

Morven Museum & Garden 2026 Exhibitions and Public Programs

Exhibitions

- **Five Independent Souls: The Signers from New Jersey** (opening May 3, 2026) assembles personal items, manuscripts, furniture, and artwork to examine the lives of Abraham Clark, John Hart, Francis Hopkinson, Richard Stockton, and John Witherspoon. As all five were enslavers, the exhibition will also examine how the rhetoric of revolutionary America—freedom, equality, and liberty—was intertwined with the practice of slavery. Visitors will be able to see actual signatures of those who signed the Declaration of Independence!
- **Voices in Print: New Jersey Black Women Printmakers Shaping the American Narrative** (opening September 4, 2026), a collaboration with Princeton University Art Museum and the Arts Council of Princeton titled *Re-Visioning America: 1776–2026*, features powerful prints by Black women artists with a connection to New Jersey. Curated by Judith K. Brodsky and Rhinold L. Ponder, this will be the first exhibition held in the Stockton Education Center.
- **Currently on view through 2026**
 - **Northern Family, Southern Ties** is the first exhibit examining the overlooked connections between families straddling the Mason-Dixon Line and the interstate movement of enslaved people, unveiling a story spanning the late eighteenth century through the Civil War.
 - Visitors can also explore the permanent exhibition **Historic Morven: A Window into America's Past**, and understand the Stockton family's role in the American Revolution, including Richard Stockton's capture by British Loyalists—the only signer to become a prisoner of war.

Morven can offer school tours of specific exhibitions and topic areas upon request. Please contact Greer Luce, Curator of Education and Public Programs, at gluce@morven.org or 609-924-8144 ext. 106 for more information.

Talks and Speaker Series

- **Generation Declaration Speaker Series:** Morven invites public historians, scholars, and writers to share their work researching little known or underrepresented aspects of the Declaration of Independence. Speakers so far include:
 - **April 9** - John Bidwell, Curator Emeritus at the Morgan Library, on “The Declaration in Script and Print”

- **May 17** - Holly Brewer, OAH Lecturer and Burke Professor of American History at the University of Maryland, on “Slavery and the Declaration of Independence”
- **July 19** - Emily Sneff, Public Historian and Author, on “When the Declaration was News”
- **November 5** - Robert Parkinson, OAH Lecturer and Professor of History at Binghamton University, on “Tyrants and Rogues: Understanding the Declaration of Independence”
- **Signer’s Stories:** Inspired by Morven’s 2026 exhibition *Five Independent Souls*, these engaging programs, including concerts, walking tours, and offsite visits, will dive into the lives of New Jersey’s five signers of the Declaration.
 - **April 29** - The Ingenious Mr. Hopkinson - A Life In Words & Musick, a talk and concert of historical music with The Practitioners of Musick’s John Burkhalter; partnership with Historical Society of Princeton
 - **Fall 2026 (date TBD)** - Panel on the life and legacy of John Witherspoon in Princeton including historians and campus and community members involved in renaming efforts around town; partnership with the Historical Society of Princeton
 - **November 19** - Morven’s talk on Richard Stockton with curators Elizabeth Allan and Jesse Gordon Simons
 - **In the works** - offsite visits tours in Hopewell and Elizabeth, NJ to explore the lives of John Hart and Abraham Clarke (respectively)
- **Exploring the American Revolution in New Jersey** with the William Trent House Museum: Talks held in partnership with the Trent House in Trenton, NJ, with the goal of exploring underrepresented topics in New Jersey’s Revolutionary history for a Trenton and Princeton community audience. Two talks booked so far:
 - **February 22** - Zara Anishanslin, Associate Professor of History and Art History, and Director of Museum Studies and Public Engagement at the University of Delaware, on her new book “The Painters Fire: A Forgotten History of the Artists Who Championed the American Revolution.”
 - **May 14** - Lucia McMahon, Professor and Chair of History at William Paterson University, on “New Jersey Women in the American Revolution”
- **Freedom at Home: Telling the Full Story of America’s Founding Homes & Gardens:** Coinciding with the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the 2026 Grand Homes & Gardens series, Freedom at Home: Telling the Full Story of America's Founding Homes and Gardens, examines the estates of signers of the Declaration. How have these spaces, all sites of American slavery, engaged and challenged founding ideals of freedom and liberty?

- **March 5** - William Paca House (MD) featuring Glenn Campbell, Historian Emeritus, Historic Annapolis
- **March 12** - Stratford Hall (VA) featuring Dr. Gordon Blaine Steffey, Director of Research and the Jessie Ball duPont Memorial Library
- **March 26** - The Gardens of Monticello (VA) with Peter Hatch, Gardener, Historian, and Emeritus Director of Gardens and Grounds for the Thomas Jefferson Foundation
- **April 16** - Middleton Place (SC) featuring Brandon M. Stone, Director of Research and Preservation

Family and Community Partnership Programs

- **Foundation Academies “Men W/O Shoes” Student Exhibition:** Morven is hosting a history exhibition created by students in the Black Student Union at Foundation Academies in Trenton. The exhibition called “Men Without Shoes” features the stories of Black soldiers who served during the American Revolution and in the battles of Trenton and Princeton, and was developed in partnership with the Princeton Battlefield Society. The exhibition will be featured **February 19 through February 21, 2026**, in the Stockton Education Center.
- **LiveHistory USA Weekend at Morven:** Step back in time for an immersive weekend of living history in an over 200 year old mansion. Morven’s first floor will be transformed with an immersive tour featuring historical figures from the home’s past aiding visitors in solving a centuries-old mystery along the way. Scheduled for **April 11 and April 12**.
- **Rev250 Princeton Oral History Project:** In partnership with the Princeton Public Library, the Historical Society of Princeton, and the Arts Council of Princeton, Morven will host an interactive oral history station in the Garden Room from about **April through December 2026**. Visitors will have a chance to answer two questions about the 250th anniversary: 1) What are your memories of the bicentennial? 2) What do you wish for the next 250 years of the U.S.?
- **Party Like It’s Your Earth Day Community Green Fair:** Sustainable Princeton and Morven’s annual Earth Day celebration returns for its fourth year. This free community festival scheduled for **April 19** features activities, food, dance, a “Trashion Show,” and more - all exploring how we can be better stewards for the natural world.
- **Fourth of July 2026:** Mark the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence at the home of a signer on **July 4**. This free festival will feature music, speakers, artmarking, community partners, food, and more - all exploring what it means to be an American for different generations of people, past and present.

- **Re-visioning America:** In partnership with Art Against Racism, the Princeton University Art Museum, and the Arts Council of Princeton, Morven will host an exhibition called *Voices in Print: New Jersey Black Women Printmakers Shaping the American Narrative*, from September 2026 to February 2027. This is an exhibition featuring the work of NJ-based Black women printmakers curated by Judy Brodsky and Rhinold Ponder and on view in the Morven's Stockton Education Center. Associated programs so far include:
 - **September 17** - Fragments of American Life panel program (location and speakers TBD). Panel of speakers discussing the 1976 bi-centennial exhibition at PUAM called *Fragments of American Life* that inspired the 2026 collaboration.
 - **September 26** - Re-envisioning America Gallery Crawl. Public "crawl" of all associated exhibitions across Princeton featuring wine, cheese, and artmaking at each site.
- **Princeton 1776 Fest:** A community celebration 250 years in the making, Princeton 1776 Fest will feature live music, living history interpreters and craftspeople, special exhibitions, and food and drink. Immerse yourself in the history and culture of colonial Princeton with activities for families and people of all ages. The event, scheduled for **October 3** is free and open to the public with food and beverage available for purchase. Presented in partnership with the Historical Society of Princeton, Princeton Battlefield Society, and Daughters of the American Revolution.