

My parents and I made our first stop in Lexington, at the highly recommended, completely free and horribly named Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library. Long known by its informal name, the (far more descriptive) [National Heritage Museum](#), the Masons are pushing to publicize their role in funding and running the museum. That means very confusing signage, so be assured, it's one and the same place.

[Sowing the Seeds of Liberty: Lexington & The American Revolution](#)

is a long-term exhibition that is the cornerstone of the museum, and, unlike the museum itself, is true to its name. It explains both the importance of agriculture in late-18th century Lexington and its role in the outbreak of the Revolution. That means items on view include everything from [hobbles](#) and bog shoes for horses to bayonets and fifes for Minute Men, along with great displays on the local events that led to American independence. (Like the war's first skirmish, the battles of Lexington and Concord as well as [the Lexington Tea Bonfire](#), heard of it?)

But the highlight (until May, anyway) is [Treasured Lands](#), an exhibition of 58 photographs by the French-Vietnamese photographer Quang-Tuan Luong – one of each the United States's 58 national parks. "Photos of National Parks – I can get that on Flickr," you say? Not even close. Mr. Luong's large-format camera creates images of beaches and glaciers and deserts and waterfalls from American Samoa to Maine that were so astonishingly sharp and mesmerizing that my father was convinced there was some special 3-D technology involved. There's not: they're just awesome photos. So awesome, in fact, you may regret your decision to visit a museum instead of one of the parks themselves.



Seth Kugel for The New York Times

The 18th century home where the Minute Men gathered before the Battle of Lexington. [Enlarge This Image](#)

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