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## CELEBRATE THE LEGENDARY MECKDEC AT CHARLOTTE'S OLDEST HOME, THE 1774 ALEXANDER ROCK HOUSE

**CHARLOTTE, N.C., April 28, 2022** – Join The Charlotte Museum of History on Saturday, May 21, to celebrate Charlotte's most legendary moment—the signing of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence on May 20, 1775. Some historians say the MeckDec was America's original declaration of independence.

Events include a book talk with local author, Landis Wade; a reading of the MeckDec; an illustrated family book walk; a special guided tour of the 1774 Rock House and homesite and an 18th century cooking demonstration. All activities are included in the museum's regular admission price. More information and admission tickets at [charlottemuseum.org/events](http://charlottemuseum.org/events).

### **Schedule of Activities**

- **11 a.m.-2 p.m. – Foods of Resistance: 18<sup>th</sup> Century Cooking Demonstration.** Volunteer and educator Janet Wade will demonstrate 18th-century techniques, exploring recipes that enslaved people commonly made during the Revolutionary period and showing their connections to today's Southern cuisine and African food traditions.
- **11 a.m.-4 p.m. – Take an illustrated book walk and see what the 1774 Alexander homesite looked like on the eve of the American Revolution** through the eyes of Jenny, an eight-year-old enslaved girl who lived there at the time. Jenny's story, illustrated by local teacher and artist Devon Wilkinson, shares what she may have experienced living and working on the property. While the specifics of her story are fictionalized, Jenny's story is characteristic of many young African children who were born into slavery. On the illustrated walk, Jenny highlights moments in her daily life that involved people often left out of the historic Revolutionary

story: enslaved men, women and children, as well as a visiting group from the Catawba Indian Nation.

- **11:30 a.m. – Costumed interpreter Robert Ryals will read the MeckDec on the steps of Charlotte’s oldest standing home, the 1774 Alexander Rock House.**
- **12 p.m. – Author, podcaster and former attorney Landis Wade will talk about his latest book, “*Deadly Declarations*,” a fictional mystery set in Charlotte with the MeckDec at its center.**
- **2 p.m.-4 p.m. – Take a MeckDec-themed tour of the historic homesite with costumed interpreter Robert Ryals. You’ll visit the Rock House, kitchen, herb garden and springhouse. The tour ends with a ringing of the Freedom Bell.**

#### **About the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence**

The history of the MeckDec began soon after news of the battles of Lexington and Concord arrived in Charlotte Town (present-day Charlotte). The following day, on May 20, 1775, prominent civic leaders are said to have adopted The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence (MeckDec) – possibly the first declaration of independence in America. The MeckDec itself is steeped in mystery and controversy. There are no records of its publication before 1819, and many historians doubt it ever existed. But it is memorialized on North Carolina’s state flag and its state seal, where the date May 20, 1775, appears. There is no doubt about the existence of the MeckDec’s companion document, the Mecklenburg Resolves. A committee of local militia members adopted these “resolves,” or resolutions, and signed them on May 31, 1775. They were published in their entirety less than a month later in *The South Carolina Gazette*. They declared all royal authority suspended and laid out a plan for how Mecklenburg County would govern itself.

#### **About The Charlotte Museum of History**

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 1774 Hezekiah Alexander Rock House and homesite, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is the oldest home in Mecklenburg County. Visit [charlottemuseum.org](http://charlottemuseum.org) and follow the museum on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). The museum is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

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