

Battle of the
Short Hills,
June 26, 1777

Patriot Tour

Guided by Leanne Manna



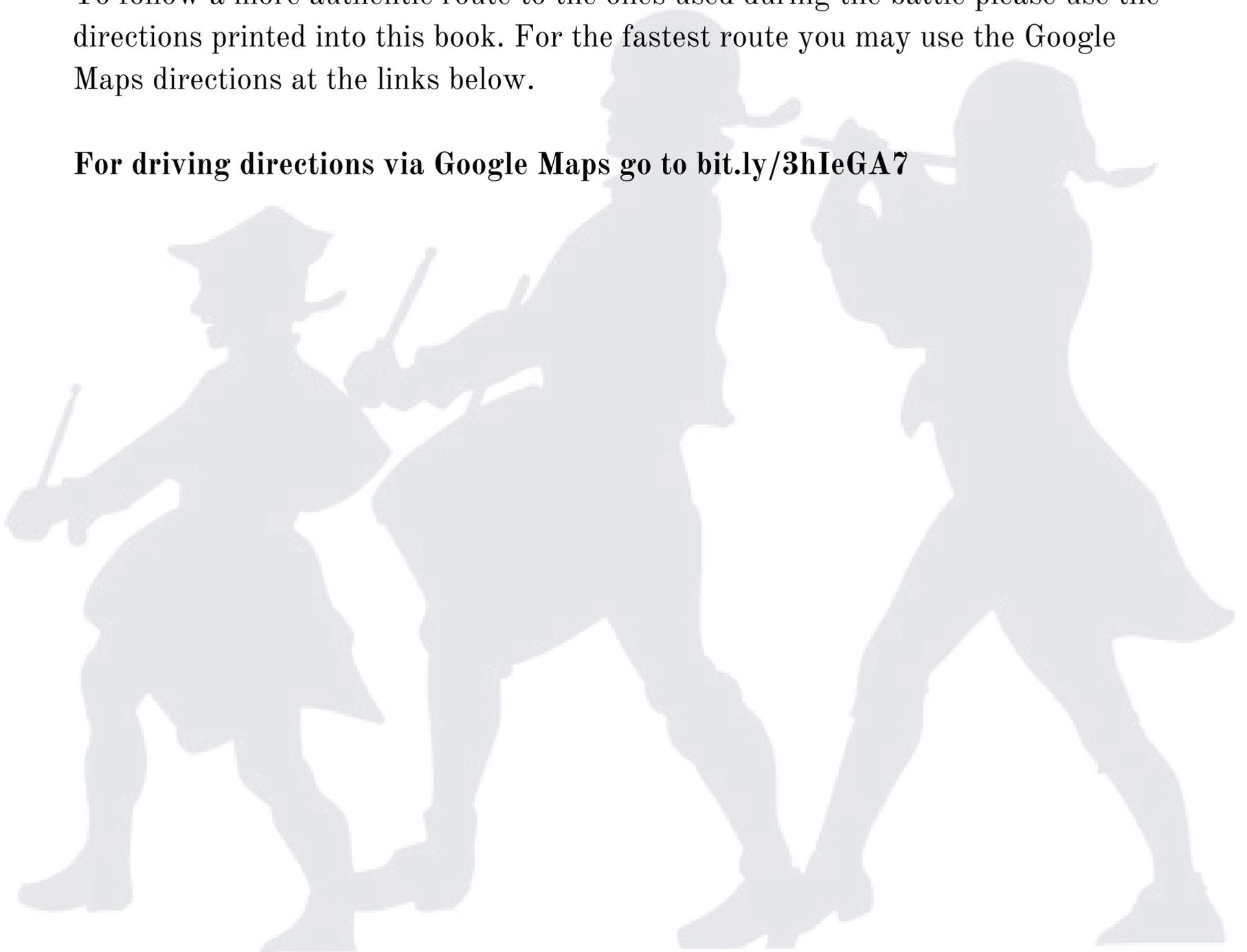
Welcome

This is the Patriot Tour which will bring you along the path of the Continental forces during the Battle of the Short Hills. This tour is designed to follow the events of the battle as chronologically as possible. The tour is comprised of stops and drive by points. Drive by points are points or areas of interest that do not accept visitors or are not defined historic sites. Stops are historic parks or museums where you can get out of your car and visit. The total driving time for the tour is about an hour and fifteen minutes.

During the winter of 1777 Washington and his troops had been in Morristown which is regarded as one of the worst winters of the Revolution, nearly tied with Valley Forge. Following the winter in May and June of 1777 The Continental forces moved towards modern day Somerset and Middlesex counties. There they had an encampment at Quibble Town, modern New Market and North Plainfield, and Samp Town, modern South Plainfield. During this time Washington observed the British troop movements from on top of the mountains. As it appeared the British were heading to Staten Island Washington moved his troops down to the plains below giving up the high ground and leaving them more open to attack. Our tour will start in Edison and end in Greenbrook.

To follow a more authentic route to the ones used during the battle please use the directions printed into this book. For the fastest route you may use the Google Maps directions at the links below.

For driving directions via Google Maps go to bit.ly/3hIeGA7



Oak Tree Pond



Edison, NJ 08820

The British plan was to fake a retreat from New Brunswick to Staten Island and draw Washington and his forces down from the Watchung Mountains. To accomplish this Major General William Howe and General Charles Lord Cornwallis planned to use the pincher attack they used on Long Island. This attack would allow them to surround and destroy the Continental forces. This maneuver was part of a larger plan to destroy the Continental forces in New Jersey and then capture the American Capital of Philadelphia. A little before sunrise the two groups of British soldiers headed out from Perth Amboy taking separate paths. As he approached Strawberry hill, which is now the intersection Green Street and Route 1, Cornwallis encountered a group of riflemen lead by Colonel James Dark. They had a half hour skirmish up Oak Tree Road that alerted Washington to the British plan, costing the British the element of surprise. Washington then called for a retreat from Quibble Town up the Watchung Mountains. The first mass resistance of the Continental forces would happen at Oak Tree Pond where cannons fired at the British forces.

Directions

Oak Tree Pond to Plainfield Country Club

- Turn right onto Oak Tree Road
 - 0.6 mi
- Turn right onto Woodland Ave
 - 1.3 mi
- Destination is on the right, continue to next stop



Plainfield Country Club

Drive By Point



1591 Woodland Ave, Edison, NJ 08820

plainfieldcc.com

Brigadier General Thomas Conway was positioned at what is now the Plainfield Country Club. Here were the American cannon emplacements on the high ground. As the British advanced the Continentals fired upon them joined by French Colonel Armand-Tuffin, and this marked the first use of both French arms and command in the Revolution. The two sides then fought through an area known as “Martin’s Woods” up to the Ash Swamp where they met up with Lord Stirling’s forces.

Directions

Plainfield Country Club to Monument

- Continue on Woodland Ave
 - 308 ft
- Turn right onto Old Raritan Rd
 - 0.6 mi
- Continue onto Raritan Rd
 - 1.0
- Destination is on the right



Monument at Ash Brook Golf Course



1210 Raritan Rd, Scotch Plains, NJ 07076
ashbrookgolfcourse.com

This monument was put up to commemorate the battle on land that was once part of the Ash Swamp. A model of a Revolutionary War era cannon is on top. The monument originally had four bronze plaques with information that were stolen and missing for several years. They have recently been replaced with new ones. It is located on Raritan Road on your way to Ash Brook Reservation.

Directions

Monument to Ash Brook Reservation

- Turn right on Raritan Rd
 - 0.6 mi
- Turn right to stay on Raritan Rd
 - 0.5 mi
- Turn right into the UCVTS campus and follow the road around. The trail started behind the Police Academy building



Ash Brook Reservation



1776 Raritan Road, Scotch Plains, NJ 07076
exploreunioncounty.com

General William Alexander, or Lord Stirling had been stationed at Ash Swamp, now Ash Brook Reservation with 1,798 men. At this point fighting stretched 14 miles from the swamp to the Metuchen Meeting House. Conway and his men continued to fight through the woods up to Ash Swamp to meet up with Stirling. They were joined here by Armand's troops as well as the Morgan Riflemen. Here they decided to make a stand, however while fighting Cornwallis, they were flanked by Howe's troops who had caught up and the men were forced once again to retreat. Many fled into the swamp in hopes of losing the British. The men that could escape went forward towards the mountains to guard the passes per Washington's orders.

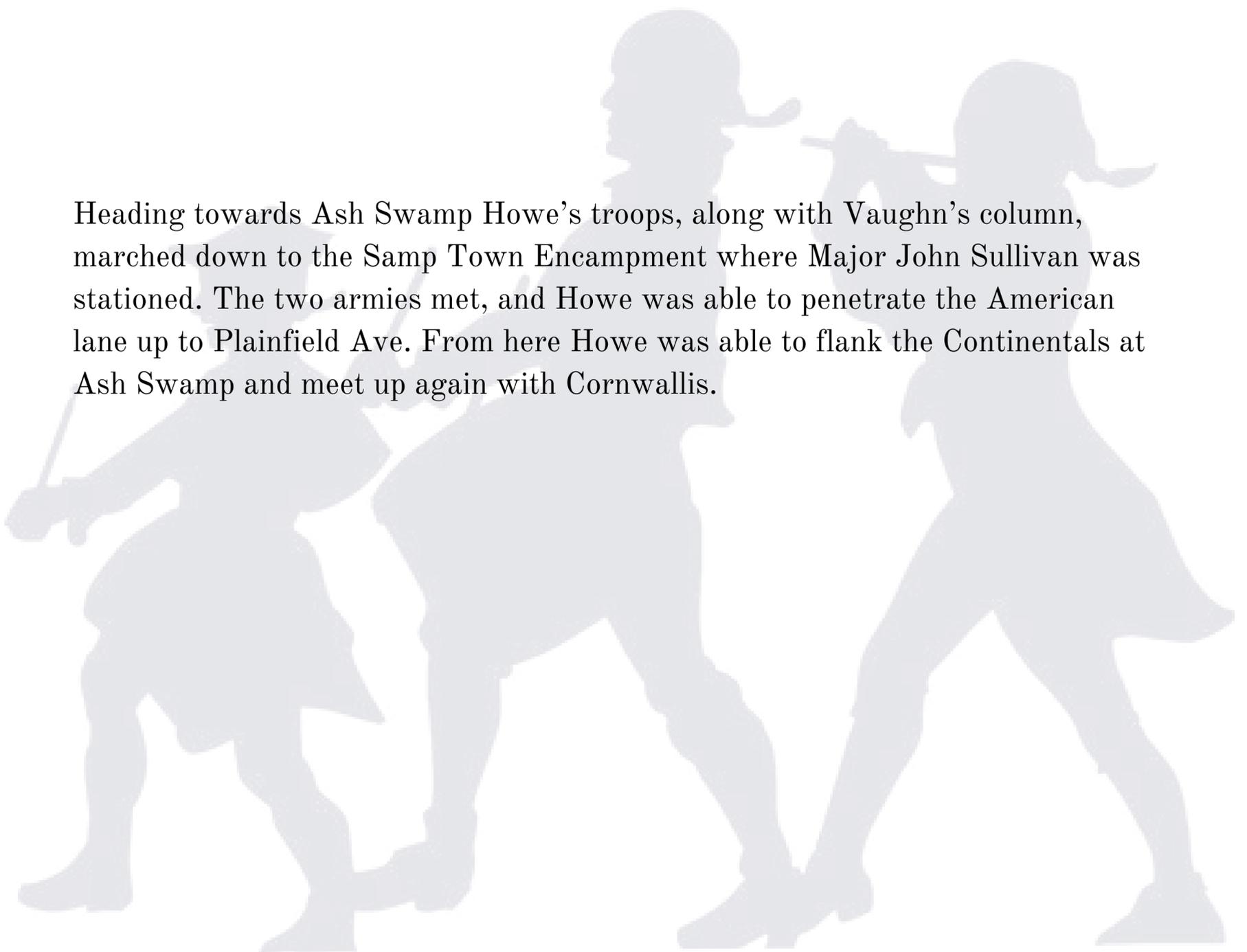
Ashbrook reservation is one of the only areas associated with the battle to remain undeveloped.

Directions

Ash Brook Reservation to Drake House Museum

- Turn left onto Raritan Rd
 - 0.3 mi
- Turn left to stay on Raritan Rd
 - 1.6 mi
- Continue onto Old Raritan Rd
 - 0.6 mi
- Continue onto Maple Ave
 - 1.5 mi
- Turn right onto Plainfield Ave
 - 0.4 mi
- Turn right to stay on Plainfield Ave
 - 2.2 miles
- The driveway is right across from the light

Heading towards Ash Swamp Howe's troops, along with Vaughn's column, marched down to the Samp Town Encampment where Major John Sullivan was stationed. The two armies met, and Howe was able to penetrate the American lane up to Plainfield Ave. From here Howe was able to flank the Continentals at Ash Swamp and meet up again with Cornwallis.



Drake House Museum



602 West Front Street, Plainfield, NJ 07060

drakehouseplainfieldnj.org

Open Sundays 2 pm- 4 pm

Coming up Plainfield Ave, you can see how close the fighting came to the Drake House, which sits on the intersections of Plainfield Ave and West Front Street. The Drake House was the headquarters for Washington and his generals during the battle. The house was in an ideal location as it was close to all three locations where generals were stationed, Ash Swamp, Samptown, and Quibble Town as well as the various mountain passages. After hearing the shots fired at Strawberry Hill, Washington ordered the troops to evacuate Quibble Town and head to the mountains. It is unclear how long Washington stayed at the Drake House. He may have left when Quibble Town was evacuated, or later after Lord Stirling's men fled from Ash Swamp.

Directions

Drake House Museum to Cannonball House

- Turn left onto W Front St
 - 75 ft
- Continue straight on W Front St
 - 3.1 mi
- Destination is on the right



Cannonball House



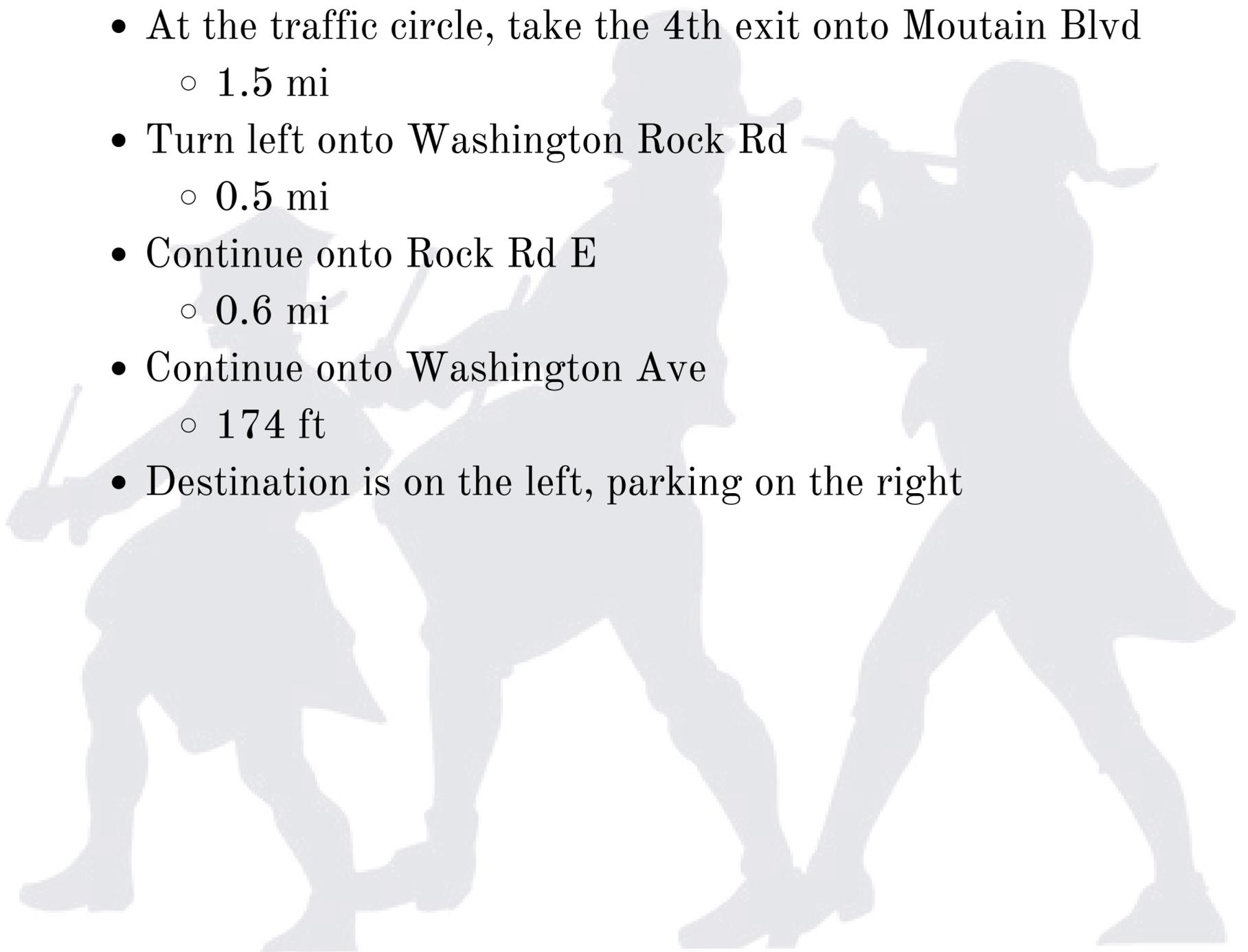
1840 Front Street, Scotch Plains, NJ 07076
historicalsocietyspnj.org/museum

As the Continental Army was retreating from Ash Swamp pursued by the British they passed the Osborn House. Mary Osborn, the family's young daughter, rushed outside to offer food and clothing to the Continental forces. As she was doing so, a Continental cannon was misaimed and hit the side of the house instead of the British forces who were marching down Park Avenue. After that, the house became known as the Cannonball House.

Directions

Cannonball House to Washington Rock via the Bloody Gap

- Head northeast on Front St toward Park Ave
 - 272 ft
- Turn left onto Park Ave
 - 0.2 mi
- Use any lane to turn left onto New Providence Rd
 - 0.3 mi
- Use left 2 lanes to turn left onto Bonnie Burn Rd
 - 0.8 mi
- **This area of the mountain pass was known as the Bloody Gap (see page 14)**
- Turn left onto County Rd 527 S/ Valley Road
 - 2.4 mi
- At the traffic circle, take the 4th exit onto Mountain Blvd
 - 1.5 mi
- Turn left onto Washington Rock Rd
 - 0.5 mi
- Continue onto Rock Rd E
 - 0.6 mi
- Continue onto Washington Ave
 - 174 ft
- Destination is on the left, parking on the right



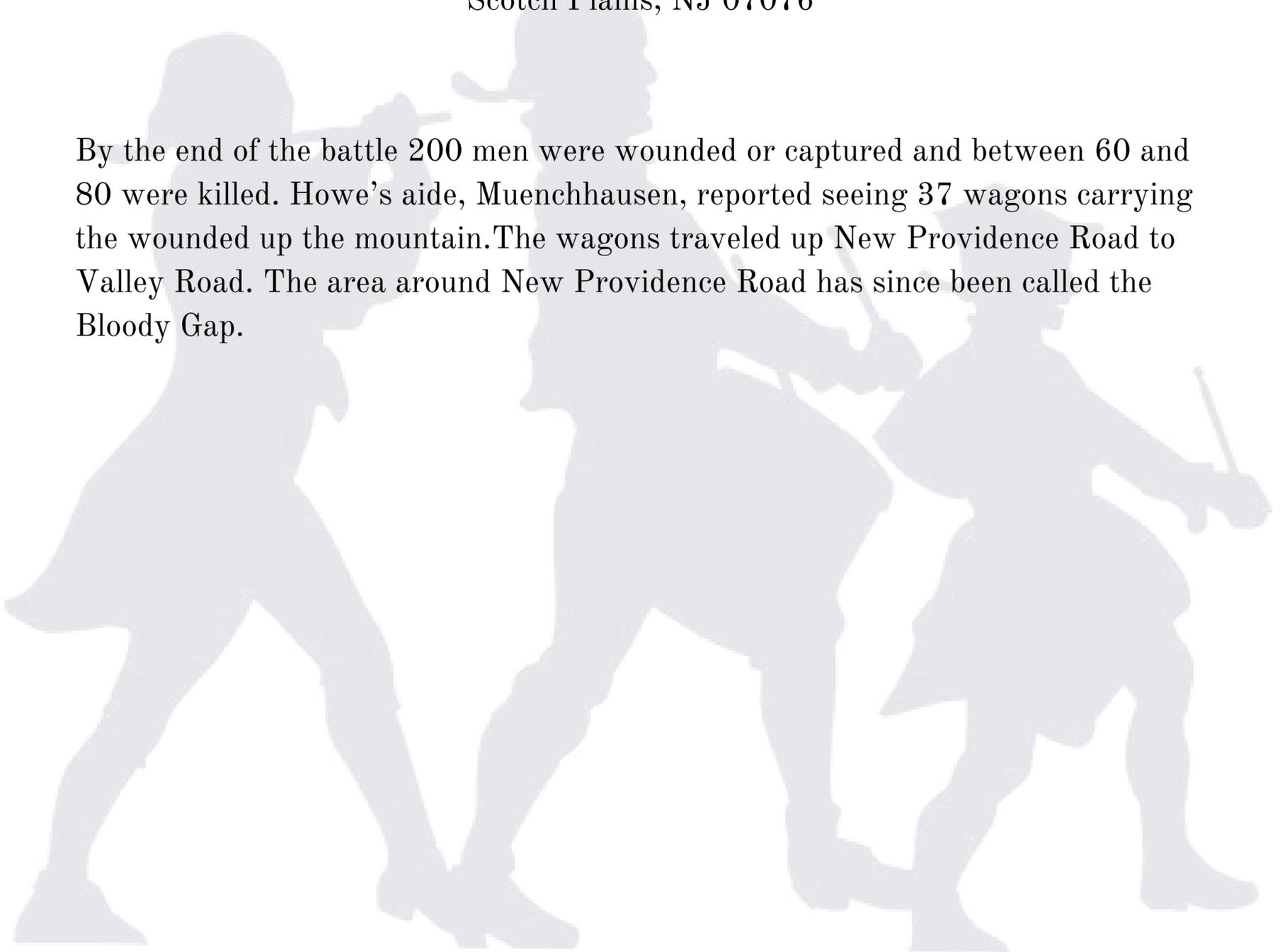
The Bloody Gap

Drive By Point



New Providence Road/ Bonnie Burn Road,
Scotch Plains, NJ 07076

By the end of the battle 200 men were wounded or captured and between 60 and 80 were killed. Howe's aide, Muenchhausen, reported seeing 37 wagons carrying the wounded up the mountain. The wagons traveled up New Providence Road to Valley Road. The area around New Providence Road has since been called the Bloody Gap.



Washington Rock



Washington Ave, Green Brook 08812
state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/parks/washrock.html

In May and June of 1777 Washington and his troops observed the British movements from what is now called Washington Rock. While Washington spent a lot of time at the outlook sources are conflicted as to whether Washington was actually at the outlook on the day of the battle. It seems likely that after ordering the retreat from Quibbletown, or after Lord Stirling's forces retreat from Ash Swamp, that Washington himself would have moved up to Washington Rock as well. Today the area is a state park and offers scenic views of New Jersey as well as a view of the New York skyline.

Conclusion

At the end of the day, the battle was indeed a tactical loss for the Americans. They had far more casualties and lost several pieces of artillery to the British. However, the British plan had been to destroy the Continental Forces on the plains, which would have ended the war. So, although it came at a great cost, the Americans did emerge victorious having thwarted Howe's plan. Following the Battle of the Short Hills on June 30, 1777 the British withdrew from New Jersey with Howe planning instead to capture Philadelphia via the water.

For More Information:

Including interactive map, audio tour, and additional resources go to:
battleoftheshorthillstour.weebly.com

Created by Leanne Manna, July 2020

All photographs taken by Leanne Manna, July 27, 2020



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