



For Immediate Release

Contact: [Danae DiNicola](#), Director of Marketing & Communications, (413) 559-1074

February 10, 2026

PRESS RELEASE

See the American Revolution Through New Eyes at Historic Deerfield

*Exhibitions, Tours, and Performances Mark the Nation's 250th Anniversary by
Exploring Revolutionary life in New England and Beyond*

(Deerfield, MA) – As the nation approaches the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, [Historic Deerfield](#) is inviting visitors to explore the era through a new series of exhibitions that examine the Revolutionary period from multiple perspectives: political, cultural, aesthetic, and deeply personal. Drawing from its extensive collections and the stories of local residents, Historic Deerfield's upcoming exhibitions illuminate how the Revolution was experienced, debated, and understood both in New England and across the Atlantic world. Together, these three exhibitions offer a richer and more nuanced look at the people, ideas, and everyday choices that shaped America's founding.

Picturing the Revolution (April 18, 2026 - January 3, 2027)

Throughout the American War for Independence, scores of images circumnavigated the globe, fighting their own battles to establish a comprehensible narrative for the momentous events occurring in British North America. Differences in politics, disruptions in communication, and the delay of thousands of miles of distance produced competing and often contradictory accounts. Some images became enduring representations of the conflict. Others faded from memory.

Drawing from Historic Deerfield's rich collection of Revolutionary-era materials, this exhibition explores the diverse ways that 18th-century individuals "pictured" or understood the Revolution as it unfolded. Looking across prints, drawings, maps, broadsides, portraits, powder horns, ceramics, and satirical cartoons, *Picturing the Revolution* highlights how images shaped local and global perceptions of the war: its landscapes, its actors, its causes, and its goals. Mining these complex visual records reveals the often-overlooked importance of pictures in the shift from revolt to revolution, and in envisioning a future for the new nation. This exhibition has been made possible with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism.

Dressing the Revolution: Fashion and Politics 1760-1789 (April 18, 2026 - January 3, 2027)

The exhibition includes more than 20 garments, accessories, textiles, and prints that illuminate the complex role of clothing at the time of the American Revolution. By posing new questions about fashion's relationship with class, race, and gender, *Dressing the Revolution* places clothing at the center of the political debates, shedding light on dress as a powerful tool that communicated not just status and identity, but political affinities during this volatile period.

The exhibition begins with a look at the consumer revolution of the mid-18th century when an abundance of highly desirable imported goods, especially finished cloth and accessories, became widely available to all levels of society in the Colonies. Fashionable dress connected Colonists with England but also contributed to the construction of personal identities and social status, while providing the potential for social mobility.

When Britain imposed onerous taxes in the 1760s, perceptions around wearing fashionable dress began to change. Patriots called for non-importation and non-consumption of British goods while advocating for more sober, American-made clothing. Women stepped into new political roles through the many highly publicized spinning bees, putting action to words in their industry and self-sacrifice. While the Homespun Movement remained largely symbolic, it nevertheless changed the narrative around the public display of clothing.

Fashionable dress remained a topic of heated debate, and public scrutiny, when consumption of imported goods resumed after the tariffs were lifted. Clothes, whether modest or fashionable, could be read for their political implications. When the Revolution brought closed ports and hardship, Colonists often made due by maintaining and altering existing clothes and dressing more plainly. The show concludes with a look at dressing in the new Nation and the conflicting urges to balance familiar calls for republican modesty and virtue with a new eagerness for American-produced fashions.

A Town Divided, Deerfield in the Age of Revolution (April 18, 2026 – January 2, 2028)

This exhibition explores how a rural Massachusetts community responded to the upheaval of the late 1760s through the 1780s. Using objects, documents, and personal narratives, it will present multiple perspectives on how Deerfield residents embraced, rejected, or questioned Revolutionary ideals. While many associate the Revolution with Boston or battlefield sites, *A Town Divided* brings the promises—and contradictions—of the Revolution to life through the lens of a deeply divided rural town in western Massachusetts.

As in other communities, Deerfield's citizens struggled to adapt to an everchanging social, political, and economic landscape as rebellion and war affected villages far from urban centers and coastal cities. In Deerfield, which was evenly split between Loyalists and Whigs, conflicts between neighbors upturned lives and polarized the community. By expanding and interpreting Deerfield's stories, the exhibition investigates overlooked aspects of the Revolution, highlighting a period when Americans faced severe challenges but eventually emerged a new nation.

Objects, documents, and voices from the period allow urgency and uncertainty of the era. The ideals of equality and liberty engaged not only Loyalists and Whigs, but also rich and poor, women and children, African Americans (both free and enslaved), and Indigenous people. This program is made possible by a grant from Mass Humanities, which provided funding through the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Historic Deerfield president John Davis said, “Taken together, *Picturing the Revolution*, *Dressing the Revolution*, and *A Town Divided* emphasize that the Revolution was experienced through images, clothing, and local relationships as much as through ideology and conflict. By grounding broad historical questions in objects and individual stories, we hope to offer a more nuanced understanding of this formative period.”

Additional Programming: Historic Deerfield has commissioned [Plays in Place](#) to produce three original one-act plays set in Deerfield during July 1774 on the eve of the Revolution. The first play will feature three young Deerfield residents arguing about issues of loyalty and liberty on the grounds of the Ashley house, the home of the Loyalist minister. The second will center on Jin Cole and her son, Cato, both enslaved by Rev. Ashley. The final play dramatizes the story of Sarah Stebbins who, in 1772, unsuccessfully sued David Dickinson for paternity of her child. This piece will show how the dispute (and the woman's subsequent shaming and confession of adultery) overlapped with the Patriot-vs-Loyalist debates in town (including vandalism of Deerfield's Liberty Pole), highlighting how a woman's personal ordeal intersected with public discourse around morality and politics during revolutionary upheaval.

In addition to the exhibitions, Historic Deerfield is planning a range of related activities for visitors. For example, in 1774 at [The Ashley House](#), loyalists Rev. Jonathan and Dorothy Ashley held a tea party in defiance of the non-consumption agreements. There, a recreation of the tea party in progress will be installed in the North Parlor. Visitors will be able to smell imported Chinese bohea tea and Liberty tea served during the Revolution, while exploring boycotts as protest and considering opposing perspectives in the conflict. Historic Deerfield will also offer several walking tours, including “Deerfield in Revolution” and “Slavery, Labor, and Freedom,” among others.

Through these exhibitions and related programs Historic Deerfield brings the Revolutionary era to life in ways that connect national history to individual experience. By examining visual culture, clothing and political identity, and the lived realities of a divided rural community, the initiative encourages visitors to reflect on the complexities of liberty, loyalty, and nation-building. As America marks its semiquincentennial, Historic Deerfield's exhibitions provide an opportunity to engage with the Revolution not as a distant event, but as a human story still relevant today.

To learn more about Historic Deerfield, visit historic-deerfield.org.

[Images to accompany this release can be found here.](#)

About Historic Deerfield. Historic Deerfield is a museum of early American life situated in an authentic 18th-century New England village in the Connecticut River Valley of Massachusetts. Its historic houses and world-famous collection of early American decorative arts open doors to new perspectives that inspire people to seek a deeper understanding of themselves, their communities, and the world.