

Indigenous Independence: America at 250

June 15 - August 7

Helmerich Center for American Research



2026 Summer Tours

Docent Resource Packet

Tour Instructions

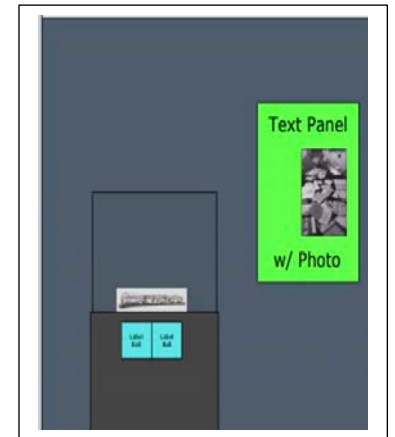
- All docents should arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the tour to get set up.

Indigenous Independence: America at 250 marks a celebratory moment in both the history of the United States and the institutional history of Gilcrease. Joining many other voices commemorating American Independence in 2026, the exhibit began by asking what unique stories Gilcrease Museum's collections tell us about our shared past. Diving deeply into documents, rare books, and works of art revealed a complex narrative of the contest for sovereignty between Native Nations, American colonists, and British imperialists. This story reflects Thomas Gilcrease's collecting interests as a Muscogee (Creek) citizen, which provides a prelude to the exhibition's main theme when, in 1948, Gilcrease first beheld some of these materials on the Freedom Train. Viewing historical documents was an inspirational experience for him, and we hope it inspires you, too. As Gilcrease Museum embarks on a new chapter, *Indigenous Independence* is a reminder that we all carry the responsibility of learning from our history to more capably journey ahead together beyond 250.

The main exhibit story covers the "long Revolutionary period," but objects on display include materials from the early-1700s through the early 19th-century. The orientation (introduction) display serves as a prelude to the main exhibit exploring the story of Thomas Gilcrease's collecting and the history of the Freedom Train (1947-1949). A concluding wall label looks forward to the present and the future.

- **Stop 1: Tour begins with All Aboard the Freedom Train (East Wall)**

- Text Panel
- Key Themes: Thomas Gilcrease, Collecting, Freedom Train (1947-1949), Democracy
- Items: Text Panel with Photo, Two Printed Pamphlets about the Freedom Train, Model of the American Freedom Train (1975-1976)

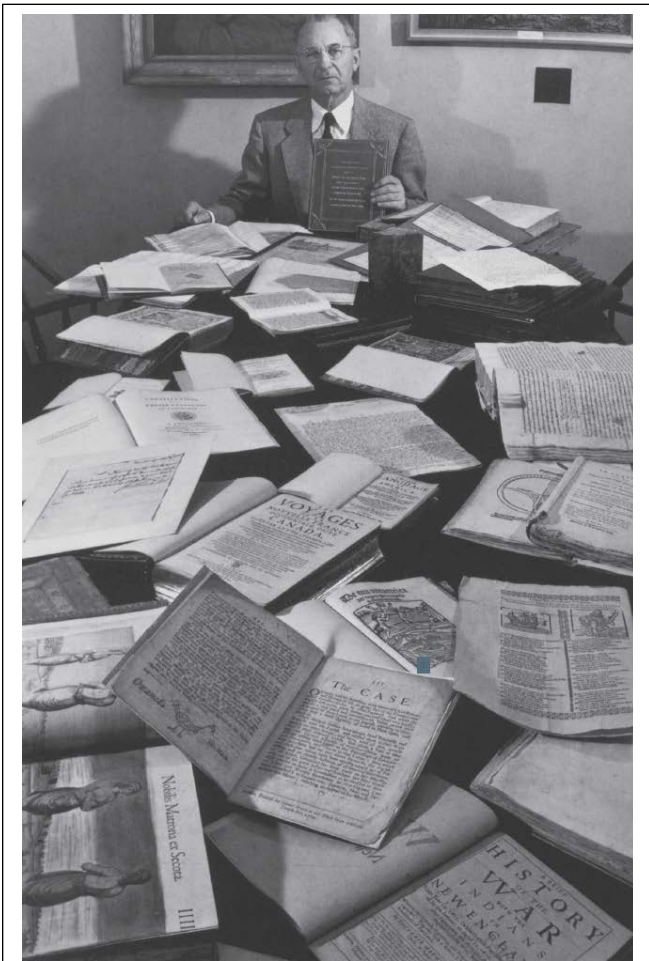


All Aboard the Freedom Train

On January 23, 1948, the Freedom Train arrived in Muskogee, Oklahoma, along its 37,000-mile journey across the nation. This seven-car traveling museum had toured for five months, making more than 100 stops and welcoming its one millionth visitor to marvel at its display of 127 precious documents and objects from American history. The next day, it traveled to Tulsa. Oklahomans from all walks of life endured the bitter cold to enter the Freedom Train, including Muskogee (Creek) citizen, oilman, and collector Thomas Gilcrease.

In 1949 several of these cherished documents returned to Tulsa, including a 1777 handwritten, certified copy of the Declaration of Independence.

Gilcrease had admired these items and eventually secured their purchase from brothers A. S. W. and Phillip Rosenbach of Philadelphia, prolific dealers in manuscripts and rare books.



Thomas Gilcrease poses with manuscripts and rare books for a *LIFE* magazine article published March 8, 1954. Some of the documents pictured include those he first saw on the Freedom Train. Gilcrease holds the 1777 Declaration of Independence in a custom-made enclosure. *Photo by Eliot Elisofon, 5027.736.*

The Declaration became a cornerstone holding of Gilcrease's personal museum, which opened on these grounds the same year.

Both the Freedom Train and Gilcrease Museum were conceived at a time of national reflection following World War II. Civic leaders hoped that firsthand experiences of famous documents — either for a brief glimpse in a train or longer study in a museum — would reinforce Americans' appreciation for their country's democratic foundations.

The American Heritage Foundation

Washington, District of Columbia

The Documents on the Freedom Train: A Guidebook and Catalog (New York: The American Heritage Foundation, 1947)

Good Citizen: The Rights and Duties of an American (New York: The American Heritage Foundation, 1948)

printed pamphlets

Between 1947 and 1949, visitors to the Freedom Train purchased these and other pamphlets to enhance their experience and as souvenirs. Page three of *The Documents on the Freedom Train* shows Gilcrease Museum's copies of the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and a letter from Benjamin Franklin. *Good Citizen* contained articles that conveyed the train's purpose, which was to help Americans appreciate "their rich heritage of freedom."

Lionel Corporation

Chesterfield, MI

American Freedom Train model, ca. 1975

plastic and metal

To celebrate the US bicentennial anniversary, a second American Freedom Train toured the nation in 1975–76. To outdo its predecessor, the 1948 Freedom Train, this iteration of the traveling special exhibit added more display cars and carried around 500 honored pieces of Americana. This toy model includes a locomotive, showcase car, two display cars, and an observation car. The Liberty Bell and a replica of the Lunar Rover can be seen in the showcase car.

- **Talking Points:**

- We don't know exactly which site Thomas Gilcrease visited the Freedom Train, but it was either Tulsa or Muskogee. Later acquired 5 documents from the train.
- The two pamphlets on display were sold during the first iteration of the Freedom Train (1947-1949), including patriotic articles. Docents can read some of these online: <https://archive.org/details/goodcitizenright00amerri/page/n1/mode/2up>
- The American Freedom Train (1975-76) was a different iteration for the Bicentennial celebrations, in Tulsa on March 15-18, 1976. The American Freedom Plane touring the United States in 2026 to commemorate the 250th anniversary of American Independence.

Indigenous Independence

America at 250

In 1776, American Revolutionaries proclaimed their independence from Great Britain. *Indigenous Independence* explores the decisive influence Native Nations had on this celebrated moment. Gilcrease's collection of documents, books, and works of art narrates the contest for sovereignty between Native communities, American colonists, and British imperialists.

Featuring materials housed here at the Helmerich Center, this exhibition highlights the formative role of Native diplomacy for well-known figures like Benjamin Franklin and Charles Thomson, as well as Indigenous leaders like Tah-gah-jute (James Logan), a Mingo chief whose speech about the injustices suffered by his people was widely reprinted. The items on display here were often made by Anglo-American settlers and British officials *about* Native people and not *by* Native people, and thus their bias cannot be ignored. Yet these records bear witness to the fact that the American Revolution was a battle over lands and independence for both Native peoples and settler colonists.

In three phases — Diplomacy and Alliances, the Rhetoric of Savagery, and Native Land and Contested Boundaries — this exhibition approaches the American Revolution as more than a sudden break between Great Britain and its North American colonies. Instead, it addresses the long history of struggles between colonists and Native Nations toward their distinct dreams of prosperity and independence.

Historical books and documents are routinely displayed among related artworks in the galleries of the new Gilcrease Museum. To prevent light damage, those presentations rotate frequently but works may also be viewed for research by appointment in the Reading Room of the Helmerich Center. For the convenience of visitors, this exhibition utilizes reproductions for all light-sensitive and vulnerable objects, sometimes enlarged for clarity.

Exhibition Credits: The Leuschen Endowment for Research and Education

Stop 2: Title Wall introduces *Indigenous Independence: America at 250*

- Introductory Text Graphic
- Key Themes: Indigenous Nations, American Revolution, Native diplomacy, land, colonial ideas about “savagery”
 - **Talking Points:**
 - This exhibition theme emerged from a closer look at the 1777 copy of the Declaration of Independence and seeing Charles Thomson’s name as one of the authenticators or “attestors.” Learning more about his early experiences in Native diplomatic relations in Pennsylvania led to a broader understanding of the importance of Native Nations in the buildup to the Revolution and a major theme within the Gilcrease collections for this period.
 - The typeface or font used on the Title Wall and the text panels and labels in the exhibition is an 18th-century font called “Caslon” and was Benjamin Franklin’s personal favorite typeface. It was also the typeface used for the first printings of the Declaration of Independence.

- **Stop 3: Diplomacy and Alliances** (South Wall – East Section)

- Text Panel
- Key Themes: Diplomatic Relationships with Native Peoples, Alliances, Treaties, Indigenous Leaders
- Items: Edward Hicks *Penn's Treaty* (01.1008), Samuel Pleasants Jr.



Minutes of Conferences (4826.32.1-11), John Frost “Logan’s Lament” (2926.1048) *Penn’s Treaty* (01.1008), Samuel Pleasants Jr. *Minutes of Conferences* (4826.32.1-11), John Frost “Logan’s Lament” (2926,1048)

- **Talking Points:**

- Edward Hicks’ *Penn’s Treaty* painting was modeled after Benjamin West’s famous *Penn’s Treaty with the Indians* (1771-1772) also held in Gilcrease’s collections, which was commissioned by Thomas Penn (William Penn’s son), who was embroiled in controversy nearing the Revolution because of Native diplomacy in Pennsylvania. You can tell Hick’s painting was taken from a print because the scene is reversed from West’s original painting, due to how all the printings were made.
- The Samuel Pleasants Jr., treaties is a unique archival document called a “composite volume of printed documents.” These were gathered and sewn together under one cover and contain **minutes** of several conferences and treaties with Indigenous Nations, including the Treaty of Easton proceedings (1757-1758). These can be read here: https://archive.org/details/nby_599526
- “Logan’s Lament” was a famous speech that Tah-gah-jute (“James Logan”), a Mingo leader, gave in the aftermath of the 1774 Yellow Creek Massacre, when Virginia settlers killed most of Logan’s family. It was a powerful testament to the betrayal of Native alliances and the immense costs of warfare and violence. Thomas Jefferson included the speech in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787). Read it here: <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/primary-documents/logans-lament-virginia-gazette-february-4-1775/>
- Library of Congress article about the speech: <https://blogs.loc.gov/manuscripts/2022/09/of-note-thomas-jefferson-thinks-again-a-new-letter-about-logan-cresap-and-the-yellow-creek-massacre/>

Diplomacy and Alliances

The British colonies of Pre-Revolutionary America were a diverse collection of rural communities populated by mostly Indigenous Nations, French traders, and British settlers. Across the backcountry of the Eastern Seaboard, large Native confederacies like the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and tribes like the Cherokee, Shawnee, and Lenape (Delaware) exercised immense power. These Nations entertained diplomats from both France and Great Britain and negotiated for the best trade goods, prices, and terms.

Peace medals from this period commemorating the Treaty of Easton (1757–58) and Pontiac's War (1763–66) represented the importance of Native alliances and their influence. The Easton medal offers a glimpse into a deeper history related to the attestor of Gilcrease's certified copy of the Declaration of Independence, Charles Thomson. Thomson worked closely with the Lenape (Delaware) Nation and Benjamin Franklin, documenting the history of treaty-making between Great Britain and Native nations. In his 1759 book, *Enquiry into the Causes*, Thomson criticized the British for fraud and broken promises that led to disaffection among Native peoples and ultimately to violence. The Declaration repeated this charge among its twenty-seven grievances levied against the Crown.

Items and archival materials from the Gilcrease collection reflect Indigenous power and place, highlighting how trade relations, alliances, treaty-making, and treaty breaking often challenged peace and profoundly shaped the road to revolution.



Edward Hicks

American, 1780–1849

Penn's Treaty, ca. 1830–40

oil on canvas

01.1008

Penn's Treaty imagines an early moment of colonial diplomacy, the 1682 signing of the Treaty of Shackamaxon between William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania, and the Lenape. Penn and other Quakers are shown offering a treaty to Tamanend and other Lenape leaders under an elm tree. Hicks occasionally returned to this scene in other paintings to emphasize the narrative of harmony, unity, and just dealings with Native communities. Hicks' painting was completed in the 1830s and copied from printed replicas of Benjamin West's *Penn's Treaty with the Indians*, 1771–72, originally commissioned by Penn's son, Thomas.



Samuel Pleasants Jr., compiler

American, 1737–1814?

Minutes of Conferences, Held with the Indians, at Easton, In the Months of July, and August, 1757 (Philadelphia: B. Franklin and D. Hall, 1758), from "Collection of Indian Treaties Conferences &c."

composite volume of printed documents

4826.32.1-11

During the French and Indian War (1756–63), Great Britain was desperate for Native allies and called for a conference in Easton, PA, to finalize a treaty of friendship. A Lenape diplomat, Teedyuscung, also known as "King of the Delawares," represented several tribes in the negotiations. The final treaty established an alliance between the Lenape and the British in return for a promise to end white settlement west of the Allegheny Mountains. At the bottom of the page, you can see that Teedyuscung asked Charles Thomson to record the minutes of these proceedings. Thomson would later serve as Secretary of the Continental Congress.

John Frost, author

American, 1800–59

"Logan's Lament," from *Indian Wars of the United States, from the Discovery to the Present Time. From the Best Authorities* (Philadelphia: R.W. Pomeroy, 1841)

printed and bound book

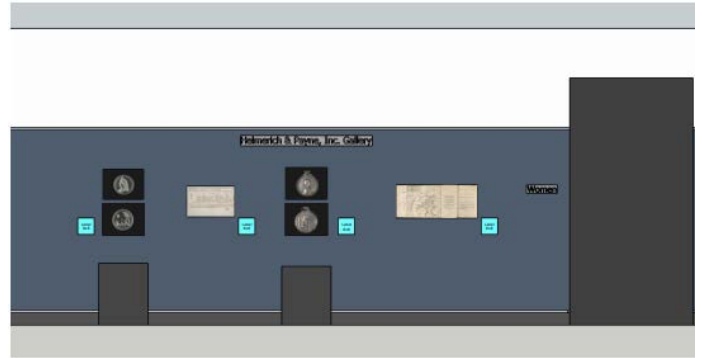
2926.1048

In this sweeping history of Anglo-Indigenous conflict, John Frost highlights the Yellow Creek Massacre of 1774, when Virginia settlers slaughtered the family of Mingo leader Tah-gah-jute, whom settlers called "Logan." In response to this outrage, Logan and his men launched counterattacks which led to the Shawnee-Dunmore War and eventually, peace talks. Logan refused to attend the peace negotiations and instead delivered a speech, which came to be known as "Logan's Lament," about the betrayal he experienced. The speech immediately gained widespread attention and is representative of Native voices that defended their rights.



- **Stop 4: Diplomacy and Alliances** (South Wall – West Section)

- Enlarged 3D Peace Medal Replica Stations
- Key Themes: Peace Medals, Diplomatic Gifts and Exchange, Native Alliances, Treaties, Charles Thomson
- Items: George II “Treaty of Easton” peace medal (1757) image and replica, Inventory listing returned articles intended as gifts to Native allies (1779), George III “Happy While United” Peace Medal (1764), Charles Thomson *An Enquiry into the Causes* (1759)



Edward Duffield, engraver

American, 1730–1803

Joseph Richardson Sr., silversmith

American, 1711–84

George II “Treaty of Easton” peace medal, 1757

silver, 1 ¹¹/₁₆ in. (4.3 cm)

60.82

Originally distributed by the Friendly Association (Quakers) and Benjamin Franklin to honor the 1757 Treaty of Easton, this peace medal reveals the importance of British diplomacy with Native Nations. The front of the medal shows the face of King George II, representing an exchange between sovereign powers. The back side depicts a Quaker sharing a peace pipe with a Native American around a fire to express hope for long-lasting peace. Designed by Franklin’s friend Edward Duffield, a prominent Philadelphia clockmaker, it is likely the first peace medal conceived and struck fully in North America.

We invite you to touch this 3D-printed enlargement of the 1.68-inch diameter Treaty of Easton silver peace medal.

Unrecorded maker

Probably English or American

Inventory listing returned articles intended as Indian gifts

April 9, 1779

Sir Frederick Haldimand Papers

ink on paper

4026.5118

Native alliances were crucial to the British war strategy during the American Revolution. Frederick Haldimand, British general and governor of Quebec, relied on Indigenous spies and scouts from the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) to provide reports and monitor supply routes into Canada. Originally damaged and returned to New York, this inventory shows the kinds of gifts the British provided to their Indigenous allies. The list includes blankets, clothing, pipes, paints, weapons, ammunition, and seventy silver peace medals with “the King & Queen’s Picture.”

Daniel Christian Fueter, engraver

American, 1720–85

George III “Happy While United” Peace Medal, 1764

silver, 2 ¹⁵/₁₆ in. (7.5 cm)

65.57

In 1763, new imperial policies regulating Indigenous relations, trade, and land settlement led to anger and renewed violence between Native peoples and colonial Americans. The leader of the Ottawa, Obwandiyag (or “Pontiac”), organized a large-scale attack against British outposts west of the Appalachians. Settlers retaliated with atrocities against Native communities, and the assault also stirred colonial resentment against British governance. Originally meant to end bloodshed following Pontiac’s uprising, this medal gestures toward the fragility of both King George III’s rule and the union that existed between Great Britain, Native Americans, and colonists.



Charles Thomson

American, 1729–1824

An Enquiry into the Causes of the Alienation of the Delaware and Shawanese Indians from the British Interest, and into the Measures taken for recovering their Friendship... (London: J. Wilkie, 1759)

printed and bound book

2976.1287b

This book turned Pennsylvania's local politics into a transatlantic scandal with revolutionary implications. Supported by Pennsylvania Quakers and Benjamin Franklin, Thomson's book revealed the colony's deceptive and fraudulent land policies toward the Lenape and Shawnee Nations. Its fold-out map helped readers see the lands involved, which had become a place of violent conflict during the 1750s. Notice the signature on the title page. This book once belonged to Franklin's good friend Dr. John Fothergill (1712–80), an influential physician, botanist, and Quaker living in London.

○ Talking Points:

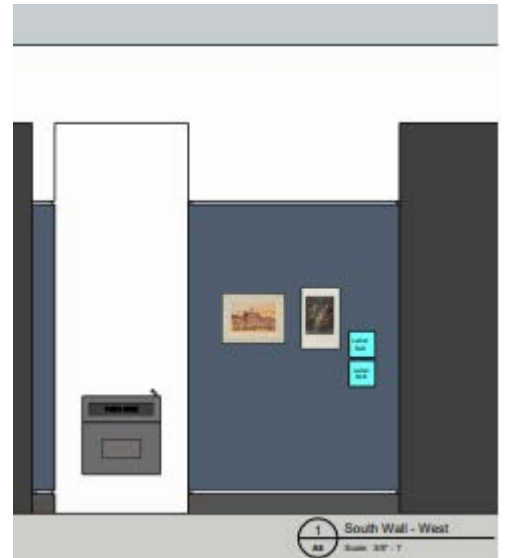
- The medal replicas on the stations should be touched and invite visitors to explore the detail. One pedestal has the verso side and the other pedestal has the recto side of the George II “Treaty of Easton” peace medal from 1757. Peace medals were diplomatic tools and gifts exchanged between sovereign powers. The back image shows a Quaker and a Native American sharing a peace pipe with hopes for long-lasting peace. It was designed by Benjamin Franklin's friend, Edward Duffield and was likely the first peace medal ever fully struck in North America.
- The inventory of gifts comes from the Sir Frederick Haldimand Papers in the Gilcrease archival collections, who was a British General and Governor of Quebec during the American Revolution period. The list includes gifts that

were part of alliance building and maintain as part of the British war effort. Have visitors try to read what these gifts included: blankets, clothing, pipes, paints, weapons. There is also a mention of “70 silver peace medals with the King & Queen’s Picture.”

- The other medal, George III “Happy While United” medal (1764) appeared during the aftermath of the Ottawa leader, Obwandiyag, or “Pontiac’s uprising” while the colonies were reeling from a coordinated attack by Indigenous Nations against British outposts along the Appalachians. This produced settler violence against Native communities in turn, leading to fear and anxiety in the buildup to the revolutionary period.

- **Stop 5: Bridge to Declaration of Independence & Rhetoric of Savagery** (End of South Wall – West Section)

- This prepares and bridges visitors to the next section on the Declaration of Independence and its legacy
- Key Themes: Declaration of Independence, Philadelphia, Independence Hall, Centennial Anniversary (1876)
- Items: McRae *Independence Hall, Phila. Pa, 1776*, Chappel *Drafting the Declaration of Independence*



After John C. McRae

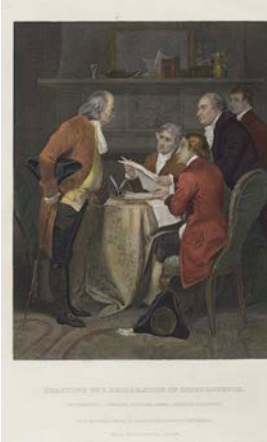
American, 1816–92

Independence Hall, Phila. Pa, 1776, late 19th century

color lithograph on paper

15.1017

Originally built in 1733, the Pennsylvania State House hosted the July 1776 meeting of the Continental Congress, at which the Declaration of Independence was adopted, as well as the 1787 Constitutional Convention. By the 1820s the building was no longer used by the government but remained admired for its historical associations, earning the nickname “Independence Hall.” Guidebooks urged patriotic tourists to contemplate relics like Washington’s pew and Franklin’s desk with reverence and to admire its collection of portraits of Founding Fathers, which included the faces of Native leaders Joseph Brandt (Kanien’kehá:ka [Mohawk]) and Sagoyewatha (Onödowága:’ [Seneca]). This print may have been published around the time of the 1876 Centennial Exposition, which drew worldwide attention to Philadelphia and its landmarks.



Alonzo Chappel

American, 1828–87

Johnson, Fry & Co. Publishers

New York, 1850s–80s

Drafting the Declaration of Independence, 1866

engraving with watercolor on paper

15.1129

As the US approached its centennial anniversary in 1876, the events of its birth gained heroic status through history books, poems, and artworks. This print imagines the writing of the Declaration of Independence as a meeting of great minds, with the Committee of Five—Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Roger Sherman, John Adams, and Robert Livingston—hunched around a table and carefully designing its contents. Such images suggest that the words of the nation's founding documents carry immense weight and should be revered by later generations, even when those texts at times contributed to excluding and harming some groups of Americans.

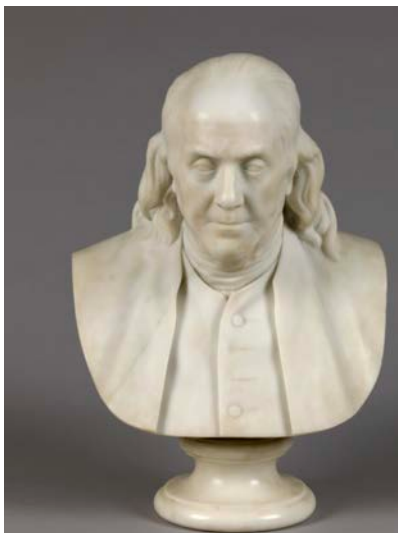
- **Talking Points:** This wall provides a bridge to the next section on the Declaration of Independence and its legacy; Gilcrease often paired the familiar with the unfamiliar; so here we provide paintings of two familiar scenes, the iconic Independence Hall and the signing of the D of I by well-known Founding Fathers; across the hall, we ask our visitors to focus on Jefferson's language and the way he described Indigenous people, using rhetoric that helped justify the colonists' reasons for declaring their independence.

- **Stop 6: Rhetoric of “Savagery”** (North Wall – West Section)

- Text Panel
- Key Themes: Ideas about “Savagery,” Violence and Conflict, Stereotypes and Enduring Images



- Items: True Copy of the Original Declaration of Independence (1777), Hiram Powers *Benjamin Franklin* (ca. 1849-73), John Frost *Braddock and Washington* (1841), Closer look at the Declaration of Independence, Chappel *Fate of Jane Wells*, Loudon *A Selection of Some of the Most Interesting Narratives of Outrages* (1808)



Hiram Powers

American, 1805–73

Benjamin Franklin, modeled ca. 1849,
carved ca. 1849–73

marble

09.6

White marble was the favorite material in early America for portraits of political and military leaders. Quarried in Italy, this expensive stone signified refinement, referencing statues of ancient Greek and Roman gods, philosophers, and emperors. For an accurate likeness of the long-deceased Franklin, Hiram Powers studied a similar bust carved by French sculptor Jean-Antoine Houdon in 1778. Houdon had modeled the American statesman's features in Paris around the time of the drafting of Gilcrease's copy of the Declaration of Independence.

The Rhetoric of Savagery

Beyond the battlefield, the American Revolution was a war of words. Terms like “savage” and “civilized” became weapons to inspire sympathy and stir emotions against enemies. In his nineteenth-century history of “Indian Wars,” John Frost highlighted a speech given by Mingo leader Tah-gah-jute (James Logan) in 1774 that accused American colonists of greediness and savagery. Frost himself characterized some Americans as uncivilized, reporting that Chief Logan was “barbarously murdered” by backwoods Virginia frontiersmen.

In contrast to Frost’s narrative, most colonial Americans characterized Native peoples like Jefferson did, as “merciless Indian Savages” who attacked innocent women and children. Author Archibald Loudon amplified this widespread belief, depicting Native peoples as bloodthirsty, lawless, and violent.

Finally, American colonists used the rhetoric of savagery to demonize the British, repeatedly linking them to their Native allies. During the war, Benjamin Franklin discussed “Prints to illustrate British Cruelties” with the Marquis de Lafayette, and they agreed on one vignette: “Savages killing and scalping the Frontier Farmers and their Families ... [with] English Officers mix’d with the Savages and giving them Orders.” Depictions of violence like *The Fate of Jane Wells* further illustrate this sentiment.

Silas Deane, scribe and signatory

American, 1737–89

Benjamin Franklin, signatory

American, 1706–90

A True Copy of the Original Declaration of Independence, 1777

ink on paper

4026.901

This is one of the only known handwritten, certified copies of the Declaration of Independence. It was drafted and signed by Silas Deane, and also signed by Benjamin Franklin. The pair sent this document, a copy of the Articles of Confederation, and an introductory letter to Prussia's Minister of Trade. As an early attempt at diplomatic relations, Franklin and Deane hoped to gain support from Prussia, dispel rumors about the war, and establish commercial trade. Look for Charles Thomson's name as one of the attestors of the original Declaration.



John Frost, author

American, 1800–59

"Braddock and Washington," from Indian Wars of the United States, from the Discovery to the Present Time. From the Best Authorities (Philadelphia: R. W. Pomeroy, 1841)

printed and bound book

2926.1048



Illustrations in early history books often focused on Anglo-Indigenous conflict, such as the infamous defeat of British Major General Braddock's forces in the 1755 Battle of Fort Duquesne. George Washington served as Braddock's aide-de-camp but escaped the surprise attack, while the French and their Native allies mortally wounded Braddock and surged further eastward. Though the French won this battle, they eventually lost the war and most of their territory in the region, leaving their Native allies in a vulnerable position with the land-hungry colonists.

A Closer Look at the Declaration of Independence

One of the many grievances listed in the Declaration of Independence focuses on the suffering of American settlers at the hands of Native peoples. In this final grievance in a list of twenty-seven, Thomas Jefferson blamed Great Britain for failing to protect “innocent” American families from Indigenous violence, calling out the King in this passage for leaving all “ages, sexes, and conditions” vulnerable to enemy tribes. Jefferson conveniently overlooks the cause of this violence: white settler land encroachment and broken treaties.

Alonzo Chappel

American, 1828–87

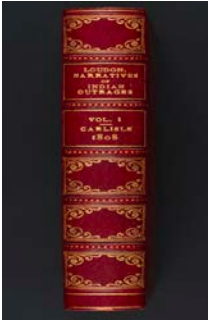
*Fate of Jane Wells; Incident in Cherry Valley,
Ostego County, New York, 1856*

oil on canvas

1.1651



Skirmishes between the Continental Army and the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy, mainly allied with the British, were common near Jane Wells’s hometown in upstate New York. These drew national attention when Wells and roughly thirty civilians died in an attack in November 1778, and massive retaliation by the Continental Army followed. George Washington stated his goal in the subsequent campaign: “total destruction and devastation” of the “hostile tribes of the six nations of Indians.” American troops destroyed over forty Haudenosaunee villages that winter and spring, but as Chappel’s painting shows, only one perspective passed down to later generations, focusing Wells as a sentimental victim of Native aggression.



Archibald Loudon

American, 1754–1840

A Selection of Some of the Most Interesting Narratives of Outrages Committed by the Indians in Their Wars with the White People, v.1
(Carlisle, PA: Whitehall, 1808)

printed and bound book

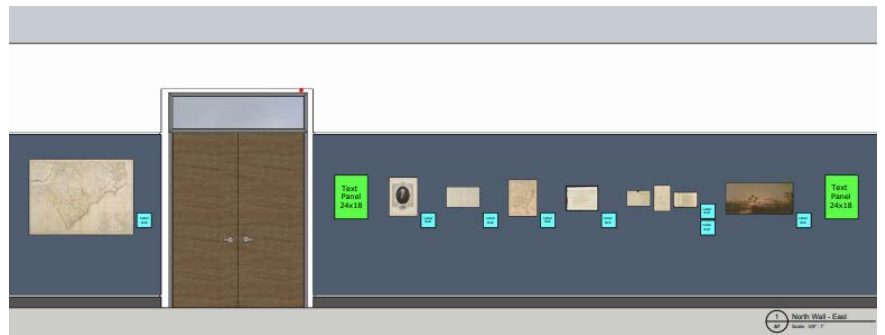
2526.2437

As a boy Archibald Loudon moved with his family to the lower Susquehanna Valley where he witnessed multiple Native attacks. They eventually fled their home to safety across the Appalachian Mountains. These memories stayed with Loudon, who came of age during the American Revolution and fought for the Patriots against Loyalists and their Native allies. After the war, he settled in Carlisle, PA, and ran a printing business, where he collected and published stories of Native atrocities. According to Loudon, behind every “savage” was a British ally waiting to seek revenge on the new American republic.

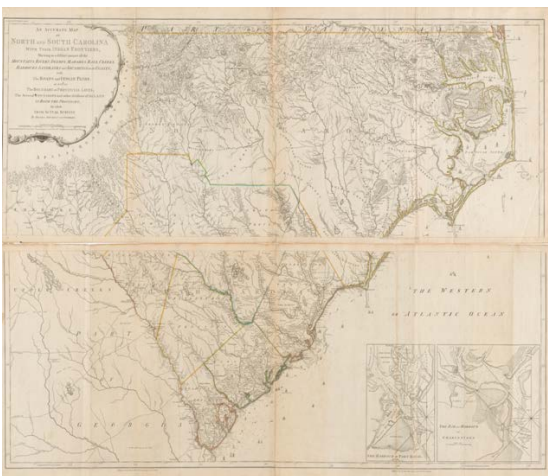
- **Talking Points:** Great Britain defined itself as the most civilized country in the world; civilization was the opposite of savagery, which was often equated with animal-like, brutalist behavior. British colonial settlers often defined themselves in opposition to the “savage” Indian, but in the context of the Revolutionary War, everyone was painted as a savage. American colonists referred to the British as “savages” because of their brutal war tactics and alliances with the “real” savages, Indigenous peoples (the fate of Jane Wells depicts a British/allied Indian attack on a New York settlement); Indigenous people like Logan referred to American settlers as savages for their cruel attacks on Indigenous communities; and the British called both Native peoples and the Americans savages for their uncouth, rustic lifestyles in comparison with the British gentry.
- “Merciless Indian Savages” is the phrase Thomas Jefferson used to describe Native peoples in the declaration. This dehumanizing phrase pointed to the violence between Native communities and American settlers, blamed King George III for the violence, and sought to stir up American colonists using familiar language.

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- **Stop 7: Native Land and Contested Boundaries** (North Wall – East Section)

- Text Panels
- Key Themes: Lands and Boundaries, Native Nations, Trade, Sovereignty, Management of Territory, Land Speculation, East and West Florida



- Items: Mouzon *An Accurate Map of North & South Carolina* (1775), Knight Thomas Jefferson (ca. 1870), John Stuart *A Plan for the Management of the Indians and Indian Affairs* (1764), James Adair, Esq. *A Map of the American Indian Nations* (c. 1740s), Survey of the Island of Tinian (1766), Order from Gov. Peter Chester in West Florida...Detailing Survey and layout of 5,000 acres of unclaimed land (1770), Land Warrant and Hand-Drawn Plat Map (1771), Heade *Florida River Scene*



Henry Mouzon, author

American, 1741–1807

Robert Sayer and John Bennett, publishers

London, 1775

An Accurate Map of North & South Carolina with their Indian Frontiers, 1775

engraving on paper

3976.553

American, British, and French forces relied on this map as they fought across colonial boundaries and Native lands. This large map held the most accurate picture of the Carolinas during the Revolutionary War. Drawn from land surveys, it includes many natural features. It also shows the territories of the Cherokee and Muscogee (Creek) and the trade paths connecting these Nations and the southeastern British colonies. The text at the bottom of the map shows it was published on May 30, 1775, around the time news spread abroad of the first major battle of the war, the Battle of Lexington and Concord.

Native Land and Contested Boundaries

After the French and Indian War, Great Britain gained a vast amount of territory, but the survival of its empire depended on strict land management, regulation of trading policies, and careful diplomacy with Indigenous nations. From 1763 to 1774, Britain tightened its imperial grip by surveying the newly acquired lands, which now stretched from Quebec down the Mississippi River (West Florida) to St. Augustine (East Florida).

To discourage westward settlement and avoid further conflict with Native peoples, the British drew boundaries, including the Proclamation Line of 1763, prohibiting land speculation west of the Appalachian Mountains. Imperial control clashed with the aspirations of colonists, like Thomas Jefferson, who hoped to profit from expansion. As violence spread along colonial borders, the British Empire struggled to placate settlers and maintain peace with Native peoples.

The Gilcrease collections narrate this territorial tug-of-war during the colonial and American Revolutionary periods. Maps, manuscripts, and artwork illustrate the Indigenous homelands in question and the imperial schemes for administering colonial boundaries.

T. W. Knight, engraver

British, active mid-19th century

Jean Pierre Bouch

French, 1765–1820

Thomas Jefferson, ca. 1870

engraving on paper

15.954

Few Americans know that the Founding Fathers, including Jefferson, made money in land speculation prior to the Revolution. Jefferson inherited over 11,000 acres when he married Martha Wayles in 1772. He hoped to enlarge his land holdings further, supporting several proposed treaties with the Cherokee and Shawnee Nations. But the British Proclamation Line of 1763 prohibited land speculation west of the Appalachian Mountains and thus stopped Jefferson and others from making money. Some historians argue that the crushing debt from failed land deals pressured the founders to declare independence so they could expand American settlements.



John Stuart

American, 1718–79

A Plan for the Management of the Indians and Indian Affairs in the Southern District of North America, c. 1764

ink on paper

4026.8364



In the wake of the Proclamation Line of 1763, this document offered a plan to centralize and control Native relations, trade, and land management. Colonial governments would no longer manage trade and Indian relations. Instead, the British Crown appointed superintendents, like Sir William Johnson and John Stuart, to oversee the Northern and Southern districts. Conflict between Native communities and colonial traders had long plagued British officials, and the hope was that greater imperial oversight would stabilize relations with Tribal Nations.

James Adair, Esq., author

American, c.1709–83

John Lodge, engraver and cartographer

British, 1735–96

A Map of the American Indian Nations Adjoining to the Mississippi, West & East Florida, Georgia, S & N Carolina, Virginia, &c., c. 1740s

in *The History of the American Indians...*, (London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1775)

ink on paper

2976.1324a



With support from Benjamin Franklin in 1774, James Adair's book and this accompanying map illustrated the vast presence of Indigenous Nations at the outset of the American Revolution. It is based on Adair's experiences as a deerskin trader who lived among the Chickasaw and Cherokee Nations. Adair offered advice to British policy makers regarding trade in Southeastern Native territories. Gaze west of the Allegheny and Appalachian Mountain ranges on the map, and you will see many Tribal Nation names and places taken from Adair's understanding of Indigenous languages.



Unrecorded maker

British

Survey of the Island of Tinian in the River St. John in East Florida, 1766

pen and ink with hand coloring

3976.565

When the 1763 Treaty of Paris awarded Spanish lands in “East Florida” to Great Britain, British aristocrats quickly moved in to claim land in the region. This survey of the St. John’s River region helped establish several tracts for plantation agriculture. Lord Adam Gordon, a British army officer, claimed Tinian Island and founded the “East Florida Society of London” at Shakespeare’s Head Tavern to encourage British settlement. The region was the longtime home of the Timucua people. The key on the right includes “Spaldin(g) Upper Store,” which was a trading post that did brisk business with the Muscogee and Seminole Tribes.

Peter Chester

British, 1720–99

Order from Gov. Peter Chester in West Florida to Elias Durnford, Surveyor General. Detailing survey and layout of 5,000 acres of unclaimed land for Edward Mease, October 24, 1770

Sir Frederick Haldimand Papers

ink on paper

4026.5109

England jockeyed for power with Indigenous Nations and Spain, which still controlled the vibrant port of New Orleans. As the political conflict intensified in 1775, Chester promised land grants in West Florida to Loyalists who swore allegiance to the Crown. As this grant shows, Chester recognized Native land rights and deemed these areas off limits for British settlement. Chester also urged British forces to protect the port of Pensacola, noting that it was the only way to import the trade goods needed to maintain Indigenous alliances, which were crucial to Britain’s ability to fight the revolution.





Unrecorded maker

American

Land warrant and hand-drawn plat map signed by Governor Peter Chester in favor of Edward Mease, April 23, 1771

Sir Frederick Haldimand Papers

ink on paper

4026.5110

Controlling lands became a necessity for the British Crown following the French and Indian War. From 1764 through 1775, land surveyors swarmed across Native territories mapping the territories and boundaries beyond the thirteen mainland British American colonies. This massive project was called the "General Survey of British North America." Peter Chester, the governor of West Florida, commissioned surveys along the Mississippi River to create detailed maps. This hand-drawn map highlighted the natural features of the assigned land. Land grants were given as political favors to help populate the area and gain access to Indigenous trade routes.



Martin Johnson Heade

American, 1819–1904

Florida River Scene, 1883–1904

oil on canvas

01.2317



The swamps of northeast Florida were contested lands during and after the American Revolution. Following stewardship by the Timucua people, this region changed hands between Spain and Great Britain several times before its purchase by the US in 1821. The construction of railroads in the 1880s attracted tourists and developers to Florida and threatened its ecosystem. After moving to St. Augustine in 1883, painter Martin Johnson Heade advocated for the landscape's preservation through his artworks and with articles, citing the sustainable hunting and land management practices of local Indigenous tribes.

- **Talking Points:**

- Land, boundaries, and territory was central to conflict leading up to and during the American Revolution. The large Mouzon map is a transition point that illustrates the convergence of colonial boundaries and Native territories. Colonial boundary lines intersect the names and trade paths of Native Nations on the map, including the Cherokee and Muscogee (Creek) Nations. The reality of Indigenous presence in these lands was undeniable. This map was drawn from land surveys, which increased across the American colonies from 1764-1775.
- Thomas Jefferson had strong interests in land speculation, and his financial standing motivated him and other founding fathers toward revolution. His western land grants conflicted with treaties agreed between Tribes, like the Cherokee Nation and Great Britain.
- The Proclamation Line of 1763 was Great Britain's attempt to stave off further westward settlement of Native lands and avoid costly conflict between settlers and Native communities. Land companies were restricted from issuing land grants beyond the line. Described by land grant companies as "unjust" and "tyrannical."
- The "Map of the American Indian Nations" illustrated the vast presence of Indigenous Nations in the southeast. James Adair's account, while biased, is still valued by Chickasaw people for its information about Chickasaw culture and language. <https://www.chickasaw.tv/profiles/james-adair-profile>
- Florida doesn't always come to mind when people think about the American Revolution. Florida seems peripheral when we look at the 13 colonies. But when we consider that Britain's colonies extended from Canada to the Caribbean, Florida was the center. East and West Florida were mainland America's 14th and 15th colonies that remained loyal to Great Britain. They became a refuge for fleeing Loyalists, a vital stronghold for the British Empire, and strategic site for Britain's war effort. Much of this strategy depended on land management and strategic alliances with southeastern Indigenous Nations. Many of the documents here relate to Britain's attempts to manage land and alliances.

The Journey Ahead

When Thomas Gilcrease first visited the Freedom Train and began assembling his collection, many Americans did not enjoy the liberties described in the Declaration of Independence. Non-white citizens were routinely denied their rights, while centuries of broken treaties limited Tribal sovereignty, issues that reverberate today. Since the earliest days of colonization, the continent's Indigenous communities have asserted their stewardship over stolen land, while demanding self-determination in language and governance. Transnational reclamation movements such as LandBack represent the "long legacy of organizing and sacrifice to get Indigenous Lands back into Indigenous hands" (landback.org). Tribal governments and Native communities, activists, and artists advocate for justice on Native land throughout Oklahoma and beyond.

Thomas Gilcrease's vision for his museum was born out of a conviction that Native American history *is* American history. On the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Gilcrease's collection reminds us that our national life is inextricably tied to Native America.

Suggested Readings (all available at TU library)

Blackhawk, Ned. *The Rediscovery of America: Native Peoples and the Unmaking of U.S. History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023.

Calloway, Colin G. *The Indian World of George Washington: The First President, the First Americans, and the Birth of the Nation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Holton, Woody. *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia*. Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 1999.

Kenny, Kevin. *Peaceable Kingdom Lost: The Paxton Boys and the Destruction of William Penn's Holy Experiment*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

We will have four documents on view in the Reading Room on the public viewing dates. They include:

Silas Deane, scribe and signatory

American, 1737–1789

Benjamin Franklin, signatory

American, 1706–1790

A True Copy of the Original Declaration of Independence, 1777

ink on paper

4026.901

George Washington

American, 1732–1799

Address to Delaware Nation, May 12, 1779

ink on paper

4026.8413

In 1778, American colonists signed a treaty with the Lenape (Delaware) for aid during the Revolutionary War. When the promises to honor Lenape lands were ignored, the tribe appealed to Congress, proposing a memorial to reaffirm friendship. In this speech, George Washington responds, “I will do everything in my power to prevent your receiving any further injuries.” Nonetheless, the pattern of broken promises by the US continued.

Joseph Warren, signatory

American, 1741–1775

Paul Revere Certification, April 29, 1775

ink on paper

4026.900

This note certifies Paul Revere as a member of a Committee of Safety, one of many local groups authorized by the Continental Congress to replace British authorities and govern the colonies prior to the Declaration of Independence. Dr. Joseph Warren served as the Chair of the Massachusetts Committee of Safety.

Thomas Jefferson, author

American, 1743–1826

Letter to William Fleming, July 1, 1776

ink on paper

3826.71

Note the date of the letter. Towards the end, Jefferson writes: “If any doubt has arisen as to me, my country will have my political creed in the form of a ‘Declaration &c.’ which I was lately directed to draw. This will give decisive proof that my own sentiment concurred with the vote they instructed us to give.”