

HISTORIC *Newton* NEWS

WINTER 2025

• JACSON •
HOMESTEAD
CITY OF NEWTON
OPEN SATURDAYS 1-3 P.M.

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Staff

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Allegra Davis, *Museum & Education Assistant*

Laura Grzybowski, *Director of Development*

Sara Lundberg, *Curator*

Allison Pagliaro, *Director of Education*

Marie Recuperio, *Assistant to the Director*

Abby Strayer, *Museum & Education Assistant*

Marya Van't Hul, *Curator of Manuscripts & Photographs*

About the cover:

Jackson Homestead volunteers hard at work gardening, c. 1950s



is the Fourth of July?" A gifted orator and prescient writer, Douglass forces us to reckon with the legacy of slavery and the promises of democracy. The striking dichotomy of enslavement and liberty encourages us to grapple with the timeline of American history—not until the year 2111 will America have experienced more years of freedom than years of slavery, according to Hidden Brookline.

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends of Historic Newton,

As we reflect on the past year, there is a lot to be concerned about. From cuts to federal funding for museums and libraries, to the whitewashing of public history, this is a critical time for our nation and our history.

Here at Historic Newton we remain committed to sharing a multifaceted, nuanced, and thorough telling of our history with our community. Newton is a vibrant community today because of the rich and multicultural history that has shaped it.

That history is the cornerstone of our new forthcoming exhibit, *Newton: The City We Make*, which you'll learn more about in this issue. In 2025 the Jackson Homestead celebrated 75 years as a museum. As part of that celebration, the outside is undergoing a much-needed makeover, from new paint and gutters, to rebuilt porches and more. We look forward to inviting you into the museum in early 2026 to show off our improvements, setting us up for another 75 years.

As a nation we have begun celebrating the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, which will culminate in 2026. In the next pages, learn about the role of Newtonians during the Revolution, and catch up on 18th-century-focused programming from Historic Newton you may have missed.

250 years ago, our nation underwent a major transformation that was long, challenging, and the outcome unknown. Yet our communities and neighbors supported one another and came together to form a new nation. With history as our guide, we see that the only constant is change, but we will hold fast and continue to uplift and educate our community. Last year over 6,000 people enjoyed Historic Newton's offerings! From silly to serious, history has something for everyone.

In gratitude for your interest in history and its power to shape the future,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa".

Lisa S. Dady, *Director*



Reading Frederick

On Sunday, July 13, members of our community gathered at the Jackson Homestead to read aloud the words of Frederick Douglass from his famous address "What to the Slave

"In a time when the names and deeds of important figures in Black history are being erased, it is more important than ever to keep alive the words of these Black leaders. Douglass's July 4th message is stirring and chilling and will resonate for listeners today," said Lisa Dady.

This event was sponsored by a grant from Mass Humanities with funding made possible by the Mass Cultural Council, and was hosted in collaboration with Newton Cultural Development. The Reading Frederick Douglass Together program was held in over 70 communities in 2025.

Newton in the American Revolution

In honor of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, we are pleased to share a short history of Newton and the Revolution written by Allegra Davis, a museum and education assistant and graduate student at Boston University. The celebrations of the anniversary will culminate in 2026 with the marking of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. We look forward to sharing more Revolution programming and events with you throughout the year!

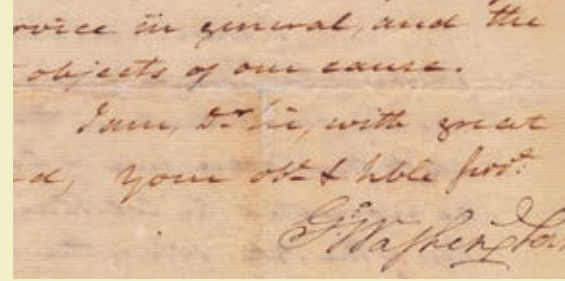
In the 18th century, Newton's proximity to the port city of Boston connected the rural community to international trade and politics. Town meeting records from the years leading up to the Revolution reveal Newton's prevailing political sentiments. For example, in 1765, the town instructed Judge Abraham Fuller, its representative to the Massachusetts General Court, to register the town's opposition to the Stamp Act, but resolved to condemn the rioting and destruction of private property that took place in Boston in protest of the same act. As Britain imposed other trade regulations, like many towns, Newton resolved to avoid buying imported goods, instead focusing on home industry. In 1773, the town organized a boycott of tea. Several Newtonians participated in the destruction of the tea in Boston Harbor in December of that year. In June 1776, the town voted unanimously to support the struggle for independence with "their lives and fortunes" should the Continental Congress decide to split from Britain. Those loyal to the king were forced out of town or fled on their own, fearing Patriot retribution.

When war broke out, Newton sent 430 soldiers to battle - about a third of the town's population. Newtonians were involved in many major campaigns of the war, including occupying Dorchester Heights, Bunker Hill and Yorktown. Private citizens contributed most of the money required to pay and outfit soldiers from Newton. Newtonians not

involved in armed conflict saw the war brought to their doorstep. The widow of Nathaniel Coolidge (died c. 1770) operated a tavern near Nonantum Bridge which, in 1775, was appointed the town's rendezvous point in the event of alarm. In 1777, prisoners taken from General Burgoyne at the Battle of Saratoga marched through West Newton on their way to Cambridge. At least 82 Revolutionary War veterans are buried in Newton.

While the stories of white Patriots like Major Timothy Jackson and Edward Durant III are well known, there were also soldiers of color with ties to Newton.

- Cornelius Lenox (born c. 1754) was a free Black man who served in the



Letter signed by George Washington in the Archives of Historic Newton.

Continental Army for approximately five years and settled in Newton in the 1780s; he owned a farm on the Newton-Watertown line where he lived with his wife Susannah and eight children.

- Pomp Jackson had been enslaved by Jonathan Jackson (then of Newburyport, a descendant of Newton's Edward Jackson) and was manumitted in 1776. Jackson soon enlisted, served throughout the war, and received an honorable discharge.

Cornelius Lenox and Pomp Jackson both served with the Continental Army, but the majority of Black soldiers fought on the British side-especially enslaved men, who were promised

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REVOLUTIONARY NEWTON

2025 kicked off the celebrations of the birth of America with the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Lexington and Concord. Historic Newton celebrated the Revolution with a living history day at the Durant-Kenrick House and Grounds, which was built c. 1734. The Durants were active participants in the Revolution, as were many Newtonians. Historical reenactors spent the day talking to the public about what they were wearing, the British military, tea boycotts, and more. With historical crafts and a tea tasting, we had over 250 guests visit, making this program one of our best-attended of the year!



The Durant-Kenrick House and Grounds will time travel again on Saturday, March 28, 2026. Explore our museum while talking with living historians about taxation, the Sons of Liberty, women's 18th century roles, and everything in between. This is a free family-friendly event. We look forward to seeing you at Revolutionary Newton!

If These Walls Could Talk

Imagine how much history the Jackson Homestead has seen!

Archaeological evidence tells us that the site of the Jackson Homestead saw human use for at least 11,000 years before English colonists arrived.

Beginning in 1634, generations of Jacksons lived on the site before Timothy Jackson built the present Federal-style house in 1809. By that time horse-drawn carts and wagons traveled back and forth along Washington Street, as there was not yet a railroad in Newton, carrying farm goods and travelers.

Fifty years later, the Homestead served as a stop on the Underground Railroad, giving shelter to freedom seekers on their way to Canada. By this time, the Boston and Worcester Railroad crossed Newton, running alongside Washington Street in front of the house. A honey locust tree,



The Jackson family, from a daguerreotype by J.A. Whipple in 1846. This crowded house consisted of 14 children from William Jackson's first and second marriages.

planted around the time of the American Revolution, had grown tall, and an American Elm stood by the front driveway, providing welcome shade in the era before air conditioning.



The Jackson Homestead around the turn of the century.

In 1950, the Jackson Homestead began a second life as a historic house museum. Outside, the railroad had been lowered below grade and cars sped past on Washington Street, although the Mass. Turnpike had not yet been extended through Newton. The museum's first director came to live at the museum with her cat, Mr. Tuxedo. Volunteers decorated the house with antique furniture and costumed mannequins.

After 30 years as a furnished historic house museum, the Homestead underwent another major identity change in 1980: it became a museum of the history of Newton. More professional staff were hired. Period furnishings made way for well-researched museum exhibits exploring suburbanization, immigration, slavery and anti-slavery, and a wealth of other topics in our city's

past. New education programs enriched the school experiences of thousands of children.

Outside the museum's walls, there have been changes as well. Today,

"It is hoped by the Board of the Trustees that the Jackson Homestead will become a historical center for the City of Newton, where adults and children will be welcome to learn of the City and its history. All too little is known by Newton citizens of the fine heritage which is theirs."

—The Newton Graphic,
November 2, 1950

traffic on the Mass. Turnpike roars past the Homestead. And in April 2020, while many of us isolated at home during the Covid-19 pandemic, a storm toppled the venerable honey locust tree that had served as a Newton landmark for 250 years.



Mrs. Bockmann, a volunteer, demonstrates wool spinning during a school class visit to the Homestead in the 1950s/60s.

History is about change, and the Homestead will see much more. With 2025 marking the site's 75th anniversary as a museum, the building is undergoing a renewal, with rebuilt porches, a fresh coat of paint, and a major project to eliminate water incursion in the lower level. New exhibits are in the works. Meanwhile, the Homestead continues to bear witness to the evolution of our city.

What will the next 75 years bring?

The Power of History

History is powerful. Research has shown that museums can be beacons of hope in complicated times, illuminating our journey to the present and inspiring our path to the future.

Historic Newton has embarked on an ambitious campaign to raise **\$545,000** to support a new exhibit at Jackson Homestead, outpost exhibits throughout Newton, and a refreshed and user-friendly website. *Newton: The City We Make* will connect our community with its history, fostering understanding and building positive action across our city.

A major new exhibit will reflect present-day demographics and use state-of-the-art design to bring history to life through stories, images, objects, and interactive elements. The exhibit will tell Newton's history throughout the entire first floor of the Jackson

Homestead and Museum (about 1,000 sq. ft.). Centered on the theme of people as agents of change, the space will explore the choices that drove Newton's changing landscape, the evolution of our city's ethnic and



Joeng Soon and Chong Ho Cho with son Phillip, at their new Asian grocery store Jin Mi, 1976.



The Newton Fire Department proudly showing off their new Knox Combination A, 1910.

international makeup, and the ways individuals and organizations have sought to improve our city over centuries.

In addition to the exhibit, a **traveling installation** will travel among public spaces in Newton, carrying the exhibit beyond the walls of our museum to reach a wider audience. And a **new website** will help users access the wealth of resources Historic Newton offers: online exhibits, searchable collections, curriculum packets for K-12 teachers, histories of each of the city's 13 villages, interactive maps, and a dynamic array of talks, workshops, and interactive programs.

Newton has evolved to become the city we know today: not at random, but in response to choices people have made in response to an array of forces. By bringing these to life for new audiences, we seek to inspire everyone to recognize their own power to influence our collective future.

Newton: The City We Make represents significant expansion of Historic Newton's focus and offerings. We will be able to tell Newton's stories from many points of view, to engage the broadest possible audience.

To learn how to support us in illuminating Newton's history, please contact Laura Grzybowski, Director of Development at lgrzybowski@historicnewton.org or 617-641-9142.

Newton in the American Revolution

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freedom if they enlisted with the British army; an estimated 20,000 enslaved people fought with the British in search of freedom.

In Newton, people remained enslaved even as their enslavers advocated for the principles of the Revolution. A man named Titus was enslaved by Edward Durant III, who played a leading role in planning the Revolution. General William Hull (1753-1825), who settled in Newton after the Revolutionary War, enslaved a man known as Tillo, short for Othello, in Newton. Othello remained with the Hull family even after slavery was made illegal in Massachusetts and is reportedly buried without a marker

in the Hull family tomb in the East Parish Burying Ground.

While residents of Newton differed ideologically on issues of freedom and independence, as shown by town meeting records, numerous Newtonians contributed to the Revolutionary cause in ways large and small.

For more information on Newtonians during the American Revolution, scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/AmRevNewtonMA



75 YEARS AT THE JACKSON



Students visiting the Jackson Homestead, 1989



Christmas Open House, December 1955



Lusterware on display, 1955



Family Work: Spinning and Weaving exhibit, 1980s

PRECEDENTS/Currents



Ten Artists in Conversation with Newton's Past
Jackson Homestead, May 12 – June 12, 2016


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NOW ON EXHIBIT AT THE JACKSON HOMESTEAD
Hair, How We Wore It and What It Means from 1840 to 1980



HOMESTEAD AND MUSEUM



Outdoor performance at the Jackson Homestead, 1976



Norumbega Park exhibit, 2007

**An Architect Ahead of her Time:
Annie Cobb
(1830-1911)**

**New Exhibition
Opening
October 3, 2012**

at the Jackson Homestead and Museum
527 Washington Street, Newton

Find us on Facebook and Twitter!

**HISTORIC
Newton**



Four-Legged Newton exhibit, 2002

**CONFRONTING OUR LEGACY
SLAVERY AND ANTISLAVERY
IN THE NORTH**

**HISTORIC
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Clothing on display, 1978

Historic Newton Supporters

Historic Newton gratefully acknowledges the following donors, members, and sponsors who made contributions from January 1-December 31, 2024.

\$10,000+

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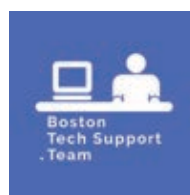
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Thank you for supporting the Revolution!

As part of our Revolutionary Newton celebration, the setting sun saw the

museum transformed into a 21+ cocktail party, Naughty Newton at Night, which explored the racier side of 18th century life. While sipping historic drinks, guests showed off their favorite history-inspired outfits while learning 18th-century card games, writing risque love letters, and finding out just what did women wear under all those layers.



We are so grateful to Honda Village, our Revolutionary corporate sponsor, as well as all our other sponsors for their generous donations. To our guests who supported this event—thank you for making this program possible! We cannot do it without you. *If you or your company would like to support this or other programs in 2026, please*

contact Laura Grzybowski, Director of Development, at lgrzybowski@historicnewton.org.



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2025 Preview Party and House Tour

Nearly 100 guests enjoyed cocktails and hors d'oeuvres at 111 Temple Street for the 2025 Preview Party. Hosted by Madeline Krauss and Paul Friedberg, guests explored the 1897 shingle-style/colonial revival house and basked in the fine spring weather on the spacious wraparound porch. Our co-chairs for the event, Stella Lee and Sarah Kish, worked tirelessly to ensure the evening was a success.



The 2025 Preview Party was held at the home of Madeline Krauss and Paul Friedberg

Right: Guest speaker Treff LaFleche (left) with the hosts Madeline Krauss and Paul Friedberg, co-chair Stella Lee, Victor Chin, and guest.



We were honored to have architect Treff LaFleche as a guest speaker. Treff's firm, LDa Architecture & Interiors, Inc., led the 2007 renovations when the home was featured in "This Old House."

We are grateful to our Preview Party media sponsor, New England Home magazine, as well as to the House Tour's lead sponsor, The Village Bank, and all our charitable sponsors.

Thank you to everyone who supported the Preview Party. Fundraising events like these allow Historic Newton to continue to educate the public, preserve our past, and so much more.



The **42nd Annual House Tour** was held on Sunday, May 18. This year's tour included seven private homes and ran through Chestnut Hill, Newton Centre, Newtonville and Newton Corner. Nearly 400 guests attended and enjoyed viewing the variety of interior design and architectural styles on display. Historic Newton thanks the House Tour Committee as well as all of our day-of volunteers—we couldn't do this without you!



HISTORIC NEWTON CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FOR MORE DETAILS AND EVENT REGISTRATION, VISIT HISTORICNEWTON.ORG OR CALL 617-796-1450

FREE WEEKENDS

Enjoy free admission the first weekend of every month at Durant-Kenrick House and Grounds!



HISTORY BOOK CLUB

Bimonthly, Thursday nights on Zoom

Meets bi-monthly on Thursday nights via Zoom. For more information or to be added to the email list, please contact us at education@historicnewton.org.

LECTURE SERIES WITH NEWTON FREE LIBRARY

January - March 2026

This program is part of the Newton History Series, co-sponsored by Historic Newton and the Newton Free Library. Check our website or the library website for details.

FEBRUARY VACATION WEEK: FUN PROGRAMMING!

Tuesday-Friday, Feb 17-20, 2026
12:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Location: Durant-Kenrick House and Grounds



Top-secret theme to be announced in February! Explore your creative side with fun hands-on

activities during February vacation week! Plus LEGOs, games, and hands-on exhibits. Each day features a unique theme and activities.

- \$5/child, free for adults and kids age 5 and under
- Appropriate for all ages
- Stop by anytime during the program
- Accompanying adults must remain onsite during the program

REVOLUTIONARY NEWTON

Saturday, March 28, 2026
12:00 - 4:00 p.m. — FREE

Location: Durant-Kenrick House and Grounds



Historic Newton celebrates the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution! Learn what life was like in 1776 New England. Reenactors will inhabit the museum exhibits and grounds to create an immersive experience of revolutionary life. Guests can participate in hands-on period-specific activities and listen to reenactors debate politics, describe daily life, reminisce on military service, and much more. Shop exclusive merchandise and see what your local museum can do for you! This event is free and open to the public.

NAUGHTY NEWTON AT NIGHT

Saturday, April 11, 2026
7:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Location: Durant-Kenrick House and Grounds

Attend the historic cocktail party of the year! Enjoy drinks and hors d'oeuvres and listen to costumed historians discuss the scandalous side of 18th century life like alcohol production and consumption, gambling, sex, and historical undergarments.

This is an adults-only (21+) event. Historic costumes are highly encouraged but not required. Tickets will go on sale in early 2026.

APRIL VACATION WEEK: FUN PROGRAMMING!

Tuesday-Friday, April 21-24, 2026
12:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Location: Durant-Kenrick House and Grounds

Top-secret theme to be announced in April! Explore your creative side with fun hands-on activities! Plus LEGOs, games, and hands-on exhibits. Each day features a unique theme and activities.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS:

PREVIEW PARTY AND HOUSE TOUR
May 2026

PLANT SWAP
June 2026

SUMMER WALKING TOURS
June - September 2026

HAYFEST
Fall 2026

100 Books!

"In history, a great volume is unrolled for our instruction, drawing the materials of future wisdom from the past errors and infirmities of mankind."

—Edmund Burke

Some historians date the first book club in the United States to Anne Hutchison, who gathered women to discuss weekly sermons in 1634. Others point to Benjamin Franklin's organization of the Junto in 1727, a literary society that met to discuss the topics of the day. Whatever the origins of the organized book club, it is clear that people like to talk about books! A recent census found that 5% of American adults — about 13 million people — participate in book clubs.

Historic Newton's own History Book Club began in 2008, facilitated by now-retired board member Peter Terris. This year, the club will reach a proud milestone: its 100th book! The group's selections have explored topics from the history of the FBI and the Aztec empire, to Thomas Edison, the Great Depression and China's politics in 1945. "It's a much more enjoyable experience to read a book and talk to others about it," says Terris.

The History Book Club meets every other month over Zoom in the evening. It is free to join. If you'd like to receive updates, including each meeting's book selection and Zoom link, email us at education@historicnewton.org.

Historic Newton

Historic Newton connects our community with its history in order to enrich future generations.

Jackson Homestead and Museum
Durant-Kenrick House and Grounds
Historic Burying Grounds Preservation

Historic Newton Museum Shops

Members receive a 20% discount at both Historic Newton shops. All purchases support Historic Newton's exhibitions and programs.



FEATURED SHOP ITEM:

Oliver Pluff & Co Tea

You won't want to throw this tea in the harbor! In honor of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, Historic Newton is now stocking authentic 18th-century teas. Whether you are a full-fledged Patriot and drink only herbal teas like Blueberry, or you are a staunch

supporter of King George III and prefer Bohea black tea, we have something for everyone to sip!



FEATURED SHOP ITEM:

One-Eyed Jack Magnet

Is your refrigerator looking a little less spooky than you'd like? Let Historic Newton bring mortality to your morning orange juice with this magnet of a gravestone from our own East Parish Burying Ground. From the engraving found on the stone of Abigail

Jackson (d. 1702), this magnet—affectionately known as One-Eyed Jack—features the winged skull which is symbolic of one's mortality and the inevitability of death.

GIVE THE GIFT OF FUN AND LEARNING: Memberships

Memberships include discounts on Museum Shop merch, events, and more. A family membership is only \$50. Details: newtonma.gov/HNmembership



HISTORIC NEWTON

527 Washington Street
Newton, MA 02458
www.historicnewton.org

Visit our website for up-to-date museum and shop hours.

Selections from our gift shop can be found online by scanning the QR code at right.



Museum Admission

\$6 Adults, \$5 Child/Senior
\$5 Newton Residents
Members: Free

Admission to the museum is FREE the first weekend of every month!