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MORVEN

MUSEUM & GARDEN

**National Historic Landmark Morven Museum & Garden
—home of Founding Father Richard Stockton—
commemorates America’s 250th with events throughout 2026**

**Including the new exhibition
*Five Independent Souls: The Signers from New Jersey***

PRINCETON, NJ (December 30 2025) — As the nation prepares to mark the 250th anniversary of American independence, **Morven Museum & Garden** in Princeton, NJ—the **only home of a New Jersey signer of the Declaration of Independence open to the public**—is commemorating the semiquincentennial throughout 2026!

Visitors can immerse themselves in history, culture, and civics through **new exhibitions, public programs, and special events** that illuminate the story of America’s founding.

Two new exhibitions will be on view:

- ***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!

“Less than two weeks before the 13 colonies’ voted on independence, New Jersey’s delegates, who wanted to delay a vote, were replaced with five courageous men who were ready to vote yes—John Adams called them ‘independent souls.’ *Five Independent Souls* reveals who they were as people: their ideals, their familial background, and influence. We’ve spent years securing loans from institutions and private collections across the nation, and are excited for visitors to experience this landmark exhibition.”

—Elizabeth Allan, Deputy Director and Curator

- ***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.

From its beginning in the 1750s, Morven has played a significant role in New Jersey and American history. Two special exhibitions will be on view:

- ***Northern Family, Southern Ties (through 2028)*** 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.
- ***Morven Revealed: Untold Stories from New Jersey’s Most Historic Home*** (through March 1, 2026) explores not the battles, speeches, or legislation that Morven witnessed, but rather the quotidian experiences of dressing, child rearing, housekeeping, and hosting that made it a home.

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 is one of numerous historical sites, from the Princeton Battlefield to Nassau Hall (temporary capitol of the U.S. in 1783), that make Princeton a must-visit destination in 2026.**

“As we approach this extraordinary anniversary, Morven is proud to stand where American independence began—and to share these stories with new generations. Our program partners are helping us bring history to life in inspiring and meaningful ways. We’ve been preparing to make 2026 unforgettable, and we can’t wait to welcome visitors of all ages from around the world to Morven.”

—**Rhonda DiMascio, Executive Director**

Special semiquincentennial events at Morven include:

- ***Men W/O Shoes: A Student-Led Tribute to Forgotten Heroes*** (February 19-21, 2026). At least fourteen Black men fought alongside General George Washington to secure a crucial victory in the Battle of Princeton. Students from Foundation Academies in Trenton have been engaged in research to uncover the identities of these men. The project, which grew from a collaboration with the Princeton Battlefield Society,

culminates at Morven with a striking art installation of student-created works that reflect the resilience, sacrifice, and legacy of Black soldiers in war.

- ***LivingHistory USA Weekend*** (April 11–12, 2026). Morven’s first floor will be transformed with an immersive tour with historical figures from the home’s past aiding visitors in solving a centuries-old mystery.
- ***Fourth of July 2026*** (July 4, 2026), a free festival featuring music, speakers, artmaking, community partners, food, and more—all exploring what it means to be an American and community member for different generations of people, past and present.
- ***Princeton 1776 Fest*** (Oct 3, 2026). This community celebration 250 years in the making will include live music, living history interpreters and craftspeople, special exhibitions, and food and drink. Presented in partnership with the Historical Society of Princeton, Princeton Battlefield Society, and Daughters of the American Revolution.

Morven’s 2026 programs delve into the diverse stories of America’s founding, offering many experiences that visitors can join virtually. Highlights include:

- **Generation Declaration (January–November, 2026)** is a new speaker series featuring writers and historians reflecting on the creation and many interpretations of the Declaration of Independence.
- **Grand Homes & Gardens “Freedom at Home” series (February–April, 2026)** takes audiences on a journey through the original 13 colonies, showcasing the residences and landscapes of the Declaration’s signers and telling the stories of the people who lived and worked in these grand spaces: enslaved people, families, and free Black and immigrant servants.
- **Signer’s Stories (April 2026–January 2027)** is a new series of interactive programs including musical performances, walking tours, and other activities exploring the complex lives and contributions of the signers of the Declaration representing New Jersey, such as Francis Hopkinson, lawyer, jurist, and avid composer.
- **Behind-the-Scenes Opportunities (throughout 2026)** invites you to take a look behind-the-scenes with Morven’s curatorial team, featuring “Meet the Curator” tours of new exhibitions, virtual “Curator Corner” talks delving into new acquisitions and research, and our annual “Inside Scoop” event for Morven Members, discussing the creation of *Five Independent Souls*.

“Throughout 2026, Morven will offer a rich variety of programs in collaboration with community partners, leading historians, writers, and artists. Whether you’re interested in history or just curious about the 250th, there’s an opportunity for everyone to join in the conversation and learn more.”

—Greer Luce, Curator of Education and Public Programs

Details for these programs (and more!) will be announced soon.

CALENDAR LISTINGS

FESTIVE HOLIDAY DISPLAY

Festival of Trees

Morven Museum & Garden's uplifting decorative display Festival of Trees returns for its 20th Anniversary, transforming the historic mansion's galleries with an abundance of creative trees and mantels, each uniquely decorated by local non-profits, schools, garden clubs, and artists. To launch the Semiquincentennial, it has been extended for the first time (through January 11).

Dates/Times: Now through January 11, 2026, open Wednesday-Sunday from 10 am-4 pm. Closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Location: Morven Museum & Garden, 55 Stockton Street, Princeton, NJ 08540

Tickets: Included with museum admission: \$12 for adults; \$10 for seniors (ages 60+), youth ages 7-18, students with ID, and active military or veterans with ID. Free for ages 6 & younger.

Reserve tickets at www.morven.org/visit

PROGRAM

Generation Declaration

Explore the Declaration with us! Its language has been employed throughout history to support political ideals, institute social change, and offer critical reflection. This hybrid speaker series features writers and historians reflecting on the creation and many interpretations of the Declaration of Independence.

Dates/Times: Select dates to be announced, January through November 2026, 6:30 pm

Location: Virtual and in-person at Morven Museum & Garden, 55 Stockton Street, Princeton, NJ 08540

Registration: Details to come at www.morven.org/events

SPECIAL EVENT

Men Without Shoes: A Student-Led Tribute to Forgotten Heroes

"History is not complete until every story is told." For over a year, students from Foundation Academies in Trenton have worked to uncover the identities and share the stories of the fourteen unknown Black Men who fought in the Battle of Princeton. The project culminates at Morven with a striking art installation of student-created works that reflect the resilience, sacrifice, and legacy of Black soldiers in war.

Dates: Feb 19-21, 2026

Location: Morven Museum & Garden, 55 Stockton Street, Princeton, NJ 08540

Tickets: Details to come at www.morven.org/visit

PROGRAM

Grand Homes & Gardens “Freedom at Home”

Blending history, architecture, and horticulture, the Grand Homes & Gardens series takes audiences on a journey through the original 13 colonies, showcasing the residences and landscapes of the Declaration’s signers, and telling the stories of the people who lived and worked in these grand spaces: enslaved people, families, and free Black and immigrant servants.

Dates/Times: Select Thursdays to be announced, March through April 2026, 6:30 pm

Location: Virtual and in-person at Morven Museum & Garden, 55 Stockton Street, Princeton, NJ 08540

Registration: Details to come at www.morven.org/events

PROGRAM

Signer’s Stories

In this new series of interactive programs, musical performances, walking tours, and other activities explore the complex lives and contributions of the signers of the Declaration of Independence representing New Jersey, such as Francis Hopkinson, composer of the first American opera.

Dates/Times: Select dates to be announced, April 2026 through January 2027

Location: Virtual and in-person at Morven Museum & Garden, 55 Stockton Street, Princeton, NJ 08540

Registration: Details to come at www.morven.org/events

SPECIAL EVENT

LivingHistory USA Weekend

Morven’s first floor will be transformed with an immersive tour with historical figures from the home’s past aiding visitors in solving a centuries-old mystery.

Dates: April 11-12, 2026

Location: Morven Museum & Garden, 55 Stockton Street, Princeton, NJ 08540

Registration: Details to come at www.morven.org/events

NEW EXHIBITION

Five Independent Souls: The Signers from New Jersey

The first exhibition to examine the lives of Abraham Clark, John Hart, Francis Hopkinson, Richard Stockton, and John Witherspoon, *Five Independent Souls: The Signers from New Jersey* assembles over 100 objects on loan from around the country.

Dates/Times: May 3, 2026 through January 27, 2027, open Wednesday-Sunday from 10 am-4 pm. Closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

Location: Morven Museum & Garden, 55 Stockton Street, Princeton, NJ 08540

Tickets: Included with museum admission: \$12 for adults; \$10 for seniors (ages 60+), youth ages 7-18, students with ID, and active military or veterans with ID. Free for ages 6 & younger.

Reserve tickets at www.morven.org/visit

SPECIAL EVENT

Semiquincentennial Celebration: In the Company of the Signers

To mark this historic moment, Morven will present an elevated evening event in place of its traditional Morven in May fundraiser, celebrating the exhibition's opening and setting the tone for a year of reflection, inspiration, and national remembrance.

Date: Saturday, May 2, 2026

Location: Morven Museum & Garden, 55 Stockton Street, Princeton, NJ 08540

Tickets: contact Megan Shackney (mshackney@morven.org; 609.924.8144 x101)

SPECIAL EVENT

Fourth of July Festival 2026

Commemorate America's 250th birthday at Morven, the former home of Richard Stockton—a signer of the Declaration of Independence. In this milestone year, Morven's beloved Independence Day Festival takes on even greater meaning, uniting families, neighbors, and history lovers for an afternoon of reflection, civic education, and community connection.

Date/Time: Saturday, July 4, 2026, 12-3 pm

Location: Morven Museum & Garden, 55 Stockton Street, Princeton, NJ 08540

Tickets: Free (registration required; details to come at www.morven.org/events)

NEW EXHIBITION

Voices in Print: New Jersey Black Women Printmakers Shaping the American Narrative

Morven presents an exhibition of powerful prints by Black women artists with a connection to New Jersey. Curated by Judith K. Brodsky and Rhinold L. Ponder, *Voices in Print* joins a robust group of exhibitions and programs throughout Princeton under the umbrella *Re-Visioning America: 1776–2026*, a collaboration with Princeton University Art Museum and Arts Council of Princeton.

Dates/Times: September 4, 2026 through February 28, 2027, open Wednesday-Sunday from 10 am-4 pm. Closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

Location: Morven Museum & Garden, 55 Stockton Street, Princeton, NJ 08540

Tickets: Included with museum admission: \$12 for adults; \$10 for seniors (ages 60+), youth ages 7-18, students with ID, and active military or veterans with ID. Free for ages 6 & younger.

Reserve tickets at www.morven.org/visit

SPECIAL EVENT

Princeton 1776 Fest

Step back in time for an unforgettable day in revolutionary Princeton! This one-of-a-kind event at Morven Museum & Garden brings 1776 to life with live music, living history interpreters, craftspeople, and food and drink. Presented in partnership with the Historical Society of Princeton, Princeton Battlefield Society, and Daughters of the American Revolution.

Date/Time: Saturday, October 3, 2026, 11 am-4 pm; rain date: Sunday, October 4, 2026, 11 am-4 pm

Location: Morven Museum & Garden, 55 Stockton Street, Princeton, NJ 08540

Tickets: To be announced

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About Morven Museum & Garden:

Most historic sites celebrate a single notable resident—Morven is different. Built in the 1750s for Richard Stockton (a signer of the Declaration of Independence) and his wife, Annis Boudinot Stockton, an early published poet, Morven was home to five generations of the Stockton family as well as generations of enslaved men and women and later, immigrant servants. The twentieth century saw the innovative industrialist and humanitarian Robert Wood Johnson, Jr. and five New Jersey governors.. Over 250+ years, its walls have witnessed the lives of governors, political leaders, celebrities, and everyday families alike.

Today, Morven Museum & Garden welcomes visitors to explore this layered history through exhibitions, programs, and historic gardens. The museum, located at 55 Stockton Street in Princeton, NJ, is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The gardens are open daily until dusk. Learn more at morven.org.

Northern Family, Southern Ties is made possible by Lisa and Michael Ullmann.

Additional support from Liza and Schuyler Morehouse, Colleen Goggins, Helen R. Buck Foundation, and The George H. and Estelle M. Sands Foundation.

Funding for *Five Independent Souls: The Signers from New Jersey* has been provided, in part, by Liza and Schuyler Morehouse; Carol Hanson; Eileen and Robert O’Neil; J. Richard and E. Barbara Pierce; the General Society of Colonial Wars upon the recommendation of the Society of Colonial Wars in the State of New Jersey; Glenmede Trust; Nassau Inn; Palmer Square Management; Ken and Mindy Siegel; Lear & Pannepacker, LLP; and NJM Insurance Group.

Morven Museum & Garden received a project grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of the Department of State.

Bryn Mawr Trust is the lead sponsor of the 2026 *Grand Homes and Garden* series.

2026 Sponsorships are available. For details, contact Megan Shackney, Chief Development Officer, at mshackney@morven.org or 609.924.8144 x101.

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