



For Immediate Release

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PRESS RELEASE

Two New Exhibitions Open at Historic Deerfield's Flynt Center of Early New England Life

Historic Deerfield invites patrons to visit their modern museum facility for exhibitions of the art of James Wells Champney and a show highlighting the museum's recent acquisitions.

Deerfield, MA – Historic Deerfield, a museum of history, art, and architecture, is pleased to announce the opening of two new exhibitions this fall. These exhibitions delve into the artistic contributions of James Wells Champney and showcase recent additions to the museum's extensive collection. Both exhibitions are included with general admission to Historic Deerfield and will be up until February 23, 2025. The [Flynt Center of Early New England Life](#), located at 37 Old Main St. in Deerfield, is open Wednesdays-Sundays (and Monday holidays), from 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

[In Pursuit of the Picturesque: The Art of James Wells Champney](#) is on view at the Flynt Center of Early New England Life from August 31, 2024, to February 23, 2025. Through an array of paintings, pastels, photographs, and material culture, this exhibition takes a fresh perspective on the New England artist, James Wells Champney (1843-1903) and how he played a pivotal role in shaping late 19th-century perceptions of nostalgia and beauty. This exhibition explores how Champney drew upon different topics within American art, including sentimental genre scenes, paintings of Colonial Revival motifs, and pastels of idealized female models. While the artist was involved in several New York artistic communities, he also resided in Deerfield and continually returned to this New England setting for its bucolic scenes and landscapes. As he depicted the town and its colonial character, Champney would eventually become known as Deerfield's resident 19th-century artist.

The exhibition reexamines Champney and his work, particularly his involvement with the *picturesque*. In the late 19th century, audiences gravitated toward images of old New England, ones that emphasized an ideal past and rural settings as an escape from the harsh realities of modern life. With subjects evoking the simplicity of a bygone era, Champney helped promote the Colonial Revival movement and a fascination with 18th-century material

culture. Importantly, Elizabeth Williams Champney, a prolific young adult author whose collaborations with her husband have often been overlooked, is also incorporated into the narrative. The exhibition brings together a select group of Champney's artwork and associated materials from the collections of Historic Deerfield, surrounding institutions, and private collections.

[Building a Collection: Recent Acquisitions at Historic Deerfield](#) (on view at the Flynt Center of Early New England Life from September 28, 2024 to February 23, 2025) highlights recent additions to the museum's collection, including furniture, ceramics, metalwork, paintings, prints, textiles, and rare books. This exhibition provides insight into the museum's curatorial process and the stories these new acquisitions can tell about New England's rich material legacy.

Historic Deerfield possesses one of the premier public collections of decorative arts and architecture in America, with a focus on the material culture of the Connecticut River Valley. The museum utilizes its collections not only to tell the stories of daily life in Deerfield and the Valley from the early pre-settlement days of the 17th century to the Arts and Crafts period of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but also to foster experiences that create an understanding of New England's important material heritage and natural landscape. Through selective purchases and the generosity of donors, Historic Deerfield's collection continues to grow and becomes more inclusive in the types of stories it can tell.

To learn more about Historic Deerfield, visit the website, historic-deerfield.org.

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About Historic Deerfield. Historic Deerfield is a museum of early American life situated in an authentic 18th-century New England village in the Connecticut River Valley of Massachusetts. Historic Deerfield welcomes all to experience one of the best-preserved villages and rural landscapes in North America through dynamic encounters with the stories, cultures, and material worlds of those who have made New England home.