FIRST AFRICAN LANDING COMMEMORATIVE WEEKEND

Fort Monroe | Hampton, Virginia
August 22 - 25, 2019

1619–2019
COMMEMORATION
FIRST AFRICAN LANDING

AMERICAN EVOLUTION™

Virginia to America | 1619-2019

DEMOCRACY · DIVERSITY · OPPORTUNITY

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FORT MONROE

Where Freedom Lives

HAMPTON VA 2019 COMMEMORATIVE COMMISSION

August 22, 2019

I am honored to welcome you to Virginia.

This year, we are recognizing the 400th anniversary of events that happened in Virginia in 1619—events that continue to have a profound effect on us today.

Across the Commonwealth, citizens and organizations are coming together this year to reflect upon our shared history through events and programs that tell the true and honest story of what happened here.

This weekend, we come together at Point Comfort in Hampton to recognize the arrival of the first enslaved Africans on our shores—an event that had, and continues to have, a profound impact on this country and its people.

I hope we will take this opportunity to reflect upon 400 years of African-American history, perseverance, and determination. And I hope we will come together to honor the countless African-Americans—both here and elsewhere—who fought for freedom, equality, and dignity.

This site, Fort Monroe, is also the ground where, during the Civil War, fugitive slaves sought—and were given—refuge, in what became a major turning point in the fight for freedom.

The Fort Monroe Visitor and Education Center galleries, opening this fall, will tell the profound stories of what happened here. I am grateful to them, and to all of you gathered here, for helping us reflect upon, and learn from, our shared history.

Thank you for joining us on this important weekend.

Ralph S. Northam
Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia

August 22, 2019

Dear Friends,

It is our pleasure to welcome you to Fort Monroe for the 400th Anniversary Commemoration of the First African Landing. This weekend is about honoring the courage and the perseverance of Africans and African Americans throughout 400 years of Virginia's and America's history.

American Evolution is commemorating the 400th anniversary of significant events that occurred in Virginia in 1619. We are honoring the stories of Virginia's and America's beginnings and highlighting and sharing the history of the diverse people and cultures that created the foundation of our great nation.

Learning about the challenges, successes and inequities of the past enables us to fully appreciate the difficult path our nation has taken to become what it is today. We thank you for being here for this weekend's vital programs, and we hope you will join us for other American Evolution events this year. To learn more, visit www.AmericanEvolution2019.com

Sincerely,

M. Kirkland Cox
Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates
Co-Chair, 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution

Thomas K. Norment, Jr.
Majority Leader of the Senate of Virginia
Co-Chair, 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution

August 22, 2019

Welcome to Hampton!

On behalf of Hampton's City Council and the residents of our historic City by the sea, I would like to welcome everyone to Virginia—and to Hampton—as we commemorate one of the groundbreaking events of 1619.

Here in Hampton, history tells us that in the summer of 1619, "20 and odd" African men and women arrived at Point Comfort (present-day Fort Monroe) on an English privateer ship. Natives of central Africa, these men and women were sold for food and supplies.

Their names have been lost to time and history, but the first Africans to arrive in English North America left a lasting mark on our community and our country. Their descendants—physical and spiritual—fought in America's wars, saw the rise and fall of slavery, battled for civil rights and played key roles in the nation's industrial and technological revolutions.

Founded in 1610, Hampton today is home to one of the nation's premiere black colleges, Hampton University. The NASA Langley Research Center in Hampton is a worldwide leader in aerospace research and the early home of the nation's space program. Our City has been recognized by Money Magazine as one of the best places in the nation to live. And, we have been called a national model for youth development and civic engagement.

We are proud of Hampton's history and look forward to a bright future for the City and the region.

Donnie R. Tuck
Mayor

FIRST AFRICAN LANDING COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY
CONTINENTAL PARK, FORT MONROE, VIRGINIA
SATURDAY | AUGUST 24 | 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Musical Prelude	I.C. Norcom High School Choir
Welcome	The Honorable Donnie R. Tuck *Mayor, City of Hampton*
	The Honorable James P. Moran, Jr. *Chairman, Fort Monroe Authority Board of Trustees* *United States House of Representatives, 1991-2015*
	The Honorable M. Kirkland Cox *Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates* *Co-Chair, 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution*
Presentation of Colors	7th Transportation Brigade Color Guard Joint Base Langley-Eustis
Pledge of Allegiance/ National Anthem	Chelsea Griffin *Special Guest Artist*
Invocation	Dr. Joseph Green, Jr. *Chairman, 400 Years of African American History Federal Commission*
Special Remarks	The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine *United States Senator, Virginia* *Governor of Virginia, 2006-2010*
	The Honorable Mark R. Warner *United States Senator, Virginia* *Governor of Virginia, 2002-2006*
	The Honorable Robert C. Scott *United States House of Representatives* *3rd Congressional District of Virginia*
	The Honorable Elaine G. Luria *United States House of Representatives* *2nd Congressional District of Virginia*
	The Honorable Karen R. Bass *United States House of Representatives* *37th Congressional District of California* *Chairwoman, Congressional Black Caucus*

Featured Remarks	The Honorable Ralph S. Northam *Governor of Virginia*
Original Poem	Nikki Giovanni *Poet, Writer, Activist and Distinguished Professor, Virginia Tech*
Special Remarks	P. Daniel Smith *Deputy Director, Exercising the Authority of Director for the National Park Service* Brycen Dildy *Student, Larkspur Middle School, Virginia Beach*
Introduction	The Honorable Mamie E. Locke *Senate of Virginia, 2nd District*
Special Address	Anthony K. Jones *TV Host, Author and Change-maker*
Closing Remarks	The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax *Lieutenant Governor of Virginia*
Benediction	Reverend Monsignor Walter Barrett, Jr. *Peninsula Cluster Parishes*
Lift Every Voice and Sing	I.C. Norcom High School Choir

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FIRST AFRICANS IN VIRGINIA

FIRST AFRICAN LANDING COMMEMORATION WEEKEND COMPLETE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

THURSDAY | AUGUST 22

12:30 – 1:30 pm — **Africa to America: The Odyssey of Slavery Town Hall,** Voice of America, Brown Hall, Norfolk State University

1:30 – 4:00 pm — **400 Years of African American History Federal Commission Public Meeting,** Fort Monroe, Paradise Ocean Club

FRIDAY | AUGUST 23

9:30 – 10:30 am — **Tucker Family Cemetery Reflection and Commemoration**

12:00 – 1:00 pm — **Live Broadcast of WHRO's "Another View"** from Fort Monroe Post Theatre

12:00 – 3:00 pm — **Hampton 2019 Commemorative Event: African American Political Pioneers Luncheon and Panel Discussion, Hampton Convention Center**

Moderator: Beverly Burke

Speakers: The Honorable Robert C. Scott, United States House of Representatives, 3rd Congressional District of Virginia

The Honorable Mamie Locke, Senate of Virginia, 2nd District

The Honorable Jenean Hampton, Lieutenant Governor of Kentucky

The Honorable L. Douglas Wilder, Governor of Virginia, 1990-1994

The Honorable Howard Lee, Mayor of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1969-1975, North Carolina Senate, 16th District, 1997-2003

6:00 – 8:00 pm — **Hampton 2019 Commemorative Event: Evolution of a Black Girl: From the Slave House to the Main House** play, Fort Monroe Community Center

6:00 – 8:00 pm — **Association for the Study of African American Life and History Event:**

1619 – 2019: 400 Years of Perseverance
Panel Discussion, Hampton University

SATURDAY | AUGUST 24

6:30 – 8:00 am — **Project 1619 Morning Sunrise African Naming Ceremony,** Buckroe Beach, Hampton

9:30 – 11:30 am — **American Evolution First African Landing Commemorative Ceremony,** Continental Park, Fort Monroe

11:30 am – 5:00 pm — **2019 Commemoration of the First African Landing Cultural Activities,** Fort Monroe

- Musical Performances
- Children's Activities
- Living History
- Storytelling
- Vendors
- Cultural Group Displays
- Exhibitors
- Drumming and Dancing Presentations
- Youth Performances
- Food Trucks

12:00 – 3:30 pm — **12th Annual African Landing Day Program presented by Project 1619**

12:00 – 4:00 pm — **Black Heritage Tours sponsored by the National Park Service at Fort Monroe** (Hourly)

6:30 – 10:00 pm — **African Landing Day Concert at Hampton Coliseum featuring Common with Sounds of Blackness** (Advance tickets required)

SUNDAY | AUGUST 25
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE EVENT: HEALING DAY

1:30 – 2:30 pm — **National Park Service Town Hall,** Fort Monroe Post Theatre

2:15 pm — **Gathering in Continental Park, Fort Monroe**

- Drum Call
- Blessing of the Land and Iroquois Prayer
- Libations
- Healing Day Countdown

3:00 pm — **National Bell Ringing**

- Paper Butterfly Release
- Aerial Photo
- "What a Wonderful World"
- "Reach" - Transcendence Aerial Dance

3:25 pm — **Main Stage**

- Drummers and Dancers
- US Colored Troops Ensemble
- Emcee Welcome - Anita Blanton
- Invocation - Dr. Rex M. Ellis
- Presentation of Colors - Joint Base Langley-Eustis, 633rd Air Base Wing
- National Anthem - Rachael Colman, USAF Airman 1st Class

- Healing Day Poem – Marian Clifton
- What healing mean to me? – Jamal Diggs

4:45 pm

Guest Remarks
The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax,
Lieutenant Governor of Virginia

David Vela, Acting Director of Operations,
National Park Service

Dr. Joseph Green, Jr., Chairman, 400 Years
of African-American History Federal Commission

The Honorable Robert F. McDonnell,
Governor of Virginia, 2010-2014

The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine,
Governor of Virginia, 2006-2010

The Honorable Glenn Oder,
Executive Director, Fort Monroe Authority

P. Daniel Smith, Deputy Director Exercising the
Authority of Director, National Park Service

The Honorable G. Anne Richardson,
Chief Rappahannock Tribe

Tamika Mallory, Co-Chair of the Women's March
and Co-Founder of Until Freedom

What Does Healing Mean?
Rev. Dr. Michael Battle,
Director of the Desmond Tutu Center

Spoken Word – Teens with a Purpose

5:45 pm

Keynote Speaker
Rev. Dr. Michael Eric Dyson,
Author and Georgetown University Professor

6:15 pm

400 Distinguished Service Awards Presentation
400 Years of African American History
Federal Commission Awards
Dr. Joseph Green, Jr., Co-Chairman

Message of Healing
The Honorable Robert F. McDonnell

6:30 pm

Reflections
Terry E. Brown, Superintendent,
Fort Monroe National Monument

Benediction
Dr. Eric Williams, Curator of Religion, National Museum
of African American History and Culture

Gospel Concert
- Damien Sneed
- 4Him Quartet
- First Baptist Church of Hampton Choir

THE LANDING OF THE FIRST AFRICANS TO ENGLISH NORTH AMERICA

In August 1619, a privateering vessel flying the flag of the Dutch Republic arrived at Point Comfort, Virginia (in present-day Hampton). According to John Rolfe, the ship held no cargo but "20 and odd" Africans, who were traded to Governor George Yeardley and Cape Merchant Abraham Peirsey in exchange for provisions. These individuals, originally captured by Portuguese slavers in West Central Africa (likely modern-day Angola), were the first recorded Africans to arrive in English North America.

While the *White Lion*, which carried the first Africans to Virginia, did fly a Dutch flag, modern research has revealed that both the ship and its captain, John Jope, were English. Jope held a letter of marque from Vlissingen, a notorious privateer haven in the Netherlands, which allowed him to legally plunder Spanish and Portuguese vessels. He could not have done so under English authority, as England and Spain were at peace in 1619. While patrolling the Gulf of Mexico in late July or early August 1619, Jope encountered the *Treasurer*, another privateering vessel, captained by Daniel Elfrith. Sailing in consort with one another, the *White Lion* and the *Treasurer* managed to capture a Portuguese slave trading vessel, the *São João Bautista* (Saint John the Baptist), which was bound for Vera Cruz, Mexico.

Jope and Elfrith soon discovered that the *São João Bautista*, which departed from the Angolan port city of Luanda, was carrying

approximately 350 enslaved Africans. Luis Mendes de Vasconcellos, the Portuguese governor of Angola, enslaved approximately fifty thousand Africans between 1617 and 1621, sending them from Luanda to colonies in Spanish America. It is likely that many of the enslaved Africans onboard the *São João Bautista* were skilled laborers from West Central Africa's urban centers, and many were likely Christians as well, converted by the Portuguese before or after their capture. After taking on as many captive Africans as their ships could carry, Jope and Elfrith chose to sail north to the Virginia colony.

While John Rolfe's account confirms that the enslaved Africans aboard the *White Lion* were left in Virginia in 1619, the same cannot be said of those aboard the *Treasurer*. After receiving word that representatives of the Governor were heading to Point Comfort, the *Treasurer* abruptly departed Virginia, heading for Bermuda. As John Rolfe knew, the reason for this swift departure was because Governor Yeardley questioned the validity of the *Treasurer's* letter of marque, and had planned to question Captain Elfrith about his acts of alleged piracy against the Spanish. The *Treasurer* did not return to Virginia.

Despite the fact that slavery was not officially acknowledged in the laws of Virginia until 1661, there can be no mistaking that the first Africans brought to the colony aboard the *White Lion* were treated much as slaves were in other European colonies, regardless of age or gender. Scattered amongst a variety of plantations, including those owned by Governor Yeardley, they were immediately treated as commodities by the colonial elite. In rare instances, some Africans were allowed to work their own land, earn an income, and eventually purchase their freedom, but most were assigned to heavy labor in fields, kitchens, and outbuildings. The African population in Virginia remained quite small for the next several decades, with only 300 Africans residing in the colony by 1650. By 1680, however, that number had increased to 3,000 and by 1704, to 10,000.

FORT MONROE VISITOR AND EDUCATION CENTER

A legacy project of the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution, the Fort Monroe Visitor and Education Center will provide guests with a point of arrival and orientation to the significant historical and recreational amenities of Fort Monroe. Through the adaptive reuse of an original Beaux Arts Style building, first built as a library in 1909 by the Coast Artillery Schools, the Visitor Center will complement the existing Casemate Museum. With visitor amenities, galleries, a gift shop, information desk, archives and multi-purpose space it will also feature exhibits that include the First Arrival story and the Contraband Camp at Fort Monroe, which housed escaped slaves through the period of the Civil War. The operation of the Fort Monroe Visitor and Education Center is a partnership with the Fort Monroe Authority and the National Park Service.

FORT MONROE AUTHORITY

The Fort Monroe Authority (FMA), a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia, is primarily responsible for the care and conservation of hundreds of historic buildings and structures located on Fort Monroe. The FMA is also responsible for the transition of this former Army post to civilian uses through historic preservation, residential and commercial leasing, and public programs.

FORT MONROE NATIONAL MONUMENT

Identified by Captain John Smith as "Pointe Comfort" in 1607, later dubbed "The Gibraltar of the Chesapeake" and then "Freedom's Fortress," Fort Monroe was the third oldest United States Army post in continuous active service until its closure as a military installation in September 2011. As the landing point for the first enslaved Africans in the English colonies in 1619 and the site of the first emancipation policy decision during the Civil War, Fort Monroe marks both the beginning and the ending of slavery in the United States. The majority of the Fort Monroe peninsula was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960 and is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Created by Presidential Proclamation on November 1, 2011, Fort Monroe National Monument includes historic fortifications and the North Beach area.

THE CITY OF HAMPTON

Hampton, Virginia, is the oldest continuous English-speaking city in our nation, and many pivotal moments in American history occurred here. The Hampton 2019 Commemorative Commission designated by Hampton City Council is commemorating the 1619 landing of Africans at Point Comfort in English-occupied North America by educating people about its role as a critical national turning point through programs, events, exhibits, and other opportunities for reflection.

400 YEARS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY FEDERAL COMMISSION

The 400 Years of African-American History Commission is a federally authorized committee officially enacted by Public Law 115-102 as signed by the President of the United States in January, 2018. The Secretary of the Interior is charged with providing oversight which occurs through the National Park Service. The Commission is tasked to plan, develop, and carry out programs and activities throughout the United States to recognize and highlight the resilience and contributions of African-Americans since 1619. The Commission is leading efforts to acknowledge the impact that slavery and the laws that enforced racial discrimination have had on the United States. Goals include educating the public about the arrival of Africans in the United States and encouraging civic, patriotic, historical, educational, artistic, religious, economic, and other organizations throughout the country to participate in commemorative activities.

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Kathy J. Spangler
Executive Director, 2019 Commemoration

*Executive Committee
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The Honorable James A. Gray, Jr.
Vice Mayor

The Honorable Eleanor Weston Brown

The Honorable Steven L. Brown

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Mary B. Bunting
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Additional Commissioner/Staff:

Jonathan McBride
Housing & Neighborhood Services Division

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American Evolution Champions	CGI Colonial National Historical Park Hourigan Construction Corporation NewMarket Preservation Virginia WestRock
American Evolution Friends	Anheuser-Busch BWX Technologies, Inc. Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC

2019 COMMEMORATION, AMERICAN EVOLUTION

2019 Commemoration, American Evolution commemorates the 400th anniversary of key historical events that occurred in Virginia in 1619 that continue to influence America today. Along with notable Virginia institutions across the Commonwealth and national partners, American Evolution has launched a series of educational programs, signature events, and legacy projects of national and international significance to build awareness of Virginia's role in the creation of the United States and to reinforce Virginia's leadership in education, tourism, and economic development. American Evolution commemorates the ongoing journey toward the key ideals of democracy, diversity, and opportunity. For more information about American Evolution or for a full listing of events, visit AmericanEvolution2019.com

AMERICAN EVOLUTION™

Virginia to America | 1619-2019

DEMOCRACY · DIVERSITY · OPPORTUNITY

AMERICANEVOLUTION2019.COM

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The 2019 Commemoration is a sub-agency of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

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