

January – March 2026

Museum Receives \$25,000 Grant



The Plymouth Historical Museum is receiving a \$25,000 grant from the America250MI Grant program! The grant will be used by the Museum to create “Plymouth-Canton-Northville (PCN): A Shared

Regional History” in collaboration with Northville Historical Society & Mill Race Village, Plymouth Township, and Canton Township. The Museum has a complimentary grant from the former Relentless Care Foundation, now the Orsa Foundation, to help with technology costs.

“Plymouth-Canton-Northville (PCN): A Shared Regional History” brings together local historical societies to collectively interpret how a single historic super township—an early township that later divided into multiple municipalities—gave rise to the modern communities of Plymouth Township, the City of Plymouth, Canton Township, Northville Township, and the City of Northville.

The project is intentionally designed so that history can be encountered in segments across the region, while the complete story is brought together at the Plymouth Historical Museum. At historic sites throughout the communities, visitors can watch site-specific video stories on their mobile devices via QR code activation. These video stories are designed to stand on their own, offering meaningful interpretation tied to place.

At the Museum, these individual stories are woven into a comprehensive regional narrative through Plymouth’s Portal to the Past, a new exhibit space located there. Accessed through a prominent brick

archway on the main floor, the portal functions as both a physical and conceptual gateway, orienting visitors to how individual community histories fit within a larger regional story.

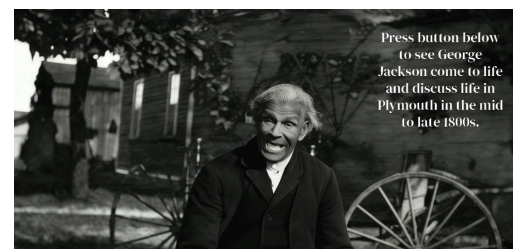
Visitors will encounter a gallery-style environment featuring historic portraits and scenes that visually support the video stories presented on the main display. Selected historical figures will be introduced in coordination with the video narrative, while animated maps and historic imagery will help visitors visualize change across time and geography.

Work has begun on research for this project, guided by Museum Executive Director Liz Kerstens and Museum volunteers and historians Doug Willett and Ellen Elliott. The goal is to have the exhibit space ready in the fall of 2026.



Part I: 1776-1900

If you’re curious about the videos discussed in the announcement above, you can see our first foray into Artificial Intelligence and Augmented Reality in the Museum’s new permanent exhibit about George Jackson.



Plymouth Historical Museum
155 South Main Street
Plymouth, Michigan 48170
<http://www.plymouthhistory.org>
<http://www.facebook.com/plymouthhistory>
734-455-8940 Fax: 734-455-7797

Hours

Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday
 1-4 PM all days
 Open year round (except holidays)

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Elizabeth Kerstens, director@plymouthhistory.org

The Newsletter is printed four times a year.

Monthly Drawing

Volunteers Anna Benyo, Avani Saraiya, and Judy Sameck are the respective winners of the drawings for a \$25 gift certificate for January, February, and March.

Did You Know?

If you are age 70½ or older, you may be able to make a gift to the Museum directly from your IRA and receive a tax benefit — even if you do not itemize deductions on your tax return.

Under Internal Revenue Code 408(d)(8), a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) allows you to transfer funds directly from your IRA to a qualified charitable organization. When done properly, the amount given is excluded from your taxable income.

This means you can support the Museum while potentially:

- Reducing your taxable income
- Lowering the tax impact on Social Security benefits
- Helping avoid higher Medicare premium brackets

A QCD can also count toward your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) if you are required to take one.

You may transfer up to \$111,000 per year from your IRA through a QCD. Married couples with separate IRAs may each make their own qualified distribution.

To qualify, the funds must be sent directly from your IRA custodian to the Museum.

If you are interested in using a QCD to support the Museum’s Building Fund, please consult your tax advisor or financial professional.

Welcome New Members!

- Jan Artushin, Bloomfield Hills
- Mark R. Childs, Plymouth
- Linda Christopher, Plymouth
- Susan Cook, Plymouth
- Stella Delap, Plymouth
- Laura Elder, Plymouth
- Sara Hochstein, Plymouth
- Benjamin Hutko, Plymouth
- Ali (AJ) Jawad, Plymouth
- Jennifer Lauer, Canton
- Christen Lesko-Brown, Livonia
- Cheryl Piziali, Farmington Hills
- Linda Reeves, Plymouth
- Carla Spradlin, Plymouth
- Joe White, Plymouth



June 7, 1776



On June 7, 2026, Plymouth will celebrate the 250th anniversary of Richard Henry Lee's Resolution to the Second Continental Congress that proposed independence from England. The resolution was the precursor to the Declaration of Independence.

Our celebration will take place in the parking lot area on Church Street adjacent to the Plymouth Historical Museum between 1 and 4 PM. The focal point of the celebration will be a performance by the Plymouth Fife and Drum Corps, sponsored by the Sarah Ann Cochrane Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution.

Richard Henry Lee will be onsite to read his

resolution, accompanied by other contemporary colonials including Martha Washington, our country's first First Lady.

Colonial demonstrations will take place outside the Museum, including candlemaking, colonial cooking, knitting, and quilting. A food truck will be available for those hungry for modern food.

This event and the Plymouth Historical Museum are **free and open to the public** on June 7, 2026, 1-4 PM. Don't miss the celebration!



The Dressmaker's Shop

By Laura Elder, Marketing Specialist

Step back in time and imagine preparing for the day in a Victorian shop. This carefully arranged dressing room display offers a window into the daily rituals of the late 19th century.

The focal point of the room features a lady at her table. The mirror, delicate lace garments, and personal accessories reflect the attention to appearance that was expected in Victorian society. Women often spent considerable time arranging their hair, fastening intricate garments, and preparing themselves for the day ahead.

Nearby stands other beautifully detailed dresses. Clothing of this era was both fashionable and highly decorative. The warm lighting from the hanging lamp and the floral wallpaper help recreate the cozy—yet refined—atmosphere of the shop.

Displays like this allow visitors to imagine not just what people wore, but how they lived. From the quiet moments spent getting ready in the morning to the social expectations of the day, the dressing room tells a story of daily life more than a century ago.

When you visit the museum, take a moment to really study the details. Each garment, piece of furniture, and accessory helps bring the past to life.

Collection Treasures

By Marissa Warren, Archivist

Copper Foot Warmer

Before the invention of convenient heated mattress pads and blankets, there were other methods for warming up the bed for the night. The top of this 1930s piece would be unscrewed and filled with heated water before being placed under the covers to have it comfortable in time for bed. It was also used outside of bedtime, offering a warm spot to rest any cold feet. While safer than other warmers that used coals, these warmers aren't without their hazards however, as touching the hot surface without protection can burn the skin. Electric alternatives have replaced and lessened the danger, but



this remains an option for any time the power is out.

1908 Sears, Roebuck & Company Catalogue

Anything from grand pianos to shoes to memorial monuments, this catalogue from 1908 shows off the massive variety of products offered by Sears, Roebuck & Company. Originally a mail order service before expanding to physical stores, the company used these thick catalogues to showcase the countless goods. The full catalogues easily began surpassing 500 pages starting in the 1890s, a necessary length to cover departments ranging from simple household goods like toys and clothing to larger purchases like carriages and windmills. This book not only shows off the popular items of the time, but can still be used to help identify the products using the detailed descriptions and sketches.



backyard view from the Draper home in Plymouth. While we had incredible photos of the interior of the home, on the exterior we only had a partial view of the contemporary swing set that was next to the house (above). In order to show our digital designer what the swing set actually looked like, we turned to the 1918 Sears Catalog (left). The final product, with the swing and the Penniman home in the background, is below.



Editor's Note: When we were creating the Victorian Home exhibit in 2024, we wanted to put up wallpaper outside the home that looked like the

A Tax Smart Way to Support the Museum — Even If You Don't Itemize Your Taxes

By Jim Sullivan, CPA

Many taxpayers today claim the standard deduction rather than itemizing deductions. While this simplifies tax filing, it also means that many charitable donations no longer produce a direct tax deduction. Fortunately, there is an important exception that can allow certain donors to support the causes they care about while still receiving a meaningful tax benefit. The strategy is called a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) and is authorized under Internal Revenue Code §408(d)(8).

If you are age 70½ or older and have an IRA account, you may transfer funds directly from your Individual Retirement Account (IRA) to a qualified charitable organization such as the **Plymouth Historical Society** (the official name for donations). When this transfer is done properly, the amount given to charity is excluded from your adjusted gross and taxable income, even if you take the standard deduction.

This is a powerful tax planning tool. Normally, withdrawals from an IRA are taxable. However, when the distribution goes directly from the IRA custodian to the charity, the amount is not included in your adjusted gross income (AGI) (**which gives Michigan residents a double tax benefit**). For many retirees, reducing AGI can provide additional benefits such as lowering the taxable portion of Social Security benefits or helping avoid higher Medicare premium brackets.

QCDs can also help satisfy Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) for individuals who must begin

taking withdrawals from their retirement accounts. In effect, donors can meet their required distribution while simultaneously supporting the Museum.

Currently, individuals may transfer up to \$111,000 per year (2026 limit, indexed for inflation) from an IRA to qualified charities through QCDs. Married couples with separate IRAs may each make their own QCD.

There are a couple key rules however:

- The donor must be of RMD age or older,
- The funds must come from an IRA, and the transfer must be made **directly** from the IRA custodian to the charitable organization. If the funds are first paid to the account holder and then donated, the tax benefit is lost.

For supporters of the Museum, this presents a particularly meaningful opportunity. A QCD allows donors to use a portion of their retirement savings to help preserve and strengthen the Museum for future generations — while also receiving a valuable tax advantage.

Gifts made through a QCD can be directed toward the Museum's Building Fund, helping ensure that the facility continues to serve as a place where history, culture, and community come together.

If you are age 70½ or older and planning your charitable giving this year, consider speaking with your tax advisor or financial professional about using a Qualified Charitable Distribution. It is a simple, tax-efficient way to make a lasting impact while supporting the Museum's future.

Ticket Sale Dates for Upcoming Events

Date	Event	Members	Public
April 25	Ghosts of Plymouth Walk	Now	Now
May 3	Princess & Pirate Tea	Now	Now
May 17	Wilcox House Tour	Now	March 30
June 13	Murder Mystery	April 6	April 20
June 30	Members-only Preview	May 1	
August 16	Wilcox House Tour	June 15	June 29

HISTORY

The Road to Statehood

Historical Museum spotlights state's – and country's – history in 2026

By Elizabeth Kerstens and Ellen Elliott

PERHAPS the two most influential events that impacted the settlement of Michigan Territory were the enactment of the Land Act of 1820 and the opening of the Erie Canal. Prior to 1820, federal land sold for \$2 per acre with a minimum purchase of 160 acres. When Congress passed the Land Act on April 24, 1820, the price per acre was reduced to \$1.25 cash with a minimum 80-acre purchase.

After eight years of construction between Albany and Buffalo, New York, the Erie Canal opened in 1825. Travel time between the two cities was reduced from two weeks by stagecoach to five days by water. A direct water course was now available between the Atlantic Ocean and the Great Lakes, and allowed for more efficient migration all along the route.

These two events encouraged early Plymouth settlers to make the arduous journey to Michigan to stake their claims. The Plymouth Township area was surveyed in 1815 and 1816; the first settler – Luther Lincoln – was issued his land patent on April 2, 1825, by the land office in Detroit.

Over the next decade, more settlers arrived, cleared the land, established homes, and built



infrastructure. Homesteaders also benefited from industrious neighbors who built grist and sawmills to process wheat and lumber as early as 1826.



On January 26, 1837, Michigan became the 26th state to enter the union. By that time, Plymouth Township was flourishing with a population of 2,246. Plymouth village consisted of “a post office, a presbyterian church, 5 stores, a banking association, 3 taverns, a druggist, a lawyer, and 3 physicians,” according to the 1838 Gazetteer of the State of Michigan.

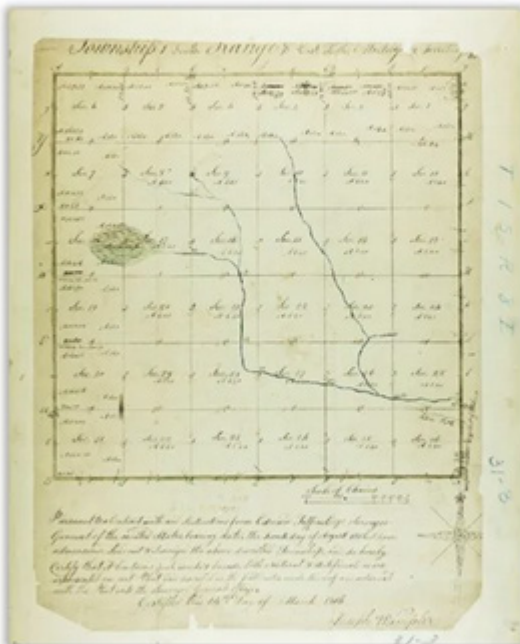
The community benefited from a state road that passed through the village from Detroit to Ann Arbor. To ease the difficulties of transportation, the Michigan legislature passed an act in March 1837 incorporating the Detroit, Plymouth and Ann Arbor Turnpike, or Timber Road Company. By 1850 there were four toll gates along that route, including one in the north part of the village of Plymouth.

At statehood, the village population was 300. A viable financial institution was needed. The Wayne County Bank of Plymouth was organized on December 2, 1837. In March of that year, the state legislature passed “An Act to Organize and Regulate Banking Associations.”

There was great financial uncertainty in the early years of statehood. In January 1839, the state’s banking commissioners reported that the law was ineffective in punishing swindlers, so the legislature suspended it.

The Plymouth Historical Museum will spotlight Michigan history during 2026 with two special exhibits celebrating the 250th anniversary of the United States of America. The first will highlight the years 1776 to 1900; the second will focus on the years 1901 to 2026.

The Museum is located at 155 S. Main Street in Plymouth and is typically open Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday 1-4 p.m. Admission is \$7 for adults and \$3 for children 6-17.



Donations Received

December 2025 – February 2026

Thank you for the following generous donations that were received between December 2025 & February 2026:

The Dunning (\$2,500 or more)

Tim Joy
George Thompson

The Lincoln (\$1,000–\$2,499)

Bob & Margi Bake
James Burroughs
Kiwanis Club of Colonial Plymouth

The Starkweather (\$500–\$999)

Sally Fedus
Rita Furdak
Mayflower Enterprises

The Penniman (\$250–\$499)

Janet Chorkey
Fred Robinson

The Kellogg (\$100–\$249)

Guy Kenny
Vickie Krause
Andrea Selewski
Paul & Traci Sincock
Victor West
John Wilson

Under \$100

Holly Borrusch
Grace Colter
Lary Smith
Susan Stoney
Elsie Mae Trinka
Richard Walther

Sponsorships

Jackson Fund

James Burroughs (\$5,000)
Brian & Margaret Kidston (\$500)
Clark Chapin (\$100)
Lori Hemingway (\$100)
Adam Szymczak (\$100)
Emily Doubler (\$50)

America 250 (\$800)

Sarah Ann Cochrane Chapter, NSDAR

Plymouth Fair (\$2,000)

Blackwell Ford

Plymouth Ghosts (\$500)

Fox Hills Golf & Banquet Center
Schrader-Howell Funeral Home

Mary Todd (\$400)

Bank of Ann Arbor
Hock Family Dentistry
Plymouth-Canton Civitan Club

Family Fun (\$300)

Basket Kreations
Comparis on the Park
E & E Manufacturing
Rokit Digital Marketing
Taystee's Burgers

Calling All Volunteers and Educators!

Do you love local history, storytelling, or working with people of all ages? Our museum is looking for friendly volunteers and passionate teachers to help bring history to life. Opportunities include greeting visitors, assisting with events, leading educational programs, and supporting behind-the-scenes projects. Whether you have a few hours a month or more time to share, your talents can make a meaningful impact. Join us in preserving the past and inspiring future generations.

Please contact Janet Burns, volunteer coordinator, at 734-455-8940 x6 or bookkeeper@plymouthhistory.org.

Plymouth Historical Museum Board Candidates



Kathy Sullivan

Kathy has been proud to have served on the Museum Board for more than 10 years. After receiving her master's degree in library and information science from Wayne State University, she worked as a librarian at the Sladen Library in Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit.

She left the hospital to raise a son and daughter with her husband, Jim, in Plymouth Township. They are the current owners of the DownTown Pourhouse on Fralick. When not at the tavern or traveling to see her kids, she enjoys reading, photography, gardening, and is currently working on her second novel.



Doug Willett

Doug has been a Plymouth Township resident for 32 years and currently serves on the Plymouth Township Historic District Commission. He's married to Theresa and has two grown children—Adam, who is getting married this year,

and Sarah, who is expecting their first granddaughter, Summer, in April.

Doug has volunteered at many of the Museum's events in recent years, including Ghost Walks and open houses, often portraying historical characters.

He has worked closely with the executive director and staff to pursue new grant opportunities that will advance the Museum's technology initiatives. One project he's especially proud of is the A.I. George Jackson video featured in our latest exhibit.

In addition, he has developed and donated the Phoenix Database system to support research by interns and staff at the Museum. It's designed to help us better organize, connect, and explore our community's rich history—and to serve as both a foundation and an engine for future storytelling in powerful new ways.



Pam Yockey

My love of history has been a lifelong passion. Through 40 years of teaching in the Taylor Schools, a masters in Historical Preservation from Eastern Michigan University, 4 years with the Henry Ford, Greenfield Village, and an

extensive study of textiles and period clothing, I have continued to learn and absorb the nuances of the past. Past experiences with the Museum include Plymouth Historical Society Board president, vice president and secretary, Museum archivist, and participating in many Museum events. Over the past 25 years, I have had the opportunity of greeting and getting to know many like-minded Plymouth citizens who love and cherish this special part of Plymouth history.

Nominations for candidates for the Board of Directors per the Bylaws

- "Candidates must be members in good standing of the Society on or by the deadline for nominations and maintain their membership throughout their term.
- "Employees and immediate family members of employees and the then acting Directors may not serve as Directors.
- "Members may not be nominated for office unless they have given their consent and agree to serve if elected."

2026 Board Elections

This year, the Museum will be mailing out ballots to all members within the next couple of weeks. We must have at least 5 percent of the active membership casting ballots, according to our Bylaws.

As a member, you have a right to vote. Please return your ballot in the envelope provided before the deadline, so you can elect your next Board of Directors. Your participation is appreciated!



155 S. Main St, Plymouth, MI 48170
734-455-8940 ext 0

STARTING LOCATION:
Kellogg Park
Downtown Plymouth, MI

TICKETS PER PERSON:
\$20 in advance;
\$25 on April 25

VISIT, CALL, OR SCAN :
plymouthhistory.org
734-455-8940



The Plymouth Historical Museum presents historic figures from Plymouth's past in:

GHOSTS OF PLYMOUTH Walking Tour

~ Hear the tales of early Plymouth from the characters themselves. ~

Saturday, April 25, 2026

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS:

- First walk is at 5pm. Last walk is at 7pm.
- Locations are along Ann Arbor Trail.
- Walks head out every 15 minutes.
- Tours last up to 90 minutes.
- This event runs rain or shine!
- Wear walking shoes!

For more information, please visit: plymouthhistory.org/events/upcoming-events



Sunday, May 3 12:00-2:00pm

Step into a storybook afternoon at our Princess and Pirate Tea!
Enjoy light refreshments, themed activities, and picture opportunities
with our princess and pirate at the Plymouth Historical Museum.

The fun includes:

- Tea delicacies
- Make and take activities
- Kids encouraged to attend in costume
- Photo opportunities

Tickets are \$40 for one child
and an accompanying adult;
additional attendee is \$20.

Children must be accompanied
by an adult. Minimum age is 4.

Sponsored by:



155 S. Main Street | 734-455-8940 ext 0 | plymouthhistory.org

PHM Maintenance Crew 2025

The Maintenance Crew completed several major tasks in 2025 and assisted Mike Hoggard, the Facility Manager. Our stalwart crew included:

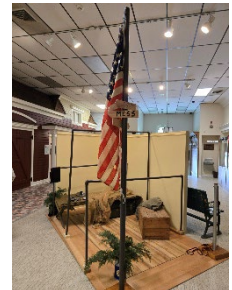
Lee Baker	Sal Cavallaro	Clark Chapin	Gregg Packard
Rick Schubatis	Bruce Tomlinson	Rich Walther	

Once again, we enjoyed each other’s company, swapped stories (most of which were true), and applied our individual talents to make the team work more smoothly.



- Since the opening of the current building, the maintenance room contained a retractable power cord on the ceiling. After 50 years, the retracting clutch mechanism wore out and we replaced the entire unit.

• Our next fabrication project was to construct a flagpole and tent frame for the “The Wars Over – Now What?” Exhibit. We used PVC tubing and on hand 2x4s to assemble the tent frame and flagpole. At the close of the exhibit, the tubing and fittings were disassembled and stored for further use or reassembly.



- During the year, we repaired a few of the Sanford Burr Meeting Room folding chairs with various threaded rods, screws, and vinyl seat coverings.



- In the spring, we fabricated a shadow box and mounted several of the Museum’s awards in the stairway leading to the lower level. During that time, we also installed several motion-sensitive switches in the kitchen and office to help reduce utility costs. This was complicated by the need to shield the switch sensors from movement in adjacent areas, but Rick Schubatis managed to fine tune the systems.

• We removed a Plymouth-built Dew Craft rowboat from a local barn, washed it to remove decades of barn dust, and moved it to the Museum to be part of the “The Fair That Changed America” exhibit.

- The various puzzles for the Escape Room needed repair from the stresses of frustrated participants. We attempted to make each puzzle more robust as part of each repair.



- We managed to fabricate a new base for one of the mannikins using on-hand materials, thus preserving the use of one of the older mannikins used for the various exhibits.

- In the office, we repaired the keyboard tray in the secretary’s desk.

- Sal Cavallaro reattached a finger and refurbished a mannikin hand. It was his first attempt at orthopedic surgery and was a success, or at least the patient didn’t complain.

- In July we demolished the old indoor caboose in preparation for a new exhibit. The largest single piece, the steel stairs, platform, and railing, were successfully sold on line. It gave us an opportunity to use several power tools and exhibit our primary skill: Taking big pieces of wood and making them smaller.



Caboose demolition during and after

- During the July shutdown, we disassembled and moved three large display cabinets near the office and store so that the underlying floor could be replaced. We also assisted in moving the Doll House and Trolley as well.

PHM Maintenance Crew 2025

- Sal and Rich kept the model train running by cleaning the track and replacing the traction tires. For improved reliability, they also added vibration dampening to the control box.
- As part of the “The Fair That Changed America” Exhibit, we fabricated a “body chute”. No hotel should be without one!
- Sal Cavallaro and Rich Walther helped repaint the Meeting Room closet wall where water damage had ruined the original paint.



- We repaired a marble top table for the Victorian House exhibit.

- In December when the camels were moved to the Kellogg Park nativity scene, we replaced them with the inflatable vinyl elephant that had been used previously. Unfortunately, we discovered that he had suffered a serious injury during storage and needed serious reconstructive surgery. Even



after the repair, he still had a leak that caused him to collapse at inopportune times, such as when the Museum was open for visitors. Luckily, Rick Schubatis was able to use his experience as a



physician (and his personal tools) to help us localize the leak.

- Sal Cavallaro and Bruce Tomlinson replaced some of the ceiling tiles in the kitchen after the replacement of the hot water heater in the ceiling(!). Luckily, we had more than enough spare tiles to accomplish the task.



- We rounded out the year on December 31, by dismantling an old hand-built mannikin that had been fabricated from pieces of wood, fiberglass insulation, steel strapping, and rubber sheeting. After recovering all of the materials that could be useful in the future, we transported him to the nearby dumpster.



Farewell to 2025

We are always looking for new members who are willing to share their experience and skills with us. We gather each Monday and Wednesday from 8:30-11:30 AM to swap stories as well as knowledge over a cup of coffee and a cookie or two.

Clark Chapin, Lee Baker, Sal Cavallaro, Gregg Packard, Rick Schubatis, Bruce Tomlinson, and Rich Walther

Friends of the Plymouth Historical Museum
155 S. Main Street
Plymouth, MI 48170

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Return Service Requested

Calendar of Events

Tickets can be found at <http://plymouthhistory.org/events/>.

April

25—**Ghosts of Plymouth Walk**, 5-7 PM. Tickets on sale now. <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/ghosts-of-plymouth-walk>

May

3—**Princess & Pirate Tea**, 12-2 PM. Tickets on sale. <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/princess-and-pirate-tea>

17—**Wilcox House Tour**, 1-4 PM. Tours start on the hour and last about 50 minutes. Tickets on sale to members now; on sale to public March 30. \$20 each.

June

7—**“The Call for Independence: America at 250!”**
1-4 PM. Free event and free admission. Plymouth Fife and Drum Corps performance; Colonial reenactors and demonstrations; Impasto Food Truck.

7—**Last day of “America 250: Part I—1776-1900.”**

8-30—**Museum closed for exhibit changeover.**

30—**Members-only Preview for “America 250: Part II—1900-2026,”** 6-8 PM.