

THE WILLIAM TUCKER 1624 SOCIETY LETTER

Good morning, everyone!

I sincerely hope everyone had a chance to get a little respite from an exceptional week of historic events!

Words cannot express the deep gratitude of The William Tucker 1624 Society for your contributions to the success of the weeks long events starting Saturday, August 22nd with Project 1619, Inc., and concluding with The William Tucker 1624 Society's annual commemoration and Unveiling of the figures of Isabella, Antoney, and Baby William by Fort Monroe and VA250.

We all worked together to bring so many talents together to commemorate African and African American experiences and history as part of America's history. I believe we succeeded above and beyond all expectations.

The enthusiasm and emotional feelings from many people is a testimony that our great work had a personal impact as many took pictures with the figures as a memory and connection to our history.

I believe the ancestors are pleased that their narratives live on, and their resilience, faith, and hope continues to sustain their descendants for such a time as this!

I can only imagine what we will continue to accomplish!

Warmest regards,

Wanda Tucker on behalf of The William Tucker 1624 Society

CONTRABAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY LETTER



CONTRABAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

August 25, 2026

To: Scott Martin, Chief Executive Officer
Fort Monroe Authority
20 Ingalls Road
Fort Monroe, VA 23651

Dear Mr. Martin,

This to express our profound appreciation for the Fort Monroe Authority's contribution of providing a venue and other logistical assistance, as a partner of the Contraband Historical Society's symposium on May 22-23, 2026, at Fort Monroe. Your generous support was instrumental in making the event a success, helping us to preserve and educate the public about this vital history and heritage! Thank you!

Sincerely,

Tony Gabriele
Treasurer

The Contraband Historical Society is a registered 501(c)(3) educational nonprofit corporation.

404 Link Road, Yorktown, Virginia 23692

PROJECT 1619 LETTER

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF PROJECT 1619

Thank you all so much for everything. Every year, the Saturday FEALD Commemoration gets better and better. Adding the Umoja Reception and the Panel Discussion broadened the scope of engagement, first out of necessity, but then ending in love and, of course, unity. Even the Cleansing and Healing Ceremony was above and beyond. Adding the Naming Ceremony at the end just seemed to fit and flow like it belonged.

You all made the weekend so special and then the week was spectacular!!!! I cannot say enough how appreciative I am, Project 1619's Boards are, and we are so grateful for you. We are a family. I cannot wait to see what we come up with for next year. I already have someone from another organization who wants to come on board and have her event during our week – **OUR WEEK**. That says a lot. It was a success. We, together, jointly, made it a success and it can only grow upward from here.

Peace and blessings,

Melinda J. Steele

President
Project 1619, Inc.





Project 1619, Inc.

extends its deepest appreciation to the African Delegations, honored guests,
partner organizations, cultural leaders, and community supporters who joined us for our
2026 First Enslaved African Landing Commemoration Events.

Your presence uplifted the legacy of our Ancestors, strengthened our shared commitment to
truth, and ensured that their stories continue to be remembered with
dignity, reverence, and clarity.

The Events:

First Enslaved African Landing Day Commemoration Program

The Umoja Gathering Reception

The Spiritual Cleansing and Healing Ceremony

"Words Matter: Remembering the Enslaved" Panel Discussion

In Honor of the Ancestors

We are grateful for your continued support of our mission to preserve history, elevate truth, and
ensure that the voices of our Ancestors remain central to America's narrative.

May our collective work continue to inspire generations to come.

With Respect and Esteem,

Project 1619, Inc. Board of Directors



FIRST ENSLAVED AFRICANS

15 Years of Service, Founder Calvin W. Pearson, Sr.

Honoring the Ancestors. Preserving the Truth. Uplifting the Legacy.

TAKE THE LONG ROAD RV'S FACEBOOK POST



Take the Long Road RV's Post



Take the Long Road RV is in Fort Monroe.

1d · 🌐



Fort Monroe was incredible today-beautiful, fascinating, and filled with more history than we ever expected. 🇺🇸

We explored the largest stone fort ever built in the United States, walked through the casemates, saw the Old Point Comfort Lighthouse and even stood in the room where Confederate President Jefferson Davis was imprisoned after the Civil War. Pretty amazing that a place with more than 400 years of history only became a National Monument in 2011.

One of the most interesting stories was learning why Fort Monroe became known as "Freedom's Fortress." In 1861, three enslaved men escaped to Union-held Fort Monroe. General Benjamin Butler refused to return them, a decision that became known as the "Contraband Decision." Word spread, and Fort Monroe became a destination for thousands of enslaved people seeking freedom behind Union lines. It was an important step on the long road toward emancipation.

But the moment we'll remember most happened at the African Landing Memorial.

There we met Verrandall, a 17th-generation descendant of baby William, the first known child of African descent born in English North America. William was the son of Isabella and Antoney, two of the Africans brought to Virginia in 1619.

Standing there while Verrandall shared his family's story was incredibly special. There's something powerful about learning history from someone whose own family story reaches back through generations to the people you're standing there remembering. It took something we've read about and made it very human and very real.

We walked away feeling incredibly grateful for that chance encounter and for Verrandall taking the time to share his story with us. ❤️

And we had one last stop to make.

We ended our day at nearby Hampton University beneath the Emancipation Oak, and it felt like the perfect ending to everything we had learned. In 1861, Mary Smith Peake began teaching African Americans seeking freedom beneath the branches of an oak, and in 1863 that same tree became the site of the first Southern reading of the Emancipation Proclamation. The Emancipation Oak still stands on Hampton University's campus today. 🌳

From the arrival of the first Africans at Point Comfort in 1619, to freedom seekers finding refuge at Fort Monroe more than 240 years later, to education and emancipation beneath the branches of that incredible oak ...what a story this place tells!

Days like today are exactly why we Take the Long Road...sometimes you go somewhere expecting to see history, and instead you get lucky enough to meet it. ❤️🇺🇸

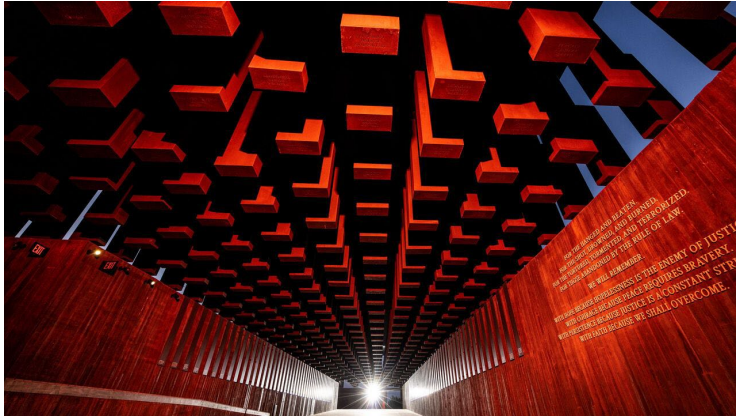


Write a comment...



THE ECONOMIST ARTICLE

The Economist



[United States](#) | Grim past, brighter future

July 1, 2026

Transforming the cradle of the Confederacy

Tourists are flocking to monuments on America's racial history

Photograph: Equal Justice Initiative

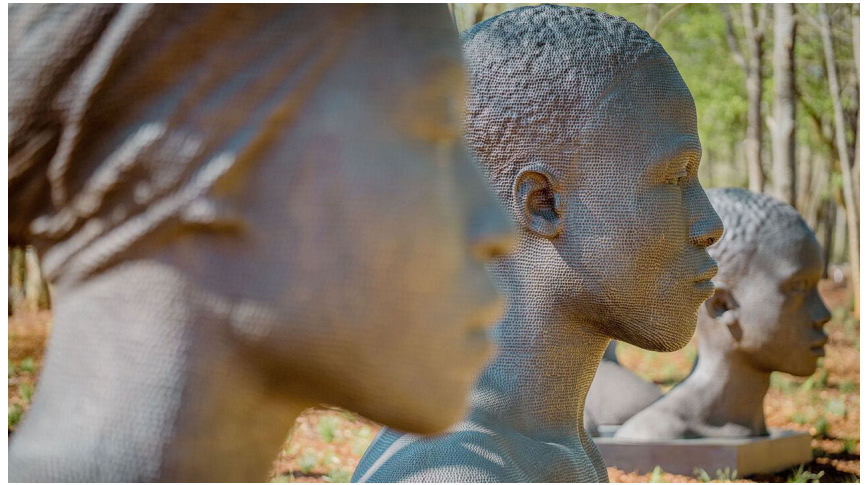
Jul 1st 2026|MONTGOMERY|4 min read

ACROSS AMERICA more than 4,400 black people were lynched between 1877 and 1950. Some were killed for flirting with white women, others for talking back to bosses or trying to vote. In downtown Montgomery, Alabama, each of their names is carved into a rusted steel column marking the county where they lived and died. As visitors walk through the six-acre memorial the columns seem to rise. By the end they resemble a sea of dark bodies hanging heavily overhead.

Montgomery, Alabama's capital, once had more slave-trading depots than churches. More recently, it has become home to memorials that commemorate this history. As Donald Trump sets out to build [grand new structures](#) in Washington, DC, Montgomery's monuments offer another model of urban reinvention. About a decade after the project was conceived, Montgomery's downtown is transformed and tourism is booming.

The project has been led by Bryan Stevenson, the founder of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), a non-profit law firm that defends death-row inmates. Mr Stevenson had observed how Berlin, Johannesburg and Kigali confronted their bleakest chapters. When he first moved to Montgomery, it didn't have a single marker that mentioned "slavery", yet had 59 monuments to the Confederacy and three high schools named for its war generals and soldiers. This seemed odd.

Montgomery had been home to the first White House of the Confederacy. It also is the city where, in 1955, Rosa Parks refused to relinquish her seat to a white passenger, sparking wide boycotts; where segregationists bombed Martin Luther King junior's home; where a mob beat activists at a bus depot; where George Wallace, Alabama's governor, declared "segregation forever" in 1963; and



where, two years later, the long march from Selma concluded with King calling for "a society that can live with its conscience" from the steps of the state Capitol. So Mr Stevenson set out to develop sites to tell the story of American slavery, racial violence and civil rights.

With private financing, he opened the memorial and a museum in 2018, then a few years later a sculpture park and, this spring, a town square. In town halls, Mr Stevenson recalls, some locals used to be sceptical. That changed when they saw tourists, and cash, roll in.

Each month 50,000 people visit the "legacy sites", some coming from as far as Europe and Asia. Demand is such that, in the past year, the EJI has partnered with for-profit groups to open a five-star hotel, two restaurants and a coffee shop, ventures that might inspire reluctant admiration from a certain New York developer turned politician. Profits go back into funding the museums and memorials. The hotel, named Elevation, has some unusual features: the architects included a library and "reflection garden" and reduced the number of rooms to make communal areas for visitors to talk to each other.



Facing history Photograph: Equal Justice Initiative

High-end tourism to grapple with racism is either a triumph or caricature of American capitalism, depending on your view. For Montgomery, though, the legacy sites have clearly been a boon. "It's been a game-changer," says Ron Simmons of the Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Tourists stay in town twice as long as they did a decade ago. Last year 1.4m visitors spent \$1.4bn,

roughly four times the city's annual budget.

Combined with big new investments from Amazon, Meta and manufacturers, surging tourism means that Montgomery's economy is, according to its mayor, Steven Reed, in its best financial position in 30 years. The city is using new revenue to raze abandoned buildings, give grants to small businesses, hire more police and invest in financial-literacy programmes. In May the city launched a "midnight basketball" league, to occupy young people when they might otherwise get into trouble.

Last year, in an executive order titled “Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History”, Mr Trump instructed federally funded museums and parks to remove exhibits that “degrade shared American values” or “divide Americans based on race”. The president has taken particular exception to the Smithsonian Institution for emphasising “how bad Slavery was”.

Mr Stevenson’s projects are immune to this pressure—because he is in the business of litigating against the government, he has never taken a penny of state or federal funding. Mr Reed notes that “pointing out truths doesn’t mean pointing your finger.” Asked what Montgomery now represents to its visitors, he says, “an enduring patriotism”. ■

Stay on top of American politics with [The US in brief](#), our daily newsletter with fast analysis of the most important political news, and [Checks and Balance](#), a weekly note that examines the state of American democracy and the issues that matter to voters.