

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Exploring the American & French Revolutions Through Lafayette’s Sword: A Material Memory Program from Revolutionary Spaces**

*Historian and anthropologist in conversation with community members explore 18th-century sword brought to Revolutionary-era America by the Marquis de Lafayette – April 17, Old South Meeting House*

**BOSTON, MA** - In an upcoming program from [Revolutionary Spaces](#), a historian will share the fascinating story of the Marquis de Lafayette, a key player in the American Revolution, through a sword Lafayette brought over from France as part of a larger supply of weaponry. The event, part of Revolutionary Spaces’ Material Memory program series, features acclaimed podcaster and New York Times bestselling author Mike Duncan (*Hero of Two Worlds: The Marquis de Lafayette in the Age of Revolution*) and Associate Director of Collections for Revolutionary Spaces, Lori Erickson Fidler. They will examine Lafayette’s lifelong quest to defend the principles of liberty and equality on both sides of the Atlantic, the deep interconnections between the American and French Revolutions, and the impact of his legacy on our world today.

A wealthy French aristocrat, Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier de La Fayette, the Marquis de La Fayette, played a decisive role in the American Revolution while fighting alongside George Washington, eventually becoming a globally-revered statesman, fierce advocate for liberty, and a passionate abolitionist. After his military career began with a brief stint in the French army, Lafayette joined the Continental Army to support the American cause. He fought for two years before returning to France in 1779 to leverage his status to lobby the French government for aid for the American rebels.

Lafayette returned to Boston in 1780 with additional resources, including a large cache of uniforms and weapons, and Revolutionary Spaces’ staff deem it likely that this handwrought iron sword was among those items. A century later, in 1891, the sword was donated by French fencing master Louis Rondelle to the Bostonian Society (the organization that led preservation efforts for the Old State House and ultimately merged with the Old South Association in Boston in 2020 to form Revolutionary Spaces).

“Few in history can match the revolutionary career of the Marquis de Lafayette,” says

speaker Mike Duncan. “As a soldier, statesman, reformer, philanthropist, and abolitionist he became the living personification of the age of democratic revolution. His remarkable life is the story of where we come from, and an inspiration to defend the ideals he held dear.”

Lafayette would later help write a draft of the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Men and of the Citizen with Thomas Jefferson, which was France’s first declaration of rights.

“This program will explore Lafayette’s roles in the revolutions of America and France and his lifelong battle for liberty and equality fought on both sides of the Atlantic. The ideals Lafayette embodied continue to drive acts of rebellion and protest over 200 years later,” says Revolutionary Spaces Associate Director of Collections, Lori Erickson Fidler.

This is Revolutionary Spaces’ third year coordinating Material Memory programs, in which a historical expert is brought in to highlight a special artifact from the collection, focus on moments in America’s complex history, and connect people through ideas.

### [Drawing the Sword of Liberty: Lafayette’s Life and Legacies](#)

*A Material Memory Program*

**Wednesday, April 17, 2024**

- Program Begins: 6:30 PM (Doors Open: 6:00 PM)
- Location: Old South Meeting House, 310 Washington St, Boston, MA 02108
- Logistics: An evening of historical presentation that will conclude with an audience Q&A. Light snacks and refreshments will be provided.
- Admission: Free
- More information: Visit the event webpage [here](#).

Primary accounts of Lafayette’s presence in Boston and at these historic landmark buildings in particular in the late 18th and early 19th centuries can be found [here](#).

[Drawing the Sword of Liberty: Lafayette’s Life and Legacies](#) is free and open to the public thanks to the generous support of The Lowell Institute.

#### **ABOUT SPEAKER MIKE DUNCAN**

Mike Duncan one of the most popular history podcasters in the world and author of two New York Times-bestselling books, *The Storm Before the Storm: The Beginning of the End of the Roman Republic* and, most recently, *Hero of Two Worlds: The Marquis de Lafayette in the Age of Revolution*. His award-winning series, *The History of Rome*, remains a legendary landmark in the history of podcasting. Duncan’s podcast *Revolutions* ran for 10 seasons over the course of nine years until 2022, and covered the great political revolutions that have driven the course of modern history, including the American, French, and Russian Revolutions.

#### **ABOUT SPEAKER LORI ERICKSON FIDLER**

Lori Erickson Fidler is Associate Director of Collections for Revolutionary Spaces. She manages the object collections and archives, overseeing collections care, planning, and

documentation. Before joining Revolutionary Spaces, Lori held positions as Curator and Collections Manager in addition to working as a museum collections and exhibitions consultant. She holds both a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Science in Anthropology, with a focus on archaeology and museum studies.

### **ABOUT REVOLUTIONARY SPACES**

Revolutionary Spaces stewards the historic Old South Meeting House and Old State House as landmarks, museums, and gathering spaces for the open exchange of ideas and the continuing practice of democracy. Viewing history as a powerful tool for today, Revolutionary Spaces brings people together to explore the American struggle to create and sustain a free society.

### **ABOUT THE OLD SOUTH MEETING HOUSE**

The 1729 Old South Meeting House was a Congregational church and the largest gathering place for popular politics in Revolutionary Boston. Today it is a busy museum, treasured landmark, and active center for civic dialogue and free expression.

### **ABOUT THE OLD STATE HOUSE**

The 1713 Old State House served as the seat of government for the province of Massachusetts during the Revolutionary era. Today, it is a museum and historic site offering tours, exhibits, and public programs exploring Boston's Revolutionary-era history.

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