

Freehold Memorial Day Parade

Decoration Day 1874



Memorial Day 2024

Honoring the Fallen for 150 Years

Dear Friends:

In the years following the end of the American Civil War in 1865, those who remained searched for a way to commemorate the more than half a million lost in that war. A remembrance began where the public would decorate the graves of the fallen, leading to a holiday known as Decoration Day. In 1868, the leader of the Grand Army of the Republic, a veterans group for Union soldiers, Major General John A. Logan stated that the holiday should be made permanent and that it should be celebrated on May 30th.

Freehold began its commemoration of the day just a few years later in 1874 - 150 years ago this year. According to our current research, that makes the Freehold Memorial Day Parade around the 11th oldest in the nation - we were not the first, but we are one of the few that continue to honor the lost today. Over the past 150 years, the commemoration of the fallen in Freehold has become a tradition marked with both solemnity and joy, with the Memorial Service at Elks Point and the ever-growing parade. We were also one of the few (if not the only) that still had a parade within COVID guidelines in 2020.

This year, the Freehold Memorial Day Parade Committee is looking to go all out in our commemoration of not only Memorial Day, but our 150th celebration of it. To that end, we are looking for your help. We want this year's parade to be *the best* it has ever been. We would love to see more groups this year, more bands, more past and present elected dignitaries and would be ecstatic to have our units bring back the floats of the past.

If you have not participated in our parade in the past, or it has been a long time, or you are typically at another parade, we hope that you might make an exception to join us in this important and historic celebration. If you are a group that joins us on an annual basis, we look forward to having you back with us!

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Sincerely,

Alice McCobb

Alice McCobb, Chairman

Freehold Memorial Day Parade Committee