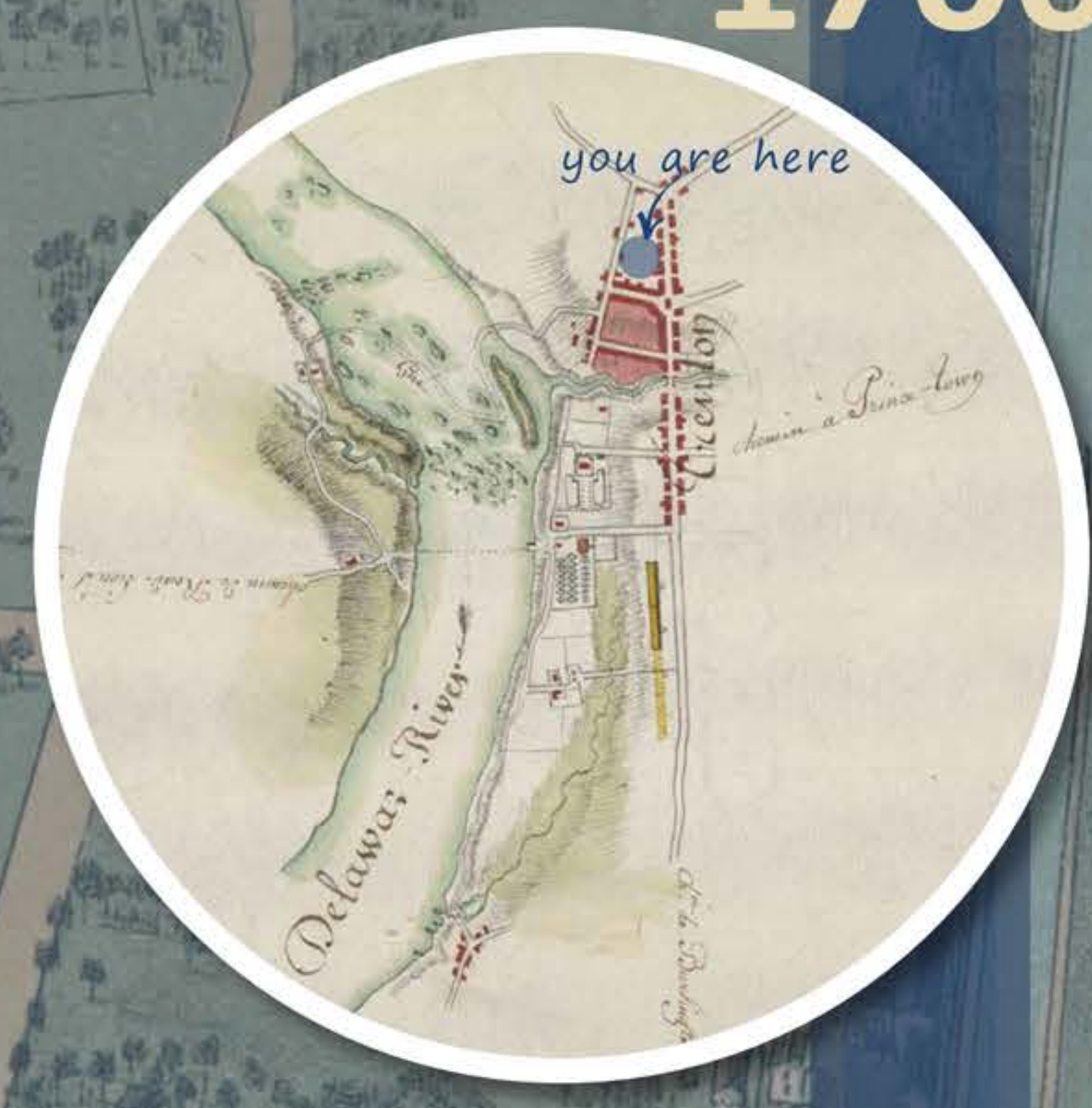




# BATTLE MONUMENT PARK

From  
Battleground to  
Commemorative  
Park

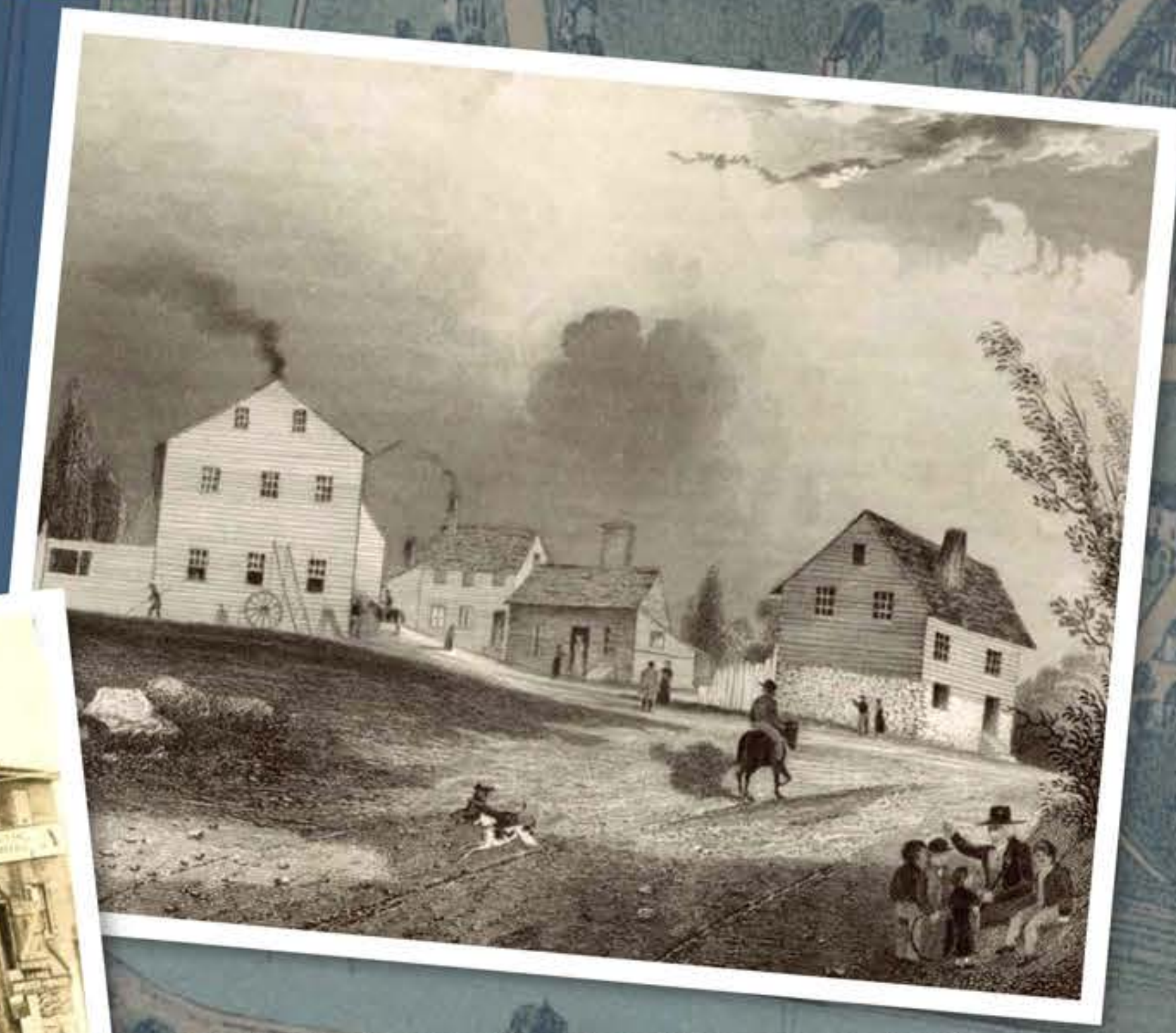
1700s



Map of Trenton prepared in 1781 for the encampment of General Rochambeau's French army en route from Newport, Rhode Island to Yorktown, Virginia. The site of the future Battle Monument lies at the apex of the street pattern on the northern edge of town.

1800s

Right: Engraving of a painting by James Hamilton, circa 1845, showing "The Battle Ground at Trenton." Although difficult to interpret with certainty, the view is thought to be looking up Warren Street toward Five Points and the intersection with the Pennington Road.

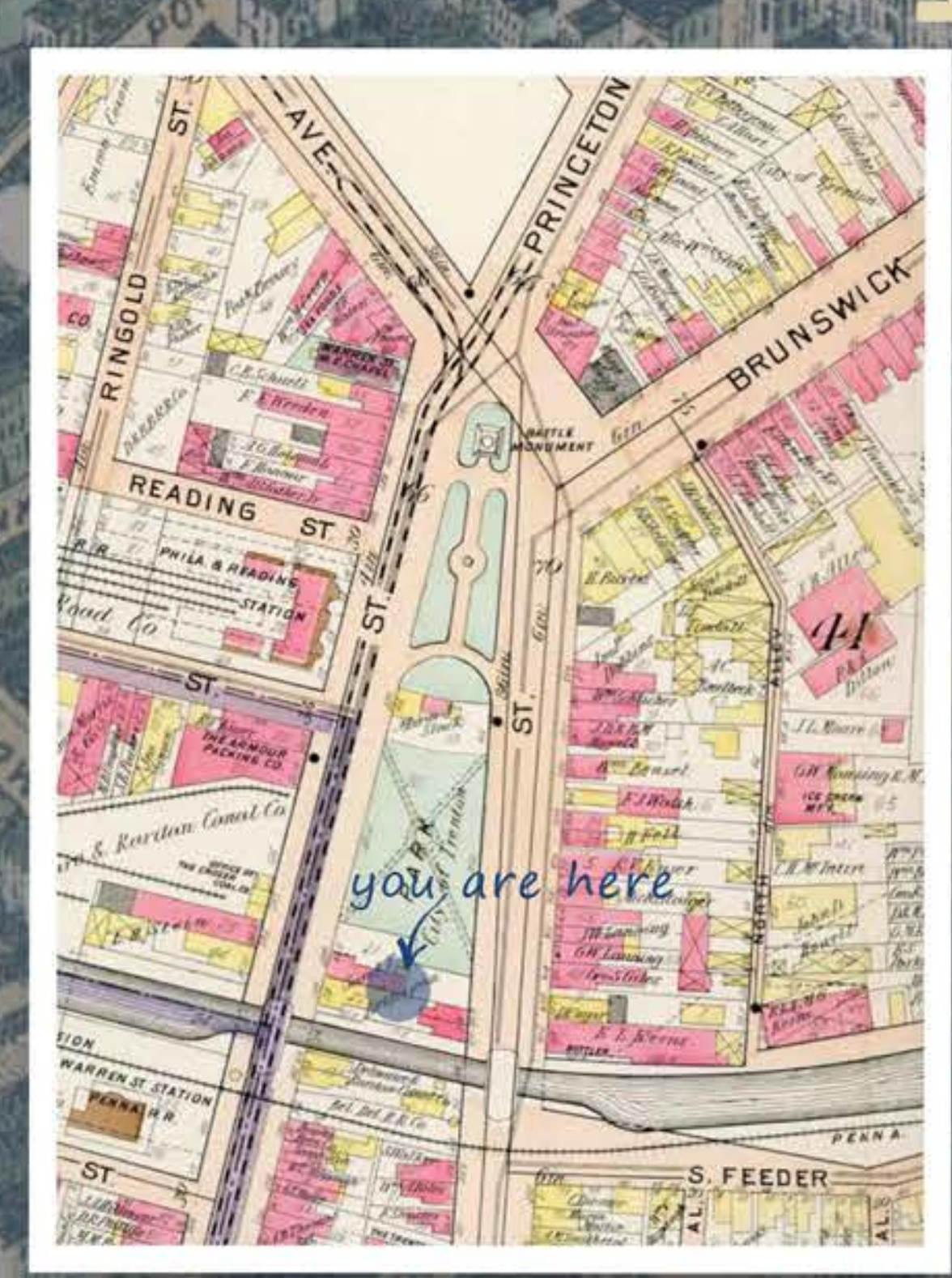


Left: View showing the site of the Trenton Battle Monument in 1891 shortly before construction commenced. The building in the foreground occupied the center of Five Points and housed the Trenton Wagon Works. It was demolished to make way for the monument. Beyond, to the left, with the clock tower, is the Reading Lines Trenton Station.

The official dedication ceremony of the Trenton Battle Monument on October 19, 1893.



1900s



Map from the Lathrop Atlas of the City of Trenton, published in 1905, showing Battle Monument Park in its original configuration. The home of one local resident, Maria A. Slack, remained in place in the middle of the park.



A view up North Warren Street in 1933 looking toward the Battle Monument with the park in the foreground across from the Reading Lines Trenton Station. A street car heads downtown.

2000s

Background image: Fowler and Bailey, Bird's Eye View of Trenton, 1874.

## history

**Battle Monument Park** occupies the northern apex of the somewhat irregular street pattern that frames the historic core of downtown Trenton. The Battle Monument itself is set at the upper end of the park, a location that evolved over the centuries as a critical "five-point" road intersection and as the northern gateway into the city.

Over the course of the colonial period a cluster of homes and commercial premises took root around the intersection. Among the local residents living here on Warren Street on the eve of the Battles of Trenton were Samuel Tucker, President of the Provincial Congress and a justice of New Jersey's Supreme Court, and Charles Axford, Jr. and William Smith, both musicians serving in the Trenton militia. Axford, a carpenter, was also the town's tax assessor and kept the **King of Prussia Tavern**. Another inn nearby on Brunswick Avenue, the **Fox Chase Tavern**, was notable for housing a sizeable Hessian picket at the time of the first battle.

After the Revolution, Trenton blossomed as the seat of state government and as a rapidly industrializing city. Turnpikes, a canal, railroads and street cars all fueled development around **Five Points** throughout the 19th century. The **Delaware and Raritan Feeder Canal**, built in the early 1830s, still passes just behind you, supplying water to the canal's main line from Trenton to New Brunswick. In its heyday, potteries, stone, coal and lumber yards and other businesses lined its banks. In the later 19th and 20th centuries, the **Belvidere-Delaware Railroad** (later part of the Pennsylvania Railroad) and the **Delaware and Bound Brook Railroad** (later absorbed by the Reading Railroad) both maintained passenger stations and freight yards on Warren Street a few yards from here.

The idea of erecting a monument to the **First Battle of Trenton** gestated for a half century or more before coming to fruition. The cornerstone was laid 115 years to the day after the battle on December 26, 1891. A formal dedication ceremony took place on October 19, 1893, but it was not until 1896 that the observation deck and park were fully open to the public. Rising almost 150 feet with a fine view of the downtown and Delaware River, the monument was designed by John H. Duncan, the architect of Grant's Tomb in New York City. The bronze statue of Washington atop the column and the soldier figures guarding the entrance were sculpted by William O'Donovan; the bronze relief panels by Thomas Eakins and Charles Henry Niehaus. The original Eakins panels are on display at the New Jersey State Museum, following restoration.

Funding for the park rehabilitation project from NJM Insurance Group and the City of Trenton. Project designed and administered by BRS, Inc. on behalf of the City of Trenton, the D&R Greenway Land Trust and the New Jersey Tree Foundation. Sign design and content by Hunter Research, Inc. Image credits (top to bottom): Princeton University Library Archives; Godey's Magazine XXXII:51; Trentoniana Collection, Trenton Public Library; R.C. Maxwell Company Collection, Duke University Libraries.



**As you stand here**, imagine a cold winter mid-morning, the day after Christmas, 1776. This is a battleground, the place where the Continental Army first begins to cast off the yoke of British imperialism. All around you and all across what is now downtown, for an hour or more, there swirls intense, chaotic fighting, musket and cannon fire, as American troops catch Hessian mercenaries unawares and force them into submission. Today, we celebrate this spot with a noble monument and pensive park set within the same three-century-old colonial street pattern that existed at the time of the First Battle of Trenton.