

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact:
Erika Byrnison, Marketing Director
ebyrnison@morven.org
Photos: morven.org/press

MORVEN

MUSEUM & GARDEN

Grand Homes & Gardens returns with a new series for America's 250th

PRINCETON, NJ (February 26, 2026) — Morven Museum & Garden's popular speaker series **Grand Homes & Gardens** returns next month. Coinciding with the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, *Freedom at Home: Telling the Full Story of America's Founding Homes and Gardens* examines four estates belonging to five signers of the Declaration: **William Paca, Richard Henry Lee, Francis Lightfoot Lee, Thomas Jefferson, and Arthur Middleton.**

Illustrated presentations by speakers from each site will offer insight into how architecturally significant homes, gardens, and landscapes of the time were designed and built. At the same time, about two thirds of the Declaration's signers were enslavers and these estates were all sites of American slavery. How were ideas of independence and autonomy woven into these spaces? How have they engaged and challenged founding ideals of freedom and liberty? Participants will learn how experts work today to tell the full story of these homes and their place in America's founding.

Join Morven, a museum set in the home of a signer, as we travel around the original thirteen colonies for a journey through architecture, design, gardening, and social history of the eighteenth century. **The series includes:**

- **March 5: William Paca's Annapolis House** with **Glenn Campbell**, Historian Emeritus, Historic Annapolis
- **March 12: Stratford Hall (the Virginia home of Richard Henry Lee and Francis Lightfoot Lee)** with **Dr. Gordon Blaine Steffey**, Director of Research and the Jessie Ball duPont Memorial Library

- **March 26: Thomas Jefferson’s Revolutionary Garden** with **Peter Hatch**, Gardener, Historian, and Emeritus Director of Garden and Grounds for the Thomas Jefferson Foundation
- **April 16: Middleton Place (the South Carolina home of Arthur Middleton)** with **Brandon Stone**, Director Research and Preservation.

All programs are hybrid, with both in-person and virtual options. Participants can choose to attend individual events or to purchase the full series and save on tickets. **Each program takes place Thursdays at 6:30 pm** in Morven’s Stockton Education Center. For in-person ticketholders, doors open at 6 pm for light refreshments.

The 2026 Grand Homes and Gardens speaker series is sponsored by Bryn Mawr Trust. Individual programs sponsors are Mrs. G Appliances, Studio Hillier and Corcoran Sawyer Smith.

Details on the full slate of programs in the series is below.

CALENDAR LISTINGS

Grand Homes & Gardens. *Freedom at Home: Telling the Full Story of America’s Founding Homes and Gardens*

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.

March 5: William Paca’s Annapolis House

March 12: Stratford Hall

March 26: Thomas Jefferson’s Revolutionary Garden

April 16: Middleton Place

Dates: Thursdays: March 5, 12, 26 and April 16, 6:30 pm. Doors open at 6 pm for light refreshments.

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

Tickets: \$125 in-person/full series; \$60 virtual/full series; \$40 in-person/single program; \$20 virtual/single program. Student discounts are available. Register at morven.org/signature/grandhomes

Grand Homes & Gardens: William Paca's Annapolis House

Blending history, architecture, and horticulture, this year's Grand Homes & Gardens speaker series, *Freedom at Home: Telling the Full Story of America's Founding Homes and Gardens*, showcases the estates of signers of the Declaration of Independence, telling the stories of the people who lived and worked in these grand spaces.

On March 5, Morven welcomes **Glenn Campbell** (Historian Emeritus, Historic Annapolis) for an illustrated presentation on **William Paca's Annapolis House**, built in the 1760s as the Annapolis home of an ambitious young lawyer who would become a patriot leader, signer of the Declaration of Independence, and third governor of the state of Maryland. After the five-part Georgian mansion was sold, it was home to two other elite households.

Date: Thursday, March 5, 6:30 pm. Doors open at 6 pm for light refreshments. Other programs in the series take place on March 12, March 26, and April 16.

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

Student discounts are available.

In-person tickets: \$125 in-person/full series; \$40 in-person/single program

Virtual tickets: \$60 virtual/full series; \$20 virtual/single program

Register at www.morven.org/events/grandhomes-william-paca

The 2026 Grand Homes & Gardens speaker series is sponsored by Bryn Mawr Trust.

Grand Homes & Gardens: Stratford Hall

Blending history, architecture, and horticulture, this year's Grand Homes & Gardens speaker series, *Freedom at Home: Telling the Full Story of America's Founding Homes and Gardens*, showcases the estates of signers of the Declaration of Independence, telling the stories of the people who lived and worked in these grand spaces.

On March 12, Morven welcomes **Dr. Gordon Blaine Steffey** (Director of Research and the Jessie Ball duPont Memorial Library) for an illustrated presentation on **Stratford Hall**, the boyhood home of **Richard Henry Lee** and **Francis Lightfoot Lee**. It was also the birthplace of **Robert E. Lee**, General in Chief of the Armies of the Confederate States during the Civil War. Four generations of the Lee family lived at Stratford, as did hundreds of enslaved Africans and African Americans who lived and labored at the plantation. Today, the site stands as a model of Georgian architecture, standing almost entirely as it did in the 1740s.

Date: Thursday, March 12, 6:30 pm. Doors open at 6 pm for light refreshments. The next programs in the series take place on March 26 and April 16.

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

Student discounts are available.

In-person tickets: \$40 in-person/single program

Virtual tickets: \$20 virtual/single program

Register at www.morven.org/events/grandhomes-stratford-hall

The 2026 Grand Homes & Gardens speaker series is sponsored by Bryn Mawr Trust. This program is sponsored by Mrs. G's Appliances.

Grand Homes & Gardens: Thomas Jefferson's Revolutionary Garden

Blending history, architecture, and horticulture, this year's Grand Homes & Gardens speaker series, *Freedom at Home: Telling the Full Story of America's Founding Homes and Gardens*, showcases the estates of signers of the Declaration of Independence, telling the stories of the people who lived and worked in these grand spaces.

On March 26, Morven welcomes **Peter Hatch** (Gardener, Historian, and Emeritus Director of Gardens and Grounds for the Thomas Jefferson Foundation) for an illustrated presentation on **Thomas Jefferson's Revolutionary Garden**. The Monticello vegetable garden, a 1,000-foot-long terrace, grew new and unusual edible plants from around the world. Jefferson was a strong believer in a vegetable diet, and this revolutionary garden inspired a revolutionary cuisine in the kitchen at Monticello. Much of the work constructing, cultivating, and maintaining the gardens would have fallen to enslaved labor. Today, these gardens have been mostly restored to the early nineteenth century.

Date: Thursday, March 26, 6:30 pm. Doors open at 6 pm for light refreshments. The final program in the series takes place on April 16.

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

Student discounts are available.

In-person tickets: \$40 in-person/single program

Virtual tickets: \$20 virtual/single program

Register at www.morven.org/events/grandhomes-thomas-jefferson

The 2026 Grand Homes & Gardens speaker series is sponsored by Bryn Mawr Trust. This program is sponsored by Studio Hillier.

Grand Homes & Gardens: Middleton Place

Blending history, architecture, and horticulture, this year's Grand Homes & Gardens speaker series, *Freedom at Home: Telling the Full Story of America's Founding Homes and Gardens*, showcases the estates of signers of the Declaration of Independence, telling the stories of the people who lived and worked in these grand spaces.

On April 16, Morven welcomes **Brandon Stone** (Director Research and Preservation) for an illustrated presentation on **Middleton Place** in Charleston, SC, the primary home of Declaration signer Arthur Middleton. More than 2,800 men, women, and children were enslaved by the

Middleton family from 1738 to 1865. The estate was heavily impacted by the Civil War when Union troops razed most of the property. The plantation's extensive and transformative gardens, established in the 1740s, were awarded the Garden Club of America's highest honor, the Bulkley Medal, in 1941.

Date: Thursday, April 16, 6:30 pm. Doors open at 6 pm for light refreshments.

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

Student discounts are available.

In-person tickets: \$40 in-person/single program

Virtual tickets: \$20 virtual/single program

Register at www.morven.org/events/grandhomes-middleton-place

The 2026 Grand Homes & Gardens speaker series is sponsored by Bryn Mawr Trust. This program is sponsored by Corcoran Sawyer Smith.

#

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 am to 4 pm. The gardens are open daily until dusk. Learn more at morven.org.