

# Commemorating the 243<sup>rd</sup> Year of the Affair at Cedar Bridge Tavern

By Pat Johnson

The annual Cedar Bridge Tavern Commemoration that reenacts the last land skirmish of the Revolutionary War will be held Sunday, December 7, 2025 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Cedar Bridge Tavern Historic Site, 200 Old Halfway Road in Barnegat. (Snow date January 4, 2026) There will be plenty to see and do during the event; this year there will be two staged battle reenactments of the skirmish, at noon and 2 p.m. Expect some musket and cannon firings and battle cries as Loyalist reenactors from (among others) the 1<sup>st</sup> New Jersey Militia Battalion engage with Patriots reenactors from the 9<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Pennsylvania Regiments. Both will be in full regalia.

They are commemorating the Affair at Cedar Bridge that took place on December 27, 1782. Here is a brief history that comes down to us from many sources: Captain John Bacon was a Loyalist to the Crown and had taken lives and contraband in previous encounters with Patriots. His band of 'Pine Robbers' had created so much destruction that the Patriot Governor of New Jersey put a price on his head.

Late in December, the Burlington Militia headed by Captain Richard Shreve scoured the pinelands for Bacon and his men, and not finding them, took their rest at the tavern. Unbeknownst to them, Bacon and party were just across the river. A battle ensued at the bridge and although the Patriots seemed to be winning the skirmish, local inhabitants took sides with Bacon and he was able to get away. This last documented land engagement of the Revolutionary War is purported to have taken place at Cedar Bridge Tavern Historic Site.



Demonstrations at Cedar Bridge Tavern, 2024.  
Photo credit: Ocean County.

Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Commission Director and County Historian Tim Hart will recount the story of the battle and other tales of the Revolutionary War and Colonial South Jersey on the day of the Commemoration.

The Commission with the Ocean County Parks & Recreation Department have planned an educational and fun day for families.

Throughout the day, visit campsites of the reenactors, take tours of the Cedar Bridge Tavern where you will hear stories of Colonial South Jersey. Tavern keeper reenactor Paul Taber will have period drinks (nonalcoholic) to sample such as switchel— a concoction of beer, egg, molasses and rum that is stirred with a hot poker.

The New Jersey Fifes and Drums will perform, as will the Sea Dogs—traditional tavern musicians. There will be a blacksmith, weaver, and carpenter demonstrating their craft and more games for the children. Hart said



the children get to dress up in Colonial garb and have a chance to win a tri-corner hat. There will also be crafts and games to play throughout the site.

“The event has really grown over the years,” said Hart. “It was held at Cedar Bridge Tavern in 2001 but had been celebrated during a ‘Good Old Days’ event held in Manahawkin at the Old Stone Store before that. The first year at Cedar Bridge I think there were five of us and now we have just under 500 people show up.”

Besides the events being held around the Tavern, those dressed for the weather may enjoy hiking the 3.5-mile Michael T. Mangum Trail or the shorter walking paths around the site.

The crowds are asked to park at Jersey Sand Supply, 560 Route 72 and take the shuttle vans that will be provided by OceanRide.

Cedar Bridge Tavern Historic Site is open year-round, Thursday-Monday. For full event listings, check out the Ocean County Parks newsletter:

<https://oceancountyparks.org/frmHomePrks>

Later in the month, on the date of the skirmish, December 27, Cedar Bridge will also be hosting a history walk at 10 am for \$6 and a presentation at 2:00pm for \$5.

Additional information about the American Revolution in Ocean County can be found on the Ocean County Cultural & Heritage Commission’s website at:

[co.ocean.nj.us/OC/ch/frm250AmericanRevolution.aspx](https://co.ocean.nj.us/OC/ch/frm250AmericanRevolution.aspx)

The Commission has received a National Park Service’s American Battlefield Protection Program to make 7 short documentaries on the most significant sites of conflict during the Revolution in what is now Ocean County and to share the story of the civil war-like local experience of the Revolution. The documentaries are set to release in 2026 and will be published on the Commission website and YouTube channel.

The Commission’s traveling War at the Shore exhibit trailer will continue to visit various events throughout 2025 and beyond. To request the trailer at your event visit the Commission website.

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Photo credit: Ocean County.

