

**For more information about Princeton's role
during the Revolution**

We invite you to check out the website for the

Princeton Historical Society:

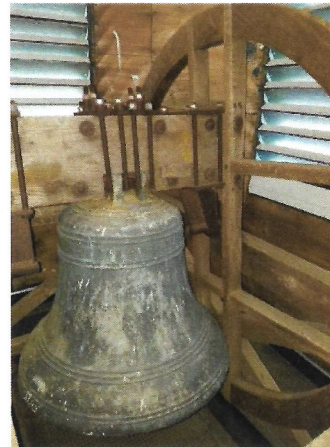
princetonmahistory.org



**The Bell in the Church spire was cast by
Paul Revere & Sons**



It was purchased by the Town in 1815 and first hung in the
Second Meetinghouse further up Mountain Road.



*Thank you for supporting civic learning and
historical inquiry.*



Date: Saturday, May 16, 2026

Time: 4:30 pm

Location: First Congregational Church
14 Mountain Road

*Declaring
Independence
Then & Now*

Hosted by:

Freedom's Way National Historic Area

Princeton Historical Society

Princeton Historic Commission

First Congregational Church

Welcome!

Thank you for joining *Declaring Independence — Then & Now*, a program exploring the actions taken in Massachusetts towns leading up to the *Declaration of Independence, July 4th, 1776* and the ongoing meaning of independence in American history and civic life today.

Declaring Independence — Then & Now was created over ten years ago for the Freedom's Way National Historic Area by public historian Mary Fuhrer and has been presented in many towns in the Commonwealth since. It is especially appropriate in 2026 as we celebrate 250 years of American independence.

Princeton is grateful for this opportunity to remember the small part our town played in the events leading up to that fateful act of renouncing the Colonies' subservience to the Crown.

The Historical Society, Historic Commission and First Church, as sponsors of this event, thank Freedom's Way, the program speakers, the Sons of the Revolution Colonel Henry Knox Artillery Regiment and **YOU** for attending and participating in today's activities.

Program

"A Toast to the Flag"

Musket volleys

Ringing of the Paul Revere & Sons Bell

Doors Open

Welcome & Opening Remarks

- Freedom's Way National Historic Area -
Desiree Demski-Hamelin
- Princeton Historical Society –
Nathaniel Gove
- Princeton Historic Commission –
Tom Kokernak
- First Congregational Church –
Jen LaBaire

Declaring Independence – Then & Now

- Moderator – Harry A Pape
- Re-enactor – Allan Van Wert
- Eagle Scout – Noah Maston
- New Citizen – Wilberth Condega Ortiz
- First Church – Jen LaBaire
- Historical Soc – Nathaniel Gove

Reading of the *Declaration of Independence*

Audience Q&A

Closing

Reception / Informal Discussion

- Fellowship Hall (downstairs)

Speakers

Harry A Pape – Town Moderator, Princeton Historical Society, First Church

Harry has been a town resident and a PHS Board member for 45 years. His tenure as elected Town Moderator began in 1989. Along the way he added Church Historian to his hat rack.

Allan Van Wert – SAR Col Henry Knox Artillery Company re-enactor

"Captain Al" is a descendant of Corporal Ebenezer Parker who fought at the Battle of Lexington. He lives in Leominster but we consider him Princeton's Minuteman.

Noah Maston – Eagle Scout

Noah grew up in town and has been active in Scouting since age 5 in Cub Scouts. He'll graduate from Monty Tech this month and plans to study Mechanical Engineering at UMass Lowell.

Wilberth Condega Ortiz – New Citizen

"Chulin" met his bride Laura Bisbee while she was in the Peace Corps in Nicaragua. He went through the arduous legal process for entering the United States and followed her back to Princeton where she grew up. He became a Citizen in 2023.

Jen LaBaire – First Congregational Church

Jen chairs the Church Council and has maintained a law practice focusing on criminal defense; ensuring fair and equal justice under the U.S. Constitution.

Nathaniel S Gove – Princeton Historical Society

A Board member of PHS and involved in the antique world for over 48 years: he is an Antiques Appraiser and Estate Consultant. A proud Swamp Yankee.