Dear Friend and Fellow Preservationist,

Mark Twain once said, "Buy land, they're not making any more."

Sage advice that we here at the American Battlefield Trust take to heart every day to preserve the hallowed battlefields in our country.

Today, we have the opportunity to buy land at three important battlefields from the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. It's not often we have the opportunity to save land from these first battles on American soil, which means that when the opportunity comes around, we have to seize it.

We have the chance to save 158 acres. But before I get into the specifics of the battleground tracts at Brandywine, Pennsylvania; Newtown, New York; and Sackets Harbor, New York, I have some very exciting news to share with you.

As you know, our campaigns often secure funding from generous individuals along with anticipated grants from federal, state, and local entities. These matching funds allow us to multiply your donation to purchase hallowed ground.

The good news is that your donation today to save battlefield land at two Revolutionary War sites and one War of 1812 site will be multiplied $23.80 to $1. Think about it: for every dollar you donate to this campaign, it will be worth $23.80 toward the value of preserving these battlefields forever.

And it's a good thing, because the total value for these tracts is a whopping $4.8 million! Fortunately, with the anticipated funding multiplier of $23.80 to $1, the Trust needs to only raise $201,500 to secure these properties and preserve these battlefields forever.

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It's remarkable.

Speaking of remarkable, let's look at these tracts and their history.

The assembled cast of commanders at the **Battle of Brandywine** was like a veritable Revolutionary War All-Star event. British Major General Sir William Howe and his subordinate Lord Charles Cornwallis squared off against General George Washington, Major General Nathanael Greene, General "Mad Anthony" Wayne, and the Marquis de Lafayette on the American side.

The battle was fought on September 11, 1777, and did not go well for the Continental Army. The battle was massive, involving almost 30,000 troops, more than any other battle in the war. It raged for 11 hours, making it the longest single-day battle of the American Revolution. It covered ten square miles, more ground than any other battle of the war.

Washington was determined to prevent Sir William Howe and his army of 15,500 British Regulars and Hessian troops from capturing the American seat of government in Philadelphia. Taking up positions along Brandywine Creek, Washington believed that his army blocked all fords across the Brandywine. He was mistaken.

Under the cover of heavy fog, General Wilhelm von Knyphausen positioned his forces at Chadds Ford, while the bulk of Howe's troops crossed the Brandywine further upstream.

The battle had been raging for hours by the time Howe's force appeared undetected on the Continental right flank. Washington furiously dispatched troops to the threatened sector, but despite a stiff resistance, the Continentals were eventually overrun by Howe's men.

Painting "The Nation Makers" by Howard Pyle depicts the Battle of Brandywine
© *Howard Pyle, Brandywine Museum*

To prevent the defeat from turning into a disaster, Washington ordered Nathanael Greene's division to act as a rearguard so that the Continental Army could escape to the northeast. Greene's brave men counterattacked along the crest of Birmingham Hill. When night fell, the remaining Americans fell back in an orderly retreat, led in part by the Marquis de Lafayette. Although wounded, the charismatic young Frenchman remained on the field to ensure an organized withdrawal.

The Americans suffered 1,300 casualties in a crushing defeat that allowed the British to occupy Philadelphia. The overall outcome, however, was not nearly as bleak.

The Battle of Brandywine was the first time the Continentals proved they could stand toe-to-toe with the most powerful fighting force in the world.

Historian John Reed writes that *"Though Brandywine was militarily an American defeat, it had stunned Howe by its fierceness and gave the Americans spirit ... American troops had proved that they could stand against British regulars in open fight."*

Another historian, Christopher Ward, writes, *"Though they had been as badly beaten as any army could be without being entirely destroyed, there had been no panic; there was no suggestion of despair."*
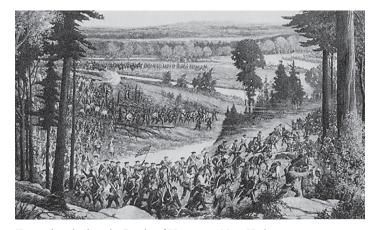
And as we all know, four years later, in October 1781, Washington and Lafayette (along with brash upstart Colonel Alexander Hamilton), would face Cornwallis on another battlefield, Yorktown, where the outcome would be very different, indeed.

Preserving hallowed ground at Brandywine is no small feat. Though 187 acres of this battlefield have already been preserved, its proximity to Philadelphia is what made it so important in 1777, and so expensive today.

As you'll see by the attached battlefield map, our target acquisition is 15 acres of a critical piece of the battlefield, as it is the center of Washington's main defensive line at Chadds Ford. (As an interesting aside, the original home and carriage house on the property served as a residence and art studio for renowned painter and illustrator N. C. Wyeth, who painted several Revolutionary War scenes, including one of Washington at Yorktown. But I digress.)

The second tract we hope to preserve is 55 acres at the **Battle of Newtown, New York**.

The lead-up to the Battle of Newtown marked a violent epoch during the Revolutionary War. The Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), Six Nations, and their allies had decided to side with the British based on a weak foundation of promises and continued to defend their land against New York and Pennsylvania settlers. These actions diverted manpower from the Continental Army, stripped the settlers of their food supplies, and spread terror throughout settlements. They had to be stopped.

Engraving depicts the Battle of Newtown, New York, September 29, 1779 © *The Chemung Historical Society*

In 1779, General George Washington allocated a force of 4,000 troops to General John Sullivan with orders to subdue the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), Six Nations. Sullivan and his forces moved into upstate New York with the objective of destroying crops, crushing their morale, and temporarily removing them as a threat to the rebellion.

Finally, on August 29, 1779, the fleeing Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), Six Nations, stood their ground. They were joined by a group of about 200 Loyalist militia members under the command of John Butler, and set up to ambush the Continentals along the banks of the Chemung River.

The Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), Six Nations plan, however, was detected by Sullivan's scouts, and rather than marching into an ambush, the American troops conducted a wide-ranging flanking maneuver across the very tract we're hoping to save. The objective was to surround the British allied forces and deliver them a devastating defeat. Sullivan succeeded in driving off the mixed force of Loyalists and Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), Six Nations, but he failed to encircle and destroy his adversaries. While the Southern colonies became the focus of the British high command between 1779 and 1781, Sullivan's campaign marked a Patriot success in the vital Northern Theater of the war.

The 55-acre tract is a critical parcel that will connect and enhance previously acquired property. If you look at the enclosed battleground map, you'll see it occupies a prime position on the Newtown battlefield. In the past two years, the Trust – thanks to good members like you – has made incredible progress in preserving the battlefield of Newtown. If we're able to add this tract to the land saved, the Trust will have more than doubled the size of the existing Newtown Battlefield State Park.

And that brings me to the 88 acres we have an opportunity to save at **Sackets Harbor, New York,** on Lake Ontario.

When the War of 1812 broke out between Britain and the United States, both sides began building up their naval forces on the Great Lakes. The lakes were vital highways for troops and supplies, and a naval arms race quickly overtook the region.

Painting of the attack on Sackets Harbor in July 1812.
© *Naval History and Heritage Command*

The race was at a stalemate when the Americans decided to attack a British shipyard at the small town of York (now Toronto). The British, now believing it to be vulnerable, launched their own raid on Sackets Harbor — the main US shipyard on Lake Ontario. Its capture would give the British strategic control of both Lakes Ontario and Erie and relieve the pressure of the American land offensive directed against Upper Canada.

General Sir George Prevost, Governor General of Canada, personally took command of the raiding party. He hastily assembled a half-dozen ships, 900 British and Canadian soldiers, and a small party of Native American warriors and began landing soldiers at Sackets Harbor on May 29, 1813.

The Americans were ready for the attack, but when Prevost and his forces landed on Horse Island, the outnumbered militia troops awaiting them retreated across the causeway that connected to the mainland. The British and Canadians followed the Americans in hot pursuit, who retreated in disorder through the woods to an area south of the village.

All seemed lost for the Americans, but in time, General Jacob Brown of the New York militia, the senior American officer present, was able to rally the panicked militiamen, and ordered them to flank the British forces.

Concluding that his force could neither win a decisive victory before sunset nor hold the ground gained, and fearing that his retreat would be cut off, Prevost called off the attack and ordered his men back to the boats.

It was a victory, albeit a close one, for the American forces, who were able to maintain their stronghold on Lake Ontario.

The 88 acres of battlefield land at Sackets Harbor provides an important connection to key points of the New York State Historic Site. It virtually completes the waterfront! It's also where the causeway from Horse Island connects with the mainland. From here you can almost see the outnumbered American militias beating a panicked retreat with enemy combatants right on their tails. That the Americans were ultimately able to turn things around at Sackets Harbor is remarkable.

There's that word again, *remarkable*. I beg your patience with the frequency with which I'm using it today, but no other word captures the opportunity we have right now, especially given the fact that all of these acres could be lost to development if not preserved.

> ### We can save three *remarkable* battlefield sites
> ### if we can raise $201,500. Every dollar you can donate
> ### to this cause will be multiplied by $23.80.

With the nation's 250th birthday celebration in just two years, the spotlight will be on our Revolutionary War history, which provides us, at the Trust, a unique opportunity. In 2026, and the years surrounding it, there will be increased interest in the battles that defined our nation. We need to preserve as much of this history as possible because we have the chance to remind our fellow citizens of the critical importance of keeping our history alive through battlefield restoration and education.

Your generous donation today, when fortified by our $23.80 match, is nothing short of … well, remarkable. And it will go a long way in helping us prepare for the semiquincentennial spotlight.

As always, I remain honored by your support,

David N. Duncan
President

P.S. If you're able to make a donation of $50 or more today, I'll send you a copy of the Trust's *Battle Maps of the American Revolution*. Some of you may already have this volume gracing your library shelves. If so, perhaps you'll consider passing along your extra copy to a young person or donating it to a public library. If you don't have this book yet, I hope you won't let this opportunity pass, especially as we close in on the nation's 250th anniversary of these nation-defining battles. I am forever grateful for your generous support.