For Immediate Release
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PRESS RELEASE

How Do You Make 1774 Feel Urgent in 2026? Plays in Place and Historic Deerfield Answer with Site-Specific Theater

Original Production Explores the American Revolution Through Place, Performance, and Public History

(Deerfield, MA) – Bringing audiences into the emotional realities of the past is the challenge at the heart of *A Stake in the Ground: 1774*, a new site-specific theatrical production created by Plays in Place in collaboration with Historic Deerfield.

Opening July 10 and running through August 16, the production consists of three original plays set in Deerfield, Massachusetts, on the eve of the American Revolution. Written specifically for Historic Deerfield and performed outdoors across the museum's historic landscape, the work blurs the boundaries between theater, scholarship, and public history.

For Plays in Place, the goal extends beyond historical reenactment. The company develops original scripts rooted in archival research, creating productions that use authentic locations not merely as backdrops, but as active participants in the storytelling.

"One of the central questions we ask is how to help contemporary audiences feel the uncertainty of the past," said Patrick Gabridge, founder and producing artistic director. "The people of 1774 didn't know how the story would end. By placing audiences inside those moments and allowing them to experience them where they occurred, we can move beyond nostalgia and into something much more immediate and human."

The project arrives during the national commemoration of America's 250th anniversary, offering an alternative to traditional Revolutionary narratives. Rather than focusing exclusively on iconic figures and well-known events, *A Stake in the Ground: 1774* examines how political upheaval reverberated through a single community and the lives of ordinary residents.

"Historic sites are uniquely positioned to foster conversations between past and present," said Claire Carlson, Director of Museum Education. "This production demonstrates how theater can

serve as a powerful interpretive tool, helping audiences engage with history intellectually, emotionally, and personally."

Performances take place outdoors, with audiences guided through Historic Deerfield's village as the story unfolds across multiple locations. Shows run Friday and Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons from July 10 through August 16. Each performance includes all three plays and concludes with a post-show conversation with members of the creative team.

Tickets for *A Stake in the Ground: 1774* are sold separately and do not require Historic Deerfield general admission. Tickets are $25 for adults, $20 for Historic Deerfield members, and $15 for college students and youth ages 17 and under. In addition to the performance, ticket holders will receive exclusive offers and discounts from Historic Deerfield, including a complimentary dessert at Champney's Restaurant. Tickets are available here.

As museums and cultural institutions continue exploring new ways to engage audiences, *A Stake in the Ground: 1774* offers a compelling example of how site-specific theater can deepen public understanding of history while making centuries-old stories feel urgently relevant.

Members of the media are invited to attend select rehearsals and performances. Interviews with playwrights, performers, directors, and Historic Deerfield staff can be arranged upon request. Due to union restrictions, please allow 24 hours notice.

A Stake in the Ground: 1774 is part of a larger regional initiative by Plays in Place to reinterpret Revolutionary-era history through site-specific theater. This summer and fall, the company will also present original productions at Hunter House in Newport, Rhode Island; Old New-Gate Prison & Copper Mine in East Granby, Connecticut; and Historic Northampton in Northampton, Massachusetts. Together, the four productions use drama, historical research, and authentic settings to help contemporary audiences encounter the people, conflicts, and choices that shaped early America. Information about all productions may be found here.

Historic Deerfield 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.

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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.