



For Immediate Release

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Historic Deerfield Opens a Revolutionary Season**

*New Exhibitions, Living History Demonstrations, and the Witness Stones Walking Tour Bring Western Massachusetts' Revolutionary Story to Life*

(Deerfield, MA) – [Historic Deerfield](#) launches its 2026 season on April 18 with a bold, expansive exploration of Revolution-era New England. From the riverbanks and meetinghouses of western Massachusetts, where ordinary citizens wrestled with extraordinary ideas, Deerfield stood at the crossroads of loyalty and rebellion. This season invites visitors to examine the Revolution not as a distant myth, but as a lived experience—complex, contested, and profoundly local—just as it was 250 years ago.

Opening the season are three major exhibitions that look at the Revolutionary moment from strikingly different vantage points: “[Picturing the Revolution](#),” “[Dressing the Revolution: Fashion and Politics 1760–1789](#),” and “[A Town Divided: Deerfield in the Age of Revolution](#).” Together, they reveal how images shaped political narratives across the Atlantic world; how garments, textiles, and adornment became declarations of allegiance; and how one rural Massachusetts town grappled with the upheaval transforming an empire into a republic. By placing Deerfield within the wider currents of Revolutionary thought and commerce, **these exhibitions illuminate western Massachusetts' essential role in the birth of the nation.**

The beloved flock of heritage sheep returns May 2–3 for [Woolly Wonders](#), a celebration of the agricultural traditions that sustained 18th-century New England communities. Visitors can meet sheep and lambs, enjoy live music and local fare, and witness sheepdogs in action, alongside demonstrations of shearing, spinning, and weaving, trades that once underpinned the region's economy and connected Deerfield to the global marketplace.

On June 19, Historic Deerfield commemorates Juneteenth with the [Witness Stones Walking Tour](#), developed in partnership with the [Witness Stones Project](#) (now affiliated with [Historic New England](#)). This powerful program memorializes the lives of enslaved African Americans in 18th-century Deerfield, with particular focus on Prince, an enslaved man who sought self-emancipation from Joseph Barnard. By restoring these stories to the landscape, the tour

broadens the Revolutionary narrative to include those who fought for liberty in ways both visible and unseen.

At the [Discovery Center](#) (formerly the History Workshop), families can delve into the shadow world of Revolutionary espionage. Through hands-on activities exploring invisible ink, coded messages, and covert communication, visitors will uncover how intelligence networks shaped the struggle for independence—and craft their own secret dispatches to take home. The Discover Center is tailored for younger visitors and is included in general admission.

Historic trade demonstrations return throughout the spring with a Revolutionary lens. On Saturdays from April through June, skilled guest artisans will revive the “art and mystery” of early American trades to include blacksmithing, tailoring, powder horn carving, silversmithing, candle-making, joinery, redware pottery, herbal medicine, block printing, chair-making, and carving. All offer a vivid reminder that the Revolution was forged not only on battlefields, but in workshops and kitchens. Calendar information for trade demonstrations may be found on the Historic Deerfield [website](#).

Hearth cooking demonstrations also resume each Saturday. In April and May, visitors can watch the preparation of Muster Cake, which was later known as Election Cake and Washington Cake, an edible emblem of civic ritual and political gathering. June programs will highlight the everyday dishes that sustained households during the Revolutionary War, grounding national history in the rhythms of daily life. Cooking demonstration dates and information may be found on the Historic Deerfield [website](#).

Marking its 50th anniversary, the [Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife](#) will convene June 26–27 with “Futurecasting, Futurekeeping: New Englanders Imagine Worlds to Come.” By examining how generations of New Englanders envisioned and shaped their futures in moments of crisis and change, the seminar connects past upheavals to present questions, underscoring the enduring legacy of Revolutionary thought in the region.

Historic Deerfield has collaborated with Plays in Place, an organization that develops and produces new site-specific plays, to create [A Stake In The Ground: 1774](#), which opens this summer. Staged outdoors at Historic Deerfield, *A Stake in the Ground: 1774* is a series of three site-specific plays, set in Deerfield, MA, on the eve of the American Revolution. Each performance includes all three plays and will end with a post-show conversation. Shows take place Fridays (6:30-8:30 p.m.), Saturdays (6:30-8:30 p.m.), and Sundays (2:30-4:30 p.m.), July 10-August 16. [Tickets are available now on Historic Deerfield's website](#).

**This milestone season positions Historic Deerfield as a vital voice in the nation's 250th commemoration**, rooted in place, rigorous in scholarship, and expansive in perspective. Visitors of all ages are invited to step into the layered history of western Massachusetts and encounter the Revolution where it unfolded—in homes and fields, in protest and prayer, in aspiration and dissent. John Davis, president of Historic Deerfield says, “This season’s programming reflects our ongoing commitment to presenting early American history with clarity

and care. By examining the Revolutionary era from multiple angles, we hope to offer visitors a fuller, more nuanced understanding of this pivotal moment in American history.”

General admission is \$20 for adults and \$5 for youth ages 13–17; children 12 and under receive free admission (sponsored by Greenfield Savings Bank), as do Historic Deerfield members, and Deerfield/South Deerfield residents. For full program details and ticketing information, visit [historic-deerfield.org](http://historic-deerfield.org).

[Images to accompany this release may be found here](#). Necessary captions for historical works may be found [here](#).

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**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.