



HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WESTERN VIRGINIA
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Virginia's History is America's Story

As the country prepares for the 250th anniversary of American Independence, a revolution of ideas began deep in Southwest Virginia a few years earlier, spurring other counties and colonies to follow the example of the Continental Congress. Its Articles of Association condemning Great Britain's Intolerable Acts motivated 15 Virginia frontiersmen to endorse the Fincastle Resolutions on January 20, 1775, lighting the torch for liberty and kindling the spark for the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

The Historical Society of Western Virginia, partnering with the Fincastle Resolutions chapter of the SAR, proposes to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Fincastle Resolutions through three new exhibitions, educational programming relating to 18th century voices, and a series of celebrations to occur on January 18, 2025, commencing Virginia's 250th Revolution commemoration.

Virginia's Valley: Leader in Liberty

Southwest Virginia has a very different story of settlement when placed alongside Jamestown and Williamsburg in the context of Virginia's history. An uncultivated wilderness surrounded by inaccessible mountains, settlers of German, Dutch, and Ulster Scot descent developed Virginia's frontier after a long migration south from Pennsylvania via the Great Wagon Road. Combining an escape from religious persecution with economic opportunities, the frontier attracted rugged individuals with diverse religious, class, and geographic backgrounds. The increasing quest for land encroached upon the Indigenous tribes, creating tension that led to innumerable skirmishes, the French and Indian War in 1758, and Lord Dunmore's War in 1774. Soon after the war, seeds of discontent with the British crown led to the establishment of the Fincastle Resolutions, the first in a second wave of resolves resisting British rule over the thirteen colonies. From colonization to the Declaration, follow Virginia's frontier history and its role at the dawn of the American Revolution.

This War Has Come From Robbery: The Fate of the Native Americans in the Revolution

Incorporating the modern voices of representatives of the Shawnee and Cherokee tribes, both residents of Southwest Virginia at the time of the American Revolution, *This War Has Come from Robbery* explores the consequences of the colonists' quest for Independence on the Native peoples. The increasing demands for westward expansion into Indigenous lands led to untold bloodshed, displaced tribes, and a dependence on European goods to survive. When war arrived, Native Americans were forced to choose: fight for the crown, remain neutral, or fight on the side of the colonies. Each side presented issues that were wholly different than that of the colonists, and no matter their decision – loyalist, neutral, or patriot – Indians from all tribes were abandoned and betrayed by both Americans and the British after the war. Hear the story of the Revolution from their point of view, learn the repercussions of an American victory, and combat the European bias with our country's earliest history.

Stand of Colours

A physical representation of the sacrifices made during the colonists' quest for Independence, the exhibition of the Stand of Colours includes around 60 honorary flags from the 13 colonies, their French allies, as well as flags from Virginia battalions. Interactives utilizing mobile and touchpad technology will enrich the exhibition with additional content comprised of full flag photographs, their specific uses, first-hand accounts in battle, along with their significance today.

Educational Programming

In addition to exhibitions at the Historical Society, which is conveniently located with Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge in the historic NW passenger station across from Hotel Roanoke, we plan to create a series of educational in museum and outreach programming that will enhance the exhibition. Programs on dance, music, card games, food ways, and artisan workshops will provide a look at life on the 18th century frontier for Europeans, Native Americans, Enslaved, Indentured, and Free Blacks, while a lecture series will allow visitors to delve deeper into the history of specific points during the conflict. Educational outreach will focus on creating trunk programs for the Roanoke City and County school systems, allowing greater accessibility for teachers to local resources, including primary source material, activities, and lesson plans. The museum will create two teacher professional development programs, and will schedule fieldtrips to the VA250 mobile museum while at the Historical Society in January 2025. Additionally, the Museum plans to host a juried open call exhibition on the theme "A Revolution of Ideas" in partnership with the Roanoke Regional Airport Commission and the Roanoke Arts Commission. This exhibit will be on display in the Roanoke/Blacksburg Regional Airport from January – July 2025.

Partners

