

MUSEUM EXHIBIT SHARES HISTORY OF NORTH CAROLINA’S MOST LEGENDARY DOCUMENT, THE MECKLENBURG DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, ON ITS 250TH ANNIVERSARY

CHARLOTTE, N.C., April 11, 2025—Ever wondered why the date May 20, 1775, appears on North Carolina’s state flag, its state seal and even its license plates? Or why some North Carolina license plates say “First in Freedom”?

The newest exhibit at the Charlotte Museum of History—“Meck Dec 250”—answers these questions, explaining how the legendary Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, signed on May 20, 1775, became an important symbol in Charlotte and one of North Carolina’s claims to fame. The exhibit includes original documents and artifacts from the Revolutionary Period, modern Meck Dec memorabilia and an interactive diorama of Charlotte in 1775. The history museum also preserves and interprets the 1774 Rock House, Charlotte’s only remaining Revolutionary-era home, which visitors can tour as they learn about the Meck Dec and its role in the American Revolution.

“In many ways, Charlotte was at the center of Revolutionary activity, with locals proclaiming this region free and independent of Great Britain in May 1775, more than a full year before the national Declaration of Independence in July 1776,” said Nolan Dahm, exhibits manager at the Charlotte Museum of History and curator of the “Meck Dec 250” exhibit. “This exhibit explores the 250-year history of the Meck Dec and its impact on the Queen City.”

Over the years, the city of Charlotte commemorated Meck Dec Day on May 20 in ways big and small, from visits by presidents Taft, Wilson, Eisenhower and Ford to commemorative milk cartons and neckties. On major anniversaries like 1875 and 1975, tens of thousands of Charlotteans packed the streets for parades, reenactments, fireworks and public plays. In addition to dozens of souvenir Meck Dec items, this exhibit will feature never-before-seen footage from the 1975 celebrations and original musical recordings from the “Hornet’s Nest” play.

How to Go

The exhibit opens on Tuesday, May 20—the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Meck Dec—and runs through March 2026. Admission to the exhibit is included in the museum’s regular ticket price, which also includes a 2 p.m. guided tour of the 1774 Rock House. On Saturday, May 24, to celebrate the



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opening of the new exhibit, the museum will offer special Meck Dec-themed tours of the Rock House every hour from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. These tours are included in regular admission.

The Charlotte Museum of History exists to save and share the Charlotte region's history, helping create a better understanding of the past and inspiring dialogue about the future. The museum is the steward of the oldest home in Mecklenburg County, the [1774 Hezekiah Alexander Rock House and homesite](#), as well as the [historic Siloam School](#), both of which are on the National Register of Historic Places. Visit charlottemuseum.org and follow the museum on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). The museum is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

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