

The Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association

Deerfield, Massachusetts

2018

“Understanding the past creates better citizens and a better world.”

Official PVMA motto approved by the Board of Directors

I. Organizational History

The Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association (PVMA) was incorporated in 1870 with the goal of "memorializing" the past through public monuments and written histories. The PVMA quickly found that the community had a wealth of documents and artifacts "from the olden times" which could engage the interest of the public. PVMA began collecting donated items and opened Memorial Hall Museum and Library in 1880 in the original 1798 Deerfield Academy building, dedicating it in the words of Lincoln as, "of the people, by the people, for the people."



Collecting American material culture a generation before the elite cultural institutions of Boston and New York, PVMA emerged as a leader in the early antiquarian and Colonial Revival movements. The PVMA's early collections were an inspiration for the Deerfield Arts and Crafts Movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. PVMA now holds an unsurpassed regional collection of 70,000 documented objects and library materials spanning 12,000 years of history. These are invaluable resources from which to weave the story of New England and America – all but a small number of these items in the collections were donated by members of the community.

Professional staff was introduced in the 1970s. The organization then entered a period of sustained growth. The PVMA has matured into a regional museum with an expanded interest in the entire scope of American history, stretching from the Pocumtucks, the native peoples, to the early twentieth century migrations of Eastern Europeans, on to World War II and the Civil Rights Era, as "windows" into national and world history. The PVMA has broadened its audience to include both its diverse local population and a wide national audience.

PVMA programs include museums, library, cultural events, education, teacher professional development, on-line offerings, publishing, and historic preservation. Special initiatives on Eastern European and African American history have had significant community involvement. Education programs serve teachers and students in colleges and elementary and secondary schools. In 1998, PVMA created www.AmericanCenturies.mass.edu, an educational website for a national audience, which had over 1.3 million visitor sessions from throughout the country last year. PVMA opened its Teachers' Center in 2001. The Teachers' Center has partnered on nine U.S. Department of Education *Teaching American History* grants, providing extensive teacher professional development. The Center now hosts National Endowment for the Humanities Landmarks of American History and Culture projects.

The PVMA uses a wide range of media – broadcast media, newspapers, books, and the Internet – to reach national audiences. For example, the museum's award-winning book on the Allen Sisters' photography, featuring the museum's collections, was launched with a seven-venue traveling exhibit

which opened at Winterthur. A major website exhibit, *The Raid on Deerfield: The Many Stories of 1704* was launched along with an exhibit, and a week-long public radio series. In addition to its own fifteen publications, PVMA assists authors with research and photographs, reaching a vast national audience through publications ranging from the *William and Mary Quarterly* to *Yankee Magazine*.

II. Organizational Goals and Objectives

“Understanding the past creates better citizens and a better world.”

The *mission* of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association is to preserve and communicate the multi-cultural history of the Connecticut and Deerfield River Valleys, with emphasis on "old Hampshire County," present day Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden Counties. The PVMA collects, preserves, and exhibits cultural artifacts made and/or used in the region. These collections are maintained both for the education of the general public and as research tools for scholars.

To carry out its mission, the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association has the following specific goals:

- To collect materials from the region’s diverse communities.
- To preserve artifacts and information for future generations.
- To publish and disseminate research on the collections.
- To produce permanent and rotating interpretive exhibits designed to be approachable to its diverse audience.
- To provide both the community and scholars access to the collections on a regular schedule.
- To host public programs of an educational nature, with emphasis on elementary and secondary schools.
- To promote an interest in the history and art of this region.
- To widely communicate information on the collections through electronic and printed media.
- To engage the participation of the membership of the PVMA and the community in the above program.

Approved 1/12/94, by the PVMA Board of Directors.

The Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association’s goals and objectives are updated and focused through strategic long range planning. The first long-range plan grew out of recommendations of a 1984 Museum Assessment Project funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, a federal agency. It was adopted in 1985. A second plan was adopted in 1991, revamped and extended in 1997, and completed in 2000. In 2001, the PVMA adopted a (2001 – 2006) strategic plan, which was extended through 2007. A (2009-2013) plan was followed by the present (2015-2019) plan.

III. Programs and Services

PVMA provides programs in eight areas: Museums, Education, Teacher Professional Development, On-Line Programs, Library, Cultural Events, Historic Preservation, and Publishing.

1) Museums: Collections and exhibits are housed in the fully accessible **Memorial Hall Museum**, built in 1798 by Asher Benjamin, America’s first architect, as Deerfield Academy’s original building. Present holdings of 31,000 objects document the entire history of the region and include Native American objects, furniture, paintings, the Fuller Collection (representing five generations of one family of artists), photographs, textiles, musical instruments, pewter, glassware, tools, military items, spinning and weaving equipment, architectural fragments, and dolls and toys. A remarkable feature of the

collection is the depth of documentation of its objects within the curatorial files as well as inter-relation to the journals, newspapers, and manuscripts in the library, providing rich opportunities for engaging in explorations of major themes and events in our nation's history.

The permanent exhibits consist of period rooms, thematic displays, and the Native American Room which won a Best Exhibit award from the New England Museum Association. Interpretation is sensitive to multicultural perspectives, particularly the Native American experience, and reflects extensive research. Exhibits integrate a local focus with a scholarly interpretation from a global perspective. Audio tapes of first person perspectives of Native Americans and historical figures enliven the visitor's experience. Recent special exhibits included: **Frances and Mary Allen Photographs** (work of deaf, turn of the last century, women photographers); **The Farmed Landscape** (paintings of our rural landscape by members of five generations of the Fuller family); and **Slavery in Deerfield** (including a permanent memorial created by an African American artist). In 2014, "**Tools, Trades and Tasks: All Work and No Play?**" was the featured exhibit and in 2015 **Made of Thunder, Made of Glass II: American Indian Beadwork from the Northeast** (featuring a new art form created in the early 1800's by Native American entrepreneurs from their ancient tradition of porcupine quill and shell bead embroidery). There were three major exhibits in 2016: "**Relics and Curiosities**"; "**Children of Deerfield: Photographs by Frances and Mary Allen**"; and a reinstatement of three centuries of musical instruments in the Music room celebrating the 100th anniversary of the 1916 wing. "**Astronomy, Geology and Dino Tracks! Oh my!**" helped launch the **Impressions from a Lost World** website in 2017.

Skilled Hands and High Ideals: The Arts and Craft Movement in Deerfield is an example of a cross departmental exhibit-based project in 2013. This program strengthened PVMA's ability to serve its public more effectively by supporting an integrated array of educational, cultural, publication, and online offerings focused on the Deerfield Arts and Crafts movement. Deerfield played a leadership role in the American Arts and Crafts movement (1880 - 1920) which was concerned with the degrading condition of industrialized labor and an artistic ideology that encouraged useful arts, craftsmanship, honest materials, and simple harmonious designs. The Deerfield Arts and Crafts was largely a women's movement. Village women created objects of lasting beauty and influence which helped support their families. Its story is a fascinating window into the history of the era of women's suffrage, immigration, and industrialization. The Museum has unparalleled collections in this area including both the crafts – textiles, photography, rugs, baskets, ironwork, furniture, and paintings – as well as related items in its library collection – account books, journals, letters, diaries, and meeting minutes.



A **Children's Museum** was opened in 1998 utilizing the PMVA education center at Old Indian House which is open weekends August to October. It hosts hands-on activities for families as well as school group visits. The Children's Museum is one of the PVMA sites used for teacher trainings.

2) Education: "*If this is history...I like it!*" is how one local fifth grader reacted to one of our programs—and that is what we want to hear. PVMA works extensively with elementary and secondary educational institutions as well as with area colleges and teacher training programs. School programs

serve 124 schools in 30 school districts in the four western counties of Massachusetts, districts ranging from rural New England to inner-city Springfield. Popular programs for elementary students are held at PVMA. Children participate in hands on activities built around life in the late 17th, 18th, and early 19th centuries, as experienced both by settlers and Native Americans. Through many hands-on activities such as preparing a meal at a Colonial hearth the children's interest is engaged, and historical concepts are explored. History Lab programs bring this type of learning into classrooms. In-school presentations by museum staff in historic costume, such as *Immigration* and *World War II Homefront*, enliven history and engage students.

High school programs have included a Community Service Learning Project with students from our local high school. Their activities have included volunteering in the Museum's historic gardens, sewing costumes for children's hands-on history programs, and creating reproduction red ware pottery for use in the fireplace cookery program.

PVMA works closely with the Five Colleges (University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Hampshire, Smith, and Mount Holyoke Colleges), Williams College, and area community colleges. PVMA's resources are often integrated into college course work. PVMA has also offered a 3 credit graduate course at Westfield State University and is an UMASS approved internship site.

3) Teacher Professional Development: PVMA is a leader in teacher professional development. Over the past ten years we have provided in-depth training for over 1,000 teachers, many through nine US Department of Education *Teaching American History* projects partnering with schools throughout the region. The PVMA *Deerfield Teachers' Center* is centrally located in the historic district and is a hub of professional development. The Center is staffed with historians and offers a library of American history resources (books, CDs, DVDs, lesson plans, and classroom history kits). Our professional development stresses scholarship, education standards, pedagogy, inquiry-based learning using primary resources, and our region's history as a window into understanding American History. PVMA has been invited to present our model of professional development at many national education conferences. The Teachers' Center has hosted accredited Mass DOE Summer Institutes for educators.

4) The Library has evolved into a premier research facility. It is open weekdays, year round. Over 5,000 scholars, students, and community members use the facility each year. It holds approximately 40,000 items including 25,000 printed books and pamphlets and 900 linear feet of manuscripts, including many which are nationally significant. The collections represent to an extraordinary degree, the life and thought of this region from the close of the 17th century to the mid-20th century. Our library materials are the basis of many publications, such as John Demos' *The Unredeemed Captive* and Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina's *Mr. and Mrs. Prince*, the latest biography of Deerfield's most notable 18th century African American family--that of Lucy Terry Prince who wrote the first documented African American poetry in America.

5) Online Programs: PVMA has created four premier national websites of its own, *American Centuries: View from New England* (www.americancenturies.mass.edu); *Raid on Deerfield: The Many Stories of 1704* (www.1704.deerfield.history.museum); *The Arts & Crafts Moment in Deerfield* (www.artscrafts-deerfield.org); and *Impressions from a Lost World* (dinotracksdiscovery.org), which launched in 2017 and is the story of the discovery of dinosaur tracks in New England in the mid-19th century. These websites had nearly a million visitor sessions last year. PVMA also collaborated on a national website, *Shays' Rebellion and the Making of a Nation: From Revolution to Constitution*, in partnership with Springfield Technical Community College (MA).

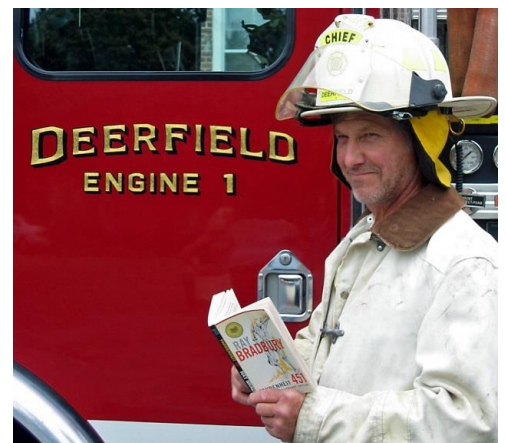
American Centuries is an award-winning national education website which features over 3,000 items from PVMA’s collections. The site includes a large digital library of primary resources and interactive activities presented in age-appropriate formats as well as exhibits, oral histories, curriculum, and interactive activities. The site also has many tools that support educational use, such as chronologies and “looking closer” features. All documents are fully transcribed and viewable as an original image. Artifacts and documents are accompanied by labels which provide interpretation in the context of major themes of American history. The site also features over 500 classroom activities that have been created by and for teachers. “**DRESS UP**”: This popular feature <http://www.americancenturies.mass.edu/activities/dressup/index.html> of our website uses an engaging format to convey to the public and especially young people a wealth of historical information across multiple eras. This project added an *African Americans in Early Rural New England* portal allowing quick access to African American items on the site.



Raid on Deerfield invites the public to explore the extraordinary story of the February 29, 1704 French and Indian raid on the English settlement of Deerfield. The site combines stories of people’s lives, historical scenes, artifacts, documents, maps, and a timeline. Visitors hear all sides of “The Many Stories of 1704” French, English, and the three Native nations involved. The website has been acclaimed as a model for how museums can depict and voice diverse perspectives of history in a way that is engaging and compelling. *Raid on Deerfield* was awarded an international *Museums and the Web Award* and an American Association of State and Local History *Award of Merit*. In 2007 the site won the *Merlot History Classics Award*.

6) Cultural Events: Living history, performing arts, adult programming, community-wide reads, and crafts events are offered year round, and provide opportunities to enliven history and engage the community in fun, educational programs.

We hold a **living history** commemoration of the 1704 attack on Deerfield, featuring costumed re-enactors portraying the French, English, and Native Americans involved in the attack. On the Fourth of July we hold a turn of the century band concert. The Sunday Afternoon Concert series, featuring local professional musicians performing chamber music, is held in the historic music room. Our historical theater has included such plays as *John Brown’s Body* and *The Crucible*. In 2004, an original opera production *The Captivation of Eunice Williams* played to standing room only houses and received rave reviews.



PVMA has led six very successful National Endowment for the Arts funded community-wide **BIG READ**’s of important **American Literature** collaborating with museums, libraries, the local fire department, WGBY(a public television station), and schools. Our first

Big Read linked book burning so central to the *Fahrenheit 451* story to the first book banned and burned in America, a theology treatise written in 1650 by William Pynchon, founder of Springfield, Massachusetts. Our fourth Big Read, in collaboration with the Veterans Education Project, was the Vietnam War era *The Things They Carried*. The Big Read led to the creation of *I was There: Stories of War and Homecoming* an exhibit of professional photographs of veterans. Our fifth BIG READ of *Joy Luck Club*, the story of 20th century Chinese women and their daughters included a traditional dance company performance at the Shay Theater in Turners Falls. Our sixth BIG READ in 2013 was *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

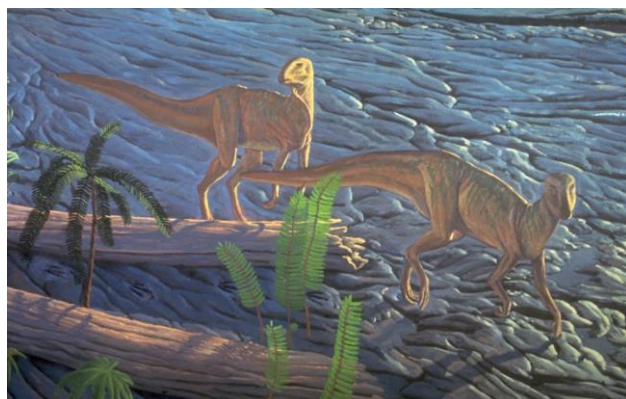


PVMA’s **African Americans in Early Rural New England Project** is an example of efforts to engage minorities. This project has branched out in multiple directions – mapping and marking the 18th century African American sites in Old Deerfield; a memorial to Deerfield’s early African Americans in Memorial Hall; retelling the Civil War-era story of Sojourner Truth in Northampton in a way easily understood by school children; and recording oral histories of local Civil Rights-era Freedom Riders and making them accessible world-wide on our websites. African American perspectives and participants have been added to the PVMA living history events in collaboration with Stone Soul, Inc.



“Double V” Project was also a major objective of the African American History Initiative. PVMA, in collaboration with the Veterans Education Project in Amherst, Massachusetts, initiated an oral history project with public presentations and on-line access entitled “Double V.” Black GI’s waved “V for Victory” finger signs with both hands, calling it the “Double V”—victory overseas in the war against fascism and victory at home against racism. This project focus was on the experience of local African American World War II veterans and home front workers and their struggles for social justice both during and following the war. The project includes: in depth oral history interviews, digitized and edited for web posting; public forums with African American WWII veterans and local African American scholars at locations in both the greater Springfield area and in Northampton presented with such groups as NAACP; workshops for teachers; and a new African American “On the Battle Front/On the Home Front” in-class program for schools. In 2016, videos from the Double V Project were incorporated into the New York City Public School 8th grade on-line curriculum.

Fossils Fuel the Valley was a Massachusetts Cultural Council Funded Adams Grant cultural tourism development project. The project encompassed the entire length of the Connecticut River Valley region of Western Massachusetts consisting of Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden counties. The Connecticut River Valley (also called Pioneer Valley) is the site of the earliest discovery



of fossil dinosaur footprints known to science. In 1835, it was here in the East, rather than the West, that the first American dinosaur remains were found, seven years before the word *dinosaur* was coined. It was thought at the time the tracks had been made by prehistoric birds. The region of track sites follows the river from Northfield through Gill, Greenfield, Montague, Deerfield, Sunderland, Amherst, South Hadley, Chicopee, Northampton, Holyoke and Springfield



The *Fossils Fuel the Valley* stakeholders included established players (such as the Springfield Science Museum, The Trustees of Reservations, and Amherst College) in the local outdoor recreational, artistic, hospitality, museum and historical society, land preservation, and educational economic sectors. Our overall goal was to create a plan to coordinate nonprofit and commercial public programs and artistic creation of goods, experiences, annual events, and services that use the tracks as a theme, e.g., permanent and temporary exhibits, films, contests, festivals, get-away weekends, edutours, hike/bike quests or letterboxing, river tours, and locally produced arts, crafts, and specialty food items on the dinosaur theme. *Fossils Fuel the Valley* events around the region are often presented under the banner *JurassicRoadshow* which has its own website at <http://jurassicroadshow.wordpress.com/> .

Fossils Fuel the Valley eventually led to a new website on the discovery in the early 1800's of dinosaur tracks in this region: *Impressions From a Lost World* which launched in June 2017. The site can be viewed at dinotracksdiscovery.org .

Contemporary Arts & Crafts programs are important as Deerfield has been home to prominent artists and to the Colonial Revival crafts movement. PVMA hosts crafts workshops, publishes embroidery patterns, and integrates crafts into school programs.

7) Publishing: PVMA is actively involved in publishing, and provides photographic and research services to scholars and periodicals and provides 30-70 art images to publishers each year. We actively market 15 titles of our own, ranging from juvenile to scholarly books. In 2004 our publication, *The Allen Sisters: Pictorial Photographers 1885-1920*, won major book awards from the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (now Historic New England, Inc.), the New England Museum Association, and the American Association of State and Local History. In 2007 PVMA co-published with University of Massachusetts Press *Romance, Remedies, and Revolution*, a Revolutionary War physician's diary from our library. In 2013 we released *Poetry to the Earth: The Arts and Crafts Movement in Deerfield*.



8) Historic Preservation: THE ACROPOLIS PROJECT, four condemned historic town buildings adjacent to Memorial Hall Museum purchased in 1995 for reuse, is PVMA's latest preservation project. The former Town Hall, school, fire house, and town office will eventually be used for museum

programs. The project has received two Massachusetts Historical Commission grants totaling \$150,000 and a \$298,000 federal Save America's Treasures grant for stabilization of the buildings. The renovated former two-story brick school house now serves as home base for our Deerfield Teachers' Center.

IV. Organizational Structure

The PVMA is governed by a Board of Directors (called "The Council") and officers elected by the Association's membership at an annual meeting. The Board meets eight times a year, and in consultation with the Executive Director, Curator and Librarian, sets policy and provides financial oversight. The Board consists of 14 - 24 members including business people, educators, scholars, a librarian, a lawyer, a retired curator from a larger museum, a retired school principal and a retired superintendent of schools.

The Board has broad representation with members from all three area counties, many ethnic backgrounds, and a wide range of ages and professions. Seven board members are women, two of whom are officers. Rural and low income communities are well represented; achieving diversity is an ongoing goal. The staff has also grown more diverse: including two handicapped employees (one paraplegic), and is now 75% female. Native Americans, African Americans, and Eastern Europeans now serve on the Board, advisory committees and staff.

V. Financial Information

Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association had a FY 2017 budget of a little over \$1,200,000. It is supported by individual private donors along with local, state and federal funding including: the Massachusetts Cultural Council (Operational Support Program); National Endowment for the Arts; The National Endowment for the Humanities; The Institute for Museum and Library Services, the National Park Service; and US Department of Education. Support from foundations has included: the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, The Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, The Ellis A. Gimbel Trust; The Kittredge Foundation; The Martha Goulding Pratt Fund, The 1772 Foundation, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In 2015-2016, PVMA had three major National Endowment for the Humanities projects and a major Institute of Museum and Library Services project running simultaneously.