2026 AND BEYOND
Ensuring that the Promise of the American Revolution Endures
When the Museum of the American Revolution opened its doors on April 19, 2017, it fulfilled a bold vision: to create a museum dedicated to telling a clear-eyed but uplifting story of our nation’s founding. Since then, the Museum has garnered public and critical acclaim for its nuanced, “warts-and-all” (New York Times) telling of the American Revolution, establishing itself as a destination that brings history to life in a unique and powerful way. Over a million visitors have experienced the Museum’s rich, complex, and inspiring Revolutionary story and millions more have encountered it through virtual exhibits and programs.

More than a century in the making, the Museum features an expansive collection of Revolutionary-era artifacts, immersive galleries, powerful theater experiences, and dynamic programs that engage visitors of all ages. Located in the heart of historic Philadelphia, the Museum is just steps from Independence Hall, where many pivotal moments of the Revolution took place.
The Path to 2026: Onsite, Online, On the Road

The Museum of the American Revolution is poised to play a leadership role in the upcoming 250th anniversary of the nation’s founding in 2026. The Museum seeks to transform the nation’s relationship with its Revolutionary past by increasing awareness of the many ordinary, diverse, and little-known people who created the American nation. Through special exhibits, digital initiatives, and educational programs, we aim to facilitate widespread conversation about the meaning of the American Declaration of Independence and its ongoing legacy. These efforts will culminate in a major exhibition, *The Declaration’s Journey, 1776 – Today*, opening in Fall 2025 with traveling elements and digital resources available to audiences across the nation and around the world.

The exhibition will be supported by programs designed for a wide range of audiences, with a strong focus on K-12 education. The Museum will expand student programs to include a full curriculum, new thematic workshops, and professional development opportunities and teacher institutes that will further support educators by introducing new stories with nuance and depth. As we develop these new programs and online offerings, the Museum will fulfill its national educational outreach strategy. Through a focus on object-based learning, we will continue to foster historical empathy and encourage civic engagement. By 2027, we plan to be a key cultural partner for classrooms, schools, and districts across the United States, helping to prepare the next generation of our nation’s leaders to embrace the ongoing promise of the American Revolution.
The Declaration’s Journey, 1776 – Today Exhibition

The Declaration’s Journey, 1776 - Today is the most ambitious exhibition that the Museum has undertaken since its opening. Through more than 75 evocative national and international loan objects and objects from the Museum’s collection, the exhibition will explore how a document created out of a colonial rebellion on the margins of the British empire became one of the most world-renowned statements of political rights in human history. How did it inspire more than 100 nations to emulate its example in their own declarations of independence? How do we understand the Declaration of Independence as a living, breathing document?

The Declaration has always meant far more than independence, and its influence has grown as generations of Americans, and people from many other nations, have considered the meaning of its promise of equality and its assertions about the purposes of government.

The exhibition will examine how national and international leaders like Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King, Jr., Abraham Lincoln, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mahatma Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela have deployed the Declaration’s words for movements ranging from women’s suffrage and the abolition of slavery to racial equality and civil rights, shaping our modern understanding of the Declaration’s meaning. The exhibition will explore the story of the Declaration’s journey, of the disappointments, violence, and hypocrisy, but also the inspiration, hope, and the sense of purpose that the words of the Declaration have instilled in Americans and people around the world. With this exhibit, we will engage new and existing audiences in an ongoing conversation that can inspire new understandings of the Declaration as a vital point of reference and aspiration for America and its citizenry.

Revolving Windsor Chair with Writing Arm, 1775-76. Mahogany, poplar, and other woods. American Philosophical Society. Gift of John Kintzing Kane, 20 April 1838. Image courtesy of the American Philosophical Society
The Declaration’s Journey, 1776 – Today provides an unparalleled opportunity for the Museum to gain distinction through rigorous scholarship, programs that enrich and energize the public, and outreach to a broad national and global audience. Digital and programming elements will include an exhibition catalog and public engagement initiatives that build on the theme of the Declaration as the subject of a long-running conversation about democracy. In addition, we will add resources to our award-winning website, including an online version of the exhibit to extend the onsite experience of visiting the Museum to audiences around the world.

“The American war is over;
but this is far from being the case
with the American Revolution.
On the contrary, nothing but the
first act of the drama is closed.”
– Benjamin Rush

IMPACT STATEMENT

Through this work, we will spark curiosity, inspire empathy, and foster understanding of the rich and complex story of our nation’s founding and the ongoing American Revolution among all people, in order to encourage civic engagement, strengthen faith in democratic institutions, and activate effective stewardship of American democratic society.
UPCOMING SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

As we work toward this historic moment, a series of special exhibits will build on the Museum’s signature storytelling approach of putting our Revolutionary past in conversation with the present, setting the stage for meaningful dialogue in 2026 and beyond.

2023: The Fortens of Philadelphia
Exploring the life and family of James Forten, a free Black Philadelphian who served as a privateer and later became a leading businessperson, philanthropist, and abolitionist.

2024: Washington’s War Tent (working title)
Based on the Museum’s award-winning display of Washington’s War Tent, with potential to travel nationally and internationally.

2025: Philadelphia: A Revolutionary City
Collaborative exhibit bringing together Revolutionary-era treasures from a consortium of Philadelphia’s oldest and most distinguished archives, libraries, and museums.

2026: The Declaration’s Journey, 1776 – Today
To be mounted within the Museum in 2025-26 as the centerpiece of its 250th commemoration, with potential for a nationally and internationally traveling panel show.

2027: The Museum’s 10th Anniversary
A celebratory year marking a decade since the Museum’s grand opening.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

The story of the American Revolution has never been more important. Now more than ever, our shared history reminds us of what unites us as a nation and has carried us through troubling times. The often-surprising stories of people who have struggled and sacrificed to advance America’s ongoing experiment in liberty, equality, and self-government offer inspiration and empowerment as we consider our own roles in carrying forward that legacy. As the Museum embarks on this critically important work, we seek investments to help support our planning efforts that are currently underway. Your support will help us build upon our initial success by enhancing our programming and digital resources to extend our reach and impact. Together, we can work to ensure that the promise of the American Revolution endures.

For more information, contact
Dr. R. Scott Stephenson, President and CEO, at rsstephenson@amrevmuseum.org or 267.579.3490.

The powder horn of Gershom Prince, a Black soldier who served and died in the Revolutionary War. On loan from the Luzerne County Historical Society.
WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

“A fresh interpretation of the American Revolution... strikingly original.”
– The New York Review of Books

“A rip-roaring tale of turbulence and risk-taking by a disparate league of people bent on achieving far-from-certain freedoms.”
– The Wall Street Journal

“The missing link in Philadelphia...”
– The Los Angeles Daily News

“Truly eye-opening. The exhibits’ narrative was unabashedly truthful about our nation’s beginnings.”
– Visitor J.M.

“A glorious and moving tribute to the Revolution... Washington’s tent brought me to tears.”
– Visitor Jack S.

“Refreshingly inclusive...”
– The Philadelphia Inquirer