



# AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD TRUST ★ ★ ★

PRESERVE. EDUCATE. INSPIRE.

## **Request for Proposals: Augmented Reality The Liberty Trail NY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

With the support of funding from a grant from the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) and matching monies, the American Battlefield Trust (the Trust) is requesting proposals from qualified development and design agencies to interpret and contextualize Revolutionary War battlefields in New York State using augmented reality (AR). The Trust aims to use the AR within its app, The Liberty Trail NY and on the websites, [thelibertytrail.org](http://thelibertytrail.org) and [www.battlefields.org](http://www.battlefields.org), among other possible online channels. We imagine that the AR will be web-based in its execution, thereby not requiring (additional) app creation.

### **A. ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND**

The American Battlefield Trust is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization based in Washington DC, that is dedicated to preserving America's hallowed battlegrounds and educating the public about what happened there and why it matters today. The nonprofit organization has protected tens of thousands of acres of battlefield land associated with the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and Civil War. The Trust also has a strong online presence with more than 600,000 followers on its social media accounts, such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, and more than one million visits to its website each month. Nearly 80% of those visits are by students and teachers. An increasingly important aspect of the Trust's work is battlefield visitation and on-site interpretation. Land preservation in combination with signage, trail-making, wayfinding, and digital experiences, such as with one of our 20-plus apps, address the questions: "What happened here?" and "Why does it matter?"

### **B. THE LIBERTY TRAIL**

The Liberty Trail got its start in the storytelling associated with the Southern Campaign of the American Revolution. The Liberty Trail is now a unified path of preservation and interpretation across South Carolina, telling the remarkable stories of the battles and skirmishes decided in the swamps, fields, woods and mountains of the South.

Now, we are continuing The Liberty Trail and the storytelling across all the points where the Revolution unfolded, from Florida to Canada, west to Ohio and Arkansas. We are set to debut a new app in New Jersey, along with new interpretation and land preservation at Princeton. In New York, the new app (and web presence) will focus first on three battlefields: Bennington, Oriskany, and Newtown. We call this broad history The Liberty Trail NY.

The first Liberty Trail app initially covered 30 South Carolina sites in what may be seen as a driving tour, but could easily be used by anyone, in any place, who is interested in the history of the American Revolution. This is the same approach we'll be taking in New York. For reference on the format of the app and the platform to be used, please use any web browser to open this URL: <https://thelibertytrail.stqry.app/1>. Please note this preceding link is viewable in any web browser but formatted for mobile phone use. The goal is to get people traversing a battlefield using the app to explore and learn the history of the land that would otherwise be inaccessible and uninterpreted without a human guide. To avoid requiring users of the app to download a second app to experience the

augmented reality experience envisioned in this proposal, we favor a Web AR implementation that may allow links to be placed within the app and signs on the land that will make for a more seamless experience.

### **C. BENNINGTON: Dragoon breastwork**

The app will guide visitors through stops at the Dragoon Breastworks, the Beardsley Farmstead & the Loyalist Breastworks, and may be integrated with The Friends of the Bennington Battlefield audio tour, currently accessible by QR code stickers on interpretive panels and hosted on their website.

“Hessian Hill” is the focal point of the visitor experience at the battlefield. The AR experience will demonstrate the extent of the dragoon breastworks and the surrounding view of old growth forest, to emphasize their hasty construction and how they would have looked at the time of the Patriot assault on that location. For a visual reference, please view the Don Troiani painting below in which some details of the breastwork peak through. Rough cut logs, stacked to chest height (about 4’) on a natural escarpment supported by log posts. Very approximately, the Durnford map suggested a large fieldworks with three arms (250’ + 438’ + 188’) for a total length of 876 feet or just under 300 yards. Presumably a last-minute embrasure would have been cut in for the cannon, according to our historian.



#### **Battle Summary**

By early August 1777, Maj. Gen. John Burgoyne's British army had advanced south from Canada past Lake Champlain. With his supply lines overextended, Burgoyne had to rely on the surrounding countryside to support his army. On August 9, Col. Friedrich Baum was dispatched with a mixed force of British infantry, Hessian dragoons, American Indian allies, Loyalists, and Canadians to collect supplies from a supply depot in Bennington, Vermont. About a week later, on August 14, Col. Baum skirmished with American militia west of the village of Bennington, Vermont under Col. John Stark who were sent to investigate reports of Native American activity in the area. After an American retreat into Bennington, Vermont, Baum decided to dig in and await reinforcements under Lt. Col. Heinrich Breymann before attacking the Americans. However, the aggressive Col. John Stark attacked Baum on August 16 with a numerically superior force. Stark's Americans struck the Hessian and Tory Redoubts

that afternoon and in the ensuing fight, broke the British line and mortally wounded Baum. The American victory at Bennington further deteriorated Burgoyne's army and contributed to his surrender at Saratoga two months later.

**D. ORISKANY: Corduroy road and surrounding forest**

This AR experience will depict the corduroy road and thick forested area that made such an ambush possible. A corduroy road is made from a series of logs laid parallel across a roadbed to allow passage of wagons, horses, or foot traffic through usually muddy or wet areas to prevent them from getting bogged down, as in the illustration below. The landscape at Oriskany currently is open fields so AR will help the visitor better understand the 1777 forested battle landscape.



**Battle Summary**

In the summer of 1777, British forces under the command of John Burgoyne moved into the Hudson Valley to cut New England from the rest of the Thirteen Colonies. Burgoyne hoped to move through the valley and reach Albany. British Lieutenant Colonel Barry St. Leger was ordered to support this column by attacking Fort Stanwix in the Mohawk Valley. On August 6, 1777, British forces under the command of Sir John Johnson engaged American forces under Nicholas Herkimer in the Battle of Oriskany, resulting in one of the few battles of the war where all the participants were North American. Its ending was inconclusive. After being initially surprised by Native American warriors, Herkimer waged a stubborn defense, eventually compelling the British and their allies to abandon the fight and return to the lines around Fort Schuyler.

The Battle of Oriskany has traditionally been called the bloodiest battle of the Revolutionary War. It was fought by men who had once been neighbors and even brothers in the Mohawk Valley, but who had chosen opposite sides when the war began. The tension between those who supported the revolutionary Congress and those who supported the British government grew until many of the loyalists left their homes and fled to Canada.

**E. NEWTOWN: One of the new houses on Baldwin's creek, based on the Adam Hubley sketch of a similar structure at Chenussio**

The AR experience at Newtown will be a digital recreation of one of the period, “new houses,” on Baldwin’s Creek, based on the Adam Hubley sketch of a similar structure at the Seneca village of Chenussio, seen below.



### **Battle Summary**

The Battle of Newtown on August 29, 1779, was the main conflict of the Sullivan Expedition, a campaign ordered by Gen. George Washington to weaken the Iroquois Confederacy by destroying their villages, crops, and forcing them from western New York. Deadly Iroquois and Loyalist raids on American settlements in 1778, gave the American army cause to act. Under the leadership of Maj. Gen. John Sullivan and Brig. Gen. James Clinton, American forces advanced, meeting resistance near Newtown. The battle ended in an American victory, allowing Sullivan to destroy over forty Iroquois villages, driving many Iroquois to seek refuge at Fort Niagara. Although their territories were devastated, the Iroquois continued to raid frontier settlements until the war’s end.

### **F. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The objective of this work is to use AR to allow visitors to these three battlefields to see what cannot now be seen. We’d like to use AR to digitally reconstruct the breastworks, the corduroy road, and the “new house,” based on the preceding descriptions and subsequent research and information to be made available.

We would like help to create a fully realized experience with the AR being used on-site (and other places) including signage on the battlefield and in the visitor center to start the experience so that it is as easy and seamless as possible. As previously stated, making AR available without the burden of an app download is the reason for our preference for WebAR, but we are open to hearing other approaches that are dictated by the optimal experience for visitors to the battlefield.

In addition to the structures described above, we invite responses to this RFP to include enhancements to create a full and immersive experience. Examples include the interior of the house, characters in the battle, sounds, music, guides who may convey the history, and other ways to bring the history to life.

**G. HISTORICAL GUIDANCE AND REVIEW**

Historians David Pitlyk, Michael Roets, Tori Srnka, Travis Bowman and Dan Davis head our team of subject matter experts. All are experienced not just as subject matter experts, but as public historians, ensuring that our content will be highly researched, accurate, and accessible. The subject matter experts will provide all content to the vendor in the form of text or visual source material from which the vendor will create the final product. The team of subject matter experts will be able to provide exact geolocations to anchor the AR for the structures.

We also like to call on an expert of the history of the Oneida Indian Nation and their dwellings to recreate the inhabitation that existed in Newtown and advise us on the corduroy road at Oriskany.

**H. DELIVERABLES**

The vendor shall deliver an AR experience that includes the breastworks, the corduroy road, and the “new house,” that were a part of the sites at the time of the Revolutionary War battles. At a minimum the experience allows users of the AR to pin the augmented structures to a location where historians suggest they may have been, at full, 1 x 1 scale. The AR should be portable and playable in one or more streaming platforms such as 8<sup>th</sup> Wall (or in another mutually agreeable way). The vendor shall deliver work in both raw and “glb” formats unless otherwise determined by the Trust and the vendor. The files shall be viewable from a simple web link.

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## I. PROJECT SCHEDULE

A suggested work schedule is below. Work begins in February 2025 and is completed (AR will be live and operational) by July 2025.

	Action	Deliverable
November 2024 - January 2025	RFP released and proposals reviewed.	Finalist and winner.
February-March 2025	Draft contracts with vendors Deliver historical reference material Formal project kick-off Research & scripting commences Creative design commences Production schedule agreed Script writing begins	Contracts signed. Production schedule. Initial storyboards and design comps.. Voice-over and other talent identified, if needed.
April 2025	Production commences User testing Additional script writing	Feedback compiled; refinements made. Test AR delivered.
May - June 2025	Final feedback. Animation completed with voice-overs. Music sourced. Closed captions inserted Final report produced.	Final WebAR files delivered and tested.
July 2025	Deployment and retrospective meeting. Design and develop signage to alert the visiting public to the AR.	Signs in the ground. Final files on an WebAR platform.

## J. AUDIENCE

The audience for this AR experience can be described as the “general public,” but the focus is on families and students and teachers who visit the battlefields.

## K. SELECTION CRITERIA

The proposals will be reviewed and evaluated based on the following factors. The factors will be evaluated through a balanced combination of all of them together and, overall, the selection will hinge on the Trust’s judgment of best value, defined as most likely to produce high-quality results, not necessarily the fastest or the least costly.

- a. The vendor should have a proven track record of developing successful and attractive AR experiences, ideally for a variety of clients. Please share links, references, and/or case studies to demonstrate relevant prior experience. The following factors will also be considered when evaluating the applicants submitting their qualifications:
  - i. Demonstrating an understanding of the purpose and scope of the AR.
  - ii. Creative vision: ability to envision, articulate, and design a high-quality AR experience that addresses the Trust’s goals based on the latest research and best practices.
  - iii. Specialized experience and technical competence.
  - iv. Prior success in developing inventive digital media, especially AR, products in a cost-efficient and timely manner.
  - v. An understanding of human-centered design, and/or experience in conducting testing with target audiences and incorporating feedback into final products.

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- vi. The specific experience of individuals who constitute the firm will also be considered. A primary contact must be identified.
  - vii. Client references, relevant projects, company background, tentative timeline, and your development approach.
  - viii. The vendor's available resources and capacity to complete the project within the specified timeframe, and within a team environment.
- b. Working within the identified budget for this contract of approximately \$30,000.
- i. We welcome offers of in-kind donations from applicants to this solicitation.
  - ii. Allowance for appropriate credits to donors and partner organizations on the media or signs may be necessary.

### L. SUBMISSION AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Submissions should address the criteria above and communicate a creative vision that is adherent to the timeline and budget provided.

Please include the following in a response to this RFP:

- Company background
- Why your agency is the right fit for this project and what do you do best
- Agency team information and people to be assigned to this work
- Three client references and relevant portfolio work
- High-level production plan, timeline, and budget
- Client revision process
- Disclosure of any conflicts of interest

Please submit your proposal to Lawrence Swiader at [lswiader@battlefields.org](mailto:lswiader@battlefields.org) no later than noon ET on December 15, 2025; proposals received after this date will not be considered. Additional questions about the project or this RFP may also be directed to Lawrence Swiader.

The American Battlefield Trust is committed to creating a diverse environment and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or veteran status.