

Media Clips – June through August 2016

#### **Fourth at the Fort Media Coverage**

WAVY TV 10 – The Hampton Roads Show, July 1, 2016

Our live audience today is from Fort Monroe and they're here to tell us how you and your family can celebrate Independence day in the

cradle..... <http://wavy.com/2016/07/01/audience-ft-monroe-independence-day-celebration/>

WVEC TV 13 – Coast Virginia Connections, June 26, 2016

<http://www.13newsnow.com/mb/entertainment/television/programming/dialogue/coastal-connections-6-26-16/253635802>

<http://www.dailypress.com/entertainment/thisweekend/dp-fea-ticket-top-10-0701-20160630-story.html>

#### **Shakespeare, U.S. Air Force concert band and Bob Ross paint night | Top 10 things to do this weekend**

June 30, 2016



FILE PHOTO (submitted photo / Virginia Gazette)

#### **Virginia Shakespeare Festival in Williamsburg**

Festival, which runs through Aug. 7, includes performances of "Romeo & Juliet," "Cymbeline" and "The Gravedigger's Tale." Bard's Market Entertainment, which starts an hour before each show, features treasures, food, beverages and live music. Performances held at Phi Beta Kappa Hall on the College of William and Mary campus. Adult tickets start at \$20. For a full schedule and more, visit [wm.edu/as/vsf](http://wm.edu/as/vsf).

## U.S. Air Force Concert Band performances in Williamsburg and Fort Monroe

The U.S. Air Force Heritage of America Concert Band performs an Independence Day concert at 7 p.m. Sunday at Merchants Square in Williamsburg as a special performance in the Summer Breeze Concert Series. Info: [facebook.com/events/1327622510588506](https://facebook.com/events/1327622510588506). The band also performs at 7:30 p.m. Monday at Fort Monroe. [fmauthority.com](http://fmauthority.com). Both shows are free. **List of July 4 fireworks displays in Ticket.**

## Editorials

<http://www.dailypress.com/news/opinion/editorials/dp-edt-iuneteenth-0616-20160616-story.html>



Editorial: Unchained and Free - at last

Juneteenth, the June 19 designation that celebrates the date in 1865 when word of the Emancipation Proclamation reached the last slaves in Galveston, Texas, deserves national recognition as a holiday.

(Library of Congress)

June 16, 2016

[Juneteenth](#) is a designated holiday that raises a philosophical question about the very nature of freedom. At what point did slaves in the South legally become free — when their shackles were legally removed, or only when they were physically removed? Is a man free if he escapes but is still considered a slave by the laws of the day? What if the law says he is free but that information is kept from him?

On May 23, 1861, three slaves arrived at Fort Monroe seeking asylum. Their escape prompted Union General Benjamin Butler's landmark decision that if slaves were indeed property under the law, then escaped slaves who reached Fort Monroe would be declared "contraband of war" and not returned to their masters. President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on Sept. 22, 1862. Its directive to free all Confederate slaves went into effect on Jan. 1, 1863. The first public reading of that document in the South occurred beneath an oak tree that still stands today on the campus of Hampton University.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution which abolished slavery, was formally ratified by the required three-quarters of the states on Dec. 6, 1865 — though somehow, Kentucky did not ratify it until 1976 and Mississippi not until 1995, and even then, because of a clerical error, it was not formally certified in Mississippi until 2013.

And then there is June 19, 1865 — the day a Union general stood on the balcony of an opulent villa in Galveston, Texas, and read General Order No.3, announcing "an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves." It was the first they had heard of the Emancipation Proclamation.

A century and a half later, this is recognized as the moment when the slaves were truly freed, and when our nation was freed from the self-imposed stain of that indefensible institution.

True, there are other dates that would serve the purpose as well, but why quibble? It is clear as an unmuddied stream that this is an event to celebrate, and June 19 is as good a date as any.

We celebrate the Fourth of July, and rightly so, as the anniversary of the date that our Founding Fathers declared independence from the British throne in order to establish a new land where "all men are created equal." So why is it so difficult to muster equal pride in the date when we took this major step toward living up to those ideals?

Annual Juneteenth celebrations began popping up in Texas, first spontaneously and later with more organization. In the 20th century, as African-Americans migrated out of the South, the concept of Juneteenth spread around the country but was still largely limited to regional pockets of recognition.

Pretty much, it's still there today, and that's too bad.

Forty-five states and the District of Columbia recognize Juneteenth as a ceremonial holiday, but we question how many Americans could actually identify the date or explain its significance. Far fewer, we fear, than those who could identify the date when a varmint in Pennsylvania is supposed to stick his head out of the ground and give a weather forecast.

Juneteenth deserves better.

It deserves federal recognition and an education campaign to let Americans know why it is celebrated. Over the past 20 years, both houses of Congress have made half-hearted attempts to formalize a Juneteenth holiday, but none has come to fruition.

Slavery is an inescapable part of our nation's history. We celebrate America in a variety of ways through specific holidays. An annual Juneteenth recognition would honor those slaves who persevered and then took advantage of their freedom, as well as those who died as martyrs. It would pay tribute to the men and women who dedicated their lives to the abolitionist cause.

Just as the Fourth of July marks the date when we proclaimed to the world that all men are created equal, Juneteenth would recognize the date when we began to actually mean it.

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[http://pilotonline.com/opinion/editorial/virginian-pilot-editorial-a-picture-of-peace-and-progress/article\\_24e53c9c-d283-568c-9205-27e963726116.html](http://pilotonline.com/opinion/editorial/virginian-pilot-editorial-a-picture-of-peace-and-progress/article_24e53c9c-d283-568c-9205-27e963726116.html)

## EDITORIAL

### **Virginian-Pilot editorial: A picture of peace and progress**

July 17, 2016

America has seen some awful things in the past two weeks.

Five officers gunned down in the street of a major city. Two African American men killed on video. Protests transformed into riots. Violence. Anger. Racism.

Amid all this blood and sadness and frustration, though, the nation has also been witness to hope: Protesters and police discovering common ground, even comfort and support from each other. Cries for justice and dignity gaining a receptive ear. Pleas for tolerance and understanding finding traction.

Even as so many fear a nation veering toward a precipice of division and violence — and as hucksters foment those differences — there is opportunity for understanding, for bridging wide divides. Maybe even for change.

It all depends on what happens next.

Last Sunday in Virginia Beach, protesters marched around Mount Trashmore, calling for justice, harmony and an end to violence. Later that day and throughout the week, at key intersections in Portsmouth, Norfolk, Suffolk and Chesapeake, they waved signs and stopped traffic.

Marchers in Portsmouth blocked Interstate 264 and obstructed access to the Downtown Tunnel for a time last Sunday night, garnering resentment from motorists caught in the ensuing traffic snarls and regrettable public comments from one city councilman.

These actions were deliberately intrusive, as civil disobedience tends to be. They were also multicultural, multiracial, multigenerational and, thankfully, peaceful.

The rallying cry — “Black Lives Matter” — continues to inspire invective here and across the nation. Those leading this charge insist, simply, that black Americans deserve equal protection under the law, as the Constitution affords.

That shouldn't be a controversial notion, but it has become so. Its very assertion is enough to incite those who don't — or pretend not to — see differences in the way institutions treat people based on the color of their skin.

These folks want to paint BLM as anti-police, which casts doubt on the legitimacy of the group's concerns. For them, even asking questions about excessive and lethal force disparages those in uniform.

Predictably, both sides lob charges of racism at one another on TV, online and across blocked highways.

Our inability — and unwillingness — to honestly and meaningfully address difficult matters involving race renders us helplessly, but maybe not hopelessly, divided.

It is America's perpetual affliction.

There is decidedly history here, in Hampton Roads, where bigotry became this nation's defining shame.

America's founding documents held up a lofty ideal of individual freedom while keeping intact a brutal and inhumane system of slavery, which found its beginning in the English New World in Jamestown.

The elimination of that institution in the U.S. Constitution required the sacrifice of some 600,000 Americans.

The final days of slavery began at Fort Monroe, where fugitive slaves from the Confederacy sought protection in a Union fort. But even with the Civil War's end, its awful cause continued to dominate.

For 100 years — and more — the bitter struggle for human rights continued across the country. Any Hampton Roads native over the age of 50 can remember vividly when there were two Virginias, one white and one black.

But as integration helped ease those clear lines of division, the healing of the nation's soul, of its conscience and its heart, has proven to be far more stubborn. And it will require concerted effort from all, especially at this critical moment.

Speaking at a memorial service on Tuesday for the five slain officers in Dallas, former President George W. Bush offered an observation: "Too often we judge other groups by their worst examples," he said, "while judging ourselves by our best intentions."

There has been no better analysis of the current national chasm. And it provides a clear call to turn our noble aspirations — our best intentions — into action.

All Americans should be horrified by what they've seen in Dallas; Baton Rouge, La.; St. Paul, Minn.; Baltimore and in so many other places. They know the difference between an officer

doing his job and a rogue cop animated by animus. They know that a sniper targeting police is an unspeakable, indefensible horror.

The rainbow of folks who marched down Brambleton Avenue in Norfolk on Wednesday — protected by police on bicycles, on foot and in squad cars — is testament to the fact that nobody is alone in this struggle for justice and equality and peace under the law. It's time we all started acting like it.

### **Additional News Stories**

[http://pilotonline.com/news/local/juneteenth-celebration-educates-and-entertains-locals-in-portsmouth/article\\_330fc3aa-5bff-5088-89f9-03e9113eebe8.html](http://pilotonline.com/news/local/juneteenth-celebration-educates-and-entertains-locals-in-portsmouth/article_330fc3aa-5bff-5088-89f9-03e9113eebe8.html)

### **Juneteenth celebration educates and entertains locals in Portsmouth**

[By Amy Poulter](#)  
[The Virginian-Pilot](#)

June 19, 2016

#### *PORTSMOUTH*

After a seven-year hiatus, founder and organizer Sheri Bailey organized the first Juneteenth celebration since 2009 on Sunday afternoon in Portsmouth City Park.

Juneteenth, also known as Freedom Day, is celebrated nationally on June 19. It marks the day that news of President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation spread to Texas and the last remaining slaves in the United States were freed.

The proclamation took effect Jan. 1, 1863, but it wasn't until June 19, 1865, when Union soldiers traveled to Galveston, Texas, that the remaining Confederate soldiers were told the war had ended and all slaves were to be freed.

Bailey founded the Juneteenth VA festival in 1997. She said she learned about the meaning and celebration of the event while living in California after high school.

"I realized that much of the history they were referring to happened in my home town," Bailey said. "So I started researching the local history as it pertains to how slavery started and ended in America."

Bailey said she was surprised at how much of the history of slavery is rooted in the Hampton Roads area. **Fort Monroe, she said, is where slavery began. In 1619, the first Africans were**

brought to the beaches of what is now Fort Monroe before they were taken to Jamestown as indentured servants.

“That’s an incredible piece of history that needs to be understood,” Bailey said. “The reason we haven’t understood that is because for the last 150 years, the Civil War has been narrated by the losers of that conflict. So of course, they’re not going to talk about what actually happened. They’re going to tell it from their perspective.”

Bailey said she hopes that when more people are educated on the past and its connection to Hampton Roads, it will help people to better understand and discuss social issues that stem from slavery.

“When we look at high incarceration rates of black and brown people, infant mortality rates and high school dropout rates, these are the legacies of slavery,” Bailey said.

Many attendees were longtime supporters and celebrators of the holiday, but not all were descendants of the enslaved. Several were descendants of the enslavers, which Bailey said is significant because “everyone suffered under slavery.”

Mark Geduldig-Yatrofsky said he’s been attending Juneteenth festivals for almost 20 years and has volunteered at many.

“History books have not been generous in their descriptions of [slavery],” Geduldig-Yatrofsky said. “If we don’t acknowledge our past, as inglorious as it was, we’ll never appreciate the struggles and the successes of our fellow citizens who were oppressed.”

Mike Taylor also learned about Juneteenth while living in California and said he is happy to see the festival’s return this year.

“We need this, these types of events here,” Taylor said, “because my people are such a scared people right now, especially in the South.”

Bailey said that she is already planning next year’s festival and hopes to return to Portsmouth City Park.

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[http://www.journalnow.com/news/local/us-house-approves-bipartisan-bill-commemorating-arrival-of-africans-in/article\\_24a9f3cd-d2bf-594c-859a-e3c8f40d77d7.html](http://www.journalnow.com/news/local/us-house-approves-bipartisan-bill-commemorating-arrival-of-africans-in/article_24a9f3cd-d2bf-594c-859a-e3c8f40d77d7.html)

**US House bill salutes arrival of blacks in America**

Posted: Sunday, July 10, 2016 12:11 am

*By Bertrand M. Gutiérrez Winston-Salem Journal*



A large group of U.S. House Democrats and four Republicans co-sponsored a bill recently approved by the U.S. House aimed at commemorating something that happened almost 400 years ago.

In 1619, aboard a ship known as the White Lion, about 20 Africans arrived in Colonial America. The place was Point Comfort, now known as Fort Monroe in Hampton, Va. They were the first Africans to arrive. And like commodities, they were traded for food and supplies.

The bill, known as the 400 Years of African American History Act, or H.R. 4539, would establish a commission charged with planning programs and activities in 2019, primarily through the U.S. National Park Service, highlighting the arrival and subsequent influence of Africans in America. The commission may provide grants to communities and nonprofit organizations for the development of programs, as well as to scholarly organizations to research, publish or distribute information relating to the arrival of Africans in the U.S., according to a summary of the bill.

Sixty-one Democrats signed on as co-sponsors. Among them were the three from North Carolina: Alma Adams, G.K. Butterfield and David Price.

"It's time for our nation to commemorate the contributions and resilience African-Americans have made throughout history," said Butterfield, chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus. U.S. Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-5th) supports the bill, aides said. In fact, the House passed the bill unanimously in a voice vote.

The wider goal is to highlight the influence and contributions African-Americans have made in the United States since 1619, Butterfield said.

"It will also recognize the painful impact of slavery 400 years ago, as well as the racial discrimination and oppression that continues today," he said.

Similar commissions have been established. For instance, one such commission commemorated the 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown, Va., and another the 450th anniversary of the founding of St. Augustine, Fla.

U.S. Sens. Tim Kaine and Mark Warner of Virginia, along with U.S. Rep. Bobby Scott of Virginia, introduced in February parallel bills in their respective chambers.

The Senate would have to pass the bill before the commission could be established. It has been referred to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Taylor Holgate, a spokeswoman for U.S. Sen. Richard Burr, a Winston-Salem Republican, said he "supports efforts to commemorate the countless contributions of African-Americans, confront past injustices, and foster a greater awareness of our history."

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<http://wavy.com/2016/07/05/hampton-camp-aims-to-foster-positive-relationships-between-police-youth/>

## Hampton camp aims to foster positive relationships between police, youth

By [Emily Satchell](#) Published: July 5, 2016, 6:04 pm



HAMPTON, Va. (WAVY) — A summer camp in Hampton is aimed toward creating a positive relationship between young people and police.

The VA Rules Summer Camp is designed to teach teens about how state laws affect their civil rights, their responsibilities, what happens in a courtroom and more. In addition to educational experiences, the kids will spend the week doing fun activities like fishing, swimming and more.

The camp is for students rising anywhere between 6th and 12th grade. It will be held at the Fort Monroe Community Center from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., August 29 to September 2.

The camp is free and space is limited. [Click here to apply online.](#)

The camp is supported by a grant from the Virginia Attorney General's office and is a joint effort by Hampton's Police Division the city's Park, Recreation and Leisure Department, the Youth Violence Prevention Division and the Hampton Roads Committee of 200+ Men Inc.



The aircraft carrier USS Harry S Truman passes Fort Monroe on July 13, 2016 as it returns after an 8 month deployment in the Middle East. Photo by Randall Greenwell | Virginian Pilot

<http://www.dailypress.com/entertainment/dp-nws-pokemon-go-craze-20160714-story.html>

### 'Pokemon Go' craze continues across the Peninsula

By Jane Hammond [jhammond@dailypress.com](mailto:jhammond@dailypress.com)

July 14, 2016 Hampton

Dozens of people, eyes glued to their phones and oblivious to their surroundings, invaded Larry Svihla's yard Wednesday night.

The Fort Monroe resident watched in shock as dozens of people flocked to the gazebo across the street from his house. Their eyes were focused on animations dancing across their phone screens even when they began to walk across the street.

Svihla called them "zombies."

The unexpected visitors were playing "Pokemon Go," a mobile app based on Nintendo's series of video games, cartoons and movies. The app uses the phone's camera, GPS and digital map to send players on quests to find and catch "Pokemon," animated creatures from the game series. When people who are playing the game come close to one, the camera turns on, using augmented reality to impose the Pokemon on the user's surroundings.

Players can also gain items to catch and enhance their Pokemon at "Pokestops," which are map sites normally found near monuments and landmarks in the real world.

The gazebo by the Chamberlin at Fort Monroe is a Pokestop. Once "caught," players keep them in their mobile collection and advance in levels. This later allows players to compete in "battles" with other players.

"When I came home from work yesterday, there were all these people walking around in circles looking at their phones," Svihla said. "It was like zombie-land or something. ... They walk in circles, they're talking to themselves. It's like the zombie movie, you know. (Wednesday) night it was slammed — there probably were 50 people out there."

Fort Monroe isn't an anomaly on the Peninsula. Hundreds of people have been regularly gathering where Pokestops are abundant.

There are five Pokestops at City Center in Newport News, and they have attracted people every day since the game debuted last week. The crowds shift to a new location when a highly sought-after Pokemon is "sighted" and a user shouts out its name.

Plenty of Pokemon Go users wander around City Center in Newport News looking for characters.

"I came out here (Wednesday) night to walk around the fountain and it was nuts," said Brittany Heath of Newport News, who was playing near the fountain on Thursday. "So many people out here, and they were all playing Pokemon."

The Virginia Living Museum in Newport News contains seven Pokestops. The museum is also host to two "gyms," which are virtual locations where players can "train" their Pokemon and compete in battles.

The museum has extended summer hours until 8 on Thursday. It advertised a "Pokemon Night" on Facebook to entice visitors and has already seen an uptick since last week, said Matt Theisen, guest services assistant manager.

"We've been having a busy day," Theisen said Thursday. "I think a lot of people realize once they get here that there's a lot of 'stops.' I've seen people walking out on the trail with their phones out playing the game. And (at the) gym inside the building, I've seen people just sitting around that as well. ... People were playing it here before we even started promoting it."

While many attractions are encouraging people to visit as part of the game, some businesses and homeowners see the game as encouraging players to trespass.

The York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office posted recently on Facebook to remind players not to venture onto private property.

"We are getting complaints that people are showing up at a church following this game," the post said. "They were startled when people just came up pulling on the doors, trying to get in when vacation Bible school is going on. It is scary for people to just to show up on other people's property."

Dominion Virginia Power also posted on Facebook to warn that an electric-powered Pokemon named Pikachu was not to be followed onto power station property.

"If you see Pikachu hiding by a substation or a power plant, DO NOT chase him ..." the post said, accompanied by a picture of a Pikachu near a Dominion sign.

Hampton Police Senior Police Officer Ashley Jenrette said that there have been no reported accidents related to "Pokemon Go," but the department created a video warning players to stay safe while playing the game.

The most obvious tip is to watch where you're walking and to look both ways before crossing roads.

"We want people to be aware of their surroundings, of course, while playing, because a lot of people, I've noticed, are looking down at their cellphones," Jenrette said. "They're not able to see what's around and thieves have been known to come up and snatch your phone. No driving and playing."

Hammond can be reached by phone at 757-247-4951.

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<http://www.dailypress.com/sports/dp-spt-va-youth-sailing-20160719-story.html>

### **Youth Sailing Virginia brings low-cost experience to Fort Monroe**

Coach Allen Kilgore talks about the Youth Sailing Virginia program. The group held a night outing on Mill Creek Sunday, July 17, 2016.

By Khari Thompson [khthompson@dailypress.com](mailto:khthompson@dailypress.com)

July 19, 2016

About 20 years ago, former U.S. Olympic sailing head coach Gary Bodie began having visions of a community sailing center on the Peninsula. It would be a place where sailors of all ages and skill levels could come and hone their skills without having to buy a boat.



Youth Sailing Virginia held their end of season night outing on Mill Creek Sunday, July 17, 2016. Students decorated their boats with glowsticks before hitting the water.

(Sabrina Schaeffer)

Today, Youth Sailing Virginia Inc. is bringing that vision to fruition at Fort Monroe, and is looking to expand its programming and infrastructure.

Youth Sailing Virginia subsidizes prices for its competitive programs while offering instruction from Bodie and Allen Kilgore, who sailed in the 1988 Olympics.

"We're talking fees in the order of \$100, \$200 for a season, which is substantially less than it actually costs," Youth Sailing Virginia president Kevin Eley said.

Youth Sailing Virginia also runs practices open to sailors from all four of the Hampton city public high schools and Hampton Roads Academy. Members say they enjoy meeting people from other schools.

"It was a team building thing," said Miles Campbell, who graduated from Hampton Roads Academy this year. "I got to hang out with all my friends from all the different schools throughout the area,"

Recent Phoebus High graduate Neilson Woodfield said, "We always have parties and events and I've made a lot of lifetime friends through the program. And I had a lot of fun volunteering. We volunteer at Fourth at the Fort and the ([Blackbeard](#)) Pirate Festival, so its always fun to meet new people and talk about sailing."

"It's hard to imagine kids growing up in Hampton and not being able to take advantage of the waters all around them," Eley said. "Certainly the goal is that there's no kid in the area from Hampton to Newport News that comes down and wants to go sailing and says 'hey wow that's cool I want to try that' and money's in the way. We're sailors, we love sailing, we want to see kids sail."

Bodie's first attempt at community boating on the Peninsula was in downtown Hampton. He and a group of local sailors kept the program afloat for nearly a decade before folding. But, when Fort Monroe was decommissioned as an Army base in 2011, the opportunity to make the club's home there was too good to pass up.

"We knew that the fort was closing and we knew what a great place it was to sail over here, how natural it was, and that's when I was like, 'you know what we really ought to do is try this community sailing thing again and here's the perfect place,'" Bodie said.

So, the group got in contact with the Fort Monroe Authority, which leases buildings on the fort, and made their sales pitch at the marina.

"I got out of my car and they sort of did a show of force," said Fort Monroe Authority Executive Director Glenn Oder. "They had some parents at the marina against the railing and they had about a half-dozen sail boats sailing right up to the shore and doing loops and turning around right in front of me."

Oder told the group that they couldn't get the marina because the Army still owns it. But, he said he had another body of water on the fort in mind that Youth Sailing Virginia could use, Mill

Creek. The group drove over to the area to check it out and said they were blown away by what they saw.

"There's no buildings, no high-rise buildings, the wind just blows in off the ocean, off the bay," Bodie said. "But we're all protected. There's no shipping traffic, no commercial traffic. There's not even very much recreational traffic. So, generally speaking we have it almost all to ourselves. And for what we're focusing on, high school sailing and instructional sailing, it's nearly a perfect location."

Once it secured the location, Youth Sailing Virginia had to get boats. It raised more than \$50,000 through grants and donations and bought 18 used boats from [Dartmouth College](#) in New Hampshire. The Flying Junior model boats are all about 13 to 14 feet long.

Currently, the program keeps the boats on floating docks, which they say they are making do with for now. Bodie said the goal is eventually to create a pier that will connect the floating docks to shore and make it easier to get the boats in and out of the water.

Another major goal for Youth Sailing is to acquire a building on Fort Monroe so that it can expand its programming. Eley said the group eventually wants to have classroom space so they can teach sailing-based science lessons and offer affordable summer programs for kids.

"With sailing, there's so much science that you can teach and practical applications that sometimes the light bulb can just go off," Eley said. "Because I know if I was just sitting in a classroom as a kid listening to a science teacher talking about air foils, I might be snoozing. But if you're out here and you can say well look at the shape of this sail and this is where it's generating lift that helps the boat go into the wind it just makes a lot more sense."

The Fort Monroe Authority is open to the idea of Youth Sailing Virginia getting a building in the future.

"If they want to have a facility on the grounds of Fort Monroe, they're going to have to generate the funds to sustain a lease, and pay for the utilities for a building," Odor said. "We would find that very exciting. And would be thrilled to have that here at Fort Monroe."



Photo Gallery: <http://www.dailypress.com/sports/dp-spt-va-youth-sailing-20160719-story.html>

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<http://www.dailypress.com/features/history/dp-nws-civil-war-balloon-at-fort-monroe-20160724-story.html>

Union eye in the sky over Hampton Roads | Hampton Roads History

By Mark St. John Erickson

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Sometime early on the evening of July 25, 1861, a spectacular, almost-unbelievable sight rose from a clearing on the east bank of the Hampton River.

Measuring some 60 feet across and perhaps more than double that in height, the giant silk balloon Atlantic climbed into the sky over Hampton Roads, fighting a stiff wind to reach an altitude that enabled aeronaut John La Mountain to see a sloop on the Back River some 5 miles away.

That was a disappointing start for the famed New York balloonist, who had previously reached 12,000 feet and set a nonstop flight record of 809 miles that stood for 51 years.

But it was just the first ascent in a series that — over nearly three weeks — would soar as high as 3,500 feet and provide views as far as 30 miles across.

It also marked the first aerial military reconnaissance mission in the history of the United States.

Ten days later, La Mountain entered the record books again — this time transforming the Union gunboat Fanny into a pioneering aircraft carrier that transported his balloon into Hampton Roads, then launched and towed it through the skies all the way from Fort Monroe to Newport News Point.

Newspapers all over the country published stories about his landmark feats, including some in Richmond, the nearby capital of the Confederacy.

"It was one red-letter day after another for military aviation," says Historian M. Clayton Farrington of the Hampton Roads Naval Museum, which will feature an article on the achievements of Civil War aeronautics in its August Daybook.

"La Mountain pushed warfare into the third dimension for the first time in this country — and he was putting the Union behind the Southern lines in a way that had never been accomplished before."

## **Daring invitation**

Like the other members of the nation's small but accomplished corps of balloonists, La Mountain was a staunch Unionist, and after the shooting started in April 1861 he wrote twice to the Secretary of War in Washington, D.C. to offer his services to the army.

Neither letter prompted a response from the War Department, but on June 5 Maj. Gen. Benjamin F. Butler sent a note asking La Mountain to demonstrate the balloon's potential at Fort Monroe.

The aeronaut replied on June 10, promising to have two balloons, two assistants and his hydrogen-making apparatus ready to depart Troy, N.Y., within a week.

On that very day, however, Butler's command was bloodied and embarrassed at Big Bethel, where Union troops misled by faulty intelligence were badly defeated by a smaller but unexpectedly well-entrenched Confederate force in the first battle of the war.

His situation grew even more dire following the Federal disaster at the first Battle of Bull Run on July 21, after which all but 2,000 of the soldiers at Fort Monroe, nearby Camp Hamilton and Camp Butler at Newport News Point were pulled out to defend Washington.

"Fortress Monroe in Danger," exclaimed the Old Point Comfort correspondent of the Baltimore Clipper on June 25.

"There can be no doubt that Fortress Monroe will soon be the point of an attack."

Those reversals made Butler even more eager to send La Mountain into the skies when the long-delayed aeronaut finally arrived on July 23.

"This was the center of the war at that time. It was the front line — and Fort Monroe was not only surrounded by hostile territory but isolated from the rest of the Union in the very heart of the Confederacy," Hampton History Museum Historian J. Michael Cobb says.

"So Butler feels besieged. He feels surrounded. And he can't see where his enemy is. And when you can't see your enemy, you magnify your danger and his strength."

## **First ascents**

Using 60 mammoth bottles of sulfuric acid and 5,000 pounds of iron filings, La Mountain and his assistants manufactured their own hydrogen gas, then pumped as much as 60,000 cubic feet into the giant varnished-silk envelope of the Atlantic.

They began on the afternoon of the 24th, drawing so much attention from the Old Point correspondents that more than a dozen newspapers announced their impending flight the following morning.

Stymied by unfavorable winds, La Mountain could not reach the altitude he hoped for, restricting the radius of his July 25 observations to 10 miles.

Continuing bad weather kept him grounded until July 31, when — following equipment issues that curtailed his first ascent at 400 feet — he rose into the sky for a second time and reached 1,400 feet.

"In the rear of the Battery on Sewell's Point, obscured from the water side by trees, is a cleared tract upon which I counted 52 tents, beside six bush tents in their rear," the balloonist reported, easing Butler's fears over previous intelligence that estimated some 3,000 to 4,000 Confederates faced him across the channel.

"For twenty miles I could trace distinctly the James River, but could not discover any movements thereon. ... I could not discover any encampments beyond Newport News, or in the direction of Yorktown, except half way from the Bethel church and Yorktown I could see a small cluster of tents. In the Back River I could see nothing but the one sloop I saw in my ascent last week."

Soon afterward, Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly published an eye-witness view showing the Atlantic rising from a clearing in the woods near Camp Hamilton at the mouth of the Hampton River.

Though two of his rivals had made preliminary ascents near Washington in June, La Mountain was the first to come back with actual intelligence about the enemy positions.

"Militarily, Hampton Roads is a pretty small area, so if you can find a way to get up high enough, you can see it all," Hampton Roads historian Bill Lee says.

"La Mountain came back down with a lot of information — and it was information that Butler couldn't get any other way."

### **Aircraft carrier**

Emboldened by his success on July 31 as well as a fruitful 1,000-foot ascent over Hampton the following day, La Mountain quickly looked for new ways to expand his horizon.

Working closely with Butler, he transformed the gunboat Fanny into an aircraft carrier, using a windlass and mooring ropes to secure his inflated balloon to the vessel's stern before steaming out toward Sewells Point on Aug. 3.

Rising to 2,000 feet, he inspected the fortification closely, discovering behind a screen of tall trees the construction of new positions designed to threaten Union shipping in the channel as well as nearby Fort Wool.

He then proceeded under tow to Craney Island and Pigs Point, where he confirmed what he'd seen on previous ascents.

He made his last observations on Aug. 10, this time with Butler watching from the vessel as the Atlantic climbed to 3,500 feet.

There he discovered new Confederate works at both Big Bethel and Young's Mill, demonstrating the value of balloons in monitoring a tense and changing military situation.

"The Rebels (at Sewells Point) ran when they saw him in the air," Scientific American reported, "leaving their works and peeping at him from their shelter and behind trees."

With his gas-making supplies exhausted, La Mountain left Fort Monroe on Aug. 16, promising to return with a second balloon called the Saratoga.

He also told Butler his experiments had convinced him that — in addition to gathering intelligence from an unequalled vantage point — he was capable of carrying the war to the enemy from the air.

"I take leave to call your attention to that portion of his communication in which he proposes to use the balloon for warlike purposes," the general wrote to the assistant secretary of war.

"Is it not worth the experiment? The proposition is new and daring, but with the explanations he has given me I think it might have an element of feasibility."

### **Promise dashed**

Butler's interest in testing the balloon and exploring its offensive potential was both keen and unconventional, reflecting the Massachusetts lawyer's lack of military training.

"A West Point military officer was not trained to be innovative. He was trained to follow established doctrine," Cobb says.

"But Butler was willing to be creative. He was willing to think out of the box. It was part of his nature."

Still, when La Mountain returned in September, he found that Butler had been replaced by former Army inspector general Maj. Gen. John Wool.

With no notes or introduction from Butler to support the case for continuing aerial observations, the already reluctant Wool sent the balloonist to Washington, where he

eventually found employment in the new Balloon Corps led by his fiercest rival, Thaddeus S. C. Lowe.

"Wool was 72 years old. He was a long-serving officer who went by the book," Farrington says.

"He had no interest in dealing with something he may have looked upon as a carnival side-show."

Unable to get past Lowe's deep distrust and superior political connections, La Mountain was dismissed in February 1862.

But the chief aeronaut himself didn't last much longer than his sponsor, Maj. Gen. George McClellan, who was sacked as head of the Army of the Potomac in November 1862 after employing balloons at Yorktown and other sites during the Peninsula Campaign.

Three months after Lowe resigned in May 1863, the Army's flirtation with balloons ended, too.

"What this shows you is how highly personalized the development of this new military innovation was," Farrington says.

"Their ability to carry out their missions was only as good as the commanders — like Butler — who supported them. And when those commanders were gone, they were gone, too."

Erickson can be reached by phone at 757-247-4783.

ONLINE: video and photo gallery exploring Fort Monroe's Civil War balloon.

<http://www.dailypress.com/features/history/photos/dp-civil-war-balloonist-makes-military-aviation-history-at-fort-monroe-20160722-photogallery.html>

<http://www.dailypress.com/features/history/dp-nws-civil-war-balloon-at-fort-monroe-20160724-story.html>

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<http://www.dailypress.com/features/dp-nws-endangered-artifacts-20160729-story.html>

### **Three Peninsula artifacts make list of top 10 endangered pieces**

July 29, 2016

By [Mark St. John Erickson](#)

Three fragile artifacts from Peninsula museums make state endangered list

Three historic objects from two Peninsula museums have been nominated for the Virginia Association of Museums' 2016 list of the state's Top Ten Endangered Artifacts.

The trio includes two gun carriages designed by Swedish-American naval architect John Ericsson for his pioneering Civil War ironclad warship USS Monitor — and now being conserved at the USS Monitor Center of The Mariners' Museum after 140 years in the Atlantic.

The third artifact is a late-1800s Army bugle recovered from the moat at Fort Monroe in 1978 — and now needing conservation after nearly a century in the salt-filled mud and tidal water at Old Point Comfort.

The objects are among a group of about 20 artifacts selected by a professional panel of conservators as candidates for a final list of 10, on which the public can vote starting Monday, Aug. 1, at [vatop10artifacts.org](http://vatop10artifacts.org).

"We've helped more than 100 collecting institutions — from tiny historic sites to major museums — bring attention to their conservation efforts since starting the list in 2011," says Christina E. Newton, assistant director of the Virginia Association of Museums (VAM).

"These are very complicated, very expensive efforts — and getting that stamp of approval from our list has helped many of these organizations move forward in raising the funds needed to pay for them."

### **Demanding work**

Recovered with their massive Dahlgren guns when a joint Navy-NOAA expedition pulled the Monitor turret up from its Cape Hatteras, N.C., wreck site in 2002, the carriages are weighty and complex objects that — like the rest of history's first mechanized warship — require unusual treatment.

At 2,200 pounds apiece, they can only be moved with the help of the Monitor lab's gantry crane, conservators say.

Then there are the different materials that make up that bulk, including more than 150 separate pieces of wood, wrought iron, cast iron and copper alloy that demand varying conservation methods.

"It took eight months and a lot of muscle and care to disassemble just one of the carriages," conservator Kate Sullivan says.

Among the other challenges is the fragile state of the artifacts, which have deteriorated in often deceptive ways after decades of being submerged.

Much of the 1-inch-thick iron shell retains only a small portion of its original strength, while the 4- to 5-inch thick wooden elements are so waterlogged that they've become extremely unstable.

"The wood seems solid, but it's really degraded," senior conservator Elsa Sangouard says.

"And if we don't replace the water inside with chemical bulking agents, it will lose its shape. The water is the only thing holding it up."

### **Historic links**

At Fort Monroe's Casemate Museum, the staff selected the late-1800s bugle from a larger group of candidates because of the bastion's long association with music.

Military bands began performing regularly at the fort well before the Civil War, Director Robin Reed says, and that tradition has continued even after the base's closure in 2011 with a popular summer concert series at the historic bandstand in Continental Park.

Recovered by Navy explosive ordnance divers clearing the moat, the bugle also underscores the link between a famous piece of Civil War music and the artillerymen who trained here for generations.

The first recorded performance of Taps took place at the burial of a Fort Monroe gunner at Harrison's Landing on the James River in July 1862, Reed says, and Capt. John C. Tidball — the battery commander who first ordered the now-iconic bugle call to be played — later served as one of the artillery school's superintendents.

"A little bit of this folklore has been preserved at Fort Monroe's Chapel of the Centurion," Reed says, "where one of the stained-glass windows was installed in honor of the first performance of 'Taps.' "

More than a century after it was lost in the moat, the copper-alloy bugle is showing signs of slow but steady long-term deterioration because of all its years in the water and mud.

Though the surface was washed when it was recovered in 1978, it's now apparent the instrument will require much more thorough and painstaking conservation to remove the chemicals absorbed when it was submerged, Reed says.

That's the case with the Monitor's gun carriages, too, which — like the rest of some 200 tons of artifacts — will require just as epic an effort to conserve as to recover from the bottom.

"Nothing's easy with the Monitor," Center and Foundation Director John V. Quarstein says.

"Getting these things to the surface was just the start."

*Erickson can be reached by phone at 757-247-4783.*

### **Virginia's Top Ten Endangered Artifacts**

Go to [vatop10artifacts.org](http://vatop10artifacts.org) to see the list of nominees and vote beginning Monday, Aug. 1.

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<http://wydaily.com/2016/08/07/virginia-symphony-to-hold-free-local-concerts/>

### **Virginia Symphony to hold free local concerts**

*By WYDaily Staff on August 7, 2016*

[WYDaily.com](http://wydaily.com) is your source for free news and information in Williamsburg, James City & York Counties.





The Virginia Symphony Orchestra performing at Lake Matoaka Amphitheater. (Courtesy VSO)

The sounds of the symphony will fill the air this September.

The Virginia Symphony Orchestra invites family and friends to experience Virginia's premier professional symphony orchestra during their annual series of free fall outdoor concerts in Williamsburg, Hampton, Yorktown, Chesapeake and Virginia Beach.

According to a recent news release, the program will feature family-friendly selections including John Stafford Smith's "Star Spangled Banner," John Williams' suite from "Jaws" and John Philip Sousa's "Hands Across the Sea." A piece by local composer James Hosay titled "Rivers of the Chesapeake: The Elizabeth," will also be featured.

Concerts will be conducted by the orchestra's resident conductor, Benjamin Rous, and will serve as a prelude to the Virginia Symphony's 2016-17 concert season, the release stated. Symphony Under the Stars will commence Aug. 31, with a total of five concerts through Labor Day week and weekend.

The following is a comprehensive list of performance times, dates and locations.

**Paradise Ocean Club at Fort Monroe: Wednesday, Aug. 31, 7:30 p.m.**

Lake Matoaka Amphitheatre, Williamsburg: Thursday, Sept. 1, 7:30 p.m.

Riverwalk Landing, Yorktown: Saturday, Sept. 3, 7:30 p.m.

Chesapeake City Park, Chesapeake: Sunday, Sept. 4, 7:00 p.m.

Neptune's Park 31st Street Stage, Virginia Beach: Thursday, Sept. 8, 7:30 p.m.

Learn more about Virginia Symphony Orchestra and the pieces included in this year's edition of Symphony Under the Stars at [www.virginiasymphony.org](http://www.virginiasymphony.org), or call [757.892.6366](tel:757.892.6366).

*Virginia Symphony to hold free local concerts added by WYDaily Staff on August 7, 2016*

<http://www.dailypress.com/sports/dp-spt-hampton-cup-regatta-preview-20160805-story.html>

### Hampton Cup Regatta gears up for 91st race this weekend



By Khari [Thompson kthompson@dailypress.com](mailto:kthompson@dailypress.com)

August 5, 2016

HAMPTON — If you ever wanted to see what a V8 engine can do on the water, you're in luck this weekend. The Hampton Cup Regatta, which touts itself as the oldest continuously running motor-sports event in America, returns to Fort Monroe on Saturday and Sunday.

Admission is free. The Mercury Boulevard bridge, which the race's website states is the best place to watch the races, will be open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. The bridge is closed to traffic for the weekend.

"If you are on that bridge and you look at Turn 2, and you're looking at (four boats) come flying down for the start — I get goose bumps just thinking about it," Hampton Cup Regatta

chairperson/race director Lisa Adkins said. "If you're standing on the bridge and the wind catches the rooster tail (of water spray from the boats) just right, you'll get some mist on your face.

"That's cool."

Now in its 91st year, the regatta will feature 15 racing divisions, with up to 80 boats moving at top speeds ranging from 80 to more than 170 miles per hour.

"You get the same adrenaline rush as you would watching NASCAR," regatta vice chairman Kraig Cole said. "We're getting up to the same speed as NASCAR, and we like to say we're like NASCAR on the water."

Cole added, "If you like racing of any kind, this fuels the adrenaline of the gearheads."

And if you do like looking at actual cars, the regatta has a car show planned at Mill Creek. It is a "no entry-fee show" that is expected to draw antique, muscle and specialty cars, as well as some trucks and motorcycles. The car show runs from 9:30 a.m. to the last race of the day Saturday and Sunday.

Food vendors will be available on the Mercury Boulevard bridge during the event. There also will be mobile ATMs on-site. There will be a designated children's area near the bridge.

Live music will be provided by local band ADB Overture and the Mullen Sisters.

This year's event serves as the Eastern Divisional, one of the three biggest hydroplane events in the United States. The regatta will host the biggest event, the hydroplane nationals, in 2018 and '19 for the first time since 2012.

"It's a free event and a very family-oriented event," Adkins said.

*Staff writer Marty O'Brien contributed to this story.*

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Daily Press video and pictures from the Hampton Cup Regatta

<http://www.dailypress.com/sports/dp-91st-hampton-cup-regatta-2016-20160806-premiumvideo.html>

<http://www.dailypress.com/videogallery/dp-video-sunday-at-the-2016-hampton-cup-regatta-20160807-premiumvideo.html>

<http://www.dailypress.com/sports/dp-pictures-hampton-cup-regatta-20140802-photogallery.html>