



Virginia's Revolutionary Histories Take Center Stage at 'For 2026' Conference

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (Aug. 28, 2024) - The Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture, in partnership with William & Mary and The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, is pleased to announce the third conference in its highly successful five-year "For 2026" series. "Virginia's Revolutionary Histories & Beyond" will examine the Commonwealth's distinctive role in the American Revolution of 1776-1783 and its influence on local and global communities. The conference will run Oct. 25-26, 2024. A preconference day of workshops and experiences for K-12 teachers and museum educators will take place on Oct. 24.

"As our country's first university, William & Mary shaped the ideals of our early republic. Today, we are united by our commitment to sustain this pluralistic democracy in the 21st century, through open debate, fierce pursuit of facts, and above all, respect for one another," said Katherine A. Rowe, President of William & Mary. "Year three of our 'For 2026' series uncovers new histories of the U.S. Revolution. Along with our partners in Williamsburg, we aim to illuminate our nation's future by expanding our understanding of its past."

"Colonial Williamsburg is uniquely positioned to bring together academic history and public history, translating the world-class work of our staff historians, curators, archaeologists and preservationists into public-facing programming that inspires people to get curious about their own history," said Cliff Fleet, president and CEO of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. "As we look forward to the 250th anniversary of American independence in 2026, Colonial Williamsburg is honored to contribute our expertise to the 'For 2026' conference to make history more accessible and more relevant to an ever-widening audience."

In the lead up to the American Semiquincentennial, the "For 2026" series explores our nation's founding. Scholars, public historians, educators, students and community members come together for robust conversations about our shared history and the challenges our country faced then – and still faces today.

"Virginia's Revolutionary Histories & Beyond" will investigate political, intellectual and social change in the Old Dominion and how those changes impacted the nation and world. The conference showcases a mix of researcher-to-researcher panels, public audience events, roundtable discussions, site visits, workshops and plenary sessions. Scholarly daytime panels at the W&M School of Education will include a wide range of topics, such as the legacies of Williamsburg Bray School students in Revolutionary Virginia, the formation of the *Virginia Gazette* and "Lawyers, Guns, and Money."

William & Mary's [Office of Strategic Cultural Partnerships](#) is a key organizer of the conference.

"Strategic Cultural Partnerships is honored to convene this broad array of individuals and organizations," said Ann Marie Stock, presidential liaison for Strategic Cultural Partnerships. "Together we enhance the understanding of our nation's history and generate ideas for building our collective future. Meaningful teaching and learning take place through collaboration and that is a hallmark of this notable event."

VIRGINIA'S REVOLUTIONARY HISTORIES & BEYOND

Highlights of the conference will include two evening plenary sessions covering historic research in varying ways. Friday's evening plenary will be held at the Hennage Auditorium at the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg. Fleet will introduce "Beyond Words: Bringing History to Life Responsibly", a panel discussion moderated by Katharine Pittman, Colonial Williamsburg Nation Builder who portrays Martha Washington. Panelists will include Colonial Williamsburg Foundation colleagues Amanda Keller, Curator of Historic Interiors and Household Accessories, and Hope Wright, Actor-Interpreter. Joining the trio from Colonial Williamsburg will be Tiffany Momon, Public Historian, Professor, Founder and Co-Director of [Black Craftspeople Digital Archive](#), and Mary V. Thompson, Research Historian Emerita, George Washington's Mount Vernon.

The panel will focus on the topic of using multidisciplinary approaches to address imbalances in the historical record responsibly, and practical methods of using historical content to create engaging and relevant stories for the public. A reception at the Art Museums Café will follow the Friday plenary. Both the reception and the plenary are open to all Colonial Williamsburg ticket holders, "For 2026" registrants, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Staff, and William & Mary staff and students. Colonial Williamsburg tickets may be purchased at colonialwilliamsburg.org/tickets.

On Saturday evening, Rowe will introduce an address by noted American historian and author Alan Taylor, Thomas Jefferson Foundation Chair at the University of Virginia. Taylor's address, "Tower Hill: A Plantation on the Edge" will discuss the proximate causes of the locus of Nat Turner's attempted 1831 revolution in Southampton County, Virginia, highlighting environmental collapse, epidemic disease, economic failure, family madness and resistance efforts by the enslaved.

Taylor is an award-winning author, notably including twice winning the Pulitzer Prize for History in 1996 for *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic* and again in 2014 for *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772 - 1832*, making him one of only five people to have been twice awarded the Pulitzer Prize for History.

Saturday's plenary featuring Taylor will be free and open to the public and will be hosted in the Glenn Close Theatre in Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Hall at William & Mary. Following the address, a reception for attendees will be held in the theatre's lobby.

"The OI, the nation's pre-eminent center for early American history, is delighted to support this unique conference series," said Catherine E. Kelly, Executive Director of the Omohundro Institute. "'For 2026' continues to set the bar for bringing scholars, educators, and museum professionals together to explore cutting edge history."

REVED AND SLATE SEMINAR RETURN

Returning this year to "For 2026" is the Revolutionary Educators (RevED) Teacher Summit, a convening of K-12 teachers, teacher educators, and museum and historic site educators that will share strategies for interdisciplinary pedagogical practices, convened by Mark Hofer, Senior Director of the Learning & Design Lab at W&M. A pre-conference workshop for teachers, led by Virginia Council on the Social Studies President Samantha Futrell, Brendan Gillis, Professor of History at Lamar University and Director of Teaching and Learning for the American Historical Association and Beau Dickenson, Virginia Social Studies Leaders Consortium, will lead off a full day of programming for RevEd participants, to include a visit to Colonial Williamsburg's Historic Area and Art Museums and a tour of the historic Wren Building.

“For RevEd this year we have doubled the number of sessions available and have a great balance between K-12 teacher, museum educator, and university-based educator presenters,” Hofer said. “Sessions will range from a focus on civic engagement, shining a light on hidden histories, to the responsible use of AI in the teaching of history.”

It is a particularly auspicious year for the Slate Seminar, a symposium to share the history and legacies of the Williamsburg Bray School and the students who studied there as 2024 marks 250 years since the August 1774 closing of the school. The Slate Seminar is convened by the W&M Bray School Lab and will include updates for Descendant Community members and others on genealogical research, oral histories, and insights into engaging in descendant-generated research. The Williamsburg Bray School building is scheduled to open as an interpreted site at Colonial Williamsburg later in 2024. The Slate Seminar is made possible through the generous support of the Mellon Foundation.

“The 2024 Slate Seminar is W&M Bray School Lab’s third annual conference convening,” said Maureen Elgersman Lee, director of the Lab. “This year’s sessions will reflect the continued growth in the depth and breadth of the Bray School Lab’s research and engagement as continue to mark 2024 as “the year of the Bray School.”

Passes to [“For 2026”](#), [Revolutionary Educators](#), and the [Slate Seminar](#) are available now. Full conference registration through the Omohundro Institute is available at low-to-no-cost for Colonial Williamsburg staff and William & Mary faculty, staff and students. All “For 2026” registrants receive a ticket voucher to Colonial Williamsburg’s Historic Area and Art Museums good for the duration of the conference.

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About The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Colonial Williamsburg is the world's largest outdoor American history museum, dedicated to its mission that the future may learn from the past through its expert and distinctive events, collections, programs, and site interpretation.

About Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture

Founded in 1943 by Colonial Williamsburg and William & Mary, the Omohundro Institute is the leading hub for inquiry into early American history – broadly understood as all points in the Atlantic World between roughly 1450 and 1820 – and supports and publishes leading research into this expansive Early America.

About William & Mary

Founded by Royal Charter in 1693, William & Mary is the second-oldest institution of higher learning in the country. The Alma Mater of the Nation is a preeminent university, combining the depth and breadth of a liberal arts and sciences education with the disciplined exploration and innovation of a leading, global research university. A vibrant and inclusive community, William & Mary cultivates creative thinkers, principled leaders and compassionate global citizens equipped for lives of meaning and distinction. As a “Public Ivy,” the university convenes great minds and hearts to meet the most pressing needs of our time.