

Museum on Main Street
"Crossroads: Change in Rural America"
Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A
February 5-March 18, 2023
Open Tuesdays from 10am to 4pm
Thursdays through Sundays from 10am to 6pm
Closed Mondays, except Monday holidays

Ribbon Cutting Event: Sunday February 5, 11am-1pm
Shea Theater Kickoff Event, Saturday February 11, 6-9pm
EVENT CALENDAR: <https://greatfallsdiscoverycenter.org/crossroads/>

Originally known as Peskeompskut, the area of Turners Falls was inhabited by Indigenous peoples continuously for 10,000 prior to European contact. The modern village of Turners Falls founded in 1868 as a planned industrial community to harness the immense power of the local waterfalls.

Turners Falls' past and present-day way of life will take center stage as the Smithsonian Museum on Main Street, in cooperation with Mass Humanities, rolls into the Great Falls Discovery from February 5 to March 18, 2023.

"Like the whole of America, Franklin County has seen transformation and depression, ebbs and flows. The Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center are excited to bring the Smithsonian's Crossroads exhibit to Turners Falls so that we all may explore together the unvarnished and beautiful history of this community, and where we are today, within the context of the country at large." - Sarah Doyle, Secretary of the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center

Crossroads: Change in Rural America offers small towns a chance to look at their own path to highlight the changes that have affected their fortunes over the past century. The exhibition will prompt discussions about what happened when America's rural population became a minority of the country's population and the ripple effects that occurred. Throughout the exhibit, the "Crossroads" theme will connect Turners Falls' land, people, identity, persistence, and change to evaluate the town's past, present and future.

Mass Humanities' local sponsor for the Crossroads exhibition is Greenfield Savings Bank. Partners for the statewide tour include the National Endowment for the Humanities, Big Y and Blue Cross Blue Shield.

The staff at Great Falls Discover Center worked with the Smithsonian, Mass Humanities and local partners to create additional exhibitions and programming that ties Turners Falls to the Crossroads theme. Local programming partners include Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, RiverCulture, the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Montague Public Libraries, and New England Public Media.

Over the past year, the Great Falls Discovery Center received extensive training from the staff of Mass Humanities and the Smithsonian, along with a \$10,000 grant from Mass Humanities to develop public events during the exhibit, which will be on display for six weeks.

“The partnerships and conversations planned by the team at Great Falls Discovery Center reflect a deep commitment to the Turners Falls community. We look forward to learning from their innovative approach to Museum on Main Street.” - Brian Boyles, Executive Director of Mass Humanities.

Launched in 1994, Museum on Main Street (MoMS) is a Smithsonian outreach program that engages small-town audiences and brings revitalized attention to underserved rural communities. The program partners with state humanities councils like Mass Humanities to bring traveling exhibitions, educational resources and programming to small towns across America through their local museums, historical societies and other cultural venues.

MoMS kicked off in September at the Essex Historical Society and Shipbuilding Museum; traveled to the Hull Lifesaving Museum in October; and arrived in Rutland December before coming to Turners Falls. Turners Falls will be followed by stops at the Bushnell-Sage Library, Sheffield (3/26/2023 – 5/6/2023) and Athol Public Library (5/14/2023 – 6/24/2023).

Organizations located in towns with populations of 12,000 or less were eligible to apply for the MoMS grant. The six sites chosen for MoMS will have the opportunity for a second-year grant to continue the work and programs they developed as part of MoMS.

For more information about each activation, including the times and locations, visit www.masshumanities.org/programs/museum-on-main-street/