



Williamsburg partners to host “For 2026” conference series in recognition of the 250th anniversary of American independence

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (Sept. 15, 2022) – The Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture, in partnership with William & Mary and The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, will host a series of five annual conferences marking the 250th anniversary of American independence. The new series will combine scholarly discussions with programs for the general public. “[Revolutionary Legacies](#),” the first conference in the [For 2026](#) series, will take place Oct. 28-29 and explore diverse perspectives on the revolutionary period and its ongoing implications.

“It is fitting that given the importance of Williamsburg in the founding of our democracy we launch this ambitious five-year conference series here,” said Ann Marie Stock, presidential liaison for strategic cultural partnerships at William & Mary. “As the conference website notes, this national milestone is an unparalleled opportunity for not only this country but citizens across the globe to explore and reflect upon the American past, the foundation of this nation and its legacy into the present.”

Each of the conferences will bring together scholars to discuss emerging research about the revolutionary era, connect a diverse public to current historical research via lectures, panel discussions and walking tours of key sites, and convene significant conversations about how and why understanding the early American past is especially meaningful today, noted Stock whose work includes oversight of the partnership with Colonial Williamsburg as well as the Omohundro Institute and William & Mary’s other cultural assets.

“Virginia is the birthplace of the American Revolution,” said Colonial Williamsburg President and CEO Cliff Fleet. “Every street, every field, every corner of Williamsburg knew something of that moment, and thanks to the outstanding work by scholars, including dozens of Colonial Williamsburg curators and interpreters, that history is alive and still very much visible today. We hope that the next five years see even more people from all corners of the globe come to Williamsburg to experience some of the place and time so integral to our present moment.”

“Convening leadership across academic sectors in this way will make a significant contribution to this dialogue,” said William & Mary President Katherine A. Rowe. “William & Mary was already over 80 years old by the time of the revolution and played a major role in the intellectual foment that catalyzed it. Since 1693, we have not just educated Americans but also have shaped America — a tradition we are proud to continue today.”

The series will be one of the first public events in the nation convened with America's semiquincentennial in mind.

'Revolutionary Legacies'

This fall's conference, "[Revolutionary Legacies](#)," features two evening plenaries at the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg, each followed by a reception, in addition to workshops and lectures at William & Mary's School of Education.

Friday's evening plenary session will be a conversation on the continuing evolution of historic commemoration featuring Christy Coleman, Executive Director, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation; Ed Ayers, Tucker-Boatwright Professor of the Humanities, University of Richmond; and Tommy Norment, Minority Leader of the Senate of Virginia. Barbara Hamm-Lee, best known as host and executive producer of WHRO's Another View, will moderate.

Saturday's closing keynote, also at the Art Museums, will be delivered by Harvard Law School Professor, eminent historian and Pulitzer-Prize winning author Annette Gordon-Reed. Gordon-Reed, who is a current board member of the Omohundro Institute as well as a former member of Colonial Williamsburg's Foundation Board of Trustees and holds an honorary degree from William & Mary, will connect the events and issues discussed in her latest book, *On Juneteenth*, to the forces unleashed by the Revolution.

Each of these addresses will be open to the public in addition to conference attendees. Tickets can be purchased through Colonial Williamsburg's [website](#). Both sessions will also be recorded and simulcast via the Colonial Williamsburg and Omohundro Institute websites.

Additional public programming includes five panel discussions offered Friday and Saturday in the Hennage Auditorium ([free reservation ticket required](#)). Select sessions are part of the [Slate Seminar](#), a conference within the *For 2026: Revolutionary Legacies* conference made possible by the support of the Mellon Foundation, which will delve into the work of the W&M Bray School Lab and the Williamsburg Bray School Initiative.

Programming at William & Mary will include a pre-conference workshop, *The RevEd Teacher Summit for 2026*. This workshop will take place Oct. 27 and will convene some of the nation's leading professional development specialists for K-12 teachers working in museums and historic sites. They will meet with faculty from William & Mary's School of Education and other partners to explore ways to collaboratively design programs for K-12 teachers that help engage students learning in complex classroom environment with more inclusive history.

"Like all of our conferences, *For 2026* showcases the OI's unparalleled role in fostering transformative scholarship about the American past," said Omohundro Institute Executive Director Catherine E. Kelly. "We are especially excited that our partnership with Colonial Williamsburg enables us to share this research with a broader audience of museum directors and other leading public history specialists, and nationally-recognized educators, and the public."

Reservation tickets for the public sessions will be available through [Colonial Williamsburg](#), and passes to the academic conference will be available through the [Omohundro Institute](#) starting September 16.

“This is the first major initiative undertaken by our partnership since the creation of the Strategic Cultural Partnerships division, and it's a powerful demonstration of how much we can accomplish by combining our assets and expertise, as we seek to advance the university's Vision 2026 strategic plan and expand learning around democracy,” Stock said.

Information on the four other upcoming conferences being hosted through the *For 2026* series will be available in early 2023.

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About The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Colonial Williamsburg is the world's largest 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.

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