

Colonial Williamsburg

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation
P.O. Box 1776
Williamsburg, Va. 23187-1776
colonialwilliamsburg.org

Exploring Black History with Colonial Williamsburg



“Judith and Daniel,” portrayed by Hope Wright and Willie Wright, is one of Colonial Williamsburg’s many programs highlighting the stories of African Americans in 18th-century Williamsburg. Photo courtesy of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

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WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (Jan. 25, 2022) – February brings Black history to life at The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. So does March. And April, and May through January. While national Black History Month is an integral part of Colonial Williamsburg’s annual programming, the Foundation’s ongoing work to tell a more

complete story of our nation's origins has resulted in a robust slate of year-round programming exploring the lives of the African Americans who comprised over 50% of the city's population in the 18th century. From dramatizations and specialized site tours to online offerings, these programs invite participants to experience Black history not as a peripheral piece of American history relegated to one month a year, but as an integral part of the country's collective past.

"Over the years, Colonial Williamsburg's representation of the stories of Black people has evolved from having Black coachmen introduce visitors to the Historic Area in the 1930s to introducing the African American interpretation program in 1979, eventually working towards integrating the perspective of Williamsburg's Black residents into our site tours and our programming across the Foundation today," said Stephen Seals, who portrays Revolutionary Spy James Lafayette in addition to his position as a program development manager for the Foundation. "It is an honor to tell these stories – the stories of my ancestors – day in and day out, 365 days a year."

Visit colonialwilliamsburg.org/bhm to see a full list of in-person and online programming for February. Programming offered this month includes:

- Dramatizations offered on a rotating basis at 1:30 p.m. daily (excluding Feb. 27 and 28) in the Hennage Auditorium at the Art Museums including "[Judith and Daniel](#)" about an enslaved couple whose marriage endures against all odds; "[Measure of a Man's Worth](#)," about Benjamin, an enslaved carriage driver, reckoning with what revolution means for him; "[Sam's War](#)," about a self-liberated Black soldier, and "[Nation Builders Discuss the Institution of Slavery](#)," among others.
- "[Loquacious Lucy, Queen for a Day](#)," on Feb. 12, 19 and 26 at 10:15 and 11 a.m. at the Play House Stage, a play designed to help families discuss slavery with their children.
- Historic Site interpretation throughout the day including "[Freedom's Paradox](#)" at the Peyton Randolph House, "[African American Contributions at the Governor's Palace](#)," and "[Slavery and the Law](#)" at the Capitol.
- "[By African American Hands](#)," a self-guided tour at the Art Museums showcasing objects crafted by African American artists and artisans.
- Online livestreamed programming including [LIVE! from History: The Price of Freedom](#) (Feb. 3 at 1 p.m.); [CW Kids Ask: How did enslaved people resist enslavement?](#) (Feb. 9 at 1 p.m.); [Trades Tuesday: The Many Skills of Peter Deadfoot](#) (Feb. 22 at 1 p.m.); and [U.S. Past Present Future CW Conversion: Black History](#) (Feb. 22 at 7 p.m.).
- [Ongoing archaeological investigation](#) at the site of first permanent structure used by the congregation of the Historic First Baptist Church.
- A procession and community celebration beginning at Capitol Circle on Saturday, Feb. 26 (rain date Mar. 5), from 12:45-1:30 p.m. to unveil the Benjamin Spraggins carriage, the newest carriage in the Coach and Livestock program named in honor of one of the Foundation's first coachmen.

Protecting the health and safety of guests, employees and the local community has been Colonial Williamsburg's highest priority through the COVID-19 pandemic. Face coverings are currently required while inside Foundation-owned buildings that are open to the public regardless of vaccination status and their use is encouraged outdoors as well. Guests are encouraged to

practice social distancing while visiting Colonial Williamsburg. Up-to-date COVID-19 health and safety policies are available at colonialwilliamsburg.org.

About Black History Month

Black History Month was [formally recognized by President Gerald Ford in 1976](#), three years before Colonial Williamsburg's initial commitment to [African American interpretation](#) in 1979. For more information on Black History Month and Colonial Williamsburg's ongoing work to interpret African American life in 18th-century Virginia, explore the resources which can be found at the end of the colonialwilliamsburg.org/bhm page.

Media contact: Ellen Morgan Peltz
Colonial Williamsburg
epeltz@cwf.org
757-220-7287

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation preserves, restores and operates Virginia's 18th-century capital of Williamsburg. Innovative and interactive experiences highlight the relevance of the American Revolution to contemporary life and the importance of an informed, active citizenry. The Colonial Williamsburg experience includes more than 600 restored or reconstructed original buildings, renowned museums of decorative arts and folk art, extensive educational outreach programs for students and teachers, lodging, culinary options from historic taverns to casual or elegant dining, the Golden Horseshoe Golf Club featuring 45 holes designed by Robert Trent Jones and his son Rees Jones, a full-service spa and fitness center, pools, retail stores and gardens. Philanthropic support and revenue from admissions, products and hospitality operations sustain Colonial Williamsburg's educational programs and preservation initiatives.