

Governor Phil Murphy

# Governor Phil Murphy, Lieutenant Governor Tahesha Way, and Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman Launch New Jersey's Commemoration of America's 250th Anniversary Celebration

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*Commemorative Activities to Celebrate New Jersey's Legacy as "Revolutionary in 1776 and Ever Since"*

*New Jersey to Celebrate the Nation's Semiquincentennial by Revitalizing Revolutionary War Sites and Hosting Educational Programming and Events Across the State*

**MANALAPAN** – At Monmouth Battlefield State Park, Governor Phil Murphy, Lieutenant Governor Tahesha Way, and Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman today launched New Jersey's celebration of the nation's 250th Anniversary, kicking off a multi-year schedule of events and projects that will take place through the nation's semiquincentennial, from 2026 to 2033. As a leader in education, technology, AI, film, science, and more, New Jersey will celebrate its revolutionary legacy and its critical role in American history.

"New Jersey is not just home to revolutionary history—we are, to this day, the birthplace for revolutionary possibilities," **said Governor Murphy**. "From our eclectic culinary landscape, to our leadership in emerging industries like clean-energy and generative Artificial Intelligence, to our steadfast reputation as one of the most diverse states in the nation, New Jersey is where the future is being built. As we launch New Jersey's official Commemoration of America's 250th Anniversary Celebration—and prepare to welcome in visitors from across the globe—we are going to unite together around our core, American values every step of the way."

"Our nation's rich and diverse history has unfolded over the last 250 years," **said Lieutenant Governor Tahesha Way**. "In my role as Secretary of State, I oversee the New Jersey Historical Commission, and I am thrilled to celebrate our country's layered history—much of which has roots here in New Jersey. This shared legacy reflects our resilience and strength as united Americans, standing together through generations."

"The Battle of Monmouth was a vital turning point to winning our nation's independence nearly 250 years ago. So much of the story of our nation's founding took place right here in New Jersey," **said Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman**. "As a member of the Semiquincentennial Commission, I'm so excited to help New Jersey show the rest of the country why we're known as the 'Crossroads of the American Revolution.'"

The launch event included musical accompaniments by the Washington Crossing Fifes and Drums; a posting and retirement of the colors by reenactors of the Continental Army; the Pledge of Allegiance led by Ava Porta, a fifth grade student from Taylor Mills Elementary School in Manalapan; the National Anthem performed by Melissa Walker, an acclaimed jazz vocalist and recording artist from Montclair; and an essay read by Malay Gupta, an eighth grade student and first-place winner in America's Field Trip scholastic contest at John Adams Middle School in Edison.

"Today's launch of America250 in New Jersey honors our state's rich history and its pivotal role in America's fight for independence during the Revolutionary War," **said Senator Cory Booker**. "Preserving our historic war sites keeps our nation's stories alive and inspires future generations to engage with the values it was founded on: democracy and freedom."

"As we prepare to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America, it brings me great joy to see arrangements being made to showcase the history of New Jersey and our involvement in the American Revolution to the world," **said Senator George Helmy**. "Our state played a pivotal role in the Revolutionary War, from turning the tides of the conflict at the Battles of Trenton and Princeton, experiencing more military engagements than anywhere else in the thirteen original Colonies, to providing refuge as George Washington strategized during his time as Commander-in-Chief. I applaud the work of the Murphy Administration and RevolutionNJ in revitalizing New Jersey's Revolutionary War sites and making sure the stories of our state's important role in the founding of our country are told. I am eager to see New Jerseyans engage in our nation's rich and complex history and learn how the ideals of the American Revolution remain relevant today."

"America250 is thrilled to welcome New Jersey as it joins dozens of states and territories in coordinating events and programs in honor of the nation's 250th anniversary," **said Rosie Rios, America250 Chair**. "As one of the 13 original colonies, New Jersey will play a vital role in marking this historic moment. Governor Murphy's leadership and the work of RevolutionNJ, along with the \$25 million investment to revitalize New Jersey's Revolutionary War sites, will ensure the stories of New Jersey's role in our nation's independence are brought to life for generations to come."

The years-long initiative will be led by RevolutionNJ, New Jersey's official organization charged with planning and promoting the state's 250th anniversary commemoration.

RevolutionNJ serves as New Jersey's representative to America250, the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission. The partnership promotes any opportunities offered by the national commission, such as the recent America's Field Trip, where 13 New Jersey students received awards, including Malay Gupta, who presented his award-winning essay at the launch event.



Now through 2026, RevolutionNJ and the New Jersey Division of Travel & Tourism will engage locals and visitors in experiences that highlight New Jersey's critical role in the nation's history. New Jersey's latest [economic impact report](https://visitnj.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/2023_Tourism_Economic_Impact_Study.pdf) ([https://visitnj.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/2023\\_Tourism\\_Economic\\_Impact\\_Study.pdf](https://visitnj.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/2023_Tourism_Economic_Impact_Study.pdf)) on tourism, released by the New Jersey Division of Travel & Tourism this year, confirmed the Garden State welcomed 120.5 million visitors in 2023, representing a 5% year-over-year increase that reached 4% above 2019's banner-year volumes. This upward trend is forecasted to continue into 2026 and beyond, as travelers to New Jersey visit Revolutionary War sites in celebration of America's 250th anniversary and renowned heritage attractions. Programming offered by RevolutionNJ will include:

**Tavern Talks:** An interactive series of events that takes you back in time, featuring history that happened on your doorstep. Reenactors immerse participants in the past using questions and prompts to help you explore not only the past, but also issues you and your community face today. This popular program is taking place across the state at different microbreweries.

**Revolutionary Lives: Living the American Experiment Then and Now Traveling Exhibition:** Coming in 2025, this exhibition will bring the stories of diverse people during the American Revolution in New Jersey to audiences across the state. This program will be offered free of charge and will take place at libraries, senior centers, and city halls, among other sites.

**The RevolutionNJ Race Series:** Launched at Monmouth Battlefield State Park in August 2024, this race series will include 5k races around several key Revolutionary War sites in New Jersey and will continue through the anniversary period. These races will continue again in spring 2025.

**History Happened Here:** This educational programming invites middle and high school students to conduct research on a topic of their own choosing that connects to the American ideals of freedom, justice, equality, self-determination, and the pursuit of happiness.

**Foundations of Democracy:** This resource provides teachers with a comprehensive annotated list of elementary civics materials, including activities that cultivate active citizenship and foster a democratic classroom.

**Art Installations:** RevolutionNJ will also be partnering with the New Jersey Arts Council to launch a series of Revolutionary-inspired installations throughout the state showcasing local artists.

RevolutionNJ's programming will culminate in a marquee event to celebrate July 4, 2026, the nation's 250th anniversary, which will feature performances, reenactments, and much more.

For more information on programming, visit [RevNJ.org](https://www.revNJ.org) (<https://www.revNJ.org>).

"In a time when the nation is divided on many issues, this anniversary provides an invaluable opportunity to re-engage our colleagues, neighbors, and most importantly our students, with the ideals of the Revolution – liberty, equality, justice – and to recommit to working together toward that more perfect union that Americans have long striven for," **said Sara Cureton, Executive Director of the New Jersey Historical Commission.**

"RevolutionNJ is seizing this opportunity to share New Jersey's dramatic history with local, regional, and international visitors," **said Carrie Fellows, Executive Director of Nonprofit Crossroads of the American Revolution.** "We believe that connecting people with our state's fascinating historic sites will strengthen our communities, our economy, and our understanding of democracy for generations to come."

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) has been leading enhancements to ensure the state's Revolutionary War historic sites fully shine as part of America's 250th anniversary. This includes implementing Governor Murphy's investment in ten signature revolutionary war sites.

"New Jersey is at the heart of our nation's founding, with historic sites, critical battlefields and key lands that helped turn the tide of victory in the Revolutionary War," **said Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette.** "As we kick off America250, the Department of Environmental Protection is making capital investments in New Jersey's Revolutionary War historic sites, including the development of a new visitor center with immersive exhibits at Washington Crossing State Park, thanks to funding provided by Governor Murphy and the State Legislature. These enhancements will ensure that New Jersey is ready to showcase our part of the Revolutionary War for the Semiquincentennial milestone anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence."

"In 2026, we will have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to celebrate New Jersey's role in the founding of our country," **said State Treasurer Elizabeth Maher Muoio.** "It is a chance to commemorate all that strengthens, inspires, and unifies us as Americans. Treasury looks forward to being a part of these efforts to share and remember our unique history."

In 2022, New Jersey [announced](https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562022/20221129a.shtml) (<https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562022/20221129a.shtml>) a \$25 million investment from federal American Rescue Plan funds would be allocated to RevolutionNJ, in partnership with the New Jersey Historical Commission and Crossroads of the American Revolution, to help restore the following Revolutionary War sites:

1. Monmouth Battlefield State Park
2. Washington Crossing State Park
3. Trenton's Old Barracks
4. Battle Monument in Trenton
5. Princeton Battlefield State Park
6. Proprietary House in Perth Amboy
7. The Indian King Tavern in Haddonfield
8. Wallace House in Somerville
9. Boxwood Hall in Elizabeth
10. Rockingham in Kingston

New Jersey is also investing in the construction of a brand new permanent gallery space in downtown Trenton, at the New Jersey State Archives. Along with the State Museum, this new gallery will launch an exhibit examining New Jersey's Revolutionary story and will showcase some of the state's foundational historic documents to the public.

"The 2,727 members of The New Jersey State Society Daughters of the American Revolution are thrilled to collaborate with Governor Murphy, Lt. Governor Way, and other leaders within our state and communities, in the celebration of America 250! New Jersey Daughters are working on many different initiatives, including cataloging the names and service of every person who fought in a battle within New Jersey and by placing DAR America250 markers throughout the state to honor the service of the women and men who served during the Revolution along with many other projects to get New Jersey citizens involved in this upcoming celebration," **said Diane Waugh Oliver, State Regent, New Jersey State Society Daughters of the American Revolution.**

### **About RevolutionNJ**

RevolutionNJ is a partnership between the New Jersey Historical Commission (NJHC), a division of the New Jersey Department of State, and the nonprofit Crossroads of the American Revolution Association to plan the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution in New Jersey.

### **About The Battle of Monmouth**

On June 28, 1778, the land that is now Monmouth Battlefield State Park was the site of one of the longest battles of the American Revolutionary War. There, Washington restored his force's reputation battered by defeats in 1777. In the day-long battle in the hills, wood lots, farm fields and meadows, the main Continental Army, retrained at Valley Forge, repulsed attacks by the main British Army. By the end of the battle, over 600 people were dead, dying, or wounded and the Continental Army held the field.

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