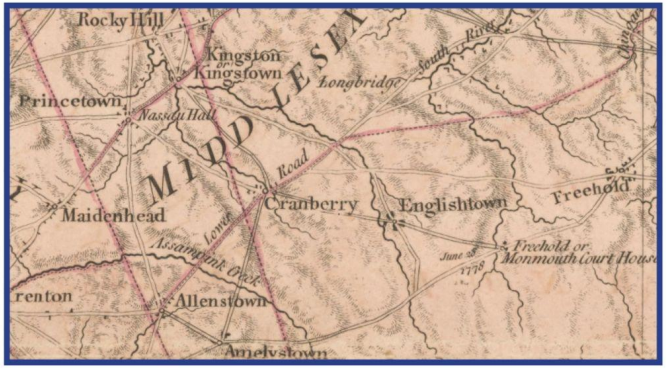
South Brunswick's "Road to Monmouth" - June, 1778

George Washington and the Continental Army used three roads in South Brunwisk Township (aka—South Ward) while making their way to the Battle of Monmouth. They arrived in Kingston on June 24, 1778, by using a short stretch of Route 27 (aka—The King's Highway or The Upper Road). The next day, leaving their tents behind and traveling light, they marched along Ridge Road, which was the drier route to Cranbury. They spent the night at Longbridge Farm. On the morning of the 26th, American forces of more than six thousand continued along Ridge Road until they reached Cross Roads (aka—Dayton), where they turned southeast onto Georges Road and made it to Cranbury late in the day. The following day, they headed towards Englishtown and Freehold. On June 28th, the Americans faced the British in the Battle of Monmouth.



Section of: 1778 *The Province of New Jersey, divided into East and West, commonly called the Jerseys* [map]. Engraved & published by Wm. Faden. https://catalog.princeton.edu/catalog/9955758113506421#viewer-container.

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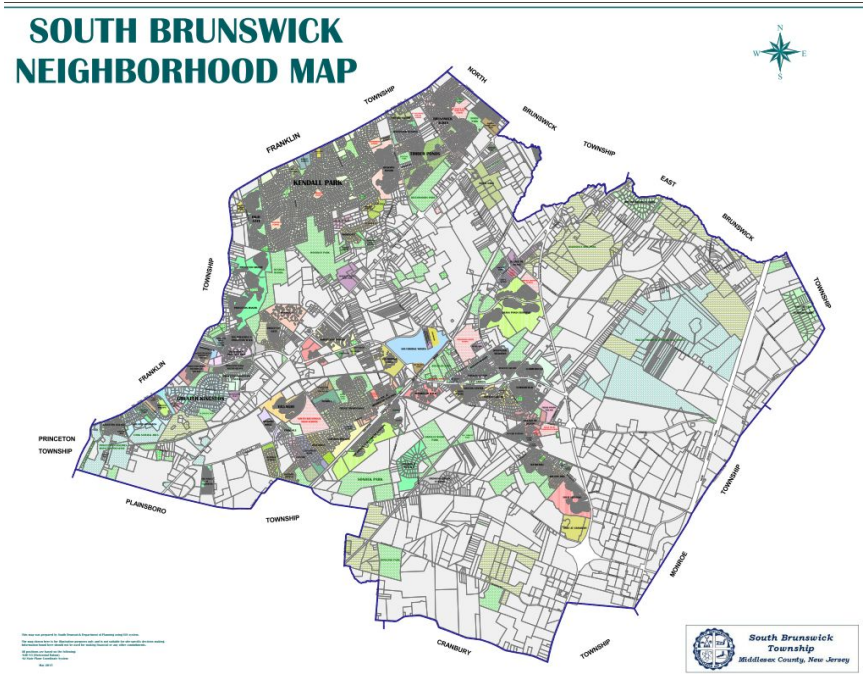
Future goals

- Brainstorm future possible sites within South Brunswick to place a sign
- Could be from any era
- Continue to develop digital aspect of signage on the local history section of library website
- Create map to track what signs are where
- Signs are portable and can be moved, replaced, or rotated when new sites become available



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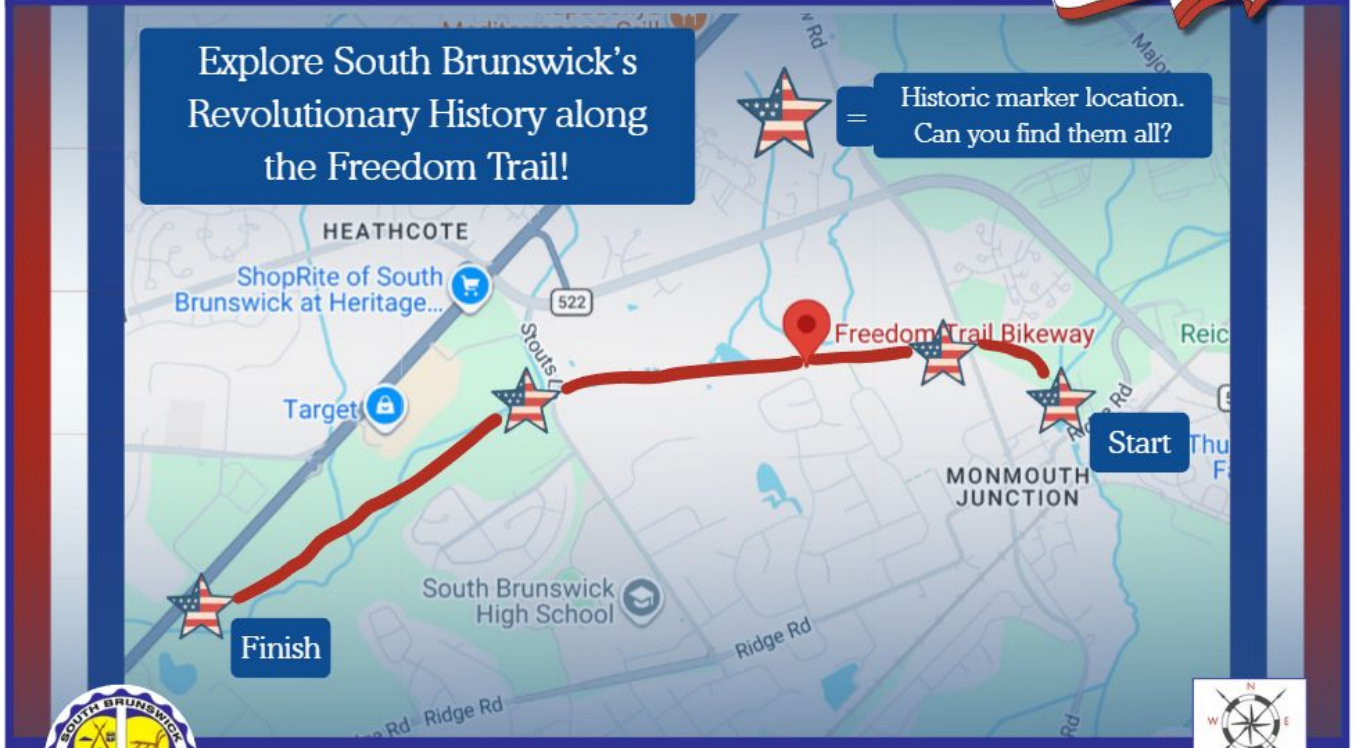
Freedom Trail Bikeway Historic Marker Map



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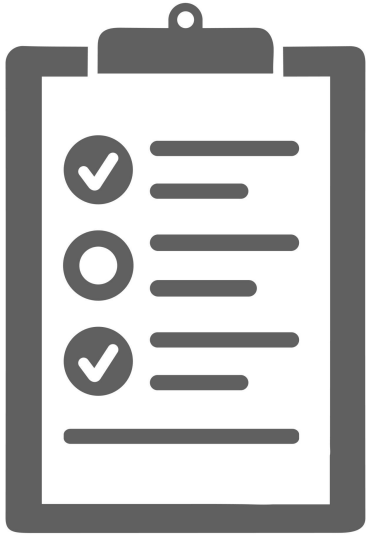
Let’s create a list

- Let’s brainstorm and come up with a list of locations within South Brunswick that could possibly have a sign…



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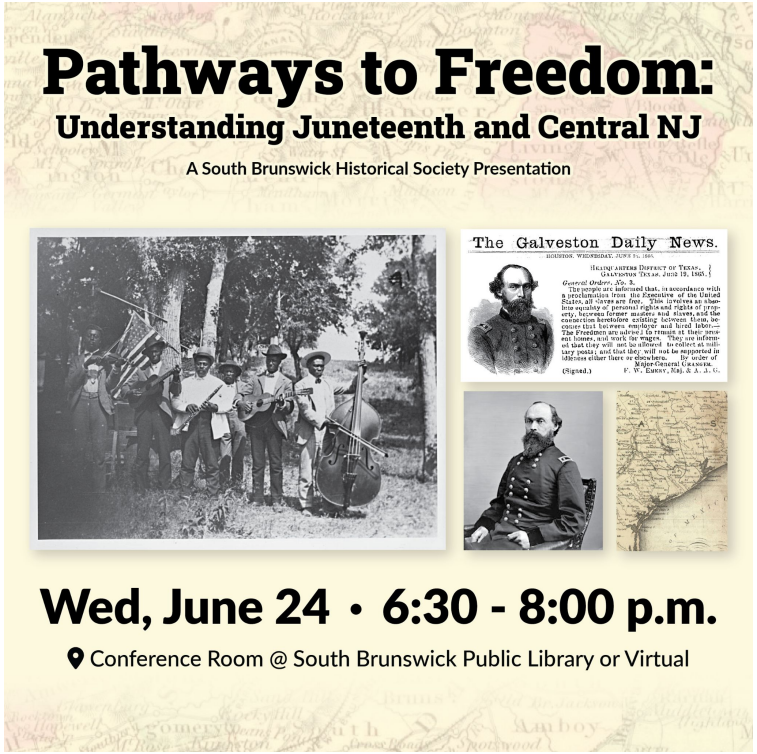
Our next event

“As we celebrate Juneteenth and reflect on the 250th Anniversary of the founding of the United States, this presentation will highlight the historical record surrounding the June 19th, 1865 General Order issued by General Gordon Granger to those living under enslavement in Galveston, Texas, declaring that they were legally free. We will also discuss this pathway to freedom in the context of Central New Jersey, examining the South Ward's history and the complex ways in which freedom and independence shaped the region.”



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Thank you!
Any questions?