

American Independence Tour



The Mission House

STOCKBRIDGE

Only days after the first shots were fired in Concord, the Mohican men of Stockbridge answered the patriotic call to arms. They served as scouts and warriors at Bunker Hill, Bennington, Ticonderoga, Saratoga, and across the northeast. General George Washington honored their service by sponsoring an ox roast in Stockbridge in 1783. Before and during the war, Native community members—including these veterans—were stripped of their land rights, forcing many to move away from their homeland. Today, the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians is telling their own story, in their own words, on their ancestral land through ongoing exhibitions at The Mission House.



The Colonel John Ashley House

SHEFFIELD

A precursor to the Declaration of Independence—the Sheffield Resolves—is believed to have been drafted in this home in 1773 with Col. Ashley moderating. He later financially backed the Continental Army while his son fought as a colonel with the 1st Berkshire Regiment. When Massachusetts ratified its new Constitution in 1780, Elizabeth Freeman—who was enslaved by the Ashleys—drew upon its revolutionary language to sue for her freedom, paving the way for the end of slavery throughout the state. Learn more about her life and legacy when visiting this historic home.

Chesterfield Gorge

CHESTERFIELD

6,000 British soldiers marched across this gorge along the old post road connecting Albany, New York to Boston after General John Burgoyne's defeat at Saratoga in October 1777. The bridge used during their journey was swept away by floodwaters in 1835, but its stone abutments are still visible today.



The Old Manse

CONCORD

The first shots of the American Revolution rang out at the Old North Bridge on April 19, 1775, only a few hundred feet from this home. Owned by influential minister Reverend William Emerson and his wife Phebe Bliss, many sermons championing liberty and independence from Great Britain were penned within these walls. The Emerson and Bliss families also embodied a contradiction at the heart of the Revolution: the fight for freedom and the perpetuation of slavery. The lives of Cate, Phyllis, and Frank who were enslaved here around the time of the Revolution illustrate this disjunction. Thanks to new research and partnerships with historic organizations around Concord, their stories continue to be uncovered.

Charles W. Ward Reservation

ANDOVER & NORTH ANDOVER

The focal point of this sprawling landscape is 420-foot-tall Holt Hill, the highest point in Essex County. On June 17, 1775, townspeople climbed to the top of the hill to watch the burning of Charlestown during the Battle of Bunker Hill. Visitors can hike to this same vantage point today for views of the Merrimack Valley and the Boston skyline.



Appleton Farms

HAMILTON & IPSWICH

Established in 1638 by one of the country's founding families, this farm was split into two acreages operated separately by cousins Isaac and Oliver Appleton during the American Revolution. Their work included hauling

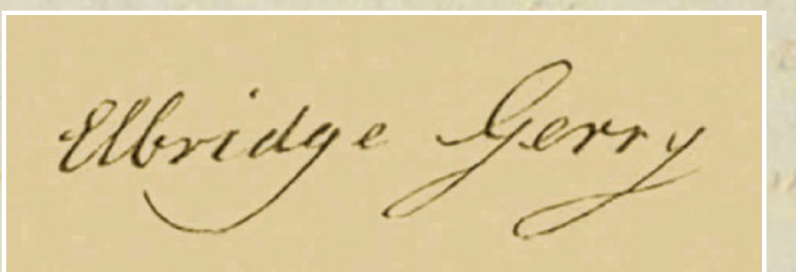


hay, cutting thatch, sawing wood, and selling posts and rails. Wander the trails around this working farm—one of the oldest continually operating in America—and stop by the Farmhouse, which stood in this same spot through the war and now reflects generations of change and fascinating history.

Gerry Island

MARBLEHEAD

Walk across at low tide or journey by watercraft to this island once owned by Thomas Gerry, whose son Elbridge Gerry grew up to be a signer of the Declaration of Independence, delegate to the 1787 Constitutional Convention (where he helped draft the Bill of Rights), Governor of the Commonwealth, and Vice President of the United States under President James Madison.



Holmes Reservation

PLYMOUTH

Wander the grassy field used as a “Muster Ground” by Plymouth farmers in the militia to assemble and train colonial Minutemen companies in the lead-up to the Revolutionary War.

