

ARTS & CULTURE

Exhibit offers 360-degree view of American Revolution

The HistoPads are back at the Historic New Orleans Collection — hand-held tablets that act as a portal to 360-degree views of the sites and events depicted in “American Revolution: The Augmented Exhibition,” a touring exhibit making its world premiere in the French Quarter.



Dave Walker

A product of the Paris-based Histover technology company, the tech and its immersive storytelling will feel familiar to anyone who visited the exhibit “Notre-Dame de Paris,” which HNOCC hosted in 2022-23.

In the new exhibit, visitors trigger each chapter at pedestals positioned in front of wall-sized images of key landmarks and moments of the insurrectionists’ story, from colonial Virginia to Boston to Philadelphia to Yorktown and all the way to the Gulf Coast, where Spanish Gov. Bernardo de Gálvez directed a multicultural militia of free men of color, Acadians, Indigenous volunteers and Spanish regulars to a series of victories against the British.

(The battlin’ governor is having a French Quarter moment. For completists and Gálvez fanboys and fangirls, the Cabildo, just a few steps away toward Jackson Square, is concurrently playing host to the new exhibit “Gálvez and Louisiana in the American Revolution.”)

Localizing the story

The Gálvez chapter of “American Revolution” was HNOCC’s contribution to a yearslong collaborative process with Histover that followed the successful “Notre-Dame” exhibit.

“They reached out to us ... asking if we would be interested in possibly hosting a new project they were developing then about the American Revolution,” said Jason Wiese, HNOCC’s chief curator, during a recent walk-through of the exhibit. “... They sent us their prospectus, and we read through it and we pointed out, ‘Hey, there’s no mention of Bernardo de Gálvez or the experiences of the Gulf South during the Revolutionary War period.’



PHOTO BY DAVE WALKER

‘American Revolution: The Augmented Exhibition’ and its interactive HistoPads are at the Historic New Orleans Collection through 2027.



PROVIDED BY HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION

The immersive storytelling will feel familiar to anyone who visited the exhibit ‘Notre-Dame de Paris,’ which HNOCC hosted in 2022-23.

And they said, ‘Well, we don’t know anything about that. What’s that about?’

“So, to their credit, they asked us if we would be willing to work with them to develop an additional chapter of the exhibition devoted to Gálvez and the people

of Louisiana.”

For the Histover project, Wiese teamed with Kathleen DuVal, a Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and author of “Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution,” which “really focuses on the margins of the

chapter because of the collaboration, including a portrait of Gálvez and a patent of nobility awarded to him by Spain’s Charles III (which completists will recognize as the cover image for the catalog that accompanied the 2022-23 HNOCC exhibit “Spanish New Orleans and the Caribbean”).

And so, HNOCC’s storytelling expertise and collection items augment the augmented exhibition that will tour through 2031 and touch all 50 U.S. states.

The visitor experience

Admission is free, but timed tickets are required to ensure everybody has enough space to spin through the chapters. Tap touch-points inside each scene to leap to character profiles, close-ups of objects of interest, fly-through animations and slider-style controls that show period views of landmarks and how they appear today.

The tablet text is offered in English, Spanish, French and German. For younger visitors, a virtual scavenger hunt for period objects is embedded in many of the chapters.

“I think each chapter is just kind of a little world unto itself, and they’re all connected,” Wiese said. “It’s a sequence that’s more or less chronological. It’s not absolutely necessary that you visit everything in order. You can explore it however you wish.”

The HistoPad can be hard to put down. And the story’s plenty compelling, too.

“One of our Visitor Services staff was telling me that a couple was in the exhibit this morning,” Wiese said. “The husband stayed in here for two hours. The wife was just sitting out there, bored out of her mind. She went to the shop. She went to see some other exhibits, but he was in here for two hours.”

“American Revolution: The Augmented Exhibition” will be at the HNOCC through Jan. 17, 2027.

Revolutionary War, particularly related to the Gulf Coast,” Wiese said. “People of color, women, Indigenous people — so really taking an interesting perspective.”

A couple of HNOCC holdings make their way into the Gálvez

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MUSEUM CALENDAR

■ The Newcomb Art Museum of Tulane’s annual Creative Connections event will take place at 5:30 p.m. April 15. newcombartmuseum.tulane.edu.

■ The Historic New Orleans Collection will present a free screening of Ned Sublette’s documentary “Tierra Sagrada” at 2 p.m. April 16. A Q&A with the filmmaker will follow the screening. hnoc.org.

■ The new exhibit “The First Piano Professors and the Lost Music of Early New Orleans” opens April 16 at the New Orleans Jazz Museum. louisianastatemuseum.org.

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Dave Walker focuses on behind-the-scenes coverage of the region’s many museums here and at www.themuseumgoer.com. Email Dave at dave@themuseumgoer.com.

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